

Latin American Secretaries-General of International Organizations: A Typical Case of “Diplomacy of Prestige” or Just Another Side Effect of Growing Cosmopolitanism?

Dawisson Belém Lopes

Department of Political Science, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

João Paulo Ferraz Oliveira

Institut de Sciences Politiques Louvain-Europe, Université Catholique de Louvain

The article discusses the hypothesis of there being a “diplomacy of prestige” in Latin America, i.e., if states from the region have consistently used formal leadership positions at international organizations as a means to pursue national interests. A second hypothesis posits that Latin American secretaries-general (SGs) are rather a collateral effect of transnational cosmopolitanism than a deliberate prestige-seeking strategy. This research comprises two stages: an assessment on data about eighty-six Latin American SGs from 1948 to 2015, condensing their personal and professional trajectories, and a prosopographical approach to ten case studies as way of observing their relationship with the respective countries of origin.

Key words: Latin America, Brazil, Secretaries-General, International Organizations.

Introduction

When one hears the former Research Director of the Group of 24, Gerry Helleiner, affirming that “I am increasingly driven to the thought that individuals are enormously influential. Politicians and people in key positions of authority. . . . They do really matter” (Schroeder 2014, 339), it is reasonable to infer that the role of individuals in International Relations (IR) has not been taken seriously yet. The disregard of the role of individuals, probably driven by a quest for parsimony in IR theorization, expresses how delicate and taken for granted this personal (subjective) dimension of international politics still remains. In this particular sense, thinking about the place of men and women in IR is one of the objectives of this article. Quite differently from the Realist school, which admits the importance of individuals only when they are in headship, this article emphasizes the unique role played by Secretaries-General (SGs) in International Organizations (IOs or formal leaderships, for the purposes of the article). As pointed out by Chesterman (2007), this institutional topic in IR is understudied, although it admittedly exerts much influence on political procedures.

Given the purposes of this article, we will be investigating SGs born in Latin America and their positions in Regional International Organizations (RIOs) and Global International Organizations (GIGOs), and establishing tentative correlative connections with their countries (and regions) of origin.

The relations they maintain with their countries of origin can be associated with the so-called “diplomacy of prestige,” which concerns *the strategic use of formal leadership positions in IOs as platforms for the pursuit of national interests*. This article focuses on the appointment of SGs and the efforts made by national officials in order to support their country's citizens into achieving formal leadership positions in IOs. We are not concerned with assessing from a substantive angle the overall performance of these SG's by any standard, but instead to further the relationship maintained between them and their respective states of origin. In other words, we look into the political mobilization that happens before the nomination process and to a lesser degree during their mandates, but not to these leaders' particular accomplishments.

In so being, we ask ourselves the following departing question: Would there be a “diplomacy of prestige” put into practice through the formal leadership of Latin American RIOs and in global IOs? Our main hypothesis is as follows: (1) Latin American states resort to a policy of prestige through the appointment and/or election of their countrymen—mostly diplomats and politicians—who take office as SGs of major intergovernmental bodies—in order to enjoy the formal powers associated to the post. We also propose a second hypothesis for consideration: (2) Tenure in office of Latin American SGs is not directly related to any prestige-seeking governmental drive or an emerging country's manoeuvre for greater international status, but rather is a collateral effect of growing transnational cosmopolitanism. Later here, we have succinctly described this article's methodological steps.

Methodology and Database

This research involves two stages, being extensively reliant on information extracted from the IO BIO Project Database (www.ru.nl/fm/iobio). This database aims to bridge the gap between IO personnel and IR studies by providing the researcher with two categories of information: first, it features a comprehensive updated catalog of SGs who took leading positions across several IOs (both regional and global) from 1945 to 2017. By referring to this catalog, one can find reliable data on personal as well as professional aspects about any given IO SG—such as their full name, gender, nationality, date of birth (and death), personal and professional highlights, amongst others. For the objectives of this piece, we have assembled information about eighty-six Latin American SGs of RIOs and GIGOs, who were in office between 1948 and 2015, with a view at providing group analysis and an interpretative account of their trajectories. IO BIO also features specific biographical notes on SGs, that is, short biographical entries based on prosopographical methodology that offers accurate details on dozens of SGs and their respective cohorts, thus allowing for in-depth case studies.¹

¹As of July 2017, IO BIO Project Database gathers sixty-eight biographical entries on IO secretaries-general, which are based on prosopographical methodology. The technique of prosopography consists of the investigation of common features from a group of actors, which can be identified by a careful assessment of their trajectories. The method establishes a universe of cases to be studied and attempts to find regularities in order to understand commonly shared factors and distinguishing aspects within the group. The technique of prosopography intends to provide a sense of political action, thus helping to explain ideological changes and continuities of an epoch (Stone 2011).

In this article, we have first employed descriptive statistics, and then approached a “small-N” sample for group analysis. The authors are fully aware that the absence of clearer selection criteria for the ten-element sample can lead to false or non-generalizable conclusions, given the non-applicability of randomization designs to this work.² Nevertheless, we stick on the matter to King and Powell (2008)’s methodological stance, as they claim that if a researcher has the chance to select a small number of cases which should lead to deeper and better knowledge about the subject, even if the sample is limited in itself and may not live up to generalizable findings, it is still worth trying. In addition to it, those researchers who select cases based on qualitative variables may also profit from being introduced to unforeseen connections as they delve into details (Goertz and Mahoney 2012).³ The authors concur with those perspectives while openly positing that, however uneven a sample of SGs might look at first, this particular batch under analysis is helpful in illustrating the diversity ranging from *diplomacy of prestige* to *transnational cosmopolitanism* in Latin America. Therefore, we will look through ten cases—whose biographical details are available at IO BIO Project Database—eight of which arguably shed light on the “diplomacy of prestige” phenomenon, while two other represent the so-called “transnational cosmopolitanism” tendency. That being said, correlational rather than causal links might be pursued in this study.

Theoretical Background

In this section, we intend to draw attention to the importance of SGs in world politics. This theoretical discussion covers two critical issues. The first one concerns the importance of formal leadership in IOs as a means to promote specific values and political objectives. The second one considers the “chair power” and assumes the double-edged character of a SG, who can conflate institutional and national interests all at once, with an emphasis on the “diplomacy of prestige” and how it can be intertwined with the formal leadership at IOs.

“The Power of the Chair”: Formal Leadership and Political Instruments in IR

Tallberg (2006) analyses the influence of formal leaderships (including IOs’ SGs) and, for the sake of theory-building, develops a coherent argument on when, why, and how formal leaders will exert influence over distributional outcomes in a multilateral negotiation. Tallberg’s argument borrows its foundations from rational choice institutionalism and bargain theory,

²According to King and Powell (2008), “if you can only collect a very small number of cases, then any method of selection, including randomness, will not let you generalize with any useful level of certainty. At that point, random selection is besides the point. You either need more information or should focus on the cases at hand (22). The authors go on to affirm: “. . . qualitative researchers should not feel guilty when selecting a small sample in a nonrandom or unrepresentative way. Inferences in this situation will necessarily be limited to the sample rather than some broader population, but learning something about some part of the world in some prescribed period of time is often valuable in and of itself” (ibid.).

³Goertz and Mahoney (2012) argue that, when it comes to quantitative research, random selection is not useful at all. Since qualitative approaches propose in-depth case studies, randomness often diminishes the odds of one picking the most important cases. In so being, qualitative approaches more often use “ideal types” of well-known phenomena and normative “substantively important” cases based on a prior theoretical body of knowledge and information available.

according to which “if the chair matters,” it is assumed that the political position enhances the possibility of successful negotiations, and access of privileged resources to conduct negotiations toward the most preferred agreement. In so being, an institutional formal leader is different from other actors in multilateral contexts, in as much as formal leaders can wield “control over the nature of the game, which offers unique opportunities for influence over the outcomes of negotiations” (Tallberg 2006, 3), providing solutions to collective action problems. Young (1991), following the same rational-oriented approach of Tallberg, includes that the type of leadership⁴ and the respective influential behavior of the leader can determine the odds of success or failure at institutional bargaining.

If that were so, formal leaders would enjoy asymmetrical access to information and heightened control over procedures, ending up with more leverage during negotiations. The perception of office as a power repository can lead to opportunistic IO chairs, entitled with formal rights by Member States, but seeking to conduct a negotiation in conformity with their own personal interests, therefore bringing collateral implications for the parties under international cooperation regimes.

Kille (2006), observing personal characteristics of leaders in terms of style of leadership, states that not only institutional variables count, but personalities should also be considered as a substantial element in foreign policy analysis. In the light of Tallberg's model, Kille's formal leadership model has a more institutional design, which comprises, so as to speak, both the demand-side and the supply-side variables. The former are related to the perceived necessity of national governments to create and empower a formal institution to control the process of cooperation, and therefore to elect an institutional leader (a person) to do so. On the “supply-side,” what matters is the personality, that is, those individual features that make up a leader who is capable of handling the political implications associated with multilateral interactions in world politics. In sum, for Tallberg and Kille, this is how chairmanship builds up possibilities, constraints, and novel dynamics.

For Tallberg (2006), the chairperson can intervene in the dimension of efficiency when s/he “facilitates decision-making through the execution of agenda management, brokerage, and representation, thus raising the efficiency of the negotiations” (37). And in distribution “when among the bargaining parties by promoting the one agreement – among a range of efficient outcomes – that is closest to its own preferred position, in other words, when reach a great amount of political convergence” (ibid). However, a formal leadership will always have to deal with a given institutional environment as an intervening variable which sets the conditions as to when, where, and how the chair will be able to influence political procedures and outcomes. A formal leader does not exist into political or institutional vacuum.

In this institutional context, Schroeder (2014) claims that the executive headship enjoys good conditions for the exercise of politically autonomous

⁴Young recognizes three types of leadership: entrepreneurial, intellectual, and structural. Entrepreneurial leadership influences how an issue is introduced on the negotiation table and attempts to generate convergence among the parties. Intellectual leaders rely on the power of ideas, which may shape individual perceptions of all those involved in bargains. Structural leaders, on the other hand, act on behalf of a given party (usually the state) and look to translate any gross asymmetry of material resources into real power (Young 1991).

actions and entrepreneurship. For Schroeder, three common conditions should be met for it to come true: (1) Uncertainty of Member States may generate political room for the executive leader to create, propose, and advance the IO's mission; (2) Executive leaders can engender appropriate solutions to practical problems whenever Member States are provided with ill or inaccurate information; (3) Executive leaders can paralyze intergovernmental bodies and convince their bureaucratic actors to reinterpret existing rules, especially when Member States fail to control key institutional resources.

Different types of leaders will allegedly bring about diverse consequences to political processes and institutional bureaucracies. In this sense, not only some in-depth analysis of national leaders would prove instrumental to understanding world politics, but would also enlighten how, when, and where formal leaders at IOs can affect international politics. The next section of this article will discuss the institutional power of formal leaders and the relationship kept between SGs and their countries of origin.

“Chair Power,” Connections with Countries of Origin, and Prestige-Seeking Moves

In the previous section, one finds the argument that a formal leadership usually entails institutional powers, which can be used in conformity with a leader's values and preferences. Tallberg (2006) analyzes the political influence played by the Presidency of the European Union and finds out that, recurrently over time, the chair became a platform for political leverage in connection with the chairperson's preferences. By taking the Presidency, some Member States were empowered to directly set the agenda, bypassing binding contents and/or coordinating their positions with regard to third parties.

The exploration of chairmanship for national purposes turned the function of formal leadership into a source for unilateral gains. The power of agenda setting, the prerogative to convene formal or informal meetings, and to determine/change priority levels attributed to procedures/stages during negotiations were good evidence of this double-edged character of the Presidency. It produces a certain paradox, as Chesterman (2007) argues that sometimes a SG can be more influential and enjoy extra leeway when adapting him or herself to the interests of Member States, that is, for a certain degree of success, the formal leader needs to accommodate national interests, so his/her country of origin can be—at least partially—contemplated by this attitude. The institutional environment can enable and improve the abilities of a formal leadership to work under such “double allegiance” paradigm. Assuming the privileges of presidency in terms of access to information and interference in negotiation tables, Tallberg correctly puts it, “Presidencies speed up negotiations and improve the chances of agreement on nationally prioritized issues through decisions on the frequency and format of bargaining sessions” (Tallberg 2006, 11).

According to Tallberg, a reason why there will be more or less polemics about one particular issue is the institutional design of the chair itself. For example, rotation among Member States for defining the next chairperson's nationality, obligation to elect a chairperson from one of the IO Member States, and appointment of a supranational official as the chairperson will produce some diffuse reciprocity among participant states that work for the

benefit of formal leaderships. The elections of chairpersons by states put the question of control in the center of the process, but also give an opportunity to other states to use the procedure to explore the value of chairmanship. There is not a direct association between the nationality of a formal leader and the exploration of the chairmanship to the advantage of his/her country of origin. However, it is possible to expect some sort of benefit as nation states seek to profit from this position in order to increase the gains inside the organization or set the agenda just because there is a fellow compatriot in office. If the formal leadership can be seen as an asset for nation states to pursue their foreign policy goals, such relationship must be analyzed. Our underlying assumption is that *prestige is important to states not only on symbolic but also on instrumental grounds*, and to the extent that prestige can be attached to formal leadership, nation states may look for it.

Theoretical concerns about “prestige” as an analytical category in international politics have first come from the Realist tradition (Wylie 2006). For the realists, that usually translates as how great powers manage to convert prestige/reputation into military power. Within this tradition of thought, prestige belongs to the “struggles for minds of men” (Morgenthau 1948; Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014), that is, it should represent what a nation is (or thinks) and wants other nations to believe. Consequently, prestige has not a truly material nature, but deals with philosophies, ways of life, propaganda, and reputation. On the other hand, Constructivism assumes that the facts of IR are socially constructed, so if states are social actors, recognition and prestige can generate perceptions of/on other states in social interactions, and then provide a theoretical framework (Kim 2004; Wylie 2006; Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014). The meaning of “prestige” underwent a connotation changing, from an inherently negative perspective associated with delusive action to some ideational asset (Kim 2004; Wylie 2006). Reputation, according to Miller, is “a judgment about an actor’s past behavior that is used to predict future behavior” (Miller *apud* Wylie 2006, 5); therefore, prestige would only be achieved from a consolidated positive reputation, as it could not be solely based on material resources.

Prestige is “the high level of respect accorded to states by the other actors in the international system. States with prestige are recognized by other actors as having a high standing either generally or with regard to a particular issue area, which means they will receive respect or esteem from other actors.” (Miller *apud* Wylie 2006, 5). As affirmed by Kacos (2011), prestige leads to attention, and in political affairs, states usually want to be noticed and taken into account, assuming that being ostracized in IR is not good for one state to achieve its goals. Prestige also is a moral category, related not only to raw power or the military, meaning that, beyond its appeal to great powers, small and middle powers will also care about their reputation, as normative prestige can open doors for cooperation, alliances, and optimal results in international negotiations; it is a matter of positioning in the international society (Kacos 2011). In so being, prestige is (or should mean) power in a normative way, transforming national states into moral authorities in international politics, for it provides an alternative course of action in international politics, embedding in foreign policy some values and perceptions that can be disseminated in world politics. At the end of the day, states might search for prestige as a source of soft power to help them pursue their goals in world politics.

Prestige acquisition may lead to some admirable results, such as economic growth, accompanied by technological modernization, cultural innovation, and political leverage within multilateral settings (Barnhart 2013). Thus, prestige is a tool for finding a good relational position in world politics, escaping marginalization and ostracism. We believe that Latin America would prove an excellent microcosm for testing some of these hypotheses raised by theories on prestige and reputation, since it incarnates nowadays both diplomatic aloofness and economic dependency on the world's major powers, not to mention an explicit bet on the virtues of multilateralism, legalism, and international institutions throughout history (Gardini and Lambert 2011; Domínguez and Covarrubias 2015; Mares and Kacowicz 2016; Belém Lopes and Faria 2016).

To sum it up, leaders can be important assets inside IOs for nation states, especially because, as argued before, prestige is a collective construction, which requires multilateral validation in order to spread and become associated with specific symbols, beliefs, norms, and values. Having a formal executive head connected with the national state fuels ambitions and can actually increase the prestige of a given state. Using the multilateral tools at hand to advance a national perspective is a low-cost strategy for a state with a desire for soft power and reputation. The question raised by this article concerns the efforts made by states to appoint SGs to IOs, with a view to promote national values and boost prestige in IR. The next section will provide an overview of SGs from Latin America in RIOs and GIGOs, and the final section will approach ten case studies to find out if there is any strong association between a supposed policy of prestige and the pursuit of national interests by specific states.

Latin American SGs of IOs

This section presents an overview of the SGs from Latin America, focusing on the presence of national citizens in RIOs and GIGOs. From the regional perspective, nine RIOs have been scrutinized: OAS (Organization of American States), ACS (Association of Caribbean States), CARICOM (Caribbean Community), OECS (Organization of Eastern Caribbean States), UNASUR (Union of South American Nations), CAN (Andean Community), MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market), LAIA (Latin American Integration Association), and SICA (Central American Integration System). At the global level, eleven GIGOs were investigated: WHO (World Health Organization), UN (United Nations), WTO (World Trade Organization), UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization), ITSO (International Telecommunications Satellite Organization), UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), UPU (Universal Postal Union), OPCW (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons), UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees), UNWOMEN, and UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). Table 1 presents the number of Latin American citizens who have taken the leadership of these institutions in the time span of sixty-seven years.

From 1948 to 2015, there were at least sixty-six Latin American SGs in RIOs and nineteen in GIGOs. Gender distribution is highly unequal, since only four women took office as SGs in RIOs and one in GIGOs (who was Michelle Bachelet, the president of Chile, at UNWOMEN), which shows a

Table 1 Number of Latin American SGs in RIOs and GIGOs (1948–2015)

Latin American RIOs	Number of Latin American SGs
OAS	14
ACS	6
CARICOM	8
OECS	6
UNASUR	4
CAN	10
MERCOSUR	10
LAIA	5
SICA	8
GIGOs	Number of Latin American SGs
FAO	1
WHO	1
UN	1
WTO	1
UNWTO	1
ITSO	1
UNIDO	2
UPU	1
OPCW	2
UNHCR	3
UNWOMEN	1
UNCTAD	5

Source: *IO BIO Database* (2016).

huge predisposition from member countries in favoring male figures in leading positions of international institutions. Data also reveal a considerable discrepancy on which states have provided more SGs to RIOs and GIGOs over time. [Table 2](#) brings out such difference in regional *vis-à-vis* global platforms.

At the regional level, Colombia is the leading country when it comes to providing SGs to RIOs, followed by Uruguay and Argentina. A partial explanation for this trend would be the massive Colombian participation in Latin American integrational experiments through IOs in the Andes and the Caribbean. Colombia takes part in the OAS, ACS, UNASUR, and CAN, having led these organizations at least once. At the Andean Community, for being a very important player in the region, Colombia has conceded no less than three SGs. Another argument correlates the internationalization of the Colombian civil unrest since the coming to power of Andrés Pastrana with the country's greater involvement in multilateral dynamics ([Borda and Guzman 2012](#)). The second place in the ranking of RIOs is taken by Uruguay and Argentina, who are not as engaged as Colombia in international institutional politics, but have showed their credentials as important regional players too: Uruguay has had two SGs in MERCOSUR, one in LAIA, and two in OAS, while Argentina has provided one SG to OAS, one to UNASUR, one to LAIA, and two to MERCOSUR.

The situation changes if one looks at it from a global perspective. Brazil takes the lead among Latin Americans in providing SGs to GIGOs, despite its shy participation in regional organizations over time. From 1948 to 2015, Brazil has witnessed their national citizens take office as SGs in the WHO,

Table 2 Number of SGs in RIOs and GIGOs (per Latin American country)

Countries	Number of SGs
Regional Organizations	
Antigua e Barbuda	1
Costa Rica	1
Grenada	1
Guatemala	1
Guiana	1
São Vincente	1
Bolivia	2
Chile	2
Ecuador	2
Jamaica	2
Nicaragua	2
Peru	2
Dominican Republic	2
Dominica	2
Barbados	3
El Salvador	3
Honduras	3
Trinidad e Tobago	3
Saint Lucia	4
Paraguay	4
Venezuela	4
Brazil	4
Argentina	5
Uruguay	5
Colombia	8
Global Organizations	
Peru	1
Ecuador	1
Guyana	1
Venezuela	1
Mexico	2
Chile	4
Argentina	3
Brazil	7

Source: *IO BIO Database (2016)*.

WTO, UPU, OPCW, UNHCR, and UNCTAD, what certainly contributes for the understanding of certain positions adopted in Brazilian foreign policy, such as the prevalence of multilateralism over bilateralism and the investment in formal institutional environments (Fonseca Júnior 2008). Brazil has been stronger at being represented in more technique-oriented institutions, attributing more weight to world-scale rather than regional organizations. This finding is consistent with Andrés Malamud's argument about Brazil being a "leader without followers" in Latin America, a reality that sharply contrasts with the spread-out self-image of a South American emerging global player. In his rendition, "Brazil is likely to consolidate itself as a middle global power before gaining acceptance as a leader in its region" (Malamud 2011, 1).

Table 3 Latin American SGs in GIGOs

IO	SG name	Period	Country of origin
WHO	Candau, Marcelino Gomes	1953–1973	Brazil
FAO	Graziano da Silva, José	2012–now	Brazil
UN	Pérez de Cuéllar, Javier	1982–1991	Peru
WTO	Roberto Azevedo	2013–now	Brazil
UNWTO	Savignac, Antonio Enríquez	1990–1996	Mexico
ITSO	Astrain Castro, Santiago	1964–1973	Chile
UNIDO	De Maria y Campos, Mauricio	1993–1997	Mexico
	Magariños, Carlos Alfredo	1997–2005	Argentina
UPU	Botto de Barros, Adwaldo Cardoso	2009–2011	Brazil
OPCW	Bustani, Jose M.	1997–2002	Brazil
	Pfirter, Rogelio	2002–2009	Argentina
UNHCR	Ayala-Lasso, José	1994–1997	Ecuador
	Vieira de Mello, Sérgio	2002–2003	Brazil
	Ramcharan, Bertrand G.	2003–2004	Guyana
UNWOMEN	Bachelet, Michelle	2006–2010	Chile
UNCTAD	Prebisch, Raúl	1964–1969	Argentina
	Pérez Guerrero, Manuel	1969–1974	Venezuela
	Fortin, Carlos	1974–1984	Chile
	Ricuperio, Rubens	1995–2004	Brazil
	Fortin, Carlos	2004–2005	Chile

Source: *IO BIO Database* (2016).

When Latin American subregional complexes are compared, the Southern Cone and the Andes strike as major SG providers, which can be explained by their proclivities to embrace regional integration. However, some small countries, such as those from the Caribbean Sea and the Amazon Forest, have already had fifteen SGs in Latin American RIOs, partly because of their integrational endeavors—exemplified by CARICOM, ACS, OECS, SICA, and the likes—providing a good platform for the exercise of influence at the regional level. Countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados, and Dominican Republic, which do not have much leverage at the global scale, can wield some pressure in their region through RIOs. The same happens to Nicaragua and El Salvador inside SICA, as they exert leadership in Central America by way of being continuous providers of SGs to this institution.

A wholly different picture is portrayed with regard to the participation of Latin American SGs in GIGOs. Altogether, they amount to twenty individuals, who are distributed among technically and politically oriented organizations, mostly dedicated to economic development and human rights—two of the most pressing agendas for developing nations. However, in comparison with other countries from the Global North, the difference is abyssal. The United States have had forty-four SGs in GIGOs over time, being followed by Switzerland, whose all-time record is twenty-three SGs, and France, which accounts for nineteen SGs. For the argument's sake, France alone totals almost as many SGs as Latin America—a subcontinent made up of two dozen countries, but whose SGs of IOs have come so far from only eight nations (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela). This patent under-representation of Latin American citizens at the head of multilateral bodies can be taken as a proxy variable for the lack

of prestige (and consequences thereof) that the region may still experience in international politics (See Table 3).

In so being, it is arguable that gross inequalities can be found both at the regional and global level. In the regional level, there is a clear overrepresentation of SGs from the Southern Cone and the Andes that would be incomparable, however, to the stark asymmetry identified at the global level, given the massive appointment of SGs from the Global North (North America and Western Europe) *vis-à-vis* the South.

Prosopographical Case Studies

This section discusses the main argument of the article: an alleged “policy of prestige” put into practice by Latin American states and the role of formal leaders at IOs. For that, we compare ten prosopographical case studies on Latin American SGs, e.g. Ayala Lasso and Vieira de Mello at UNHCHR, Baena Soares and Gaviria Trujillo at OAS, Bustani at OPCW, Candau at WHO, Holanda Cavalcanti at Latin Union, Kirchner at Unasur, Prebisch at ECLA and UNCTAD, and Ricupero at UNCTAD. All biographical data have been extracted from the IO BIO Project Database (2016).⁵ Our preliminary results are ambivalent, as they offer support to both hypotheses—and there is one clearly deviant case.

Do All Latin American SGs Look Alike?

Here we attempt to identify some common features for the cases under scrutiny. By analyzing a group of ten SGs born in four different countries in Latin America, we have found similarities in the pathways they followed to reach a formal leadership position. With regard to the academic background of these leaders, nine out of ten have graduated in courses in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences, the majority of which earning a degree in Law (five out of nine), the others having studied Political Science, Economics and Letters/Linguistics. The deviant case is Marcolino Gomes Candau, who graduated in Medicine, an academic field that happens to be directly related to the post he reached at the WHO. In this sense, having a background in the area of Humanities fits many of the functions IOs are expected to perform, be it economic or political in nature. The second similarity observed by the authors is that none of the SGs had worked in a private company before they started their careers at IOs. The ten cases assessed showed a hard governmental bias in their professional histories, as they have typically taken up positions in the public sector, a situation that has presumably prepared them to reach top posts in IOs. The case of Geraldo Cavalcanti, who worked at Ericsson Telecommunications for a short period of his life, right after his retirement from Brazil’s diplomatic corps, is quite an exception. The third commonality found among the ten aforementioned individuals is that they have demonstrated good mastery of and practical experience with intergovernmental organizations. The paths for such cognitive linkage were basically three: working as interns anytime during their lifetimes at IOs, representing their countries as diplomats or plenipotentiaries within these IOs, or being career bureaucrats at these IOs. This factor

⁵Biographical facts and figures cited in this section have been retrieved from the IO BIO Project Database. For further details on methodology, please refer to the Introduction of this article.

possibly hints at the increasingly rational and/or technical orientation in IO management these days, insofar as political and technical expertise at multilateral environments is seen as a requirement for the best performance of a SG. This can be found in the sample under analysis in this piece.

Latin American Diplomats Who Become SGs of IOs: Is It "Policy of Prestige," or What?

The "policy of prestige" supposedly adopted by states when appointing nationals as SGs in order to get benefits from the leadership, may be identified in at least six out of the ten cases under assessment, and will usually take place by two different ways: the most typical one is associated with a country's ministry of foreign affairs and the mobilization of diplomats as candidates and campaigners, while the less traditional hypothesis is associated with presidential diplomacy, where former presidents (or prime ministers in parliamentary democracies) run for SG after leaving their country's leadership.

In the group of Latin American officials who have been appointed to leadership posts at IOs, we include the cases of José Ayala Lasso, João Clemente Baena Soares, José Mauricio de Figueiredo Bustani, and Rubens Ricupero, whose entire careers were in diplomacy – where all of them have enjoyed a long and rich experience in international negotiations. Lasso, for instance, was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Ecuador from 1997 to 1999, and also served as an ambassador to Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Peru, Italy, and the former European Economic Community. The trio of Brazilian SGs – Baena Soares, Bustani, and Ricupero – displays the same traits as their Ecuadorean counterpart, as the three of them served as ambassadors to most important embassies of Brazil around the world, such as those in Washington, London, Paris, Moscow, and Vienna. In addition to that, and more importantly yet, Brazilian SGs maintain deep institutional relationships with Itamaraty – the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – being either under professional leave or in retirement when they took office at IOs. Baena Soares once led the Division of Cultural Relations and worked for the Department of International Organizations at Itamaraty; Bustani worked as the Head of the Department of International Organizations at Itamaraty; Ricupero was the Head of the South America's Division at the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not to mention his time as the Minister of Finance in Brazil. They were all rooted in the Brazilian public sector and kept strong ties with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As Brazilian Foreign Service members are very well reputed – being known for their professionalism and excellency (Tickner 2012) – if it were not for Itamaraty's support, their appointments would have been very unlikely.

The four "typical" Latin American SGs represented their respective countries of origin at the ambit of IOs: Lasso was Ecuador's ambassador to the UN (1989–1994) and the president of the UN Security Council (1991–1992); Ricupero was appointed Ambassador to Brazil's Permanent Mission to the UN in 1987, and moved to Geneva, where he worked along with multilateral organizations, in particular the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; Bustani worked in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Seabed and Ocean Floor at the UN and also attended the meetings of the Preparatory Committee to prepare for the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of

Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction of 1992, also known as Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); Baena did not work as a national diplomat at IOs, but was sent by Itamaraty on several assignments at the UN and OAS.

This deep imbrication between SGs and their national states may lead to the establishment of formal as well as informal connections. Some of these individuals were explicitly encouraged by their countries of origin to take up formal leadership roles, and states even mobilized resources for it to happen. Lasso's nomination, for instance, was welcomed with unanimous approval by Member States at the OAS. His credentials were directly presented to delegates by Ecuadorean authorities, and he received an endorsement from the former UN SG Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Bustani was also an exemplary case of how Brazil can be actively involved in SG candidacies. Baena Soares and Ricupero, despite enjoying considerable political capital on their own, have been supported by Brazil's diplomatic machinery too.⁶

An interesting case concerns Geraldo Holanda Cavalcanti's trajectory. Despite having served as a Brazilian diplomat at prestigious embassies in Washington, Moscow, and Brussels, and having advanced Brazilian positions both as a delegate at the UNCTAD and as an ambassador to UNESCO, he has never been openly supported by the Brazilian government for the post of SG at the Latin Union. That was so presumably because this position was not deemed to be useful or prestigious enough for the purposes of the Brazilian government. This deviant case shows that sometimes, for political as well as practical reasons, a ministry of foreign affairs will not engage in "policy of prestige" tactics for a national citizen to become a formal leadership.

Taken are two other cases of "policy of prestige," where the circumstances are discrepant from each other: César Augusto Trujillo Gaviria and Néstor Carlos Kirchner, the former presidents of Colombia and Argentina, respectively. Differently from what happens to a career diplomat, a president from a Latin American state has a superior symbolic standing nowadays, as s/he has (presumably) been democratically elected by the people and can use every tool at hand to efficiently diffuse prestige and promote national values and interests to a larger scale in international politics. This new style of diplomacy, termed "presidential diplomacy," is seen "as the customary resort to direct negotiations between national presidents every time a crucial decision has to be made or a critical conflict needs to be resolved. In spite of the 'presidential' adjective, this kind of practice makes reference to political, summit diplomacy – as opposed to bureaucratic, professional diplomacy" (Malamud 2005, 139–40). Although Gaviria and Kirchner did not ever join their countries' diplomatic delegations at IOs, both of them have had important roles in what regards regional integration initiatives.

⁶Brazil has been particularly proactive in supporting their national citizens' campaigns to take up formal leadership positions at international organizations, international courts and tribunals. According to Brazilian mainstream media, the recent appointments of Roberto Azevedo to the WTO (successful bid) and Leonardo Nemer to the International Criminal Court (failed attempt) have both enjoyed some degree of state support – the latter less than the former. For accounts in Portuguese language, please refer to <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/opiniaio/2013/05/1276220-fernando-pimentel-o-brasil-faz-historia.shtml> (on Azevedo's election) and http://istoe.com.br/388172_E+DO+RAMO/ (on Nemer's candidacy). Both have been accessed on July 22, 2017.

Gaviria was decisive in the negotiations for the Andean Pact, which established a free trade area as well as a customs union involving Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. He has also brokered a trade liberalization agreement with CARICOM, the Caribbean Community and Common Market, in 1994. Kirchner was diplomatically active and critical of the United States, fiercely opposing the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) project, and by the same token, re-establishing bilateral relations with Cuba, promoting deeper cooperation between Argentina and Venezuela, and trying to reconcile Mercosur and the Andean Community. It is arguable that his diplomatic entrepreneurship gave birth to two integrational initiatives: first, the Community of South American States (CASA) was created, leading to the foundation of UNASUR, and turning Kirchner into a kind of modern "founding father" of South American integration. Both of them, Gaviria and Kirchner, expressed a positive stance toward regional integration in Latin America. That is believed to be the reason why their appointments were not contested among Member States; on the contrary, they gathered massive support from the most important players in the region, such as the United States, Brazil, and Venezuela.

Are Latin American SGs the Outcomes of Growing Transnational Cosmopolitanism?

Two cases under assessment would most certainly qualify as examples of SGs who are byproducts of an increasingly cosmopolitan world, as they did not rely on national states nor ministries of foreign affairs to attain their leadership positions in IOs: Marcolino Gomes Candau and Sergio Vieira de Melo.

Candau was an Assistant Superintendent of the Special Service for Public Health in Brazil, and that was the only governmental position he ever took during his lifetime before arriving to the WHO. His international career bypassed the Itamaraty, since he was neither a career diplomat nor a politically appointed ambassador. His professional path was constructed by way of relationships with a dense web of health experts all around the world. His connections with people in academia, medical institutions, and foundations (especially the Rockefeller Foundation) were key for him to eventually become the WHO's top officer. Back in the 1940s, Candau's technical expertise opened the doors at the WHO and provided him with international recognition and visibility. In 1953, the WHO's decision-making body appointed Candau to be Director-General Brock Chisholm's successor for a five-year term by a landslide majority vote (47 to 16)—an occasion when he was supported by the U.S. delegation and all Latin American countries. Candau assumed office in July 1950 and was known as the Director-General who consolidated and stabilized the organization and endowed it with technical and administrative competences.

Sergio Vieira de Melo, the son of a Brazilian diplomat, claims to have never actually intended to become one of them, although he spent great part of his life in foreign countries. His academic background was in linguistics, especially the French language, and philosophy. In 1969, Melo was admitted at the UN, where he served as a translator and editor in the early beginnings. For over thirty busy years, he performed several duties within the ambit of UN missions, which took place in literally every corner of the world. It was no sooner than 2002 when he was finally appointed UN High

Commissioner for Human Rights (a kind of SG). He passed away in the following year in Baghdad, having been lethally targeted by a terrorist attack.

The two SGs cited above did not follow careers in diplomacy nor defended their respective countries of origin in IOs. Besides, the international reputation they have acquired was more the result of long-cultivated personal connections than a function of any institutional standing. In this particular sense, they are nothing but international bureaucrats, with a high level of expertise and, more importantly, a history inside an IO. In so being, the relationships they have built with their own countries of origin do not allow one to claim that a “diplomacy of prestige” strategy was ever implemented. Candau and Melo are the children of an increasingly interdependent world, in association with the power garnered by epistemic communities and informal networks (Haas 1992; Keck and Sikkink 1998).

However, the case of Raúl Prebisch is uniquely tailored; his appointment to lead the ECLAC and UNCTAD can be considered a consequence of growing cosmopolitanism in the world as well. As an important economist in his country in the 1930s, Prebisch became a Minister of Finance in Argentina at a very young age. He had accumulated some previous experience in diplomatic negotiations with Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, with a view at creating a free trade area in the region. But as Prebisch began to be seen as a public enemy, and was ostracized by Juan Domingo Perón’s regime, he never actually counted on the Argentinian ministry of affairs to campaign for him; just the other way around. It was U Thant, the UN SG himself, who first invited Prebisch to join the UN system as a lead officer. Again, if it were not for his personal achievements and global connections, he would not have reached the peak position neither at ECLAC nor at UNCTAD.

Conclusion

This article discussed the role of formal leaderships in IOs as a tool for prestige-seeking strategic moves by Latin American states. We have submitted two hypotheses to scrutiny: the first was that a “diplomacy of prestige” would be put into practice by rising Latin American states through the appointment of diplomats and politicians who took office as SGs of major intergovernmental bodies; and the second was that tenure in office of Latin American SGs would not be directly associated with any governmental drive or an emerging country’s manoeuvre for greater international status, but rather meant a collateral effect of growing transnational cosmopolitanism.

Thus, after briefly approaching ten cases of Latin American SGs at regional and global organizations, we could identify at least six which provided some evidence for the claim of existing strong connections between formal leaders and their countries of origin; four of them showcased the so-called “diplomacy of prestige” (as we refer to it in this article) being sponsored by ministries of foreign affairs in Ecuador and Brazil: José Ayala Lasso’s, João Clemente Baena Soares’, José Mauricio de Figueiredo Bustani’s, and Rubens Ricupero’s appointments are good examples. The deviant case of Latin Union’s SG Geraldo Holanda Cavalcanti well illustrates how, no matter how suitable a candidate may be for a position, his/her election may not be considered strategic or priority for a country’s ruling elite.

Two of our cases suggest the emergence of a policy of prestige of a new kind: former presidents Kirchner's and Gaviria's appointments to lead, respectively, Unasur and OAS possibly represent the coming of age of "presidential diplomacy" in Latin America. To the best of our knowledge, their elections as SGs had more to do with personality traits and ground-work experience gained in dealing with diverse integration processes than with any particular act carried out by their countries' ministries of foreign affairs. In addition to that, some mention of ideological orientation would also be useful for heuristic purposes. Although leaders might aspire to be politically autonomous, in many cases they have been appointed with political support of a particular type. Although he differed from the United States on some issues, César Gaviria became SG of the OAS with American support. Indeed, one of the reasons Colombia has had such success in regional organizations could arguably be the strong US-Colombia relationship kept over the years. By way of contrast, Néstor Kirchner received support from left-wing governments at a time of strength—the Latin American "Pink Tide" (Belém Lopes and Faria 2016). Finally, two cases under assessment show the feasibility of our second hypothesis. Candau's and Melo's appointments seemed to be more an outcome of transnational cosmopolitanism than the output of a direct strategy put forth by a given state or government. None of them was a career diplomat and, seemingly, they did not rely on their national foreign ministries to achieve leadership posts in IOs. The case of Prebisch is also unique: he has reached the position of SG two times—at two different IOs, ECLA, and UNCTAD—in spite of not having maintained good relations at the governmental level with his country of origin.

Giving a detailed look at this batch of ten SGs, especially against the backdrop of the general data collected about eighty-six SGs from Latin America who came to power from 1948 to 2015, has left us with a few important lessons. The first one regards the place of reputational politics for Latin American foreign policies. As a tendency, leaders and ministries of foreign affairs, particularly those from Brazil, will campaign for their nationals and spare no resources to elect him/her to the position of SG, be it in regional or global organizations. The bid for leading posts at multilateral organizations appears to be consistent with the historical inclination of Latin American countries to embrace institutional rather than unilateral acts or bilateral *ad hoc* arrangements (Gardini and Lambert 2011). Second, concerning the political economy of these electoral campaigns, one can always claim that, from a cost-benefit perspective, the "diplomacy of prestige" consists of a relatively cheap strategy for "international" graduation (Milani, Pinheiro, and Lima 2017). Yet, since a campaign for the post of SG can be both financially costly and politically demanding, the country must consider all the risks involved in mobilizing public resources for this objective before engaging in it, and (possibly) failing at the end of the day.⁷ Third and lastly, one infers from the cases under analysis that even if a country's ruling elite does not make an effort to transform one of their nationals into a SG, it is still feasible for a citizen to become the formal leader of an IO, inasmuch as the

⁷To provide one recent example on this dilemma, please refer to the discussion promoted by Brazilian mainstream media outlet CartaCapital about the appropriateness of having a state-sponsored strategy to elect Mrs. Flávia Piovesan as Justice of the OAS Inter-American Commission in times of economic recession in Brazil. <https://www.cartacapital.com.br/politica/campanha-de-flavia-piovesan-na-cidh-tem-irregularidade-e-suspeit> (accessed July 22, 2017).

nomination from the country of origin is no necessary condition for the appointment/election.

Works Cited

- Barnhart, Joslyn. 2013. "Prestige, humiliation and international politics." PhD diss., UCLA.
- Belém Lopes, Dawisson, and Faria, Carlos. 2016. When foreign policy meets social demands in Latin America. *Contexto Internacional* 38(1):11–53.
- Borda Guzmán, Sandra. 2012. *La internacionalización de la paz y de la Guerra en Colombia durante los gobiernos de Andrés Pastrana y Álvaro Uribe*. Bogotá: Ediciones Uniandes.
- Chesterman, Simon. 2007. *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Cambridge University Press.
- Dafoe, Allan, Renshon, Jonathan, and Huth, Paul. 2014. Reputation and status as motives for war. *Annual Review of Political Science* 17:371–93.
- Domínguez, Jorge, and Covarrubias, Ana, eds. 2015. *Routledge Handbook of Latin America in the World*. London: Routledge.
- Fonseca Júnior, Gelson 2008. *O interesse e a regra: Ensaios sobre o multilateralismo*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra.
- Gardini, Gian Luca and Lambert, Peter, eds. 2011. *Latin American Foreign Policies: Between Ideology and Pragmatism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Goertz, Gary; Mahoney, James. 2012. *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Science*. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Princeton University Press.
- Haas, Peter. 1992. Epistemic communities and international policy coordination. *International Organization* 46(1): Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination (Winter, 1992):1–35.
- IO BIO, *Biographical Dictionary of Secretaries-General of International Organizations*, eds Bob Reinalda, Kent J. Kille, and Jaci Eisenberg, www.ru.nl/fm/iobio, (accessed June 26, 2016).
- Kacos, Anne. 2011. "Reconstructing respect: the quest for prestige in the International System." Masters' diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Keck, Margaret, and Sikkink, Kathryn. 1998. *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Princeton University Press.
- Kille, Kent J. 2006. *From Manager to Visionary – The Secretary-General of the United Nations*. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kim, Youngho 2004. Does prestige matter in international politics? *Journal of International and Area Studies* 39(11):39–55.
- King, Gary, and Powell, Eleanor. 2008. How not to lie with statistics. <http://j.mp/2o3Dyto> (accessed July 20, 2017).
- Malamud, Andrés. 2005. Presidential diplomacy and the institutional underpinnings of Mercosur: An empirical examination. *Latin American Research Review* 40(1):138–64.
- . 2011. A leader without followers? The growing divergence between the regional and global performance of Brazilian Foreign Policy. *Latin American Politics and Society* 53(3):1–24.
- Mares, David and Kacowicz, Arie, (eds) 2016. *Routledge Handbook of Latin American Security*. London: Routledge.
- Milani, Carlos, Pinheiro, Letícia, and Lima, Maria Regina. 2017. Brazil's foreign policy and the "graduation dilemma". *International Affairs* 93(3):585–605.
- Mares, David and Kacowicz, Arie, eds. 2016. *Routledge Handbook of Latin American Security*. London: Routledge.

- Morgenthau, Hans J. 1948. *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: A. A. Knopf.
- Schroeder, Michael Bluman. 2014. *Executive Leadership in the Study of International Organization: A Framework for Analysis*. *International Studies Review*.
- Sergio Vieira de Melo Foundation. Biography: Sergio Vieira de Melo. http://www.sergiovdmfoundation.org/wcms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=55&lang=en (accessed June 26, 2016).
- Stone, Lawrence. 2011. *Prosopografía*. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Revista de Sociologia Política.
- Tallberg, Jonas 2006. *Leadership and Negotiation in the European Union*. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Cambridge University Press.
- Tickner, Arlene 2012. Rising Brazil and South America. In *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, eds. S. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wylie, Lana 2006. We care what they think: Prestige and Canadian Foreign Policy. 2006 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, June 3, Toronto.
- Young, Oran R 1991. *Political Leadership and Regime Formation: On the Delevopment of Institutions in International Society*. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: International Organization.