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# "IS INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TOO HARD FOR AZERBAIJANI WOMEN?"

MFA Azerbaijan as A Gendered Institution

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## Abstract

The main aim of this thesis is to examine MFA Azerbaijan as a gendered institution for studying the status of Azerbaijani women in international affairs. Following this research aim, the thesis relies on three sets of theoretical factors (institutional sex ratios, hierarchies and divisions of labour, gender rules and norms). For developing a descriptive study, it has employed a single case study design and carried out a content analysis of two kinds of data: (1) official documents regarding the Azerbaijani MFA and its staff; and (2) semi-structured qualitative interviews with current and former MFA employees.

The content analysis has revealed that women, as a "token" minority in MFA Azerbaijan, face the problem of the glass ceiling, gendered hierarchy and task allocation on the ground of social norms and gender stereotypes; however, they do not employ a "role encapsulation" perception. It has also been clear that there are the same formal rules for men and women, and most of these rules do not produce differential gendered impacts. As the institutional rules, the thesis has revealed that the appropriate standards of behaviours on physical mobility, social mixing, and alcohol are also gender-neutral in MFA Azerbaijan.

Thus, the study has contributed to two distinct bodies of scholarship: (1) women's underrepresentation in foreign policy and (2) women/gender in MFAs. As the first study about Azerbaijan on this topic, this thesis has presented empirical data on gender patterns in its MFA and provided novel theoretical insights on what kinds of social norms might matter for the presence or absence of women in diplomacy.

**Keywords:** Women's Underrepresentation, MFA Azerbaijan, International Affairs, Gendered Institution, Women in Diplomacy

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## 1. Introduction

Like many other professions, diplomacy has been male-dominated and associated with masculinity for a long time. Enloe (2014), in her ground-breaking *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, addresses diplomacy as an institution which has been masculinized under its long male dominance and which continues to reproduce gender stereotypes. According to Towns and Niklasson (2017), 85% of the ambassador positions are held by men in the modern world. Male dominance in diplomacy is also observed in the terms of the prestige of ambassador positions. The authors have attested that a noticeably lower share of women is appointed to the countries with high economic and military powers.

That said, diplomatic history scholars argue that women have also been involved in international affairs in various ways. For example, there have been very important and influential female characters who have held great political power in certain periods, such as Cleopatra, who was extremely talented in international politics; Queen Victoria, who is famous for her alliance strategies and colonization policies; or Catherine the Great, who made Russia a world power of the 18th century with her imperialist foreign policies (Peterson and Runyan 1993: p.46). Further, Wood's (2005) discussion on the "diplomatic wives" concept also supports this claim. In her study, she explains that U.S Foreign Service and State Department have encouraged the unpaid involvement of diplomat's wives into diplomacy as eyes and ears at social functions (See also Allen 2019, Enloe 2014, Towns 2020). In other words, those women have served as mediators of informal diplomacy for Foreign Service for a long time (Towns and Aggestam 2018).

Moreover, in recent years, growing numbers of women in international affairs have started to shake the foundations of its male-dominated structure. Events such as the election of Kamala Harris as the first female vice president of the US, Australia's "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" strategy by the first female foreign minister of the country, Julie Bishop, the "Feminist Foreign Policy" decision of the Swedish government, and a considerable increase in the number of women ambassadors around the world have led to a profound alteration in the field. However, this process has not occurred at the same level in all states. While some countries have seen a rapid rise in the number of women in diplomacy, others remain largely male-dominated. One country that falls into the second category, is Azerbaijan.

Although Azerbaijani women did not obtain political rights through a radical struggle and organization like in some other countries, women's emancipation process in Azerbaijan has not been easy. For many centuries, Azerbaijani women have been perceived as a symbol of power and intelligence. In ancient Turk societies, women were participating in social, political and economic life together with men (Doghramacı 1992). Although the emergence and rise of Islam, as it developed in the Arabic region, came to lower the status and freedom of Azerbaijani women, there continued to be powerful female characters who have played an important role in international and governmental affairs, like Sara Khatun or Xurshudbanu Natavan. Azerbaijani women were granted universal suffrage right in 1919, one year after the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), which made Azerbaijan one of the first countries in the world and the first Muslim-majority country ever to enfranchise women. During the Soviet period (1920-1991), the government required the involvement of both sexes in social, economic, and political life, leading to relatively high rates of participation of women in public life (Heyat 2006). After the declaration of independence of Azerbaijan in 1991, women became less involved in many sectors, including international affairs.

The most important diplomatic institution in Azerbaijan is its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). MFA Azerbaijan was first established in 1918 with the creation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, but it was subsequently abolished with the Bolshevik occupation in 1920. It was then re-established again, with the independence of Azerbaijan in 1991. The MFA is thus a relatively new institution that should not necessarily be as shaped by the same historical patriarchal structures in diplomacy as many other, older MFAs. However, a quick look at Azerbaijan's Ministers of Foreign Affairs suggests that post-independence Azerbaijani foreign affairs, including the new MFA, may not have escaped male domination. Before independence, there were six Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Azerbaijan. While four of these ministers were men, two of them were women. One of these women was Tahira Tahirova (1959-1983), who was in office for 24 years and this is the longest-serving foreign minister in the history of Azerbaijan. In contrast, after independence, all seven officials serving as a foreign minister have been male (MFA Azerbaijan, 2021). This suggests that there has been a dramatic decline in the number of women in international affairs in Azerbaijan.

As an institution that has seen a decline rather than an increase in women in international affairs since the 1990s, MFA Azerbaijan is an interesting case for study. However, as my review of existing scholarship on gender in diplomacy will show below, neither the Azerbaijani MFA as

a gendered institution nor the current status of Azerbaijani women in foreign affairs have been discussed in prior academic literature. Thus, the main aim of this thesis is to examine MFA Azerbaijan as a gendered institution in order to study the status of Azerbaijani women in international affairs.

To address the research aim, this thesis relies on theoretical tools from the scholarship on gendered institutions. More specifically, three sets of theoretical factors (institutional sex ratios, hierarchies and divisions of labour, gender rules and norms) have been applied to develop a descriptive study for examining the Azerbaijani MFA as a gendered institution. The thesis has employed a single case study design and carried out a content analysis of two kinds of data: (1) official documents regarding the Azerbaijani MFA and its staff; and (2) semi-structured qualitative interviews with current and former MFA employees.

This thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant existing scholarship on the underrepresentation of women in international affairs for clarifying the existing gap concerning the status of Azerbaijani women in international affairs and the contribution of this thesis to prior academic literature: empirical data on gender patterns in MFA Azerbaijan and novel theoretical insights on what kinds of social norms might matter for the presence or absence of women in diplomacy. Then, the theoretical chapter defines gendered institution and its main components and delves more deeply into the theoretical institutional factors that prior literature has developed. By relying on these factors, the author creates an analytical framework at the end of the theoretical chapter. Chapter 4 then specifies the research aim and questions in based on this framework. In the next chapter, 5, the single case study research design, methods for gathering and analysing data are presented and justified. Chapter 6 presents the analysis of the data based on the specified research questions and the analytical framework. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the study and discusses its outcomes and contributions for the scholarship on the underrepresentation of women in international affairs. The Bibliography and Appendix, which consist of tables, figures and additional information, are presented at the end of the thesis.

## 2. Literature Review: Previous Scholarship on Women in International Affairs

In recent years, the male-dominated structure of diplomacy has started to be undermined by growing numbers of women in the sector. This reform has also led to a profound alteration in academic literature. Lately, a growing number of scholars have turned to studying the status of women in international affairs. Thus, this thesis intends to contribute to two distinct bodies of this scholarship: (1) women's underrepresentation in foreign policy and in (2) women/gender in MFAs. There is a vast number of academic studies on women's enduring underrepresentation in international affairs. These studies mainly discuss the factors that affect women's ability to enter and advance in the field. However, most of them have primarily focused on Western countries and MFAs. Therefore, it is not surprising that no study reveals any data related to Azerbaijan on this topic.

This study, a first of its kind, will try to analyse the status of Azerbaijani women in international affairs. At the same time, it will bring both empirical data to the academic literature about one post-Soviet MFA, and a new theoretical perspective by focusing on certain fundamental social norms which considerably affect the state of Azerbaijani women in international affairs. To show the contributions and novelty of the thesis, this chapter is divided into three parts which begins with a review of existing scholarship on the underrepresentation of women in international affairs. Thereafter, the gap in the academic literature concerning the status of Azerbaijani women in the field will be discussed. The chapter will end with a concluding review that presents the contribution of the thesis.

### 2.1. Women's Enduring Underrepresentation in International Affairs

Most of the existing literature about women in international affairs has tried to determine the factors that lead to women's underrepresentation in this field (E.g. Conley Tyler et al. 2014, Linse 2004, McGlen and Sarkees 2001, Neumann 2008, etc.) The studies have mainly categorized these factors under three headings: individual, institutional and societal factors. The first set of the framework, individual-level factors, discuss the difficulties that women experience when balancing personal life and diplomatic career or shouldering patriarchal society's family responsibilities and expectations (Conley Tyler et al. 2014, McGlen and

Sarkees 2001, Rahman 2011, etc.). This set also includes traditional explanations such as less interest of women in international relations (Roggeveen 2009, Shanahan 2011, Zenko 2012). The second set, institutional factors, emphasize barriers that women face within the work environment as a result of relevant policies and practices (Conley Tyler et al. 2014, McGlen and Sarkees 2001, Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum 2018, Sjolander 2005, etc). The last set of the framework is societal factors which argue that "society continues to doubt that women can be equally as effective as men in leadership positions that involve direct dealing with other nations or other nationals" (McGlen and Sarkees 1993; p.299).

### 2.1.1 Individual – Level Factors

As mentioned above, one set of scholars focus on explaining the under-representation of women in international affairs at the individual level, pointing to factors such as life-career balance, family responsibilities and less interest in the field which emerge through individual life situations and choices. (Conley Tyler et al. 2014, McGlen and Sarkees 2001, Linse 2004, Rahman 2011, Roggeveen 2009, etc.). Firstly, some scholars identify the unequal share of family responsibilities in patriarchal society as leading women to quit their diplomatic careers or take a break in order to take care of their children, elder members of the family or household chores (Conley Tyler et al. 2014, de Souza Farias and do Carmo 2018, Flowers 2018, Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum 2018). Secondly, the situation of 'dependent husbands', i.e. men in the role of the dependent because of the wives' diplomatic profession, has also been identified as an obstacle for women in international affairs (Biltekin 2016, Linse 2004, Niklasson and Robertson 2018). More precisely, it is much harder for women to convince their partners to give up their careers in their home country (de Souza Farias and do Carmo 2018). At the same time, child-related issues like childbirth or childrearing obligations also cause obstacles for women in international affairs. For example, women should "give birth in the country to which they are posted" and "return to work as soon as possible" in Canadian foreign services (Sjolander 2005; p.26). Additionally, women need to consider their school-age children and their future when they move abroad for the diplomatic duty (Rahman 2011).

Apart from the causes discussed above, some scholars also claim that the underrepresentation of women in international affairs is a matter of interests and preferences differing between men and women. While some scholars point to "less interest in 'hard' issues of international relations such as security" (Roggeveen 2009, Zenko 2012), others claimed that women "prefer more

intimate discussions" (Shanahan 2011) and they do not like speaking up in public. However, this argument has not been discussed extensively in the existing scholarship.

### 2.1.2 Institutional Factors

Besides individual-level factors, scholars also explain the limited number of women in international affairs by highlighting institutional factors, which understood as the culture of the organization together with its characteristic and practices. (McGlen and Sarkees 1993). The scholarship can be discussed in terms of a focus on direct vs indirect forms of discrimination. As I will show below, in prior scholarship, direct discrimination stands for legal obstacles while indirect discrimination includes masculinized policies and practices that women face in the workplaces.

#### *Direct Discrimination: Legal Obstacles*

Undoubtedly, according to prior scholarship, the most formidable barrier to women to participate in international affairs has been direct discrimination practices. Conley Tyler et al. (2014) in their "Is international affairs too 'hard' for women? Explaining the missing women in Australia's international affairs" article, have explained that until the middle of the twentieth century, women were officially and legally excluded from international affairs on the ground of sex, marital status and pregnancy. For example, women were not allowed to continue to work in the Australian Public Service when they got married (Conley Tyler et al. 2014). Marital status has always been one of an overbearing obstacle to women in most professions. However, it has more vital 'importance' when the topic is international affairs. Since diplomacy is considered as a 'hard' job for women, it has been believed that they cannot balance their family and professional life when they get married. Therefore, women have been forced to decide between these two given choices (Bashkevin 2018, Linse 2004, Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum 2018). Ironically, in MFAs of some countries such as Brazil, this rule has been applied only to female diplomats who get married to another diplomat (de Souza Farias and do Carmo 2018).

Another type of legal obstacle for women in international affairs has been the minimum retirement age. According to de Souza Farias and do Carmo (2018), 49 countries in the world, including Brazil, impose different standards for retiring women and men. While minimum retirement age for male diplomats is 60, female diplomats retire at the age of 55. Thus, these

types of legal obstacles have prevented both an increasing number of women in international affairs and their promotions for high-level positions by decreasing their career duration.

### *Indirect Discrimination: Masculinized Policies and Practices*

Although most countries have now abolished direct sexism, prior scholarship also points to masculinized policies and practices that indirectly discriminate against women, showing that these still exist in most countries (OHCHR 2008, Dalton et al. 2020, Portillo and Block 2012). Enloe (2005) has explained this argument in the context of militarized U.S. foreign policy in her "Masculinity as Foreign Policy Issue" study. She has claimed that the fear of looking less 'manly' than a uniformed senior military male officer lets "militarized anxieties to override more realistic understandings of current national 'security'" (Enloe 2005 p.3). As a result, these militarized policy approaches result in silenced women's voices and dramatically shrinking female access to real political influence. This case has been more noticeable in the US during George W. Bush administration when National Security Council and Pentagon have got stronger influence over US foreign policy (Bashkevin 2018).

In addition to militarized foreign policy, the low representation of women in international affairs is also an outcome of masculinized policies and practices in the workplaces. According to Conley Tyler et al. (2014), in this sector, women are offered 'equality as sameness' which means equality in traditional masculine terms. In other words, they are forced to work within a masculinized "meritocratic" working environment. For instance, de Souza Farias and do Carmo (2018; p.120) has emphasized that the Brazilian MFA still embraces the gendered concept of meritocracy. In Canadian MFA, there is still a "culture of antipathy toward employment equity" (Sjolander 2005; p.24). Further, McGlen and Sarkees (2001) by conducting interviews with female and male employers of the States and Defense Departments of US Foreign Services have defined that women are excluded from the decision-making process (departmental ethos) and also face "glass ceiling" perception (ecological context) in international affairs. Linse (2004) has also underlined the glass ceiling phenomenon in diplomacy, which impacts the hiring and promotion of women in her study called "Challenges Facing Women in Overseas Diplomatic Positions".

Meanwhile, Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum (2018) have addressed an issue of indirect discrimination on the ground of personal questions and recruitment in Turkish MFA. Their analysis on published interviews and memoirs of female ambassadors and diplomats indicated

that recruiters had conducted longer interviews for female candidates in order to limit their numbers. At the same time, they had been subjected to questions about the present and future personal life views and plans. Biltekin (2016) and Niklasson & Robertson (2018) have also explained that a closed recruitment system creates obstacles for women in the Swedish MFA. Indeed, this type of recruitment systems lets the practices such as homosocial preferences (Biltekin 2016, Neumann 2008, Niklasson and Robertson 2018) or informal assessment (Sjolander 2005) hinder women to enter and get promotion in international affairs.

### 2.1.3 Societal Factors

Finally, a few scholars also explain women's underrepresentation in international relation by pointing to societal factors (Bashkevin 2018, Conley Tyler et al 2014, de Souza Farias and do Carmo 2018, McCarthy 2014, etc.). In this thesis, societal factors are understood as general societal beliefs, rules and practices that affect the relations between the sexes and promote the concept of male superiority. This set plays a dominant role in the framework by influencing the individual-level and institutional-level factor sets (McGlen and Sarkees 1993) (see Figure1).

One set of societal factors relate to the masculinities and femininities that circulate in society. While history books described the diplomat as an older and white male (de Souza Farias and do Carmo 2018), femininity is in many societies represented as equivalent to weakness, dependence and emotionality. Therefore, the growing participation of women in foreign affairs may lead to fears of a 'feminised international politics' which is associated with a less aggressive, adventurous, competitive state (Conley Tyler et al. 2014). Moreover, societal stereotypes regarding women's skills, competencies, knowledge and training hamper women's participation and empowerment in the field. Bashkevin (2018) has shown that in the US Department of State, women could not get a chance to carry out overseas assignments because of stereotypes that they are blabbermouth, physically weak, unable to network effectively, etc. According to McCarthy (2014), most people believe that women are neither qualified nor practically inclined to carry out overseas diplomatic assignments. Further, Flowers (2018) has shown that the Japanese MOFA mostly assigns male ambassadors as their 'most qualified diplomats' to countries like the US which have high political and economic importance. Towns and Niklasson (2017) have also attested that a noticeably lower share of women is appointed to the countries with high economic and military dignity.

Besides societal gender norms of the home country, the security situation and religion of the receiving countries are also determining factors in female ambassador postings (Flowers 2018, Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum 2018). For example, in an interview, a UK ambassador to Azerbaijan stated that her appointment had provoked a negative backlash among government officials of the country. As they had thought that "sending a female diplomat downgraded the level of importance with their relationship with the UK" (Rahman 2011). Since these patriarchal obstacles weaken the legitimacy of women as powerful actors in international affairs (Conley Tyler et al. 2014), female diplomats try to adopt masculine norms and practices rather than challenge them.

The previous argument about 'masculine' female diplomats reflects Lilja's (2016 p.692) argument about the 'masculinized' version of the female body' where women "must abandon what is regarded as common female behaviours and perform their political actions in more assertive and extroverted ways." She has argued in her research called "(Re)figurations and situated bodies: Gendered shades, resistance, and politics in Cambodia", most women think that if they avoid common female behaviours like shyness, quietness, or timidity, they would not be ignored and underestimated (Lilja 2016). This analysis also overlaps with Neumann's (2008) claims about 'diplomat first-woman-next' subjectivities in diplomacy from his "The Body of the Diplomat" research. The concept portrays women who "accept playing and being umpired on terms that are masculine" for getting recognition as a diplomat by men (Neumann 2008 p.688). While most women cannot achieve or adapt in this way, many may prefer to stay out of international affairs altogether.

## 2.2. Research Gap and Contribution

In sum, in this chapter, the existing literature on women's underrepresentation in international affairs was introduced and reviewed. Most of the scholarship on this topic concentrates on either Western cases such as Sweden, the UK or the US, or certain powerful non- Western countries like Japan or Turkey. Thus, this review has demonstrated that research on women's underrepresentation in international affairs is geographically quite limited and the existing research often disregards non-Western countries and the problems that women may face there. One of these countries is Azerbaijan, for which no study has been conducted on this particular topic. Therefore, it is quite obvious that there is also no empirical data regarding the status of Azerbaijani women in international affairs.

The review further indicated that although existing scholarship tried to put forth and analyse the most important reasons behind the limited number of women in diplomacy, scholars mainly focused on more common or allegedly universal social norms. Virtually no research has examined how certain fundamental social norms – such as gendered standards of behaviour concerning mobility, interaction with the opposite sex, participation in alcohol-serving environments, etc. – which may be more prevalent in some national contexts than others, might help explain the absence or presence of women in diplomacy. More precisely, certain fundamental social norms, which are theoretically or practically outdated in some societies, still shape women's diplomatic career in many others. Therefore, this thesis will include an examination of a number of certain norms as an overlooked set of factors that might help explain the status of women in diplomacy. While being the first study about Azerbaijan on this topic, this thesis would also present empirical data on gender patterns in its MFA and provide novel theoretical insights on what kinds of social norms might matter for the presence or absence of women in diplomacy.

### 3. Theoretical Approach: Institutional Explanations

The main goal of this chapter is to introduce the theoretical approach and analytical framework of the thesis, which will be employed in the empirical analysis. As discussed above, previous scholarship has tried to explain women's underrepresentation in foreign affairs on the ground of three sets of factors: individual, institutional and societal. More precisely, they have analyzed how societal norms about sex roles and public views concerning women's capacity for international affairs influence women's diplomatic career directly, and indirectly through institutions, that they perform in, and relevant personal life situations or choices (McGlen and Sarkees 1993). According to McGlen and Sarkees's (1993) explanation, institutions run in an intricate system that has been structured based on societal values. These values affect those establishments (their culture) and individuals (their personal lives) within it. As a result, mentioned societal values (societal factors) together with work-place culture (institutional factors) and personal life cases (individual factors) define women's status and place in international affairs.

Although all three-factor sets have utmost importance on this topic, this thesis will not study all three explanations for determining which set is the most important one. Rather, it will only focus on the institutional level factors in the context of Azerbaijan in order to examine the status of women in foreign affairs. Thus, this chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part will include definitions and theoretical discussions of the concepts of institution/organization and then gendered institution and its main components. In the second part, the author will delve more deeply into the institutional factors that prior literature has studied. More specifically, this part will study three sets of institutional gender factors: ecological context, then the internal topography and finally the historical and contemporary gender rules and norms.

#### 3.1. Institution and Gendered Institution: Comprehensive Definitions

##### 3.1.1. What is an Institution?

According to March (2005; p.1), institutions are "relatively enduring collection[s] of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources". According to Aggestam and Towns (2019), there are two central meanings of the concept of institution in gender and diplomacy literature: formal and informal. While the first one has "clear goals and rules, stipulating chains of command and institutional positions with authorities and responsibilities" (Aggestam and Towns 2019; p.21), the second one is "socially shared rules,

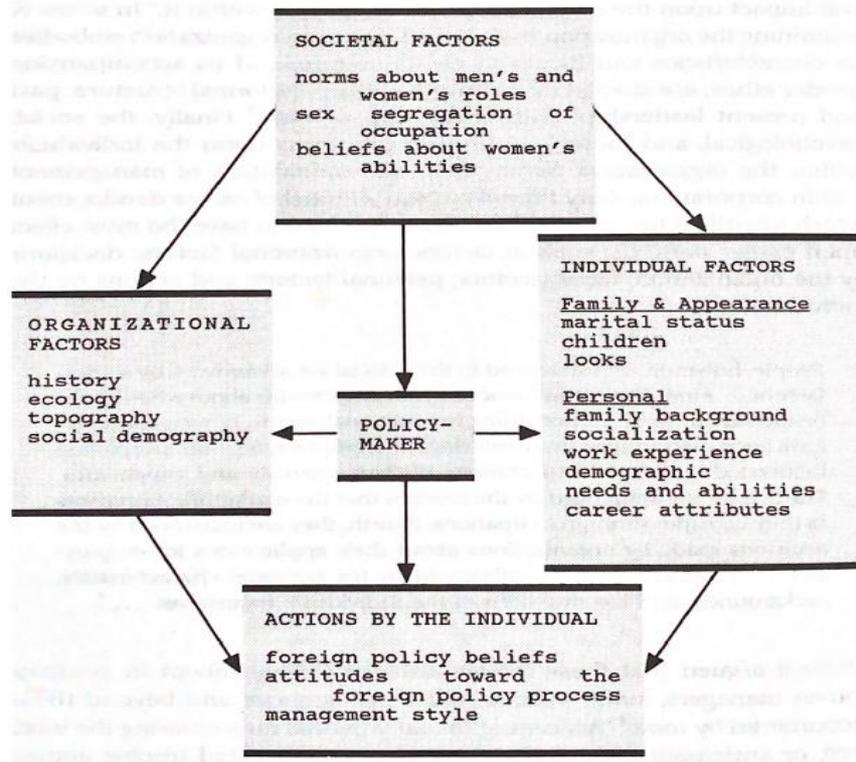
usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels" (Helmke et al. 2006; p.5). As Towns and Niklasson (2017) have explained based on Acker's (1990) "Hierarchies, Bodies, and Jobs: A Gendered Theory of Organisations" article, institutions themselves, not only the people working within them, are considered as bearers of gender. Thus, these social units and their culture play a key role in the production and implementation of gender inequalities and discriminatory practices.

### 3.1.2. What is a Gendered Institution?

The power and influence of gender as a concept depend on social practices and, more importantly, its settlement and naturalization in a wide variety of institutional structures. Thus, these institutional structures and practices that mainly considered as gender-free are actually developed by gender norms and values right along. So, in a nutshell, institutions are socially gendered structures. According to Acker (1992; p.567), gendered organizations/institutions are those in which "gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life". This concept has been discussed on the ground of various institutional components/factors by different scholars like Acker (1990), McGlen and Sarkees (1993) (*see Figure 1*) or Lowndes (2019) (*see Figure 2*) for determining how they shape the status of men and women in the various sectors. This thesis will study some of these explanations in the context of the MFA structure for defining how they affect women's (and men's) diplomatic careers.

## 3.2. Effects of Institutional Factors on Women's Diplomatic Career

As seen in Figure 1, one of McGlen and Sarkees' sets of explanations concerns institutional/organizational factors. They break down these institutional factors into four clusters: historical forces, ecological context, internal topography and social demography. This thesis will rely on the first three of these, and the author will use additional scholarship on gendered institutions in order to develop the theoretical discussion of each of these clusters below.



**Figure.1.** McGlen and Sarkees's Framework on Societal, Organizational and Institutional Factors (McGlen, N.E. and Sarkees, M.R., 2018. *Women in foreign policy: The insiders.* Routledge.)

In brief, "historical forces" concerns the effects of past organizational policies and practices on current gendered organizational features (see also e.g. Kiddle 2015). McGlen and Sarkees in turn use the label "ecological context" to draw attention to the sex ratios in the organization. Moreover, McGlen and Sarkees (1993 and 2001) have defined "internal topography" as the formal organizational structure and women's and men's place within its hierarchy and task segregation (see also e.g. Conley Tyler et al 2014, de Souza Farias and do Carmo 2018, Linse 2004, Sjolander 2005, etc.). This thesis will not examine the fourth and final of McGlen and Sarkees' sets of organizational factors, "social demography," which they define as interest, expectations and characteristics of the organization's employees toward certain groups, particularly women.

Below, the author will discuss each of the three sets of theoretical factors of interest to this thesis, in turn. I begin with the ecological context, then move to the internal topography and finally to the historical and contemporary gender rules and norms.

### 3.2.1. Ecological Context: Institutional Sex Ratio

One of the primary traits of an organization's ecological context is its sex ratio and the gendered dynamics. McGlen and Sarkees (1993) argue that the ratio of men and women plays an important role in workplace culture and gender power relations. In sex-skewed organization, such as where the number of males is higher than women (85:15), women come to play a 'token' role while men are identified as dominants or controlling group (McGlen and Sarkees 1993). These dominants build boundaries/glass ceiling which is an invisible barrier that stands between women and top executive posts (McGlen and Sarkees 2001), exclude 'tokens' from the decision-making process, and apply role encapsulation, forcing women to play gender-stereotyped roles in the workplaces.

Additionally, Niklasson (2020; p.18) has also studied the concept of tokens in diplomacy by focusing on "how women network with actors from outside the organisation when serving abroad" through three tendencies: visibility, assimilation and contrast. The visibility of women as tokens are explained on the ground of not only their low ratio but also "male profession" perception. Since international affairs are considered as an inappropriate field for women, people give more attention to tokens' performance and put them under extra pressure. As a result, women in foreign services adopt various roles for dealing with this pressure. They may try to assimilate to either the stereotypical token concept or the dominant group. In other words, they employ either a "woman-first -diplomat-next" (emphasising femininity) or "diplomat- first - woman next" (emphasizing masculinity) script (on these scripts in diplomacy, see Neumann 2008). Finally, Niklasson (2020) has touched the issue of contrast by explaining that tokens frequently experience exaggerated differences/contrasts between the two groups. According to her, the relatively small number of women in foreign affairs has led to more stereotypical or gendered behaviours and exclusion rather than changes.

### 3.2.2. Internal Topography: Gendered Hierarchies and Gendered Divisions of Labour

Besides sex ratio, McGlen and Sarkees also discuss other structural elements like hierarchy and gendered divisions of labour. However, since they do not explain these factors extensively, the thesis will instead rely on Acker's (1990) theoretical discussion of gendered hierarchies and gendered divisions of labour in organizations.

Gendered hierarchies have to do with the placement of women and men in the formal positions of an organization. In many – though certainly not all – organizations, men are often overrepresented in higher positions. In other words, higher positions of institutional power are often occupied by men (Acker 1990; p.146). When we look at the structure of most MFAs, we can map out the number of men and women in managerial positions. Prior scholarship shows that even though some women in MFAs sometimes are appointed to higher positions, they more commonly perform administrative or support jobs in these institutions (Conley Tyler et al. 2014, Linse 2004, McGlen and Sarkees 1993 and 2001). In organizations where one of the sexes does not occupy higher positions, the gender hierarchy may be seen as an obstacle for those in lower positions to perform and promote in this field. Moreover, gendered leadership structure may also build barriers/glass ceilings for women to enter and advance in foreign affairs. Besides them, income and status inequality may demotivate women to establish a career in this field and differentiation of physical spaces contribute to the expansion of hierarchy and decline of interaction which also lead to glass ceiling for women in MFAs.

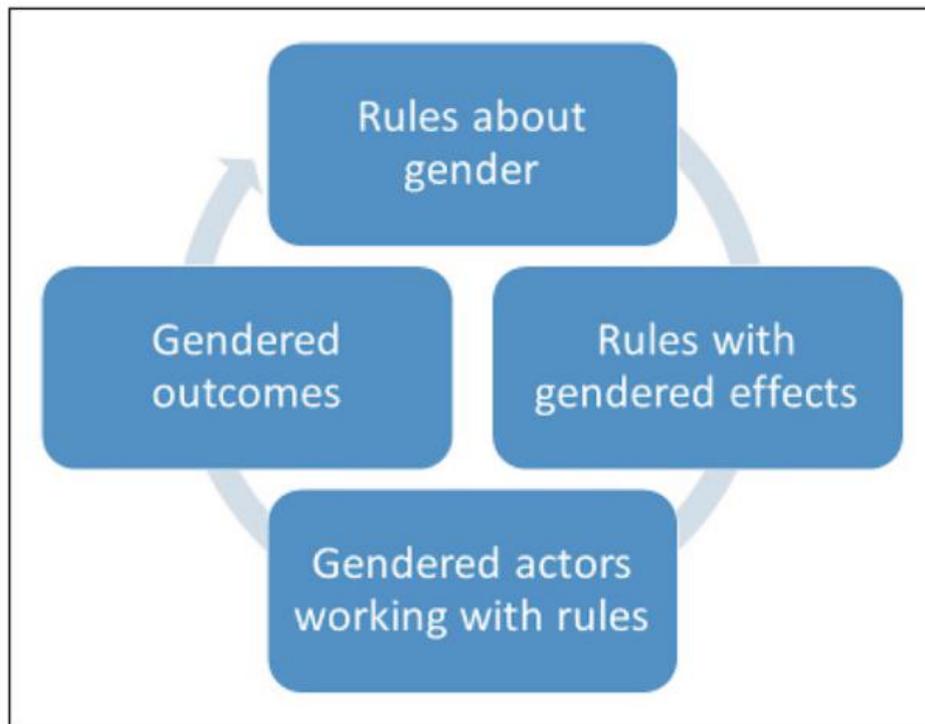
In addition to gendered hierarchies, organizations can also be characterized by *gendered divisions of labor*. Gendered division of labor is the allocation of different tasks/jobs to women and men on the basis of gender. It could be seen in actual duties that are expected of women and men (Acker 1990). According to Towns and Niklasson (2017), in the cabinets and legislatures, men gather in "hard" fields like finance or military while women frequently operate in "feminine" or "soft" perceived fields which traditionally associated with "the private sphere and/or women as a group" (Towns and Niklasson 2017; p.526). In other words, there is an overrepresentation of women in some offices (soft fields) and underrepresentation in others (hard fields). Further, "division of labour" is also characterized by stereotypically gendered allocation of tasks (female and male tasks) within the same office. Thus, the gendered division of labour may or may not strengthen an institutional gender hierarchy, masculinized leadership structures, income and status inequality, and differentiation of physical spaces between men and women in MFAs.

### 3.2.3. Gendered Rules and Norms in Historical and Contemporary Context

#### *Rules about Gender and Rules with Gendered Effects*

Besides gendered divisions of labour, gendered rules, which include two relevant categories, may also influence diplomatic careers negatively. For analysing these rules, this thesis will

draw on Lowndes' (2019) theoretical discussion of "rules about gender", and "rules with gendered effects." According to her, (political) institutions are formed not only by particular rules about gender but also by neutral rules with gendered effects. Meanwhile, "rules about gender" are the ones that explicitly concern gender, the latter includes rules that "have gendered effects because of the way in which they interact with institutions outside the political domain" (Lowndes 2019; p.545).



**Figure.3.** Lowndes's Framework on Political Gendered Institutions (Lowndes, V., 2020. How are political institutions gendered?. *Political Studies*, 68(3), pp.543-564.)

The first model contributes to the different designation of roles, actions or benefits for women and men. These rules usually include historical laws that have kept women away from a diplomatic career. This thesis will provide a brief discussion of the history of laws and rules that have kept women out of diplomacy historically. However, it will mainly focus on contemporary "rules that have gendered effects". As mentioned above, some institutional rules could be perceived as gendered due to their interaction with institutions outside the political domain on the ground of "sexual divisions of labour within the household and the broader society and economy" (Lowndes 2019; p.546). They could be formal rules with indirect negative effects upon women because of "equality as sameness" practice which means equality on traditional masculine terms (Conley Tyler et al 2014; p.162). More precisely, they are rules

that force women to work within the masculinized working environment and culture which do not consider "female" concerns like pregnancy, parental leave, etc. Additionally, informal institutional rules which are usually outcomes of gendered norms could also have gendered effects like exclusion of women from "boys' club" of formal and informal networks or mentoring relationship with the male employees.

One of the important formal rules that have gendered effect is *recruitment rules* in MFAs. Firstly, although there is not direct discrimination, female-biased recruitment practices build barriers for women to enter and advance in foreign affairs. As discussed in the Literature Review section, prior scholarship has shown that in some MFAs, recruiters conduct longer interviews for female candidates to demotivate or poke a hole in them and limit their numbers in foreign services (Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum 2018). Additionally, they might be subjected to private and sensitive questions about personal life, family and parenting responsibilities, etc. Further, a closed recruitment system (Biltekin 2016, Neumann 2008, Niklasson et al. 2018), which employ homosocial recruitment practices and informal assessment (Sjolander 2005), restrict women's access in MFAs.

Besides recruitment rules, *career advancement rules* also have gendered effects in MFAs. First, gender-biased evaluation practices do not let women advance in their workplaces by relying on their merit and skills. Secondly, the hierarchical system and gendered division of labour encumber female employees to build up a network with higher decision-making authority who are mainly men. As a result, women obviously cannot advance in international affairs where informal assessment practices and informal networks still establish barriers for minorities (Sjolander 2005).

Other significant formal barriers that have gendered effects are parental and pregnancy rules within MFAs. In a patriarchal society, women, who usually play the "caregiver" role and carry an unequal share of family and child responsibilities, try to balance their professional and personal lives. However, masculinized rules that do not consider these "responsibilities" make the situation worse for women. More precisely, family-unfriendly rules which do not take into account issues such as 'dependent husbands', childcare, pregnancy and do not provide flexible working hours or equal parental leaves affect women's diplomatic career more negatively than that of men. While some of these rules avoid women's advancement in MFAs, the others add insult to injury for females who serve abroad. Firstly, there is not parental leave for men in most

countries, which leads women to quit or take a break from their careers for a long time (Conley Tyler et al. 2014). Secondly, masculinized rules such as lack of paid leaves after miscarriage, a requirement for women to give birth in the country of the duty or pressure for returning to work immediately after birth also prevent women to advance in this field (Sjolander 2005). Finally, the lack of rules which consider spouse's career or children's education and future has also been an obstacle for women in international affairs (Linse 2004).

### *Gendered Norms within Institutions*

Moreover, although Lowndes (2019) has not touched the issue of gendered norms within the institution exhaustively, this section will include a discussion of gendered norms as one of the significant factors which affect women's diplomatic career. As Katzenstein (1996; p.5) has stated, *norms* are "collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity". More precisely, norms are expectations that determine how people should behave and what they can or cannot do in certain situations. They are either imposed externally through rewarding and punishment practices or intentionally interiorized by individuals (Sofroniou 2013).

In turn, "gender norms are social norms that relate specially to gender differences" (Marcus et al. 2015; p.4). More precisely, gender norms, as social expectations and informal rules, define expected behaviours based on gender (Marcus et al. 2015). These norms are mainly imposed, spread and preserved by social agents such as family, teachers, friends, and media (Mahalik et al. 2005). According to Lytton and Romney (1991), children start to realize gender roles at the age of five. Gender-based parenting, clothes, toys, or games by families, media coverages on the theme of gender differences, and gendered roles performed by wo/men around children result in creating a gender schema from an early age (Blakemore 2003). Later, these norms enable grown individuals to avoid physical and psychological troubles on the ground of social confirmation by following given behavioural forms shaped in conformity with age, status, job and position concepts (Bem 1981). However, since gender norms are shaped based on shared beliefs and social practices, they can vary socially and contextually. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the majority of gender norms have not been studied in the context of numerous fields and countries. Thus, this part of the thesis will discuss a number of gender norms that function within MFAs as an overlooked set of factors behind women's underrepresentation in international affairs.

Women in international affairs experience numerous socially conducted gendered norms and stereotypes in their workplaces, such as norms on occupations, physical mobility, interaction, alcohol, etc. For instance, norms about gender and leadership aptitude in international affairs may affect the entry and career paths of men and women. Historically, societal actors ranging from socio-biologists to politicians have argued that men are fitter for leadership positions on the ground of alleged biological features, like aggressiveness or greater interest in politics and war. Contrarily, women have been considered more suitable for subordinate positions because of traits like weakness, emotionality or timidity (McGlen and Sarkees 1993; p.28). As a result, women have stayed out of one of the main "male" fields, international affairs, with or without their own intention for a long time. Although these stereotypes and norms are theoretically outdated nowadays, women still mainly perform "ideal female positions" like administrative staff in MFAs. Moreover, as discussed above, they are usually excluded from overseas assignments in politically "important", less secure or religious countries because of these gendered norms and stereotypes (Bashkevin 2018, Flowers 2018, McCarthy 2014, Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum 2018, Towns and Niklasson 2017).

Another collection of gender norms that play an important role in the low participation of women in international affairs is *norms about women's and men's physical mobility*. Although physical mobility sounds like a neutral practice, it is not gender-neutral in some societies. In other words, while men can easily travel or relocate for their career, women may not have this opportunity on the ground of gender norms. As a result, because of these old-fashioned norms, like "Women could not travel alone!", "It is inappropriate for women to stay alone at the hotel!", "You cannot leave the family house until you get married", or "What people will think when they know you live abroad alone!" (Johnson 2016, Heyat 2006, UNDP 2007), women may be dissuaded or excluded from overseas assignments or international events (Conley Tyler et al. 2014) and lose their opportunity for advancement in this field.

On the other hand, *gender norms about the appropriateness of men and women mixing outside the household* not only disable women to travel or relocate but also to build a diplomatic career within MFAs. In contexts where women are seen as a dependent or second sex, people may perceive them as "decent human being" or "honour of the family" who should stay away from other men. In such contexts, it is not acceptable for women to be involved in activities with stranger men, especially at night. The case gets more difficult when the woman is engaged or married. Thus, norms such as "Decent women must stay away from other men", "My wife

cannot have dinner with other men!", "Women could not travel with other men!", or "There could not be friendship between stranger man and woman!" (Jayachandran 2020, UNDP 2007), limit interaction between women and men in their workplaces or outside, avoid women to gain network and advance in this field.

Further, *gender norms about women, men and alcohol* make the situation more difficult for females. Although alcohol, as one of the common beverages, is served in most diplomatic gatherings, the idea of drinking woman is unacceptable in many societies. While this condition is sometimes related to religious beliefs, the main reasons behind it are usually gender norms (Dalkılıç 2020, PATRÓ-HERNÁNDEZ et al. 2020, Vatandash 2007). Thus, the perceptions as "Women should not drink", "Women are not allowed to drink", "Alcohol is not feminine" or "Drinking alcohol is male practice", make women not participate in or get an invitation for alcohol-serving diplomatic gatherings.

To sum up, firstly, this chapter has explained the possible causes of women's underrepresentation problem from the institutional perspective in the context of Acker's (1990), Lowndes's (2019) and McGlen and Sarkees's (1993) framework. Thus, it has been clear that institutional factors based on "ecological context" (McGlen and Sarkees 1993), "a division of labour"(Acker 1990), "gendered rules"(Lowndes 2019), and "gendered norms" – factors that have reciprocal influence – exert an important impact on the low representation of women in foreign affairs. The theoretical discussion is summarized in an analytical table (see below).

### 3.3. Table 1: Studying MFAs as Gendered Organizations – Analytical Framework

<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<i>Institutional Sex Ratio</i>	What are the sex ratios in the MFA over time? Do we see evidence of glass ceilings and role encapsulations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % men and women in the organization</li> <li>• Glass Ceiling (Invisible barrier)</li> <li>• Role Encapsulation (forcing to play gender-stereotyped roles)</li> </ul>
<i>Hierarchy and Division of Labour</i>	Where are men and women located in the formal organization of the MFA, hierarchically and in terms of divisions of labour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hierarchy: % men and women in top positions</li> <li>• Functional Differentiation (thematic and spatial): Overrepresentation of women in some offices, underrepresentation in others</li> </ul>
<i>Gendered Rules</i>	Are there different rules for men and women in the diplomatic career? Do “neutral” rules seem to have differential gendered impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal rules for men and women</li> <li>• Rules with differential gendered impact</li> </ul>
<i>Gendered Norms</i>	What are the gendered norms that may have effects on men’s and women’s diplomatic career?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical mobility away from the home</li> <li>• male/female social mixing</li> <li>• alcohol</li> </ul>

In the following chapter, after setting the research aim and questions of the thesis, the research design and methods for conducting this study will be presented.

## 4. Specified Research Aim and Questions

The main aim of this thesis is to *examine the Azerbaijani MFA as a gendered institution*. More specifically, the thesis asks:

1. What are the sex ratios in the Azerbaijani MFA (preferably over time)? Are women a “token” minority in the MFA? If so, are there indications of glass ceilings and role encapsulations that scholars claim are related to token status?
2. Where are men and women located in the formal organization of the MFA, hierarchically and in terms of divisions of labour?
3. Are there different rules for men and women in the Azerbaijani diplomatic career? Do seemingly “neutral” rules seem to have differential gendered impact?
4. What are the gendered norms on the appropriateness of (a) physical mobility away from the home; (b) male/female social mixing, and (c) working in contexts where alcohol is regularly consumed?

## 5. Research Design and Method: A Descriptive Qualitative Analysis of a Single Case, Relying on Interviews and Institutional Documents

This chapter will describe the selected design, data and methods that have been used to conduct the analysis and answer the questions. The thesis has employed a single case study design and it relies on a combination of official documents and semi-structured qualitative interviews to analyse the problem of the underrepresentation of Azerbaijani women in international affairs. The section will start with the presentation of the research design, then present and explain the choice of data and analysis methods.

### 5.1. A Qualitative Single Case Study

The research design that has been used in this thesis is a qualitative single case study, with the Azerbaijani MFA as a single case of a non-Western MFA of a less powerful state. According to Lawrence (2014), a qualitative case study is an in-depth examination of a single case in terms of many features within a certain period. In the case of this thesis, MFA Azerbaijan is the main diplomatic institutional structure in the country which could influence Azerbaijani women's career in foreign affairs from an institutional perspective. Therefore, this structure is seen as one case of an institution that affects women's underrepresentation in international affairs.

There are various reasons behind the selection of a single qualitative case study as a research design in this thesis. The most important reason is that the research has been conducted on the "bounded" context of real-life (Huberman & Miles 1994; p.25), and the best qualitative research design is a "case study" for investigating this context in-depth and present it adequately and accurately. In this respect, the "bounded" context of the thesis is as follows: to study a limited area (Azerbaijan MFA), a limited group (Azerbaijani women) and a limited situation (women's underrepresentation in international affairs). Moreover, a case study enables the author to employ more than one data collection method and to achieve a rich and mutually confirming data variety (Yıldırım et al. 2013). Additionally, this qualitative design is one of the most options for carrying out a descriptive study. It is also worth highlighting that most of the previous scholarship on the topic of women's underrepresentation in international affairs have mainly relied on either a case study or comparative case study.

As mentioned above, the most important diplomatic institution in Azerbaijan is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other organizations in this field, such as embassies or foreign services, are usually functioning under its control. Therefore, the Azerbaijani MFA is the most suitable diplomatic organization for analysing Azerbaijani women's underrepresentation in international affairs from an institutional perspective. The author has mainly focused on the current situation within the institution. However, if relevant documents were available, the thesis would also include a comparative germane discussion about the past and present structure and culture of MFA Azerbaijan.

Although each institution may have a unique culture and environment, parts of the structure of most MFAs are similar on the ground of internationally standardized formal rules, hierarchy, etc. Therefore, the case of MFA Azerbaijan and its approach to women would be generalized in this thesis to encompass other similar states. The degree of generalizability of results from the MFA Azerbaijan depends on the social and historical background of other countries. There are various states which carry similar traits with Azerbaijan on this topic, such as post-Soviet countries, Turkish states, etc. Nevertheless, a group of variables, like economic situation, levels of democracy, or development, might also affect the domestic context of gender equality and other women related issues. Thus, the results of this case would only be generalized to states which experience a similar background on the basis of the general and institutional status of women, women's rights, gender justice and equality.

## 5.2. Data and Methods for Gathering Data: Documents and Interviews

### 5.2.1 Documents Analysis

Answers to some of the first three research questions (about sex ratios, gendered hierarchies and divisions of labour, and formal rules) are best responded with reference to MFA documents. More precisely, these primary resources include official records, documents, laws and regulations about the MFA and its structure that were published between 1991 and 2021. The reason for this time period is that MFA Azerbaijan was established in 1991 when Azerbaijan declared its independence from the USSR.

A part of the primary resources has been obtained from the official webpage of MFA Azerbaijan. Then, the author has contacted MFA Azerbaijan through various channels and personal network. However, I have been informed that it is impossible to access these

documents since they are perceived as confidential data and cannot be shared with others. Thus, the thesis could not obtain any document from MFA directly and has employed only publicly available documents. Finally, keywords and phrases such as "MFA Azerbaijan", "the structure of MFA Azerbaijan", "gender and Azerbaijan MFA", "law and regulations regarding MFA Azerbaijan", etc. have been used for finding relevant materials. Only materials that provide data on the employed theoretical concepts is useful for the aim of this thesis. Therefore, since there is a possibility that the number of the results would be inordinate, the "intensive pre-test" method by Wiesner et al. (2017) has been employed. It has helped both to filter unnecessary documents and to define any new data (Wiesner et al., 2017). Additionally, the thesis would also include available documents regarding the MFA of Azerbaijan SSR. However, the author could not find many sufficient historical sources on this topic. Further, since the historical records are mainly in Russian, most of the current official documents are published in Azerbaijani, and the author speaks both languages, besides English, all relevant documents in Azerbaijani and Russian have been used in this research.

### 5.2.2 Qualitative Informant Interviewing Method

Not all of the research questions can be answered with institutional documents alone. More than likely, some data on e.g. sex ratios and gendered hierarchies and divisions of labor may have to be retrieved through interviews with the MFA employees in the Human Resource / Personnel and the other sections. What is more, interviews are an efficient way to get a sense of the gender norms operative in the MFA of Azerbaijan. There are two basic kinds of interviews: (1) a respondent type, which takes the interviewee's worldview and ideas as the object of analysis, enabling the researcher to learn more about people's opinions and feelings on a particular activity or event (Allen 2017); and (2) an informant type, which aims to get insights and facts from the interviewee on a particular phenomenon. In informant interviews, "respondents are likely to distance themselves from their own personal views and make impersonal observations of the social reality" (Sinha 2014; p.1). One way to answer questions about gender norms in the MFA could be to conduct a larger number of respondent interviews (or an even larger survey). However, since the thesis aims to answer several different questions about various aspects of the Azerbaijani MFA, I have used informant interviews, treating my interviewees as experts and asking centrally placed interviewees with good insight into the workings on the MFA what the gender norms of the institution area.

As Stewart and Cash (1985; p.7) have stated, a qualitative interview is "a mutual and interactive communication process, based on question and answer for a pre-defined serious purpose". Accordingly, this thesis has employed a qualitative interviewing method for conducting the research on the topic of women's low participation in foreign affairs in Azerbaijan. Compared to other methods, qualitative interviewing provides researchers with control over the environment, flexibility, response rate, completeness, and non-verbal behaviour observation (Bailey 2008). Other alternatives include more ethnographic methods or quantitative survey methods. Ethnographic methods of participant observation or "shadowing," are not possible during the Covid-19 pandemic (and they would have been very expensive anyhow). A survey asking Azerbaijani MFA employees to answer a number of standardized questions would have been too risky given the short time frame of a Master's thesis, as diplomats are notoriously unwilling to participate in surveys.

As mentioned above, the research has employed semi-structured qualitative interview method. According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019; p.1), this interview type is "a dialogue between researcher and participant, guided by a flexible interview protocol and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes, and comments." It avoids wandering off the interview subject while helping the author to determine the significant points that arise during the interviewing process (Berg 2004). Besides, this interview method increases the level of reliability by enabling the author to utilize both the same type of questions in each interview and additional questions for avoiding misunderstanding. Thus, semi-structured interviews have allowed analysing participants' observations on the topic of women's underrepresentation in international affairs by collecting open-ended data.

As a starting point, about six informant interviews were carried out. Yet, the scope heavily depended on the outcomes that would be acquired at the end. More precisely, the number of participants could be increased if the obtained results of the interviews would not satisfy the author. Furthermore, as planned, the qualitative interviews were held from about the middle of April 2021 till the end of the month only in Gothenburg due to the coronavirus situation. Interviews of former MFA Azerbaijan employees who live in Gothenburg were carried out in person at different locations, like cafes or on campus, that were suitable for both interviewees and the author by following pandemic regulations. The remaining interviews took place by using videotelephony software programs like Zoom or Skype. This condition has provided participants with time and location flexibility which might lead to more comfortable

environment and process. The interviews were held in English and Azerbaijani depending on the desire of the participants.

Further, semi-structured interviews started with basic introductory questions regarding participants' current occupations and employment history in MFA Azerbaijan. Interviewees had been informed about the voluntariness possibility of the questions in advance. Additionally, if a participant did not feel comfortable, leading questions on sensitive issues were not terminated. These practices have also secured validity of the thesis by decreasing the rate of dishonest responses. During the interview process, the Voice Memos app of the IOS mobile operating system were used with the participants' consent, and then, obtained interview records were transferred to the computer. As this recording app has slowdown and acceleration features, it could be possible to listen and write down incomprehensible expressions.

Thus, the methodological discussion on how the data have been gathered for different concepts is summarized in an analytical table (see below).

<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data and Method</b>
<i>Institutional Sex Ratio</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. % men and women in the organization</li> <li>2. Glass Ceiling</li> <li>3. Role Encapsulation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Document Analysis and Informant Interviews</li> <li>2. Informant Interviews</li> <li>3. Informant Interviews</li> </ol>
<i>Hierarchy and Division of Labour</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hierarchy: % men and women in top positions</li> <li>2. Functional Differentiation (thematic and spatial)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Document Analysis and Informant Interviews</li> <li>2. Informant Interviews</li> </ol>
<i>Gendered Rules</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formal rules for men and women</li> <li>2. Rules with differential gendered impact</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Document Analysis and Informant Interviews</li> <li>2. Document Analysis and Informant Interviews</li> </ol>

<i>Gendered Norms</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. physical mobility away from the home</li> <li>2. male/female social mixing</li> <li>3. alcohol</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Informant Interviews</li> <li>2. Informant Interviews</li> <li>3. Informant Interviews</li> </ol>
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**Table 2. Methodological Tool - Gathering Data: Document Analysis and Informant Interviews**

**5.2.3. Case Selection for Qualitative Interviews**

The cases of the informant interviews are Azerbaijani people who are serving or have worked in MFA Azerbaijan, since no one can define institutional culture of MFA better than them. Although the thesis focuses on women's problem in international affairs, this study has included two male and four female participants in order to minimize biased results. More precisely, while women are the main objects of the research problem, men can also provide accurate information as outsider observers. Therefore, it is important to know and study the perspectives of both sides.

As explained in the Qualitative Informant Interviewing Method section, six people from the Azerbaijani MFA have been interviewed for this thesis. For analysing institutional level factors more accurately, employees of both HR section and other departments would be participants of this research. On the one hand, HR personnel would help to collect data for research questions on sex ratios, gendered hierarchies and divisions of labour, gendered rules. In turn, staff of other departments would also be included in this research for gathering data on gendered norms, formal rules, etc. However, since Azerbaijani people, especially government workers, are not so eager to join this kind of studies, the employees of the Human Resources department have rejected to participate in this study on the ground of personal reasons. While the staff of other departments could provide sufficient data on most of the examining factors, former employees with a minimum of one year of work experience in MFA Azerbaijan have also been participants in this research since they would provide more accurate outcomes as less loyal interviewees to the institution.

**5.2.4 Sampling Method**

At the beginning point, the participants of the research have been determined based on my personal network. Afterwards, the Snowball Sampling method has been performed for the rest

of the participants. In this method, after conducting initial interviews, the author asks participants for suggesting relevant people with a similar trait of expertise. As a result, the sample group forms and broadens like a rolling snowball in this way. Further, Snowball sampling, which is also known as chain-referral sampling, is one of the non-probability sampling techniques. It means that the sample of the research will not represent the whole population (Etikan et al. 2016).

There are more than enough people in the author's network who are capable of meeting the basic requirements of the study like nationality and occupation. However, not all of them would be interested in participating in this research since the topic is a delicate issue. For this reason, the snowball sampling method has assisted access adequate people with a genuine willingness in a little while. Additionally, since the "referrals are obtained from a primary data source" (Bhat 2018), this method has also provided a cost-effectiveness benefit. Furthermore, the invitation by friends and acquaintances has motivated and encouraged people to participate in this study.

On the other hand, the snowball method can produce a margin of error and sampling bias since respondents invite new participants that they know and might have similar characteristics (Sharma 2017). Nevertheless, the author has tried to prevent this issue during the participant evaluation process. Moreover, I have also chosen initial interviewees from different network and backgrounds.

### 5.3. Methods for Analysing Data

For analysing the acquired information, the Content Analysis technique has been employed. Firstly, certain themes and categories have been determined and established. Later, relevant words and phrases have been selected, labelled and placed in established categories. As Kvale (2007) states, these "categories can be developed in advance, or they can arise ad hoc during the analysis". In other words, scholars could specify them in accordance with either interview results (inductive) or theory(deductive). This study is deductive, as the author has determined the relevant categories for the data analysis in advance on the bases of previous scholarship (see Analytical Framework).

There is one main theme, MFA Azerbaijan as a gendered institution, four subthemes, "Institutional Sex Ratio" (McGlen and Sarkees 1993), "Hierarchy and Division of Labour", (Acker 1990), "Institutional Rules" (Lowndes 2019) and "Gender Norms", ten categories and 20 subcategories based on institutionalist framework. Although these former studies have focused on the various cases, established categories have helped to identify the causes of women's underrepresentation in international affairs from an institutional perspective in Azerbaijan too.

While the "Institutional Sex Ratio" explores troubles (glass ceiling and role encapsulation) that Azerbaijani women experience in their workplace on the ground of sex ratio within MFA Azerbaijan, "Hierarchy and Division of Labour" examines gendered divisions of labor and hierarchy in the Azerbaijani MFA. In turn, "Institutional Rules", includes discussion of formal gendered rules and rules with gendered effect which lead to women's underrepresentation in foreign affairs in Azerbaijan. Lastly, "Gender Norms" highlights gendered social norm on physical mobility, social mixing and alcohol which wreck women's current diplomatic career in Azerbaijan.

In sum, after interviewing participants and reading the records over and over again for ensuring validity and reliability, the codes based on relevant words and phrases have been determined and placed into defined categories. Any specific application or website has not been employed for the coding and analysing process. Instead, the author used some features of Microsoft Office Word and Notability software applications.

#### 5.4. Ethical Considerations

When the topic is qualitative research, ethics is one of the fundamental principles that should be considered. There are various ethical issues that might arise in this thesis. Conducting semi-structured interviews can evoke discussion on two crucial ethical issues. Initially, even though employees of MFA Azerbaijan have shared their personal observations and experiences on the topic of women's underrepresentation in foreign affairs, the given data is internal information within the organization. As a result, the thesis includes internal, even private, data of governmental organizations without institutional consent. Secondly, the informants have been notified that their personal data will be used anonymously, kept confidentially and not revealed.

Yet, it is not possible to guarantee interviewees' data confidentiality absolutely since exact examples (certain words or phrases) provided by participants have been used in the thesis.

Moreover, following ethical principles, the participants have been informed of all the necessary information beforehand, including the impulse behind the thesis. Besides, they knew everything regarding their rights, and opportunities such as the possibility of refusing to respond to certain inquiries that sensitive or personal for them or leaving the interview when they feel uncomfortable.

## 6. Result and Analysis: Institutional Gender Patterns in MFA Azerbaijan

This section of the thesis will present and discuss the findings of the Informant Interviews and Institutional Documents. The chapter will consist of four main sections according to the analytical framework approach (see Table 1) and the specified research questions (see Chapter 4). While the first part will discuss the sex ratio in MFA Azerbaijan and the indications of glass ceilings and role encapsulations, the second one will include the discussion of hierarchy and divisions of labour in this institution. In the third part, the analysis of institutional rules and their gendered impacts will be conducted. The last part will explain gendered norms within MFA Azerbaijan concerning physical mobility, social mixing and alcohol.

### 6.1. MFA Azerbaijan

As discussed above, MFA Azerbaijan was re-established as a successor of MFA Azerbaijan SSR in 1991, after the declaration of independence. As the main diplomatic institution that designs and implements Azerbaijani foreign policy, it has employed a complex Cabinet-level structure in that year (MFA 2021). More precisely, the institution contains a Minister and five Deputy Ministers who are appointed by the President of the country according to the Constitution of Azerbaijan. The remaining MFA staff are recruited based on the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which also regulates and guards labour rights in the country. Since there is publicly available data on neither these recruitment rules and policies nor the MFA staff, institutional structure and culture, the author has obtained the relevant data through informant interviews.

According to the MFA employees, there are three recruitment methods in MFA Azerbaijan, (1) recommendation, (2) "Diplomatic Volunteers" program, and (3) internship. Firstly, people can join MFA as an intern and apply for vacant positions after completing the internship successfully. Secondly, MFA receives applications by current employees' recommendation. Additionally, students can join the Diplomatic Volunteers program and establish a network for future openings. After a careful application review, an internal commission is established and administers the written and oral exam if the applicant meets the requirements for the designated position. Further, like the Minister and Deputy Ministers, the Ambassadors are also appointed by the President of the country. However, Embassy staff is also recruited by announcing vacant

positions with particular requirements. Interested MFA employees can apply for the openings and take diplomatic civil service exam if they meet the job requirements.

According to MFA Azerbaijan (2021), Azerbaijan currently has 59 embassies, eight consulate generals, five representatives at international organizations, 14 honorary consulates, eight diplomatic offices and two trade representations. Additionally, MFA Azerbaijan collaborates with numerous international and regional organizations such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Council of Europe, Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, etc.

## 6.2. Institutional Sex Ratio

To begin with, the information regarding sex ratio of the Azerbaijani MFA, as certain documents, is also perceived as confidential data, which cannot be shared with outsiders. Therefore, it has not been mentioned in any document related to MFA Azerbaijan or its staff. Besides, relevant organizations, like the State Statistics Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic, Civil Service Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, also do not possess statistical data on this issue. Even the MFA employees are not aware of the exact ratio, or they have not wanted to share it. As a result, the given data which has been obtained through only informant interviews are estimated numbers.

According to this obtained data by interviews, the estimated sex ratio in MFA Azerbaijan is around 30% female - 70% male. This proportion categorizes MFA Azerbaijan under McGlen and Sarkees's (1993) "tilted organization" concept. Since McGlen and Sarkees's (1993) have not explained the concept in detail, it is ambiguous to define the role of women as "token" in this institution. However, the ratio indicates that the number of male employees is higher than women who obviously belong to the minority group while men occupy a dominant position in MFA Azerbaijan.

On the other hand, the sex ratio of the Azerbaijani embassies has brought a more concrete conclusion regarding the role of women in MFA Azerbaijan. As mentioned above, Azerbaijan has 59 embassies around the world. Although not all of these embassies have provided information about their staff, the author could gather data on 47 embassy staffs through their websites and diplomatic lists (see Appendix 6). As a result, 47 Azerbaijani embassies have 318

employees (281 male and 37 female). According to these number, the sex ratio of the Azerbaijani embassies is 88:12, and this number categorizes MFA Azerbaijan under McGlen and Sarkees's (1993) "sex-skewed organization" concept in which women play a "token" role. Thus, although the approximate sex ratio of MFA Azerbaijan could not produce concrete outcomes, the sex ratio of Azerbaijani embassies, as its mission abroad, has defined MFA Azerbaijan as a "sex-skewed organization" and the role of women as a "token" minority and men as a "dominant" group. That is to say that these dominants can build boundaries/glass ceiling between women and top executive posts (McGlen and Sarkees 2001) and apply role encapsulation in MFA Azerbaijan.

### 6.2.1. Glass Ceiling

According to the interview findings, it is apparent that women as "token" minority in MFA Azerbaijan also face the "glass ceiling" perception (see chapter 3). In general, the career advancement structure of MFA Azerbaijan is merit-based. It means that after a certain period (3-4 years), you have a right to get a promotion with the consent of the head of the department. However, although Department Heads should evaluate their employees based on the performance and skills according to Labour Code (Article 12), informants have reported that gender frequently plays an important role in this process. Therefore, it is "harder for women to get a promotion" in MFA Azerbaijan on the ground of various reasons like social norms, gender stereotypes or sexism (Interviewee 3). For example, one of the former MFA employee has stated:

"Men might be preferred for higher positions due to marriage or other related problems. Since fulfilling women's vacant position on the ground of childbearing or other family issues will be difficult in future, men could be promoted to higher positions." (Interviewee 4)

While all of the informants have underlined that there is no gendered career advancement law and it is illegal to discriminate in this context, they have also highlighted existing glass ceiling for women on the ground of gender segregation like "men were considered more suitable for politics related positions" (Interviewee 5) or social norms like "men are more productive than women" (Interviewee 3). On the other hand, few interviewees have stated that there is not any discrimination in the advancement process, and even, one of them has claimed that it is easier for women to get a promotion:

"Contrary to what is believed, women get promotion more easily than men. Why? Because women are more responsible than men in their job; therefore, they are regarded as more reliable employees." (Interviewee 2)

In sum, despite the few contrary arguments, the findings of the content analysis, together with the imprecise and subjective career advancement policy, which is under the heel of others (Department Heads), indicate that the promotion system of MFA Azerbaijan is open to malfeasance. Therefore, it is not quite a surprise that women in MFA Azerbaijan as "tokens", face glass ceiling perception in their diplomatic career path. However, the informants have also addressed that MFA Azerbaijan changes its career advancement structure to a merit-based exam system, which may break the "glass ceiling" in the institution in future.

### 6.2.2. Role Encapsulation

Besides the "glass ceiling", another important perception that women as "tokens" face in foreign affairs is "role encapsulation", which means assimilation to either the stereotypical feminine or masculine concept. According to interview findings, women in MFA Azerbaijan neither emphasize their femininity nor employ the "diplomat- first – woman next" concept which emphasizing masculinity (see Neumann 2008). In other words, they act as they are since "acting masculine" is not an appreciated trait for women in Azerbaijani society and "acting stereotypical feminine" does not bring any professional benefit in MFA Azerbaijan. However, only one participant has mentioned:

“When women are promoted, they are sometimes pushed to act like men. In other words, they are trying to accommodate others’ pace. Because they think that otherwise, it will be difficult to deal with others. Certainly, it is their own choice, and not everyone follows the same way.” (Interviewee 1)

Further, although all participants have highlighted that there is not any advantage of "acting feminine", one informant has mentioned:

“Female employees in MFA Azerbaijan are usually respected more due to social norms. All employees, regardless of position, cavalier and treat them with great respect.” (Interviewee 5)

However, she has continued that stated "respect" does not mean professional benefit, it is just a social norm. Hence, despite some different comments, the findings indicate that women in MFA Azerbaijan do not adopt "role encapsulation" perception since employing this concept does not affect their professional career positively or negatively.

### 6.3. Hierarchy and Division of Labour

#### 6.3.1. Hierarchy

As explained above, the thesis also aims to study the problem of gender hierarchy in MFA Azerbaijan. According to the findings of the content analysis on hierarchy and division of labour subtheme (See Appendix 3), there is a rigid gendered hierarchy in MFA Azerbaijan. Approximately all of the informants have stated that higher positions are mainly occupied by male employees, and few women hold leading positions in MFA Azerbaijan. Even, one of the participants (Interviewee 5) has claimed that the Section Managers of male Department Heads are usually also men.

Moreover, the results of document analysis also confirm the findings of the informant interviews. As mentioned above, there is not enough publicly available information regarding the MFA staff. However, some documents, found in official website of MFA Azerbaijan, about Azerbaijani Embassies, Deputy Ministers, and Azerbaijani Embassy Staffs in different countries, could provide sufficient data to draw a conclusion that there is a gendered hierarchy in MFA Azerbaijan. According to these documents, MFA Azerbaijan has not had any female Foreign Minister and currently has five out of five male Deputy Ministers (MFA Azerbaijan, 2021).

Moreover, there are only two female ambassadors from Azerbaijan, Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Poland and Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Ukraine and 56 male ambassadors (see Appendix 6). Further, as mentioned above, Azerbaijan has eight consulate generals and seven of them are administered by male Consul Generals (see Appendix 7). Besides, all of the representatives at international organizations (see Appendix 8) and 12 of honorary consuls (see Appendix 9) are also male. Further, seven of the diplomatic offices are also administered by male diplomats (see Appendix 10). Thus, all these findings could conclude that there is a rigid gendered hierarchy in the Azerbaijani MFA.

### 6.3.2. Task Division

According to findings of the informant interviews, the task division in MFA Azerbaijan is also gendered on the ground of functional differentiation. Most of the informants have observed two kinds of gendered task division: (1) interdepartmental and (2) in-departmental. Firstly, interview results indicate that women in MFA Azerbaijan are underrepresented in "hard" fields such as Regional Security, International Security, Finance departments since they are usually perceived as "underqualified for these departments" (Interviewee 5). On the other hand, women are usually active in departments such as Consular, Human Resources, State Protocol which deal with "basic administrative" tasks (Interviewee 3).

Moreover, some interview participants have also highlighted gendered task division within the same department. According to their responds, there are two types of gender discrimination based on allocation of tasks: (1) "positive " and (2) "negative". On the one hand, women are considered underqualified for executive tasks or confidential assignments. Therefore, usually, men carry out those kinds of tasks in MFA Azerbaijan. On the other hand, female employees are not also assigned for night shifts or duties in insecure regions. However, unlike the first example, it is appreciated as a "courtesy" for women in MFA Azerbaijan. Even though there is not a formal rule on this topic, women usually do not carry out this type of tasks unless they personally ask for it. It is considered reasonable task allocation by both sexes on the ground of Azerbaijani culture, which places women's security before men's. Hence, regardless of various gendered "courtesy" practices, there is apparent gendered task allocation in MFA Azerbaijan.

## 6.4. Institutional Rules

### 6.4.1. Gendered Rules

Unlike other categories, the findings of both informant interviews and document analysis have demonstrated that the gendered formal rules concept is not applicable for MFA Azerbaijan. Firstly, all of the informants have unanimously claimed that there are not any different formal rules for men and women in MFA Azerbaijan. According to the prior scholarship, the most gendered rules in MFAs usually include recruitment rules that keep women away from a diplomatic career. Nevertheless, as discussed above, informants have addressed three recruitment methods in MFA Azerbaijan, recommendation, "Diplomatic Volunteers" program, and internship, and none of these methods apply different rules on the basis of gender. Furthermore, the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as the most important document

on this topic, multiple times have underlined that discrimination on the basis of sex or gender is constitutionally restricted.

"During hiring or a change in or termination of employment no discrimination among employees shall be permitted on the basis of citizenship, sex, race, nationality, language, place of residence, economic standing, social origin, age, family circumstances, religion, political views, affiliation with trade unions or other public associations, professional standing, beliefs, or other factors unrelated to the professional qualifications, job performance, or professional skills of the employees....." (Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Article 16.1)

Additionally, the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic has also prohibited any kind of discrimination in all fields including foreign affairs on the basis of sex.

"Men and women possess equal rights and freedoms. The State shall guarantee the equality of rights and freedoms to everyone, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, language, sex, origin ..... Restrictions of rights and freedoms on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, language, sex, origin ..... are prohibited" (The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan Article 25.2 and 25.3)

#### 6.4.2. Rules with Gendered Effects

Contrary to the "Gendered Rules", the interview findings of this category look so uncertain since the results of content analysis are so similar for both subcategories. More precisely, while some rules have important gendered effects, the others try to soften these effects and support women in foreign affairs. As seen in Appendix 4 (see below), most of the rules have non-gendered effects in MFA Azerbaijan. However, all informants have addressed the lack of paternity leave which is only 14 days, paid leaves after miscarriage, and paid social leave for childcare. Additionally, while some participants have addressed that they have observed different interview treatments on the basis of sex, most of them have asserted the contrary.

On the other hand, the informants have underlined many formal and informal rules in MFA Azerbaijan aim to reduce gendered effects, especially for pregnant and married women. For example, there are family-friendly rules like flexible working hours for pregnant women and women with child, assistance for employees with a sick child, covering child birth expenses,

no restrictions for pregnant employees who work abroad, financial, educational and spouse's career support for employees who work abroad, breaks for feeding of a child, additional vacations for women with child, etc.

In turn, document analysis has provided only data for rules with non-gendered effects. In other words, none of the rules mentioned in the Labour Code produce gendered effects for female MFA employees. On the contrary, most of them are designed to support them in the workplace and improve their working conditions (Article 31.2.h) Even, it is highlighted that these concessions, privileges and additional protection for women will not be considered as discrimination (Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Article 16.2). Further, there are family-friendly rules which prohibit probationary period, workplace certification, employment contracts termination, and night work for pregnant women, women with a child under the age of three, even single fathers raising a child. Besides, there is a special chapter (Chapter 37) that defends women's labour rights and guarantees their implementation. Hence, although there are some rules with gendered effects, this thesis could conclude that most of the rules in MFA Azerbaijan do not produce gendered effects for female employees.

## 6.5. Gendered Norms

As discussed above, there are certain norms that affect Azerbaijani women in international affairs, and since they are not more common or allegedly universal, previous scholarship has not examined how these certain norms influence women's diplomatic career. Therefore, this thesis has studied three of these gendered standards of behaviour, physical mobility, social mixing, and participation in alcohol-serving environments. In general, all of the informants have mentioned that social norms obviously make their presence felt in MFA Azerbaijan; however, it is not on the extreme level. In other words, the existing social norms in MFA Azerbaijan do not significantly affect professional culture in the workplace.

### 6.5.1. Physical Mobility

According to interview findings, all of the employees are invited to both national and international events regardless of gender, and everyone usually participates in these events. Informants have reported that women were not invited to the international events at one time since they usually needed the permission of family or husband. When they wanted to participate in any international event, they could apply in person. Nevertheless, as the proverb goes, this

practice "has gone the way of the horse and carriage". Although invitation of all staff does not mean that everyone can participate in these events on the ground of personal reasons, physical mobility is normalizing for both genders in MFA Azerbaijan as a neutral practice.

### 6.5.2. Social Mixing

Unlike physical activity, gender norms about the appropriateness of men and women mixing outside the household affect not only female but also male employees. However, informants have stated that as physical activity, social mixing is also normalizing in MFA Azerbaijan, especially among youth. In other words, while the aged generation usually follows the traditional norms and does not mix, young employees are pretty friendly toward one another and usually socialize in the workplace and out of work. Although aged employees do not hold with this change, youth have already broken the chains and brought this culture to MFA Azerbaijan. For example, according to one of interview the participants:

"Everyone is very friendly among young people. Spending time with people from your department is totally normal. However, older could perceive "differently" the friendship of people from different department" (Interviewee 6).

### 6.5.3. Alcohol

Like the "Gendered Rules" category, findings regarding the gender norms on alcohol also have emerged concretely. In other words, all of the informants have stated all MFA employees are invited to the events in which alcohol is serving. Participation and consuming alcohol is also perceived as gender-neutral behaviour in MFA Azerbaijan. On the contrary, people who avoid alcohol on the ground of various reasons like religion or personal choice could be considered strangely in international events. However, they do not experience this kind of attitudes in local events.

Thus, Table 3 (shown below) summarizes the result of the informant interviews and documents analysis which have examined the Azerbaijani MFA as a gendered institution.

6.6. Table 3: Interview and Document Analysis - Summary of Results

<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Results</b>
<i>Institutional Sex Ratio</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. % men and women in the organization</li> <li>2. Glass Ceiling</li> <li>3. Role Encapsulation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Women as “token” minority in MFA Azerbaijan</li> <li>2. Existing glass ceiling on the ground of gender segregation and social norms</li> <li>3. Non-existent role encapsulation perception</li> </ol>
<i>Hierarchy and Division of Labour</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hierarchy: % men and women in top positions</li> <li>2. Functional Differentiation (thematic and spatial)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gendered hierarchy where men hold top positions</li> <li>2. Gendered interdepartmental and in-departmental task allocation</li> </ol>
<i>Gendered Rules</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formal rules for men and women</li> <li>2. Rules with differential gendered impact</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The same formal rules for men and women</li> <li>2. Rules which try to minimize gendered effects</li> </ol>
<i>Gendered Norms</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. physical mobility away from the home</li> <li>2. male/female social mixing</li> <li>3. alcohol</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gender-neutral physical mobility</li> <li>2. Gender-neutral social mixing within the new generation</li> <li>3. Gender-neutral alcohol consuming</li> </ol>

## 7. Conclusion: If Not Due to Institutional Factors, Then Why So Few Women in MFA Azerbaijan?

Despite the recognition of gender equality as one of the main human rights, ongoing efforts of various national and international organizations, extensive academic research and projects, the low status of women in various fields, including international affairs, continue its existence worldwide. As discussed above, international affairs, as one of the main masculinized fields, has started to evolve with the increasing number of women in the sector in recent years. Although these fundamental changes have taken over the research world, studies on the status of women in international affairs are still geographically quite limited. More precisely, the existing scholarship disregards non-Western countries, such as Azerbaijan, in which underrepresentation of women in diplomacy still endures. Therefore, this thesis has aimed to analyse the most important diplomatic organization in Azerbaijan, MFA Azerbaijan, as a gendered institution.

To address this research aim, the thesis has presented the analysis of MFA Azerbaijan as a gendered institution based upon theoretical factors from the previous scholarship on gendered institutions: institutional sex ratios, hierarchies and divisions of labour, gender rules and norms). By applying three sets of institutional factors, employing a single case study design, and performing content analysis of two types of data (official documents and qualitative interviews), the thesis has developed a descriptive study for examining the Azerbaijani MFA.

With regards to the first research question on institutional sex ratio, which includes "token" minority, "glass ceiling", and "role encapsulation perceptions" (see Chapter 4), MFA Azerbaijan is identified as a "sex-skewed organization" in which women carry the status of "token". Concerning this research question, the findings of informant interviews have concluded that there are indications of the glass ceiling; however, female employees of MFA Azerbaijan do not employ "role encapsulation" perception since it does not affect their diplomatic career. In turn, the thesis has brought to light that there is a rigid gendered hierarchy and allocation of tasks on the ground of social norms and gender stereotypes in MFA Azerbaijan.

Regarding the third research question on institutional rules (See Chapter 4), the above analysis has revealed that there are the same formal rules for men and women in the Azerbaijani

diplomatic career. Further, although there are some "neutral" rules with gendered effects, most of the MFA rules do not produce differential gendered impacts. Similarly, the empirical analysis of certain gendered norms has concluded that the appropriate standards of behaviours on physical mobility, social mixing, and alcohol are gender-neutral in MFA Azerbaijan.

It seems fairly clear from this analysis that MFA Azerbaijan is partly a gender-neutral institution since, among the discussed factor sets, women face only the glass ceiling, gendered hierarchy and task allocation problem in MFA Azerbaijan. This conclusion can be interpreted in two ways: either (1) MFA Azerbaijan does not discourage women in foreign affairs, or (2) MFA employees, especially women, are under an illusion and do not have situational awareness. If the first statement is valid, then future studies, which aim to analyse Azerbaijani women's underrepresentation in diplomacy, should focus on non-institutional forces and the supply side of the field.

Thus, firstly, this thesis has contributed to two distinct bodies of scholarship: (1) women's underrepresentation in foreign policy and (2) women/gender in MFAs. As mentioned above, there is not a study that reveals empirical data regarding the status of Azerbaijani women in international affairs. Therefore, the thesis, for the first time, has explained the status of Azerbaijani women in foreign affairs by analysing MFA Azerbaijan as a gendered institution. By doing so, it has also brought empirical data to the academic literature about a non-Western post-Soviet MFA. Additionally, even though existing scholarship has tried to put forth and analyse the most important reasons behind women's underrepresentation in diplomacy, scholars have mainly focused on more common or allegedly universal social norms. In other words, there is no study on how certain fundamental social norms, which are more prevalent in some national contexts than others, would help explain the status of women in foreign affairs. It implies that besides being the first study about Azerbaijan on this topic and presenting empirical data on gender patterns in its MFA, the thesis has also provided novel theoretical insights on what kinds of social norms might matter for the presence or absence of women in international affairs.

Moreover, real-life examples have indicated that developing countries like Azerbaijan could achieve advanced political, economic and social development by eliminating gender inequality in international affairs. It is obvious that the current situation in Azerbaijan is not as bright as many developed countries; however, the results of the thesis have shown that it is also not more

critical than many developing and undeveloped states. Therefore, there is still hope for the future of the country and its diplomacy. Thus, the problem of the glass ceiling, gendered hierarchy and task allocation on the ground of social norms and gender stereotypes would be gradually ironed out in the near future by supporting women's diplomatic career countrywide. However, the most formidable barrier on this topic is socio-cultural norms and values since it is unfeasible to change somebody's minds overnight. Hence, overcoming barriers that arise from gendered norms, gender stereotypes, occupational segregation, etc., will take a certain amount of time and effort. Nevertheless, considering that members of forthcoming generations will carry less biased gender views, victory is not that far. Hence, well-conceived rules, policies and projects, which support Azerbaijani women's diplomatic career, by the state and MFA itself would lead to exemplary and gender-neutral foreign affairs and equal society.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Informant Interview Questionnaire

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Are you working in MFA Azerbaijan? (WRITE THE RESPONSE BELOW)

[Empty text box for response to 1.1]

1.2 How many years are your working/ have you worked in MFA Azerbaijan? (WRITE THE RESPONSE BELOW)

[Empty text box for response to 1.2]

1.3 What is your current/former position? (WRITE THE RESPONSE BELOW)

[Empty text box for response to 1.3]

1.4 You are/have been a representative of .....: (READ THE RESPONSES BELOW AND CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. Human Resources Department
- 2. Law Department
- 3. Finance Department
- 4. Media Services Department
- 5. AR Social Development Department

6. Other (SPECIFY):

## 2. Institutional Sex Ratio

2.1 What is the sex ratio in the MFA now? And how has it changed over the time? (For HR)

2.2 How do MFA employees get a promotion? What are career development rules?

2.3 Is there anything in the promotion process that you think might be different for women and men?

2.4 Is it harder for women than men to get a promotion? If so, why? What about the top positions in the MFA? Why are there so few women there? (Please share your experience if you have any)

2.5 What do women in MFA Azerbaijan have to do to increase their chances for a promotion? Are there any advantages to “acting feminine” or being a woman? Do women behave exactly the same way as men to pursue their career? (Please share your experience if you have any)

### 3. Hierarchy and Division of Labour

3.1 What is the hierarchical order in MFA Azerbaijan? (For HR)

3.2 In which offices are women overrepresented and underrepresented?

3.3 How many (or ratio) women are serving in top positions? (for HR)

3.4 Which tasks are women mainly responsible for in MFA Azerbaijan? Which tasks are the men mainly responsible for?

#### 4. Gendered Rules

4.1 How do people come to join the MFA? What are the recruitment rules in MFA Azerbaijan?

4.2 Are these recruitment rules different for women and men? (For HR)

4.3 Have you noticed or heard of women and men being treated differently during the interview process? If so, in what ways?

4.4 What are parental leave rules in MFA Azerbaijan? Should we call it parental leave or maternity/paternity leave?

4.5 What are the rules for pregnant employees (who serve in Azerbaijan and abroad)?

4.6 Are women allowed to give birth in the country of the duty or they are allowed to return back to Azerbaijan?

4.7 Are there any rules regarding miscarriage? How this situation is managed?

[Redacted]

4.8 Are there family-friendly rules for parents? (e.g. flexible working hours, nanny or kindergarten service by the institution)

[Redacted]

4.9 Do employees who are appointed for overseas assignment get "family" support from the institution? (for spouse's career or children's education)

[Redacted]

## 5. Gendered Norms

5.1 Are social gendered norms noticeable in the culture/environment of MFA Azerbaijan?

5.2 How are norms about women's and men's physical mobility followed in MFA Azerbaijan? Are women dissuaded or excluded from overseas assignments or international events on the ground of these norms?

5.3 How male and female employees mix/interact within MFA Azerbaijan? Do social norms affect their interactions? Can they be friends, work or travel together?

5.4 How alcohol affect women's diplomatic career? Are women invited to the events where alcohol is serving? Do they participate in these events?

## Appendix 2: Content Analysis (Institutional Sex Ratio)

Main Theme	Subthemes	Categories	Subcategories	Codes
MFA Azerbaijan as Gendered Institution	Institutional Sex Ratio	Sex Ratio	Token Women	Kəskin fərq yoxdur, 30%- 70%, 60 % Male and 40% Female, gender bərabərsizliyi mövcuddur, daha çox kişi idi, 200 xanım, 300 dən yuxarı kişi, 328 employees, 281 male employees, 37 female employees, 88% -12%
			Dominant Women	
		Glass Ceiling	Existent (How?)	Təyin olunur, sosial normlar, qadınlar yuxarı vəzifəyə təyin edilmir, sosial normlar əngəldir, vəzifələr təyin olunurlar, harder for women to get promotion, misleading and untrue understanding, they are few, (fərq) qoyulurdu, kişilərə üstünlük verilə bilirdi, kişiləri qabağa çəkirdilər, az dəstəklənirdi, qoyulurdu, icazə verilmirdi;
			Non-existent (How?)	İmtahan vasitəsi ilə, (məsuliyyət) kifayət edir, fərq olmur, imtahan nəticələri, (vəzifəni) daha rahat alır, performances, relevant skills, eyni idi, ayrı seçkilik olmayıb, işin keyfiyyəti;
		Role Encapsulation	Existent (How?)	Kişi kimi davranmağa məcbur olurlar, ayaq uydurmağa çalışırlar, daha maskülen olurlar, kişi kimi davranırlar, bəzi qadın səfirlərimizdə;
			Non-existent (How?)	Həmişə şamil etmək olmaz, (bəziləri) feminem davranmağa davam edir, certain standards for everyone, would not make any difference, olduqları kimi davranırdılar, üstünlük göstərmirdi, xanım-xatın davranırdı, qadın kimi davranırdılar, qadınlara daha çox hörmət edilirdi, insanın özündən aslıdır, nə çox sərtlik olur nə çox kişilik;

### Appendix 3: Content Analysis (Hierarchy and Task Allocation)

Main Theme	Subthemes	Categories	Subcategories	Codes
MFA Azerbaijan as Gendered Institution	Hierarchy & Division of Labour	Hierarchy	Gendered (How?)	yuxarı vəzifələrdə daha çox kişilərdir, iki qadın səfirimiz, low numbers, more than 5, yuxarı vəzifələrdə daha çox kişilər, yüksək vəzifələrdə qadınlar çox deyildi, üst mövqedə kişilər, çox az idi, kişilər daha çoxdu, 70% - 30%, female desk officer, only two women, only two female ambassadors, five male Deputy Ministers, male Ministers, 56 male ambassadors, seven male and one female consulate generals, five male representatives, 12 males and 2 female honorary consuls, seven male diplomats
			Non-gendered (How?)	50-50%
		Task Division	Gendered (How?)	Qadınların tam qarşılaya bilməyəcəyinə inanılır, xarıcdəki vəzifələr üçün kişilərə seçilir, axşam gediləsi yerlər, səbr lazım olan işlər, çox qadın Konsulluq idarəsindədir, Maliyyədə (qadın) az olurdu, kağız işlərində, qərar vermə mexanizmlərində, Hərbi və ya Siyasətlə bağlı sahələrdə, basic administrative işlər, icra olunma və ya təsdiq, confidential information, Protokol, Regional təhlükəsizlik, kişilərə üstünlük verilir,
			Non-gendered (How?)	Eyni işləri görürlər, fərqi yoxdur, eyni iş, no such difference, oxuduğumuz sahələr,

## Appendix 4: Content Analysis (Institutional Rules)

Main Theme	Subthemes	Categories	Subcategories	Codes
MFA Azerbaijan as Gendered Institution	Institutional Rules	Formal Rules	Gendered (How?)	Tövsiyə (x3), təcrübəçi olursan (x3), Diplomatik Könüllülər, eynidir, belə hadisələr olmur, announces vacant position, intern period, not any differences, müsahibə, imtahana, eyni proses, hər şey eynidir, tapşırıq, fərq yox idi, daxili komissiya, iki növ imtahan, eynidir, eyni şəkildə, no discrimination,
			Non-gendered (How?)	
		Impact	Gendered (How?)	Olur, evlilik və ailə ilə bağlı suallar, kişilər üçün yoxdur, 3 ay, öz hesabına məzuniyyət, yardım ayrılır, (bağça) yoxdur, xəstəlik adı ilə, öz hesabına məzuniyyət, 14 gün atalıq məzuniyyəti, stajda qeyd olunmur, no paternity leaves, maaş verilmir, var, toxunulmayıb, 3 ay icazən var, xəstəlik kimi, qayda yoxdur, yalnız analıq məzuniyyəti, belə bir şey yoxdur,
			Non-gendered (How?)	Uşağını tək böyüdən atalar, özündən asılıdır, iş saati azaldılır, uşaq pulu, müxtəlif yardımlar, təyinatları da uzadıla bilər, məktəb təmin edilir, təhsil haqqı, səfirlikdə iş, iş saatları qısaltmalar, natamam iş rejimi, məcburiyyət yoxdur, fərqliliklər olmur, şəxsi suallar olmur, equally valuable, more flexible and relaxed schedule, their choice, funded for education, öz seçimi, daha az iş saatları, uşaqların təhsili, daha az işləmək, icazə ala bildilər, istədikləri məktəbi, xüsusi suallar verilmir, özlərində asılıdır, tez çıxmaq və ya gəlmək, səfirlikdə işlə təmin olunur, təhsil haqqı, equal opportunities,

				<p>equal approach, shall not be considered discrimination, improving working conditions, no probationary period, workplace certification, employment contracts termination, night work, pregnant women, women with a child under the age of three, single fathers raising a child, part-time work, additional base vacation, breaks for feeding of a child, average wages</p>
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## Appendix 5: Content Analysis (Gender Norms)

Main Theme	Subthemes	Categories	Subcategories	Codes
MFA Azerbaijan as Gendered Institution	Gendered Norms	Physical Mobility	Appropriate	Həmı dəvət alır, istəyən iştirak edir, all people are invited, həmı çağırılırdı, qadınlara daha çox dəstək verilirdi, həmıya açıq olur, imtahan verilərək,
			Non- Appropriate	Olur, çağırılmaya bilərlər
		Social Mixing	Appropriate	(İşdə) qaynayıb qarışırlar, ola bilərlər, daxili turlar, interact perfectly, tamamilə qurulur, qaynayıb- qarışır, həmı qaynayıb qarışırdı, mehribandır, İşdə də və işdən sonra da,
			Non-existent	Çox konservativ mühitdi, həmı bir şey danışır, mehribandırlar, fərqli qarşılanma bilərdi, böyük nəsil biraz fərqlidi,
		Alcohol	Appropriate	(qadınlr) çox aktivdilər, ortaq tədbirlərdə həmı iştirak edir, həmı dəvət olunur, not any prohibition, both are invited, həmı çağırılır, içki bareri yoxdu, qadınlr dəvət edilirdi, ayrı seçkilik və ya qeyri- adi münasibət olmur, həmı dəvət olunur, heç kimi kənarlaşdırmır
			Non- Appropriate	

## Appendix 6: Azerbaijani Embassies

#	Position	Name	Gender	Sex Ratio
1	Charge d'Affaires to Algeria	Ilham Aliyev	male	
2	Ambassador to Argentine	Rashad Aslanov	male	
3	Charge d'Affaires to Australia	Ramil Gurbanov	male	4 men 1 woman
4	Ambassador to Austria	Galib Israfilov	male	13 men 3 women
5	Ambassador to Belarus	Gandilov Latif	male	
6	Ambassador to Belgium	Fuad Isgandarov	male	
7	Ambassador to Brazil	Elkhan Polukov	male	2 men
8	Ambassador to Bulgaria	Huseyn Huseynov	male	2 men 1 woman
9	Charge d'Affaires to Canada	Fuad Aliyev	male	
10	Ambassador to China	Akram Zeynalli	male	14 men
11	Ambassador to Croatia	Fakhraddin Gurbanov	male	4 men 1 woman
12	Ambassador to Czech Republic	Adish Mammadov	male	5 men
13	Ambassador to Egypt	Tural Rzayev	male	5 men
14	Charge d'Affaires to Estonia	Hasan Huseynov	male	3 men
15	Charge d'Affaires to Ethiopia	Dmitri Panin	male	1 man 1 woman
16	Ambassador to France	Rahman Mustafayev	male	
17	Ambassador to Georgia	Faig Guliyev	male	9 men 1 woman
18	Ambassador to Germany	Ramin Hasanov	male	12 men

				1 woman
19	Ambassador to Greece	Anar Huseynov	male	5 men
20	Ambassador to Hungary	Vilayat Guliyev	male	4 men
21	Ambassador to India	Ashraf Shikhaliyev	male	3 men
22	Ambassador to Indonesia	Jalal Mirzayev	male	4 men 1 woman
23	Ambassador to Iran	Bunyad Huseynov	male	
24	Charge d'Affaires to Iraq	Nasir Mammadov	male	
25	Ambassador to Italy	Mammad Ahmadzada	male	4 men 1 woman
26	Ambassador to Japan	Gursel Ismayilzada	male	3 men
27	Ambassador to Jordan	Eldar Salimov	male	6 men
28	Ambassador to Kazakhstan	Rashad Mammadov	male	9 men
29	Ambassador to Korea	Ramzi Teymurov	male	5 men
30	Ambassador to Kuwait	Elkhan Gahraman	male	7 men
32	Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan	Hidayat Orujov	male	3 men
32	Ambassador to Latvia	Javanshir Akhundov	male	5 men 1 woman
33	Ambassador to Lebanon	Aghasalim Shukurov	male	4 men
34	Ambassador to Lithuania	Tamerlan Garayev	male	4 men
35	Ambassador to Malaysia	Galey Allahverdiyev	male	4 men 1 women
36	Ambassador to Mexico	Mammad Talibov	male	
37	Ambassador to Moldova	Gudsi Osmanov	male	3 men 1 woman
38	Ambassador to Morocco	Oktay Gurbanov	male	

39	Ambassador to Netherlands	Fikrat Akhundov	male	3 men 1 woman
40	Ambassador to Pakistan	Ali Alizade	male	8 men
41	Ambassador to Poland	Nargiz Gurbanova	female	
42	Ambassador to Qatar	Rashad Ismayilov	male	6 men
43	Ambassador to Romania	Huseyn Najafov	male	5 men 1 woman
44	Ambassador to Russia	Polad Bulbuloghlu	male	22 men 9 women
45	Ambassador to Saudi Arabia	Shahin Abdullayev	male	9 men
46	Charge d'Affaires to Serbia	Elnur Guliyev	male	5 men
47	Charge d'Affaires to South Africa	Yamin Jafarov	male	1 men 1 women
48	Ambassador to Spain	Ramiz Hasanov	male	3 men
49	Ambassador to Sweden	Zaur Ahmadov	male	4 men
50	Ambassador to Switzerland	-		1 man 1 woman
51	Ambassador to Tajikistan	Hasan Mammadzade	male	3 men
52	Ambassador to Turkey	Khazar İbrahim	male	16 men 3 women
53	Ambassador to Turkmenistan	Hasan Zeynalov	male	5 men
54	Ambassador to Ukraine	Elmira Akhundova	female	8 men 2 women
55	Ambassador to United Arab Emirates	Mahir Aliyev	male	7 men 1 women
56	Ambassador to United Kingdom	Tahir Taghizadeh	male	11 men 1 woman
57	Ambassador to USA	Elin Suleymanov	male	13 men 3 women

58	Ambassador to Uzbekistan	Huseyn Guliyev	male	
59	Ambassador to Vietnam	Anar Imanov	male	4 men

## Appendix 7: Azerbaijani Consulate Generals

#	Position	Name	Gender
1	Consul General to Georgia (Batumi)	Parviz Ismayilzade	male
2	Consul General to Iran (Tabriz)	Aliyannagi Huseynov	male
3	Consul General to Kazakhstan (Aktau)	Elmar Mammadov	male
4	Consul General to Russia (Petersburg)	Sultan Gasimov	male
5	Consul General to Russia (Yekaterinburg)	Ilgar Iskandarov	male
6	Consul General to Turkey (Istanbul)	Narmina Mustafayeva	female
7	Consul General to Turkey (Kars)	Nuru Guliyev	male
8	Consul General to US (Los Angeles)	Nasimi Aghayev	male

## Appendix 8: Azerbaijani Representatives at International Organizations

#	Position	Name	Gender
1	Head of Mission NATO	Gaya Mammadov	male
2	Permanent Representative to Council of Europe	Fakhraddin Ismayilov	male
3	Ambassador to UNESCO	Elman Abdullayev	male
4	Ambassador to UN (Switzerland)	Vagif Sadigov	male
5	Ambassador to UN (New York)	Yashar Aliyev	male

## Appendix 9: Azerbaijani Honorary Consulates

#	Position	Name	Gender
1	Honorary Consul to Djibouti	Nazli Abdallah Mohammed	female
2	Honorary Consul to Malta	Kristian Balzan	male
3	Honorary Consul to Paraguay	Oscar carlos Brelles Marino	male
4	Honorary Consul to Philippines	Iii Jose De Venesia	male
5	Honorary Consul to Slovakia	Jalal Gasimov	male
6	Honorary Consul to Sudan	Tarig Hamza Zain El Abdein	male
7	Honorary Consul to Sankt Pölten (Austria)	Andreas Königsberger	male
8	Honorary Consul to Zalsburg (Austria)	Michael Heinritzi	male
9	Honorary Consul to Karlovy Vary (Czech Republic)	Fakhraddin Mirzoev	male
10	Honorary Consul Stuttgart (Germany)	Otto Hauser	male
11	Honorary Consul to Genoa (Italy)	Margharita Costa	female
12	Honorary Consul to Catania (Italy)	Domenico Coco	male
13	Honorary Consul to Kharkov (Ukraine)	Afghan Salmanov	male
14	Honorary Consul to Santa Fe (US)	Emmit Richard Art McHaffie	male

## Appendix 10: Azerbaijani Diplomatic Offices

#	Position	Name	Gender
1	First Secretary to Bosnia and Herzegovina	Elmar Aghasiyev	male
2	First Secretary to Colombia	Elnur Iskandarov	male
3	Charge d'Affaires to Cuba	Ilham Aghayev	male
4	Attache to Kazakhstan (Almaty)	Ulvi Bakhshaliyev	male
5	Third Secretary to Montenegro	Orkhan Aliyev	male
6	Charge d'Affaires to Peru	Mehdi Mammadov	male
7	Second Secretary to Saudi Arabia (Jeddah)	Ali Gadirov	male
8	First Secretary to Uruguay	Lala Safarova	female