A woman with dark hair, wearing a pink blazer and a pearl necklace, is seated at a desk with a microphone. She is holding a stack of papers. In the background, a South Korean flag is visible. The image is overlaid with several semi-transparent circular shapes in shades of blue and grey.

The Changing Role of Women in Diplomacy in the 21st Century

Tran Thanh Ha

International Relations
Insights & Analysis

The Changing Role of Women in Diplomacy in the 21st Century – The Case of South Korea

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CKWP	Centre for Korean Women and Politics
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (The United Kingdom)
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
HDI	Human Development Index
LAD	London Academy of Diplomacy
MA	Master
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Republic of South Korea)
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
SK	South Korea
UK	The United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
U.S.A	The United States of America
WEF	World Economic Forum

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical background

For the past few decades, the world has witnessed much change in the international political and diplomatic system. Throughout history, traditional diplomacy has been characterised as a business by men, for men, and a typical diplomat was always pictured as a male diplomat. This stereotype has remained a source of major difficulties for women aspiring to enter the field of international relations and diplomatic services at both junior and senior level. The existing power structures reinforced gender inequalities and underpinned the fallacy that “this is not a faculty a girl would apply to”¹.

Moreover, women have not served in the diplomatic field for as long as men have. In earlier times, women played the role of diplomatic spouses or junior administrative staff. For example, women have been employed by the British Foreign Office from the 18th century but at that time, they worked only as housekeepers, typists or personal assistants². However, since the 20th century, women have been admitted as candidates for diplomatic positions, just like their male counterparts. They were no longer considered only for junior positions that served male government officials but also for senior positions as well. Many women started to become ambassadors from that time. For instance, America appointed the first woman ambassador in 1934 in Denmark³; Cicely Mayhew became the first female diplomat to represent Britain in 1947⁴; Lee In-ho became the first female ambassador of South Korea to Finland in 1996⁵.

The number of women serving in the diplomatic field increased over the past decade, but these changes were more common in the West than in the rest of the world, including Asia. For instance, the FCO had a 40 per cent female representation; 45 per cent of the fast stream intake were women in 2012⁶ and in the same year, the Global Gender Gap Report of the WEF showed the UK ranked 18th out of 135 countries, while China was ranked 69 and Japan was ranked even lower at 101 (WEF, 2012).

¹ Farah Ajalova, “Women in diplomacy: Are there empowerment strategies for women diplomats?”, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK, Pp. 2

² Talyn Rahman, “Women in Diplomacy”, Foreign Service Despatches and Periodic Reports on U.S. Foreign Policy, April 2011, accessed at: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2011/0104/comm/rahman_women.html>

³ Caroline Linse, “Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy”, DiploFoundation, 2004, Pp. 253-263

⁴ Alex Barker, “Britain’s first female diplomats”, FT Magazine, 2009, accessed at: <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8e936c88-c9ad-11de-a071-00144feabdc0.html?siteedition=uk#axzz210QJ8mRw>>

⁵ Philip Iflauer, “Women envoys expand ranks to seven”, The Korea Herald, 24th November, 2013, accessed at: <<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131124000315>>

⁶ Menna Rawlings, “Foreign Office broadens its appeal to women”, The Guardian, 13rd June, 2013, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2013/jun/13/foreign-office-encourages-women-to-join> accessed at 24th Nov, 2013

1.2 Hypothesis

This study starts from the hypothesis that, whilst the role of women in diplomacy was not very significant in the past; it seems to have improved greatly and female diplomats have become more prominent in recent decades. Women in developed countries such as the United States of America and most European countries have gained more visibility in the public sphere in general and political and diplomatic fields in particular through their professional achievements. The rise of female political leaders such as Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and the high profile Madeleine Albright acquired in the USA seem to have paved the way for an increasing representation of women in diplomacy, albeit at a slower pace in East Asia. The main aim of this research is to explore the changing role of women diplomats in the 21st century worldwide and to analyse the current representation of women in the diplomatic field with a special focus on South Korean women diplomats and politicians. Particular attention will be placed on three areas: gender equality, opportunities available to female diplomats and the challenges they are likely to face.

1.3 Motivation

The interest in this topic stems from the researcher's personal interest in the growing role of Asian women in the political and diplomatic fields and in the belief that the success achieved by South Korean female politicians and diplomats could serve as the example to emulate in the rest of South East Asia and the developing world.

This paper reflects the ever changing nature of diplomatic practice and is relevant to key players and new participants in the diplomatic world of the 21st century. It would hopefully be a welcome addition to the rather limited literature and research available on women and diplomacy in general and the growing role of East Asian women, particularly South Korean women in the political arena.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers a review of literature that has been collected from relevant sources such as books, journal articles and online sources. It places this project within the theoretical framework of women's studies. It examines the rise of women diplomats in the 21st century both in the West and Asia and looks into studies addressing the issue of women in diplomacy in South Korea.

2.1 Women's Studies

To carry out this research, it was deemed important to include literature on Women's Studies, literature on women in politics; women in diplomacy and also any literature relevant to South Korean women in diplomacy. Although female diplomats and women in leadership positions is not an unfamiliar issue, it seems to get very little academic study. Nevertheless, there are more and more scholars and researchers that are investigating and publishing many excellent pieces of research on this topic. For instance, Alison Aggarwal, Principal Advisor to the Sex Discrimination Team of the Australian Human Rights Commission and a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) cited in the book, *Women and Human Rights in South East Asia* (Lambert, Pickering and Alder, 2003), suggests that women's activism has been rising due to the current political situation in South East Asia, and that women activists there run huge risks when promoting human rights including gender equality.⁷ However, the number of academic books and articles that address the risks faced by female activists such as politicians or diplomats mostly discuss western women and rarely discuss eastern women in the same field of activity. Most of these books such as "Gender and Power" (Connell, 1987) or "Media, gender and identity" of David Gauntlett (2002) present ideologies and discourses of gender differences when it comes to entering positions of power, which might appear not to be directly relevant but could still explain the low representation of women in diplomacy in East Asia from a gender rather than a national or cultural perspective.

In 2011, Talyn Rahman-the Director and Diplomatic Consultant of the organisation Grassroot Diplomat stated that: "A male-dominated representation of diplomacy is no longer viable within an interconnected world where women matter". She emphasised women diplomats encounter many challenges under the diplomatic hierarchy⁸. There is a reality that the existing dominance of males in the diplomatic world remains a source of difficulties and inequalities for

⁷ Caroline Lambert, Sharon Pickering and Christine Alder, "Critical chatter: Women and Human Rights in South East Asia", North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2003, Pp. 193

⁸ Ibid. 2

women to achieve the highest position in diplomacy⁹. However, she reckons that women joining the diplomatic field are a necessary step for working effectively in that field.

Furthermore, the gender inequality framework underpinning this study is reflected in various books and articles written by academics drawing attention to the benefits of gender equality and participation in society. In his article “2009 World survey on the Role of Women in Development” in the report “Women’s Control over Economic Resources and Access to Financial Resources, including Microfinance”, Sha Zu Kang identified and affirmed the important role of women in accessing and in having an input in the control over economy and finance, particularly that today women are also active in economic diplomacy. He explained that gender equality not only provides significant aid in achieving economic and financial development goals, but also transforms society’s attitude towards women in diplomacy for the better.

Although related to the interconnected fields of power and politics, the topic of Women in Diplomacy is fundamentally within the Gender Studies domain, and particularly highly relevant to Women’s Studies as it appears that it is women’s gender rather than their competence which seems to hold them back. In Gender, Peace and conflict(Skjelsbak and Smith, 2001) the authors acknowledge that women who receive high education, incessantly improve themselves and positively impact society while pursuing their aspirations in achieving a professional life instead of only being in the kitchen. However, this also depends on which environment and society women are in, as they also constitute the gender and power relations within it. There is a myriad of successful women in high positions who have broken the mould and succeeded in “numerous careers, which have traditionally been reserved for men”¹⁰ such as diplomats or politicians. This proves that women also can make a visible difference to political decisions, agenda, political culture and styles of decision-making¹¹; just as men do when given a chance.

2.2 Women and Diplomacy in the 21st century

It seems clear from the literature available that the traditional domination of men in world politics and diplomacy has been going on for centuries. This has created a huge barrier for women wishing to enter the world of diplomacy. However, women candidates have been asserting themselves to make their voices heard in the diplomatic sphere, as their voice was still considered as an absent voice in the diplomatic system. In recent years, there have positive changes and, as female diplomat Ann Wright suggests, “The rapid gains of the past decade contrast sharply with the incremental advances of the previous 70 years, and position women for new breakthroughs in the months and years immediately ahead”. An illustration of this, for

⁹ Ibid. 2

¹⁰ Ibid. 3

¹¹ Inger Skjelsboek, Dan Smith, “Gender, Peace and Conflict”, International Peace Research Institute, 22nd Mar 2001

example, can be the fact that women made up approximately one-third of all ambassadorships in the U.S in 2006¹². Also, according to Menna Rawlings there is a 40 per cent female representation working for the FCO board at the present time, compared to only 15 per cent since 1993, based on the data presented by Talyn Rahman. Another example is that whereas women working at the UN in New York used to make up only 15 per cent of the workforce, their number has increased by 10 per cent since the last decade.¹³

However, along with the breakthroughs come new challenges that women diplomats seem to be facing in the 21st century. These challenges are more obvious, particularly when female diplomats are managing both family responsibilities and their career. It could be even more difficult when they are posted abroad or in war-zone areas.

Furthermore, they have to confront the pressures of working in the public sphere, under the media gaze. An added challenge could include having to prove themselves in front of their male counterparts instead as equally effective diplomats and not just good wives or good mothers for their whole life.

It also seems to be the case that the contributions of women leaders, diplomats and members of civil society organisations are substantial. For example, female peace-makers have been successful in maintaining peace and protecting women and children where there is conflict, whether they are women from Egypt, Palestine, Philippines or Mali. Indeed UNITAR suggests that, armed with a female perspective i.e. both a feminine understanding of other females and a mother's understanding of children they become an indispensable part of making policies for international agenda and diplomatic methods affecting women and children. The contents of an online discussion on women in diplomacy run by UNITAR has emphasised that: "Active participation of women in decision-making positions is crucial to achieving equality, development and peace."¹⁴ In some instable and vulnerable areas, women diplomats could be considered as a representative for local women. They may be perceived as more approachable when engaging in dialogue with other women, especially in conservative societies, where there is a need to ensure that woman's rights and concerns are not ignored¹⁵. For instance, Sherry Rehman, a Pakistani diplomat, has been very active in the struggle for the implementation of changes to the blasphemy laws in her country¹⁶. She braved the fatwa- an Islamic religious ruling- against her and became "the very well respected Pakistani Ambassador to the US in

¹² "A more representative Foreign Service", "Women", available at <http://www.usdiplomacy.org/history/service/representative.php#top>, Accessed at: 17th January, 2014.

¹³ Elizabeth Stewart, "Women envoys on the rise", the Embassy Magazine, 2012, available at http://www.embassymagazine.com/barometer/bar_issues/emb38_bar.html accessed at 28/12/2013.

¹⁴ UNITAR, "Online Discussion on Women in Diplomacy", from the 22nd October to the 14th December, 2012.

¹⁵ Ibid. 8

¹⁶ Monica Maggioni, "Women in Diplomacy building a Network for a Better World", Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, International Conference in Rome, 15-16 July 2012, accessed at: http://eeas.europa.eu/images/top_stories/2012_eeas_speech_rome_women-in-diplomacy_en.pdf [accessed

Washington”¹⁷. This role of women as peace-makers and peace-keepers has also been supported by The Resolution 1325 of Security Council since 2000, which “reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.”¹⁸

The fact remains that, in spite of the many important and high-powered positions women hold in different areas, they still make up only 20 per cent of decision-makers in the world. On the positive side, it has been mentioned that there has been an increase in the number of women who actively participate in democratic transition, social-economic development and political change.

2.3 Women in politics and diplomacy in the West

Throughout the 20th century, particularly the last decades, there have been some cases of successful women diplomats and politicians throughout the world. Perhaps unexpectedly, the first female head of government was Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka and was followed by another Asian woman, Indira Gandhi. However, the first female leader of a major western democracy was Margaret Thatcher, ranked sixth, about 20 years after her Sri Lankan counterpart¹⁹. Despite her high profile position in a society where women rights were better than in Asia, she was never known as a feminist, nor had policies given priorities to women. John Campbell in his book “Margaret Thatcher, Volume Two: The Iron Lady”, mentioned that she always insisted that she did nothing of herself as a woman, but simply as a politician with a job to do, the standard-bearer of certain principles, who happened to be female²⁰. However, the world still looked at her as a model of a successful diplomat and politician that was very strong, independent and decisive.

Another example of a successful western female politician and diplomat is Madeleine Albright-the Former U.S. Secretary of State, who has been considered as one of the leading powerful authorities in foreign affairs of the U.S, a strong political leader and a feminist. She was the first female Secretary of State in 1997 and stepped in the highest ranking for women in the history of U.S. government. Unlike Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, when she appeared on the famous TED Women program in 2010, named “Madeleine Albright: On being a woman and a diplomat”, she shared her experiences during her successful career as a diplomat and stressed

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ United Nation Security Council, “Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security”, accessed at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

¹⁹ Campbell.J, “Margaret Thatcher, Volume Two: The Iron Lady”, Vintage 2008, Pp.1

²⁰ Ibid.

that she always loves being a woman, works as a feminist and attaches huge importance to women's rights' policies".

The growing role of women in politics and diplomacy was also highlighted by Michelle Bachelet (2012), United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director when she opened a debate on the protection of women's rights. She referred to the contributions of women leaders and civil society organisations²¹ from all around the world and praised women leaders who have made a considerable contribution to the solutions for the conflicts in Mali, Eastern DRC and Syria and other countries in the Middle East, in terms of protecting women and children through peace program for the areas. She gave many current examples of female leaders who have brought different messages of peace, appealed to institutions like the Security Council and governments as well as to leaders in the conflict areas to exercise their influence to stop violence against women and children. Furthermore, she also noted that the numbers of women candidates are increasing in elections. Many more women are not hesitating to apply to government departments and have, more than ever before, started to work in more senior positions in parliament. Her report emphasised that not only security and protection but also women's living standards, education, employment and health need to improve. She further elaborated that, education is the most important factor to empower women to let them take part in leadership positions; get more job and career opportunities and advance gender equality to make the world better.

Another contributor to this debate is Elizabeth Stewart from Embassy Magazine who has over 10 years' experience in reporting on diplomatic affairs and life as a diplomat. She has reported on various issues faced by women diplomats and has analysed the status of women in diplomacy²². As a member of Women in Diplomatic Service she has presented diverse pieces of research on women diplomats in London and their family lives in term of divorcing or family conflict. An interesting statistic is that 75 per cent of her research respondents said they experienced both subtle and overt forms of prejudice, which shows that women diplomats still need to overcome various challenges because of their gender. According to her research, the number of female diplomats has risen significantly, compared with a decade ago.

However, women diplomats still feel and say that there is a glass ceiling. One must also note that when middle and senior female diplomats were asked about this, they attributed the major reason for holding women back to the lack of support in balancing family and career – this was the support from home. Stewart also asserted that women diplomats have to put up with gender-unequal-balancing in the working environment. Based on her research, 87 per cent of diplomats agreed that men dominate the diplomacy world. Moreover, many foreign ministries have narrowed the gender gap in order to “feminise” their foreign services, and this was achieved with

²¹ Michelle Bachelet, “Open Debate of Security Council on Women and Peace and Security”, New York, November 30th 2012.

²² Ibid 13

some success. Also, the Foreign Office's Diplomatic Service Families Association is still working to find a better feasible solution for the issues mentioned above.

2.4 Women and Diplomacy in Asia

Corazon C. Aquino of the Philippines in 1986, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wajed of Bangladesh in 1990, Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma in 1990, Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia in 1998, and many other women diplomats and politicians have led successfully democratic movements against dictatorships or encouraged women to reach leadership positions, as well as changed the roles of women in some regions where male domination existed historically.

Benazir Bhutto is often mentioned as a convincing example of a female political leader who successfully took the post of prime minister. It is argued that she achieved this by being the first to raise the flag of women's rights and the poor, while improving the economy when she got into power in 1987:

*I like to think I'm carrying on my father's vision of a federal democratic Pakistan. He set the way for a society in which there should be no discrimination on the basis of sex, race, or religion, and I too am fighting for this.*²³

She tried to build a dream for the poor and women to believe in. She was perceived as a representative of a new generation in Pakistan. However, she faced different challenges than her western counterparts, namely the social-class gap between the rich and the poor, which is very wide in Pakistan and transcends gender. As a result, she was unable to fulfil her aims as promised, leading her government to discontinue raising the flag of women; thus unable to make them become full members of society and to give the poor a break out of poverty. Nevertheless, she served in the Pakistani government as Prime Minister twice after General Zia ul-Haq- who was supposed to have built a "social prison" for Pakistani women- which suggest her success and popularity, but also her ability to achieve something that is not a common for men, never mind women is proof of her political acumen and competence²⁴. In her course as Prime Minister, she managed to release thousands of female prisoners from Pakistan's jails, perhaps symbolising women's emancipation in Pakistan's society. In other words, it could be said that her government supported women to join most of activities that only men did before. She also presented a positive image of women in media²⁵.

There are not many academic studies on Northeast Asian women in diplomacy, and studies on South Korean women activists on the political stage are relatively rare. Fortunately, Miranda A. Schreurs 30 page account of Women in Politics, Protecting the Environment in Northeast

²³ Anita M. Weiss, "Benazir Bhutto and the Future of Women in Pakistan", University of California Press, 1990, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2644837>> accessed at 11st November, 2013

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Asia, in the *Journal of East Asian Studies* introduced a comprehensive view of Northeast Asian Women in politics. It emphasised a positive phenomenon that the Northeast Asian women have, step by step, began to establish themselves as professional pioneers in diplomatic operations. Regrettably, up to 2007, only one per cent of South Korean women were involved in diplomacy.

2.5 Women and Diplomacy in South Korea

As already mentioned, publications and studies pertaining to South Korean women and diplomacy are rare. However, there have been some articles on this topic. Choe Sang-hun from *The New York Times* (2010) wrote an article on the rise of women in the diplomatic field entitled “Korean Women Flock to Government”, stating that there were relatively few women who attended the official examination for the South Korean Foreign Ministry in 1992 and that South Korean society had been shocked when three women were accepted to work in the Foreign Service. The fact that ‘three’ female applications were made was considered as a surprising figure at that time. The author also drew attention to the huge difference in the percentage of women (compared to men) who have been selected to work in the diplomatic corps over the last five years. The big jump, from 3.2 per cent in 1992 to 47 per cent of female candidates who passed the Foreign Ministry examination in 2009 has apparently changed the face of South Korean diplomacy²⁶. It has also signalled a change in society’s misconceptions about women in high position in the workplace and a big move towards gender equality in the diplomatic field. It has also confirmed the growing role of South Korean women in diplomatic world and leadership positions.

This positive outlook seems to be shared by other academics and researchers. Indeed, in her article “Women in South Korean politics: a long road to equality” Heike Hermanns in 2006, from the Australian National University, investigated the reasons behind the increasing number of female representatives in the South Korean politics in the 21st century. Hermanns is of the opinion that democratic procedures influence women candidates before applying to the public service and the existing gender inequalities have created a barrier for women to get into politics. She also suggests that Korean society has exploited the traditional values, which have defined women’s positions in Korean society and which imply that a woman should become a wife, a mother and stay in the kitchen rather than work in any public services. Moreover, when analysing the causes and timing of the changes that influenced Korean women she listed among the difficulties that they have had to face in order to enter politics: the issues of gender inequality, cultural factors and political procedures. However, whilst acknowledging the role played by “an active women’s movement under the leadership of academics and feminists rather than female politicians” for the legislative changes that have “advanced women’s policies”, she is rather

²⁶ Choe Sang-hun, “Korean Women Flock to Government”, *The New York Times*, 1st Mar, 2010, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/02/world/asia/02iht-women.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0> accessed at 22nd Nov, 2013

pessimistic about the current position of South Korean women. She believes that “gender discriminating attitudes among the political elites continue to function as important barriers to women’s representation in politics”.²⁷

A more recent academic journal: “South Korea in 2012: An Election Year under Rebalancing Challenges” (Yul Sohn and Won-Taek Kang, 2012) highlights the important role played by South Korean women’s in politics and diplomacy and their contribution to peaceful solutions to the conflict between their country and its neighbours as well as their participation in the revival of their economy . The case study selected for this research cites the first female president Park Geun-hye as a clear example of these female contributors, particularly in light of her success in positioning South Korea as a middle regional power between China and Japan and her strategic alliance with the USA.

²⁷ Heike Hermanns, “ Women in South Korean politics: a long road to equality”, Australian National University, 2nd Jul,2006, Pp. 1-21

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to carry out this research is based on both a qualitative and quantitative approach relying on both primary and secondary sources. These approaches involve collection and analysis of data, gathered through interviews and questionnaires. A rationale for the sample selection is provided and relevant ethical considerations are addressed.

3.1 Research questions

In order to carry out this study, it was felt that the following questions will help in investigating this topic:

- What is the role of women in conducting diplomacy in the 21st century?

This question will hopefully give an idea about the changing roles of women in diplomacy.

- What is the representation of women in the diplomatic sphere?

This would help determine the number of active female diplomats and whether they are still very low compared to their male counterparts.

- What are the challenges faced by women diplomats?

The answers to this question will hopefully clarify whether these challenges are gender-specific

- What is the impact, if any, of female diplomats in the promotion of women-related issues?

This question focuses on the potential gains for women from having female diplomats representing their interests/issues.

3.2 Primary and Secondary Sources

This study used both primary and secondary sources in the process of data collection and analysis.

All of the data and information which were gathered helped provide facts and statistics via reliable sources. For instance, interviews of diplomats and quotes and speeches from the concerned people with the issue served as primary sources. Official documentaries, online articles, newspapers and relevant research papers served as secondary resources. Examples of data collected from reliable sources include the OECD, FCO, the ranking by Human

Development Index (HDI) from the UN Development Programme, as well as the World Bank for the gender gap index. Statistics for the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) such as gender's salary gap, number of female participants in parliament and so on were extracted from the WEF official website.

One must also consider the history of female diplomats in general and the history of The Republic of Korea in context with this, which would be particularly important for the purpose of the case study. The South Korean Foreign Ministry is also worth considering, as this institution has observed the changing gender equality in other government departments. Therefore, a concentrated study on South Korean female diplomats could be narrowed considerably by focusing on the Foreign Ministry's examinations and its policies of gender equality. Statistics and information were sourced from the Foreign Ministry's official website and government documents which directly related to the topic and gender parity issues.

3.3 Importance of using both qualitative and quantitative approaches

It was deemed that a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures could help address the research questions through their inquiry and respective strengths.

Firstly, a comparative analysis of relevant data and updated information was made for the qualitative approach. According to Professor Riad Nourallah of LAD, "Qualitative Research uses mainly verbal data, aims for analysis and synthesis, explores policies, reasons, attitudes, and experiences, and strives for coherence and insight. It uses methods or tools for collecting data like interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, key informant, document study, and case study. Analysing qualitative data can be done on the basis of theme by comparison and contrast (comparative analysis), or study of speech patterns and metaphors (discourse analysis)."

The qualitative analysis helped gain an insight into knowing thoroughly, the why and how, the phenomenon of the changing role of women diplomats has happened and is occurring. In other words, qualitative methods are means of understanding, being deeply helpful for the researcher to conduct the analysis, raise the correlation between theory and discourse analysis based on the reliable and valid up-to-date data, which has been collected in secondary research. For example, the benefits reaped from reviewing the literature review in South Korea could answer some parts of the research questions and assisted with the case study.

Secondly, the quantitative analysis is also very important. Professor Nourallah suggests that "quantitative Research uses data that are mainly numerical and statistical, obtained through the use of large-scale survey research employing questionnaires and structured interviews. It uses numbers to express quantity and aims to be conclusive. The analysis of quantitative data such as large-scale surveys is usually done with the use of statistical software. Content analysis, which is common to both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and which endeavours to locate patterns and characteristics in a text, can also be facilitated by the use of computing software."

Therefore, this paper includes interviews of academic scholars, experts and related people from South Korea and experts on women in diplomacy to enrich this study. It provides the latest numbers and percentages which helps to show the changes in women participation in diplomacy recently, especially in South Korea. It also quantifies the importance and relevance of the issues as well as measures the quantitative changes made throughout history. For instance, the number of women diplomats representing South Korea today could give weight to the perception of change or lack of it.

3.4 Topic covered in the interviews

The topics covered in the interviews included the issue of gender gap in the diplomacy field in general and particularly that of South Korean women diplomats as well as their changing role, especially in the 21st century. The questionnaires were based on the research questions raised in this paper. However, these questions were tailored for each interviewee according to their professional and national background in order to provide better rounded answers for the aims of this research. For example for Doctor Gjurchilova who has experience working in the UN the number of questions was increased to try to get more insights, considering her support and direct participation in gender policies, such as those covered in the UNSCR 1325.

3.5 Choosing samples

Besides formulating a better understanding for the case study of South Korean women in diplomacy, it was intended to direct questionnaires for interviews with professionals, academics and relevant people to enrich this research. So for example, a UN perspective on the issue was gained by interviewing Dr. Gjurchilova, a woman who has not only worked in the UN but also has been active in initiatives which addressed the importance of women in diplomacy. As South Korean diplomats based here in London do not accept interviews for researches like this, other South Korean nationals were interviewed including MA students on this course (in the Academy of Diplomacy). As an alternative to South Korean Nationals and in order to get a foreign but close and accurate understanding on this case-study, the view and understanding, (on the issue of women in diplomacy), of foreign embassy employees based in South Korea was deemed relevant. Despite the many difficulties, it was possible to interview Mr. Pham Quang Anh from the Political Office of the Vietnamese Embassy in South Korea, who provided a useful understanding and insight.

3.6 Ethical issues

First of all, one must be aware of issues involving privacy when undertaking an interview. For example, during the process of asking agreement from interviewee, he/she may request the

omission of certain personal information. Fortunately, most of the interviewees authorised publicising their names and answers for the purposes of this paper.

Secondly, procedures for interviews normally need to be laid out in written form in order to indicate to the interviewees the nature of the questions that are to be answered before proceeding with the interview. One reason for this is that there is clearly a need to be sensitive about indicating the type of questions, as interviewees may want to be cautious about their opinions; their opinions could not only effect their job but may, (in an extreme case), effect international relations when quotes are taken out of context (or even sometimes in context), especially if they are a current employee at an embassy for example. Therefore by indicating the questions in written form this helps the interviewee to answer in a relaxed manner and hopefully provide more useful insights than when answering on impulse.

For some interviewees, the questions needed to be emailed beforehand rather than handed over or posted, especially where face-to-face meetings were not possible. In such cases, written quotations of interviewees were confirmed with the interviewee and noted down.

Thirdly, confidentiality is of wide concern, especially in written documents such as reports and or articles where there are quote. One must exercise vigilance to protect individuals and maintain their confidentiality where needed or required. Therefore, unless indicated otherwise, interviewees normally should not be named or identified in general public.

Finally, any records or notes taken from interviewees should only be used under the permission of interviewees. There should also be an explanation for any absence in writing, especially when interviewees provide their answers in the form of public resources. For instance, some diplomats are too busy to answer every question of the questionnaires. However, they summed up their answers by giving suggestions, and some answered indirectly by sending links to documentaries online. In all cases and for formal reasons, it is to be believed that the information provided by diplomats would be their own opinion and could be considered as their own assessments in on the case-study of South Korean women in diplomacy or the topic of women in diplomacy.

Case study: South Korean women diplomats

4.1 The changing role of Korean women in the diplomatic services

South Korea seems to have miraculously marked a speedy transition process over the last 60 years in social and economic fields. The development of society has brought about the change in public opinion regarding working women, their status within society and gender parity issues. However, at the present time no South Korean female ambassadors are representing South Korea in any of its 118 overseas embassies. In recent years, there was only one female ambassador and she represented SK in Paraguay but she completed her post abroad and returned to SK in 2013²⁸.

There were only five out of almost three hundred officials in the position of director-manager, compared to less than two per cent of national senior officials;²⁹ 20 in total of 280 in deputy director-managers position compared to seven per cents of the second high-level positions were women in 2010²⁹. Philip Iglauer, in his report for The Korea Herald, made a pertinent comment that “the dearth of women ambassadors in the foreign diplomatic community here parallels the absence of women at the highest levels of Korea’s Ministry of Foreign affairs”.

Not only is the number of South Korean female participants rather small at various important positions in the diplomatic field, but the number of foreign female envoys in South Korea is also very low. According to current Belarusian Ambassador in South Korea Natallia I. Zhylevich, “there is no doubt that the foreign diplomatic community in South Korea was a world only represented by men”³⁰. One could argue that this reflects the nature of South Korean society. Moreover, this could suggest that the environment and atmosphere being sustained by the South Korean government might not be an encouraging one for women to work in diplomacy, or to be in the public workplace in general. However, the number of foreign female envoys in Seoul has increased to seven, which is an improvement (out of a hundred foreign ambassadors in total)³¹. This shows some diplomatic attempts, or at least an improvement in the environment enabled by the government, to close the gap on the difference in numbers between women and men ambassadors posted in South Korea.

Perhaps the following gender empowerment measure ranking compiled by HDI in 2008 gives a clear indication as to the limited presence of women in the professional sphere, particularly when we take into account the fact that, in South Korea, women occupy a mere 13.7 seats in parliament and the percentage of female legislators is only 85%.

²⁸ Ibid. 5

²⁹ Ibid. 26

³⁰ Ibid. 29

³¹ Ibid. 29

HDI rank		Gender empowerment measure (GEM)		MDG		Ratio of estimated female to male earned income ^c	
		Rank	Value	Seats in parliament held by women ^a	Female legislators, senior officials and managers ^b		Female professional and technical workers ^b
				(% of total)	(% of total)		(% of total)
HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT							
1	Iceland	5	0.881	33.3	29	56	0.73
2	Norway	2	0.915	36.1	33	50	0.79
3	Canada	11	0.829	24.9	36	56	0.65
4	Australia	7	0.866	29.6	38	56	0.73
5	Ireland	23	0.727	15.5	31	52	0.58
6	Netherlands	6	0.872	37.8	27	50	0.66
7	Sweden	1	0.925	47.0	32	51	0.84
8	Japan	58	0.575	12.3	10	d 47	d 0.46
9	Luxembourg	..	..	23.3	..	..	0.55
10	Switzerland	10	0.829	27.2	31	46	0.66
11	France	17	0.780	19.6	38	48	0.62
12	Finland	3	0.892	41.5	30	55	0.72
13	Denmark	4	0.887	38.0	25	53	0.74
14	Austria	19	0.748	26.6	29	48	0.40
15	United States	18	0.769	16.6	42	55	d 0.64
16	Spain	12	0.825	33.6	32	48	0.53
17	Belgium	9	0.841	36.2	31	49	0.52
18	Greece	26	0.691	14.7	27	49	0.53
19	Italy	21	0.734	20.2	33	47	0.49
20	New Zealand	13	0.823	33.1	40	52	0.72
21	United Kingdom	14	0.786	19.6	35	47	0.70
22	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	..	..	..	29	42	0.78
23	Germany	8	0.852	30.6	38	50	0.61
24	Israel	29	0.662	14.2	30	52	0.67
25	Korea (Republic of)	68	0.540	13.7	8	40	0.52

South Korea gender empowerment measure (GEM) ranking by human development index HDI (2008).

Source: James Turnbull³²

However despite these pessimistic figures, South Korean women are believed to be more active and confident in chasing their careers in public services. For example, according to Kim Hyo-eun, a candidate who applied to the examination of the South Korean Foreign Ministry in 1992 and said, “The number of female candidates selected was only three and it was considered as a large number”³³. Also, from 2005 to 2010 the number of female applicants who successfully passed the initial diplomacy selection test increased to 55 per cent, based on the words of the leader of the ministry’s personnel management team Kim Sang-jin³⁴. This clearly shows a big

³² James Turnbull, “Korean Gender Reader”, 27th April, 2009, available at:

<http://thegrandnarrative.com/2009/04/27/korean-feminist-reader-27th-april-2009/> accessed at 2nd Feb, 2014

³³ Ibid. 26

³⁴ Ibid. 26

change in attitudes of applicants. But this change is still too slow compared to the rapid development of the economy and lifestyle of South Korea³⁵. For instance, South Korea is the 13th largest economy in the world but ranked 111th out of 136 countries in the Gender Equality Index of WEF in 2013. There was also a huge gap between men and women in government bodies. In fact, there are 16 women participants while men are 84 in Parliament, which results in South Korea being in a very low position when it comes to women representation in Parliament (85; WEF 2013) index.

It is worth mentioning that, in 1996, the Government Departments changed their policy by introducing a new quota system to ensure that the percentage of women candidates joining public services must reach at least 30 per cent, except in military and police sections. By 2003, the government needed to install a new quota for men as well (also a minimum of 30%), as a result of many women successfully passing and earning their place in these high positions. Therefore, this dramatic phenomenon could be seen as an outcome of the government's efforts to expand democracy after long term rule under the military administration. The government also believes that the presence of well-educated women can make positive changes in every aspect of political and societal spheres, to ensure that the country is "rapidly moving from capitalism to talentism" (World Economic Forum, 2013). It has also been argued that the progressive policies in favour of women undertaken by the Korean Government are even more advanced than some other countries with higher representation of women in public services.

4.2 South Korean women get ready to stand up to the dominance of men in leadership positions

South Korean women have gained significant positions in Korean society, especially in the fields of politics, diplomacy and economy. The examples of two female leaders described below, could perhaps illustrate the changing role of Korean women in politics and diplomacy.

Firstly, South Korean people, who have the second highest standard of living and the fourth largest economy in Asia, witnessed for the first time in the history of the country, one South Korean woman being nominated as the first female Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea during the former president Roh Moo-Hyun's government in 2006. She was also previously the first Minister of Gender Equality. Her name is Han Myeong Sook. This phenomenon has been considered as a sign of progress for women in this male-dominated country. According to Santhos Shah, the host in talk show POWER talks for the television channel TYA channel (today's YouthAsia) who had a talk with Han on April 13th 2009, "she has created the history in Korean leadership by being elected as the first female Prime Minister for the country."

³⁵ Tran Thanh Ha, Email Interview with Mr Pham Quang Anh

Han has devoted her life to bringing a change in women's status, contributed a great effort to stress the importance of education to women, children and urban labourers. Not only has she changed the norms, but also raised the flag of the feminist movement that marked an obvious promotion to become the Minister for Gender Equality and family in 2001³⁶. She has proved that women can receive high education and work actively like men in different fields, even in diplomatic fields, government departments or any other public services. She said in the talk show POWER Talks that: "The 21st century will be the century of women and the female values will save humanity". She also seems to believe that:

*Female values including life, peace, consideration and tolerance will correct the direction of our planet.*³⁷

Few years after that, the very first female candidate Park Geun-Hye was elected to be the eleventh and current President of South Korea at the 18th presidential election on 19th November, 2012. She won with more than fifty per cent of the vote. It was the first time a woman had held the highest position in government in South Korea and her victory produced a stir in national and international media about this change in a country which has been referred to as the country of men. Many specialists have overestimated her powers and predicted that she will infuse a fresh spirit into the country's economy. In contrast with Han Myeong Sook, a member of the opposition party, Park Geun-Hye, who mainly focuses on the country's economy and strengthening the military, has never been a feminist³⁸. She was named as "the ice queen" reminding people of Margaret Thatcher-"the Iron Lady", and such a moniker implied a strong character. Her policies did not have a place for "women's revolution" or family and child care. She said:

*I have no family to take care of and no children to pass wealth to. You, the people, are my family and your happiness is the reason that I stay in politics.*³⁹

According to the observation of the Executive director of CKWP (2013), she was just a female leader "only in biological terms". Park, being an unmarried and childless woman, was a surprising choice in a nation ruled by Confucian beliefs, which are strongly rooted in the hierarchical society system.⁴⁰ However, her image as a female leader in the highest position of the state still produced an auspicious stir that marked Korea's history and world opinion.

³⁶ Ibid. 35

³⁷ Han Myeong Sookin POWER Talks ,April 13th 2009

³⁸ Lyuba Lulko, "South Korean woman gets ready to rule the country of men", Pravda, 9th Jan, 2013, available at <http://english.pravda.ru/world/asia/09-01-2013/123423-south_korea_park_geun_hye-0/>, accessed at 12th Dec, 2013

³⁹ AJ Correspondents, "South Korea's Park Wins Presidential Election", Inter Press Service, 19th December, 2012, <<http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/12/south-koreas-park-wins-presidential-election/>>accessed at 12th December, 2013

⁴⁰ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Park Gun-hye", Women Suffrage and Beyond, 3rd Jan, 2013, Available at <<http://womensuffrage.org/?p=20872>>, accessed at 28th Jan 2014

The public appearance of Park Guen-hye as the first female president of the Republic of South Korea in the beginning of 2013 has been evaluated as a big change in the government system. Like many of her predecessors such as Benazir Bhutto or Corazon C. Aquino, she was the daughter of a military dictator; Park Chung-hee who has been considered as the father of the South Korean economic miracle⁴¹, as he completely concentrated on healing an economy in crisis. She publicly apologised for her father's mistakes during the election campaign and said:

*I promised to be a president of common people, and I will. This victory gives people a hope to overcome the crisis.*⁴²

Consequently many scholars predict a brilliant career for her. She is the head of the Conservative Party Senuri, defeated Moon Jae-in-the head of Democratic Party with 51.6 per cent to 48 per cent for her political opponent. She emphasised:

*This is a victory brought by the people's hope for overcoming crisis and for economic recovery.*⁴³

Besides her political background, the diplomatic methods which she is employing towards North Korea have, according to analysts, demonstrated her ability of using the "stick and carrot" method to deal with this hostile country. Foreign policies towards North Korea were not a critical point in her election strategy⁴⁴. Nonetheless, she is said to be using active communication strategies to talk with Kim Jong-un-the supreme leader of North Korea, in term of making a positive change in relations between Seoul and Pyongyang, gradually improving the relation that was virtually frozen by the previous regime. She asserted her priority should be concentrated on trade relations with the U.S. and to develop a military power to protect the country from any threatening gestures, as well as to improve the diplomatic solution for any disputes in the area⁴⁵. On the other hand, from her first official visit to Downing Street with the Prime Minister of the UK in November 2013, she was praised by many for effectively conducting her diplomatic ability to promote the bilateral relationship in trade policy till 2020 between the two countries and to get the support of Britain to ensure stability in the Korean peninsula.

Park's achievements symbolise the potential women can bring to diplomacy and help underpin at least some of the aims of this research, which are promoting a bigger role for women in diplomacy.

⁴¹ Ibid. 36

⁴² Ibid. 36

⁴³ Ibid 19

⁴⁴ Chung Min Lee, "The Park Geun-hye Administration's Foreign and Security Policy Challenges", Center for Strategic & International Studies, 1st May, 2013, available at http://csis.org/files/publication/130501_The%20Park%20Geun-hye%20Adminstration%27s%20Challenge..pdf accessed at 1st Feb, 2014

⁴⁵ Ibid.43

4.3 An Analysis of Korean women working effectively in diplomacy

The research hypothesis of this paper is mainly based on the case study of South Korean women in diplomacy, which may not have been a hot topic of significance in the past; however, as the situation for women improved, it has become more important in recent years. Women in developed countries such as America and Europe have obtained satisfactory achievements in different fields, for example the rise of female leaders on political stage, or the role of women in diplomatic services and so on, while the South Korean women have only recently started participating in political and diplomatic fields. However, these developments show that the male chauvinism in the country has been slowly disappearing in modern times, facilitating the developmental opportunities for women.

It is often said that women and men diplomats have different points of views when it comes to leadership styles. Women diplomats can offer a different approach when dealing with sensitive issues, and this difference can enhance diplomatic practice, especially in mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution contexts. According to Belarusian Ambassador Zhylevich in Seoul, South Korea, “We ladies sometimes see the situation in the country from a slightly different perspective. It is good to share different points of view”. Moreover, women could be more persuasive, flexible and powerful in peace talking as they still have challenges to face when it comes to the negotiating tables – they should assert the strengths of their femininity. For instance, President Park has apparently built on her feminine strengths and was able to manage policies towards North Korea in a different way than her progressive predecessors.⁴⁶ Her predecessors followed up the “Sunshine Policy” towards North Korea from 1998 till 2008. The main aim of this policy was to ease North Korea’s attitudes towards the South through encouraging interaction and economic aid. Park designed her own policy named “trustpolitik” to reconcile inter-Korean relationship⁴⁷; she also has a flexible and concessive diplomatic policy to negotiate with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un in order to convince him to give up their nuclear weapons program as a precondition for aid from Seoul to Pyongyang.

This seems to suggest that women diplomats might have more advantages in this profession such as better skills with their intuition, sense of community and a sense of what is right and wrong, great negotiation skills practiced in everyday life for many years⁴⁸. The UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNITAR Director Interim Sally Fegan-Wyles mentioned that “It is very encouraging to see the growing recognition of the value women bring to peace negotiation and to diplomacy in general. This reflects what I have observed over many years. Men and women

⁴⁶ Park Ihn-hwi, “The Park Geun-hye Presidency and the Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance”, Council on Foreign Relations Press, March 2013, <http://www.cfr.org/south-korea/park-geun-hye-presidency-future-us-south-korea-alliance/p30183?cid=rss-elections-the_park_geun_hye_presidency_a-031113>accessed at 28/12/2013

⁴⁷ Scott Snyder, “North Korea's Test of Trustpolitik”, Forbes, 31st Jan, 2014,

<<http://www.forbes.com/sites/scottasnyder/2014/01/31/north-koreas-test-of-trustpolitik/>>accessed at 2/2/2014

⁴⁸ Tran Thanh Ha, Email Interview with Doctor Penelopa Gjurchilova, December 03, 2012

approach the same issue in different ways, and both perspectives are useful and complimentary. We need to ensure that women have the knowledge, skills and confidence to bring their most valuable contribution to the table”. Perhaps politicians could build on this and develop an agenda and find solutions for gender inequality as well as other issues from women’s perspectives since they are perceived as more approachable when creating dialogue with other women and others in society and when helping to analyse, pre-empt and prevent future threats and challenges. However, despite their unique achievements, judged by regional standards, South Korean women continue to face major hurdles.

4.4 Challenges for South Korean women diplomats in the 21st century

Cultural norms of South Korea, especially the perception of diplomacy as traditionally dominated by men has always been a key challenge to gender equality and has been a hurdle for women who would like to enter the diplomatic world and achieve the highest positions. The gender gap is sufficiently strong to make women virtually silent and voiceless. Furthermore, there are many other challenges that South Korean women diplomats seem to be facing today. They include the balance of work and family, pay gap and the preferential treatment male diplomats seem to get when it comes to the allocation of posts.

4.4.1 Gender inequalities

Although the gap in gender equality has gradually been narrowing in recent years, the number of women diplomats is still disproportionately lower compared to the number of men, who are dominating the highest diplomatic positions. It is worth mentioning that the gender-based low representation seems universal and almost all countries worldwide have the same situation in gender parity. For instance, Cinely Mayhew realised a remarkable achievement as the first female diplomat of Great Britain in 1947. One male colleague of hers at that time said it was “unthinkable” for a diplomat to “produce babies”⁴⁹. In the same vein, Menna Rawlings was amazed when she applied successfully to the FCO in 1989 and learnt that there were only two female ambassadors and they rarely occupied senior positions. In the same line, Tara Povey and Elaheh Rostami-Povey who are well versed in Iranian politics state that “Women had a miniscule role in the diplomatic arena and no women were appointed as ambassadors (this still applies), although women were appointed at middle levels in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and participated in diplomatic missions.”⁵⁰ In South Korea, it seems the Confucian tradition keeps influencing women to take full responsibility in managing the household and taking care of

⁴⁹ Ibid. 4

⁵⁰ T. Povey and E. Rostami-Povey, “Women, Power and Politics in 21st century Iran”, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012, P.p 165

children, which perpetuates the traditional view of women’s role in society as nothing more than wives and mothers⁵¹.

The perception of diplomacy as the world of men also puts substantial pressure on Korean women to prove them in the diplomatic arena. Women’s opinions seem to hold less value than men do⁵². Many of them have even been mistaken for personal assistants, secretaries or subordinate officers of their male colleagues. On the other hand, their male senior officers often tend to be prejudiced in doubting them as unreliable, undetermined and suppose that they could not concentrate on work or may even quit the job after they marry or have child⁵³.

According to the pie chart below from the research of Elizabeth Stewart in 2012, 87 per cent women diplomats with whom she talked during doing her research agreed that “diplomacy is a man’s world”.



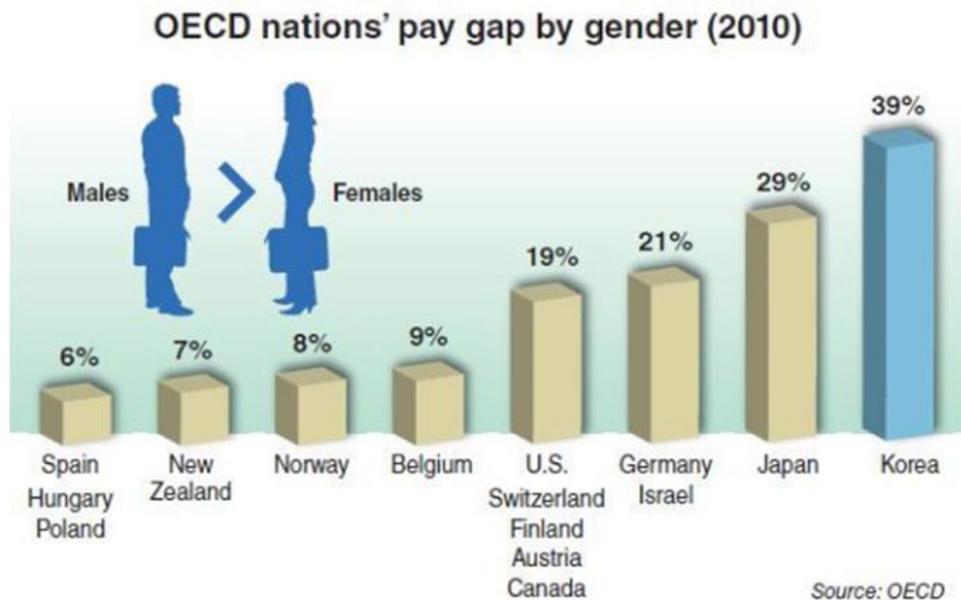
Source: http://www.embassymagazine.com/barometer/bar_issues/emb38_bar.html

The notion of extreme male chauvinism is a common complaint by many women diplomats at workplaces⁵⁴. Women regard male-behaviour sometimes as a nuisance, for example, male colleagues usually side-line women who do not want to join any drinking-games or late-night sessions which is considered the traditional way of creating office solidarity⁵⁵.

Another manifestation of gender inequality resides in the fact that Korean women are subjected to face wage discrimination in workplace. According to the U.N. Development Program’s GEM in 2009, Korean women got only more than 50 per cent of what men got in wages, and this led South Korea to be ranked at 62 among 109 countries in terms of women’s income equality, political and economic participation and decision-making. The chart below is

⁵¹ Tran Thanh Ha, interview with Miss Inhwa Jung
⁵² Tran Thanh Ha, interview with Mr Daehong Kim
⁵³ Ibid. 26
⁵⁴ Ibid. 3
⁵⁵ Ibid. 3

about the Nation's pay gap by gender and shows that women earned 39 per cent less than men did in South Korea according to OECD in 2010. This was one of the largest pay gaps among member countries of OECD in 2010.



4.4.2 The balance of work and family

Balancing work and family seems to be one of the most serious problems that many female diplomats seem to face. Some people believe that, 'behind every successful man there is a woman, but behind every successful woman there is a divorce'⁵⁶. Unfortunately, this reality happens to a lot of women working in diplomacy. As a result, a number of working women quit their jobs before marrying or after having children as it is too hard for women diplomats to strive for both a thriving professional career and a happy family. Cicely Mayhew after becoming the first female diplomat of Great Britain remained unmarried. As happens with most female diplomats, Mayhew's letter of service stated that she would be "required to resign on marriage". The main reason for this "iron-hearted" rule was that all diplomats could be sent anywhere in the world at short or long term, a situation that seems "menacing and incompatible" with married life.

Many Korean female diplomats choose to remain single because of this implication of their profession. They might be faced with many issues, some of which could force them to put off having children till very late after marriage or other issues such as the fear of being unemployment when they return to work after giving birth. Women often lack the supportive

⁵⁶ Ibid. 13

advice needed from their husbands on such issues to help make things work for them while in their career or at the workplace⁵⁷.

4.4.3 The glass ceiling

The glass ceiling phenomenon in diplomacy is that women diplomats are not able to progress from junior or mid-level positions to more senior positions. Although South Korean society may have broken some ground because of the first female president who was selected, it still lags behind in women's participation in politics and diplomacy⁵⁸. According to Dong-uk Kim-MA student of LAD, the majority of Korean women who work in politics and diplomacy seem to serve only as an audience and have no say in what really matters.⁵⁹This could in turn influence the political agenda of the South Korean government that women's voices are not heard and their interests are not represented. This would narrow the promotion prospects for women in getting higher positions. The barrier to women's accession to higher diplomatic positions could reside in the patriarchal aspect of the work culture based on the "old-boy's network" that women diplomats need to face in the workplace. According to Kim Young-Ok, a researcher from the Korean Women's Development Institute quotes that: "The rules and systems are already there, but it will take a long time for such business culture to change to allow women to stay in work."⁶⁰

In addition, many women feel under pressure to leave their jobs when they need to give birth and if they remain in their jobs, their positions could be changed negatively. In order to break the glass ceiling, South Korean government is trying to tackle the discrimination in the workplace and create more opportunities for women to work after having children.⁶¹However, Mr. Kim said that: "unless Korea's Confucian traditions and deeply ingrained chauvinistic cultural practices change, such policy reforms will have limited effects".⁶²

⁵⁷ Tran Thanh Ha, interview with Mr Daehong Kim

⁵⁸ Song Jung-a, "South Korean women face glass ceiling in workforce", the Financial Times, available at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/50242166-ce60-11e2-8313-00144feab7de.html#axzz2sSGhTeYA> accessed at 31st Jan, 2014

⁵⁹ Tran Thanh Ha, Interview with Mr Dong-uk Kim

⁶⁰ Ibid. 56

⁶¹ Ibid. 27

⁶² Ibid. 27

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter provides a summary of the main findings of this study and proposes some recommendations that could be a reference for further research on women diplomats worldwide as well as recommendations on how to address gender inequality in the field of diplomacy.

5.1 Conclusion

This study suggests that whilst in the first decades of the 21st century we have witnessed some improvement in women's representation in the diplomatic field, the progress is rather slow.

Diplomacy might not be the total male preserve it used to be, especially when one considers the visibility of western female diplomats, but the case study chosen for this research suggests that in other parts of the world such as South Korea, women lag behind their western counterparts in terms of representation. Although the number of South Korean women participants in politics and diplomacy is increasing and the changes they are experiencing are positive, the speed is still very slow compared to the rapid developments in society. It seems that this state of affairs is due to the many challenges they face. Firstly, cultural values and patriarchal attitudes towards working women seem to be an obstacle, particularly that their perceived roles revolve around being a good wife and mother. The issue of balancing work and family is also often cited as a big issue. Secondly, the nature of diplomatic work could entail a lot of travelling and perhaps living in war zones and this could be problematic for Asian societies. Thirdly, when it comes to promotion at work, it seems that there is a "glass ceiling" for women, they can go so far but not further and part from rare examples- the president of South Korea , who also happens to belong to a very well connected family- they tend not to reach the top of the hierarchy.

This research seems to back the reality of gender inequality in the diplomatic profession and as Caroline Linse suggests in her article 'Challenges facing women in overseas diplomatic positions' that, "Women still need to work harder than their male counterparts and they may still have trouble advancing as quickly as men". Therefore, motivation in payment and better work conditions are necessary to encourage women work more effective.

Another finding is that having women in a leadership position inside or outside the diplomatic sphere does not necessarily mean that they will promote women rights and interests and the South Korean president is a clear illustration of that. However, this does not diminish the fact that their very visible presence in the public sphere is likely to break taboos and change perceptions about women. Also, they could serve as role models for other women who realise that they can aim as high as possible.

Finally, this research seems to suggest that the gender-specific skills and leadership styles women bring are recognised as welcome assets to the world of diplomacy, particularly when dealing with negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution contexts. Again, the way the South Korean president has been dealing with North Korea sums up this argument.

It is hope that the findings of this study will raise awareness of the gains that could be achieved by narrowing the gender gap and benefiting from the many skills and competences women could bring to the diplomatic profession.

5.2 Recommendations

In order to get a better understanding of the issue of the changing role of women diplomats in the first century, the following recommendations are proposed:

Engaging in further research on female representation in the diplomatic sphere worldwide could shed a light on global trends and possible international co-operation to come up with global solutions to this clear gender inequality.

Introducing a quota system and formation of positive discrimination can also ensure a fairer representation of women, particularly that the inequality seems to exist everywhere.

Introducing and implementing pro-women legislation such as the one introduced by the South Korean government could be the way forward in developing countries, particularly if this is linked to public diplomacy and the image of the country abroad. So there is a need to convince the authorities that the low rank of gender equality and the limited presence and opportunities for women in the professional sphere would influence the reputation of the country in the new century. For example, some countries in East Asia such as Japan or China would understand what to do to improve their position in the records of the WEF for Global Gender Gap Report (China was ranked 60 in 2009 and 69 in 2012; Japan was ranked at 101 from 2009 to 2012).

Perhaps using the media to raise awareness about gender inequality but also to highlight the achievements of successful female leaders and diplomats and good role models could help address cultural taboos regarding the role of women in society, particularly in the developing world.

Finally, since the low representation of women in diplomacy seems to be a global issue, perhaps setting up a network and open conversational programs for women diplomats could be useful in order to exchange experience, discuss social issues, encourage confidence in conducting diplomacy and come up with solutions to serve women's interests from a female perspective.

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Interview #1: Interview with Mr Dong-uk Kim, December 10, 2013

Interview #2: Interview with Mr Daehong Kim, December 12, 2013

Interview #3: Interview with Miss Inh-wa Jung, December 12, 2013

APPENDICES

Appendix #1

South Korean Women and Diplomacy in the 21st century

Questions to Doctor Penelopa Gjurchilova from Columbia University

1. What do you think about women diplomats in the 21st century?
2. Please give a general view of your career at where you have served?
3. Do you have any role model to look up professionally?
4. Are there any challenges you have encountered in your career because of your gender?
5. What do you think about the phenomenon that there are more and more women working in Government departments, becoming diplomats or hold the leadership positions?
6. In your point of view, what are the factors bring this phenomenon?
7. You talked about the UNSCR 1325, what policies related to gender have you supported?
8. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director examined that “wherever there is conflict, whether in Mali, Syria, the Middle East, or Eastern DRC, women must be part of the solution”, what is your opinion?
9. What do you think about the idea “A diplomat in a foreign state is in a way selling his/her family abroad”?
10. How have you promoted gender parity abroad?
11. Do you think women are still under represented in leader positions?
12. Do you think women diplomats can work effectively like men?
13. You worked in the UN before, how does the UN promote the advancement of women in reality?
14. Could you please give me some advices for women diplomats nowadays?
15. Do you have any idea about South Korean female diplomats?

Appendix #2

South Korean Women and Diplomacy in the 21st century

Questionnaire to Mr Pham Quang Anh-Second Secretary, Political Office, Embassy of Vietnam in Seoul, Republic of Korea

1. What do you think about gender equality in South Korea in the 21st century?
2. What do you think about the phenomenon that there are more and more women working in Government departments, becoming diplomats or hold the leader positions in SK?
3. In your point of view, what are the factors bringing this phenomenon?
4. What do you think about working in public services in South Korea such as Foreign Ministry, is it a good opportunity for women?
5. In your opinion, do you think recently there is a “women revolution” in South Korea’s society in public services?
6. As a foreign diplomat in SK, have you worked with SK female diplomats? Do you think they work effectively and passionately like men?
7. Do you think women are still under represented in leader positions in SK?
8. There are many SK female students studying abroad but hesitates to go back home after graduating to find a job there because they think they might not be able to compete with men. What is your opinion?
9. There are many special services only for women priority over men nowadays in SK, some people agree and some disagree, what about your opinion?
10. What do you think about these successful women such as the new president Park Guen-hye of SK or the Prime Minister Han Myeong Sook, or many other women ambassadors working in embassies worldwide?
11. If your leader is a woman, how do you feel and think about it?
12. Will you be happy with your family members, for example if your daughter would like to work as a diplomat? Do you think she will gain many opportunities to work in public services? Will they treat her fairly?
13. Could you compare the work conditions for female diplomat in SK and your country?

Appendix #3

South Korean Women and Diplomacy in the 21st century

Questions to Mr Daehong Kim-President of the Creative Destination Management Company of Korea

1. What do you think about the phenomenon that there are more and more women working in Government departments, becoming diplomats or hold the leader positions in SK?
2. In your point of view, what are the factors bringing this phenomenon?
3. There are many female students studying abroad but hesitates to go back home after graduating to find a job there because they think they might not be able to compete with men. What is your opinion?
4. The percentages of female candidate applying in Government department examination are rising significantly on the trend. What do you think about this?
5. There are many special services only for women priority over men nowadays in SK, some people agree and some disagree, what about your opinion?
6. Are you happy to work with your female colleagues? If your leader is a woman, how do you feel and think about it?
7. What do you think about these successful women such as the new president Park Guen-hye of SK or the Prime Minister Han Myeong Sook, or many other women ambassadors working in embassies worldwide?
8. Will you be happy with your family members, for example if your daughter would like to work as a diplomat? Do you think she will gain many opportunities to work in public services? Will they treat her fairly?

Appendix #4

South Korean Women and Diplomacy in the 21st century

Questions to Miss Inhwa Jung-Manager in London Office, Korea Tourism Organization

1. What do you think about these successful women such as the new president Park Guen-hye of SK or the Prime Minister Han Myeong Sook?
2. SK used to be dominated by men in both politics and business; do you think they will feel uncomfortable when working with women colleagues?
3. Do you think the gender gap in SK is getting better?
4. Are you happy to work with your male colleagues? Are there any difficulties for you to work with or follow them?
5. Do they pay female workers equally with male workers?
6. In your view, do you think the new president Park or the Prime Minister Han could be a good image, a good ambassador for your country and other women are working or want to get into power to follow?

Appendix #5

South Korean Women and Diplomacy in the 21st century

Questions to Mr Dong-uk Kim- MA student of LAD

1. What do you think about gender equality in South Korea in the 21st century?
2. What do you think about the phenomenon that there are more and more women working in Government departments, becoming diplomats or hold the leader positions in SK?
3. In your point of view, what are the factors bringing this phenomenon?
4. What do you think about working in public services in South Korea such as Foreign Ministry, is it a good opportunity for women?
5. In your opinion, do you think recently there is a “women revolution” in South Korea’s society in public services?
6. Do you think women diplomats can work effectively like men?
7. Do you think women are still under represented in leadership positions?
8. There are many female students studying abroad but hesitates to go back home after graduating to find a job there because they think they might be able not compete with men. What is your opinion?
9. There are many special services only for women priority over men nowadays in SK, some people agree and some disagree, what about your opinion?
10. What do you think about these successful women such as the new president Park Guen-hye of SK or the Prime Minister Han Myeong Sook, or many other women ambassadors working in embassies worldwide?
11. If your leader is a woman, how do you feel and think about it?
12. Will you be happy with your family members, for example if your daughter would like to work as a diplomat? Do you think she will gain many opportunities to work in public services? Will they treat her fairly?

Appendix #6

World Economic Forum

The Global Gender Gap Report 2013

Appendix #7

United Nation Security Council

Resolution 1325 (2000)

Appendix #8

Log Appendix'



**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS**

The Changing Role of Women in

Diplomacy in the 21st Century

- The Case of South Korea

Tran Thanh Ha

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