

# Unveiling Gender Inequality: Exploring Historical Perspectives, Female Leadership, and Policy Implications in Guatemala

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## ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the comprehensive issue of gender inequality in Guatemala, examining both the governmental approach and its outcomes. The primary objective is to explore historical aspects that elucidate gender disparities within the country and highlight the influence of female leadership in Guatemala's domestic sphere. To provide current insights, the paper includes data from a survey conducted at a missionary school in Chisec, Guatemala, capturing children's perspectives on gender roles and future aspirations. By comparing Guatemala's situation with policies and practices implemented in Nicaragua and Cuba, the paper suggests strategies for promoting female leadership and achieving higher levels of gender equality in Guatemala. Through this comparative analysis, the paper aims to offer actionable recommendations for addressing gender inequality and enhancing women's roles in Guatemalan society.

## Introduction

Among the complexities that constitute the social environment of Guatemala, discussions surrounding gender issues, notably femicide, have risen to great significance. Noted for its high rates of selective gender discrimination rooted in its more or less historically patriarchal society, the country has witnessed a significant increase in the violent deaths of women, with 1.6 per 100,000 women reportedly killed in 2021 (Gender-Based Violence (Violence against Women and Girls), 2019). The Guatemalan government's insufficient and ineffective investigations have been called into question regarding the devastating results reflected in the statistics. In 2008, a law criminalizing several acts of violence against women was legislated by the government to show their concern towards this problem (Ruiz, 2018). However, the domestic improvements resulting from this seem to be insignificant and have, in fact, led to greater criticism.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand, this paper first examines the cultural framework of Guatemala, where the machismo culture is deeply integrated, and the power dynamics that derive from it assign specific roles to each gender, leading to male figures with more dominance over their female counterparts. This patriarchal structure not only impacts these segments but also manifests in broader contexts, limiting women's access to economic opportunities and broader participation in society. Investigating the cultural background behind this particular phenomenon will help highlight the influential factors contributing to the societal issue at hand. Subsequently, this paper will also examine the efforts made by the Guatemalan government to address this issue, leading to a discussion on the current state of political participation of women. Moreover, given the rate of women's participation within society, the paper explores the domestic influence of female leadership. This is important because it will help us understand whether actual changes have been made since such governmental measures have been implemented. The paper then provides a cross-examination of these movements in Nicaragua and Cuba to suggest how the Guatemalan government may navigate its objectives to overcome its issues regarding gender inequality and acquire a better understanding of both the advancements and shortcomings of social movements led by females in the region. Based on such findings, this paper will ultimately provide a brief outlook on Guatemala's future in relation to gender equality.

## The Influence of Machismo on Gender Inequalities in Central America

Two cultural components are largely attributed to Guatemala's familial structure: familism and machismo. Familism is the prevailing ideal that fulfills their cultural values, placing the family ahead of individual interests and development (Ingoldsby, 1991). Despite the presence of familism in some families, the influence of machismo culture cannot be overlooked. The machismo culture reflects ideas of aggressiveness and hypersexuality, highlighting the power that male individuals hold within the family unit. Needless to say, the dominance they hold significantly impacts the roles that women can play. Some scholars have observed that most women believe in male superiority (Stycos, 1955), perhaps choosing to support their men rather than being vocal and standing out. Nevertheless, there is a discourse among scholars regarding the reasons for the passivity of women in the community. Ingoldsby suggests that the widely accepted cultural stereotype leads men to "protect" their female relatives from other machos due to specific reasons regarding their virginity, ultimately allowing women to have very few liberties (Ingoldsby, 1991).

Simply put, the wife figure is often perceived as existing primarily for her husband, to the extent that she is sometimes viewed as his mother. Males who perceive their wives in this specific manner often deny their wives' sexualities completely (Basham, 1976). In other words, females who live in this dynamic are limited in opportunities—both socially and economically—as their role is to be subservient to their husbands' needs. The impact that machismo culture has is, needless to say, not insignificant, solidifying the sociological argument that the family unit is the smallest and most fundamental form of society, impacting Guatemalan society as a whole. Inversely viewing the expression of aggressiveness and masculinity of male figures within such domestic "society," there are conjectures that describe the cause of this specific behavior. According to Rainwater (Rainwater, 1964), the burden that comes from economic hardships men encounter leads to feelings of inferiority, which, in turn, are expressed in manners of aggression towards their female partners. Moreover, childhood experiences without an affectionate father figure are the ultimate psychological cause of machismo, as this attitude is passed on through generations. Certain scholars have suggested that this observation on machismo culture aligns with the specific behaviors of men (Giraldo, 1972), and while machismo culture is widely integrated within Guatemala as a whole, lower classes tend to display these particular behaviors more extensively.

## Evaluation of Gender Equality in Current Guatemalan Society

Understanding the historical background of Guatemalan culture is essential for gaining insight into the current state of women's participation within society. By examining the governmental structure and its impact on citizens, this paper grasps the significance of historical context in comprehending the necessity of subsequent movements in rural Guatemala for women to gain rights to participate in political and economic leadership opportunities. This information is critical for understanding the progress made in gender equality in Guatemala and the challenges the Guatemalan government must address to overcome ongoing issues. Among its many endeavors to enhance the quality of civilian life in Guatemala, the federal government established auxiliary mayors specifically in the Chichicastenango region. The motivation for such governmental decisions stemmed from the war in the early 1980s, leaving the region in dire need of international development cooperation (Sieder, 2017). However, the installation of new leadership positions led to structural ramifications, inadvertently displacing the people who had maintained authority in the region; scholars have referred to this phenomenon as "dispossession through empowerment" (Elyachar, 2005).

While the original intent of the Decentralization Law presented by the government aimed to provide opportunities for citizen participation in the rural indigenous population—representing the materialization of commitments made in the peace agreements—the Municipal Code simultaneously created a series of new authority structures within the region (Sieder, 2017). These councils were called the Community Development Councils (COCODEs), and their ultimate purpose was to eliminate systematic discrimination against minorities. Moreover, the Guatemalan government made several attempts to further support this goal through various regulatory measures. These included the

establishment of new laws against femicide and other forms of violence, as well as collaborative efforts between the government and civil society to raise awareness.

Nevertheless, the unexpected power of COCODEs led to failures in the advancement of women leadership. In fact, the councils reinforced male superiority—linking back to the roots of machismo culture—by interrupting the processes for which civic associations advocated to bring about the necessary changes. The influence of the committees even negatively impacted the denouncement of cases on domestic violence (ASIES/OACNUDH, 2008). Overall, the original attempt of both law enforcement and the creation of COCODEs did not align with the anticipated outcomes, and the fundamental problem of systemic pressures was left unresolved.

Ethnic claims for self-determination were extraneous to the civil war in the early 1980s; yet the peace process that brought the war to an end incorporated the historically neglected indigenous people's demands into a democratic national agenda (Sieder, 1997). Followed by the various agreements supporting the inclusion of the indigenous people, the Mayan civil indigenous society groups in particular have been successful in working with the government and opposition groups for recognition of individuals. The political liberty of indigenous people has provided the participation opportunity for individual members of society—especially women and other minorities.

The lasting impact of the civil war, however, is one of the major factors that hindered the actions of not only women but indigenous people in general. Despite the government's efforts, the war left rural Guatemala with extreme poverty and wealth inequality within the country (Bodenheimer, 2020). The elevated rates of crime and insecurity especially have triggered acts of domestic violence, connecting back to the machismo culture. Overall, these factors present the unstable status of indigenous people, which further contributes to the suppression of female movements within the country.

The inclusion of women in the societal system is essential for the country itself in order to promote sustainable economic growth. Women's leadership has direct and indirect impacts on the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem, as these positions for female figures have evidently helped both individual businesses and the country's economy to improve. Whilst being the country with the highest GDP in the region, Guatemala has 70% of the rural population living in poverty (Value for Women, compiler, 2021). In this context, increasing female participation in different sectors will bring a more significant change to the economic and social status. Statistically, it is predicted that Guatemala's GDP has the potential to increase by \$12 trillion by 2025 only if they find an equilibrium point of gender equality (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015). In fact, several local supporting organizations have recognized this projection and reported its importance in alleviating poverty and enhancing the country as a whole.

Prior to investigating the opportunities available to initiate such changes, it is necessary to observe the financial efforts the Guatemalan government has made in order to surmount the gender issue within the country. The understanding of specific sectors the government has invested in provides statistical evidence that can be used in determining the improvements and perhaps the shortcomings of such efforts. The Guatemalan government has laid out a national plan to promote women's development and gender equality, which is composed of important factors such as the eradication of domestic violence and fairness in participation (*Gender Financing in Guatemala: Mapping Funding to Improve Gender Equality*, 2021). Achievement appraisal of reaching certain objectives has been done by the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), a primary institution supporting women's rights in Guatemala. This organization mainly focuses on the gender-responsive budgeting of the government, reporting statistical data. It was revealed that the traceable gender equality funding with national budgets for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 resulted in the figures of \$568m and \$525m respectively (*Gender Financing in Guatemala: Mapping Funding to Improve Gender Equality*, 2021). The data acknowledges that certain changes in financing and policies have been implemented within the nation. Apart from the government spendings, international donors along with external organizations have made notable efforts to make the data transparent.

Despite the high figures, however, the actual outcomes remain insignificant relative to the total amount of funds spent on these specific sectors, with only an average of 5% being allocated<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, data fabrication is also an issue due to high rates of corruption, a predicament that has yet to be resolved despite efforts for transparency. The accessibility to this set of data is limited, demonstrating a lack of coherence with the aims and objectives of advocacy

as well. Furthermore, research by the Association for Women in International Development reveals that feminist movements and organizations face systematic hardships due to being under-resourced. This adds to the underscored information that the government has replaced SEPREM—considered the most significant institution in this matter—with a lower-ranking institution in order to reduce the budget (*Gender Financing in Guatemala: Mapping Funding to Improve Gender Equality*, 2021).

Many experts have expressed their concerns about this matter, as SEPREM plays a crucial role in implementing Guatemala's gender policies. Without funding obtained through strategic connections with the government, it remains unclear if the organization will be able to make sustainable progress toward its ultimate goal. The government likely utilizes its upper hand position in managing funds to suppress movements supporting female participation within the country by withdrawing the power it had previously granted to certain institutions. Indeed, one possible speculation is that the influence of machismo culture is pertinent in this context as well, as the initial seemingly trivial changes made regarding gender equality soon revealed the potential for a larger social impact than expected.

## Political Participation of Women

The extent of political participation has always been a part of anthropological discourses. While some women have limited participation in activities related strictly to legal practices, others have suggested a more broad approach of any and all types of voluntary action. It is important to define this term in understanding the political participation of women in Guatemala in different areas and the influence it has brought about over generations domestically. Verba and Nie define political participation as "all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system" (Conge, 1988). They contend "that a conceptualization of political participation must include protest and violence to present an adequate view of politics in the United States and western Europe" (Conge, 1988). However, it is necessary to redefine the concept so that it includes all actions that are not necessarily exclusive to violent ones but have been exercised by an individual or a collective form of individuals to bring about change to the system. This is because political participation of a variety of forms that have not included the usage of violence have proven to be effective as well.

Gloria Núñez, a facilitator elected in 2012 for the Shared Governance Programme implemented by NIMD Guatemala and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, is one example that best portrays the greater extent of political participation achieved by a female leader. As a member of the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean, and Diaspora Women, Núñez reached a greater community of other activists, meeting women across borders with a common goal. Núñez later launched the first School of Political Training for Garífuna and Afro-descendant Women, making significant changes in the advocacy and political negotiation skills of women who had been suppressed before (Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, 2022). Though she was not directly engaged in organizations under the governmental system, the contributions she made to society itself would be considered as achieving a great extent of political participation.

Alongside Gloria's direct involvement in the creation of new facilities for women, there have been other significant milestones achieved by Guatemalan women activists, most notably Rigoberta Menchú, a lifelong advocate for the hardships of indigenous Guatemalans and other minorities. Menchú, the founder of Winaq—the nation's first indigenous political party—ultimately ran for president both in 2007 and 2011 (Mil Milagros, n.d.). Becoming one of the most prominent female political figures in Guatemala, she demonstrated the influence an individual can have on a greater scale by being vocal despite the pervasive discrimination in society. Furthermore, in broader areas of activism such as art and professional studies, the general public has been further exposed to the idea of societal changes regarding gender inequality. An inspiring article published to recognize such women also mentions Sara Curruchich, a Mayan Kaqchikel composer and singer who uses music to advocate for the hardships of indigenous people and other minorities in the community. The inspiring music she has released thus far has resonated with many, gaining national attention through social media. This case represents the efforts made within the Guatemalan women community, with female leaders making an influence across generations.

In addition, the changes in gender-responsible human resources planned within government institutions should be discussed, as it directly reflects the actual progress the country has made in terms of achieving equality to a greater degree. In relation to the ratification of an optional protocol—which addressed general rights of women in Guatemala—that was made in 2002, the data published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union before and after this period has been collected. The percentages of women in the Congress of the Republic in 1994, 2004, and 2024 indicate an increase in the number of women in the Congress of the Republic for Guatemala—with the figures of 7.5, 8.23, and 20 percent respectively (*IPU Parline: Global Data on National Parliaments*, 2022). The average growth of 6.25 percent of women per year over two decades implies that Guatemala has made some efforts to reduce structural inequalities. However, despite the growth shown through official data, corruption in Guatemala’s elections is still considered a significant factor inhibiting the political participation of women. In 2023, the electoral authorities even blocked the indigenous female presidential candidate for Movement for the People’s Liberation (MLP), making unnecessary accusations hindering her actions and future movements (Vílchez, 2023).

Notwithstanding the fact that the number of women outweighs that of men in the nation and more women are registered on electoral rolls, men are more likely to be in leadership positions in politics according to the 2018 census (Rodas, 2022). Though the increase in engagement of women may be an encouraging indication of the influence of female leadership, the reality holds that only a handful has actually occupied head positions.

## Survey Analysis among Grade School Students in Chisec, Guatemala

Recognizing the importance of referencing a primary source that addresses the current state of knowledge children acquire regarding the discussed issue, this study has endeavored to collect relevant data through a survey conducted at a missionary school in Chisec, Guatemala. The direct involvement of students from the observed country enriches the study with a deeper connection and recent statistical insights.

Two hundred and nine participants from the school—approximately 30 students from each grade throughout 1st to 6th—were asked 18 questions, 3 of those regarding the general information of the student (name, grade, etc.). The survey utilized dichotomous questions to summarize data, allowing for more accurate implications. Additionally, comprehensive survey questions were employed to enhance individual engagement of students, providing qualitative results. Analyzing these results is intended to help understand the impact of domestic changes, particularly in gender roles, on Guatemalan children's perceptions of their future.

Questions that were mainly used as indicators to acquire results related to the theme of the research were those in the third section—titled “In the Future”—in which the participants were asked questions regarding their future plans. This helped determine whether gender in this context affects the participant’s response. Their state of confidence in achieving their future goals was asked to understand further implications about the influence of domestic changes on children’s perceptions of their aspirations. The questions from the previous sections about the participant’s parents and school were asked to identify any possible environmental factors that may have affected the participant’s response.

All of the participants, with the exception of one male respondent, said that they want to have a job when they grow up, followed by the data of only 7.7% of the whole group responding “No” to the question asking if they have a future dream. It was only 6 girls from the 16 participants who said they do not have a future dream. For the question, “Are you confident that you can reach your future dream?” 20 participants responded negatively, with only 35% being girls. Furthermore, 151 participants suggested that they do not think it is easy to reach their goals, which is approximately 72% of the whole group; in fact, the percentage of girls was found to be lower with the figure of 44.4%. Proportionally, the number of students that responded negatively to this question from each gender was similar, at around 70%.

The survey has revealed that there are no significant differences in the responses given by the two genders. This arguably suggests that the positive influence of improvements made in gender equality is reflected in the presented data; or perhaps, it could be asserted that there is no correlation between women in leadership and children’s projection—especially those of girls—of their own future.



Understanding the implications through analyzing the results, it is important to also address the limitations of the survey in proceeding with this paper. The primary issue with the methodology itself is the possibility of a sampling bias in which inaccurate representation of the target population—Guatemala—is used for further interpretations. With the sample population being 209, the participants are only approximately 0.001% of Guatemala's total population, which is 18.4 million as of 2024; hence there was an insufficient sample size used for the conducted survey. Also, the sample size is arguably insufficient in other respects as the participants represent the region of Chisec, Guatemala solely. This may result in biased responses with the social and geological factors having an effect on the respondents. Furthermore, the inability to probe for clarification may have created a disparity between intended and perceived messages. Focusing on the construction of the questions, the dichotomous questions limit the depth of information received through the survey, only reflecting their thoughts at a surface level. Despite the presented limitations, the survey is highly relevant to this paper as it engages with the locals in the studied region, providing additional information collected recently. The involvement of students as participants further provides a new perspective in viewing the impacts of female leadership on future generations.

## Comparative Study of Gender Equality in Nicaragua and Cuba

Prior to suggesting possible methods for implementing gender equality in Guatemala, it is important to study previous cases in the same region for a better understanding. This paper will investigate the efforts and outcomes of various policies and societal approaches toward this issue in Nicaragua and Cuba. The common thread of machismo culture connects these three nations, providing a basis for comparison. While some may question the significance of this single component, the entrenched nature of this cultural phenomenon and historical evidence of gender disparities justify such comparisons. Moreover, the geographic proximity of these regions suggests similarities in societal practices. Additionally, considering the recent advancements in policy implementation, comparing these countries can assist Guatemala in enacting policy changes to address its own challenges with gender inequality.

Based on local accounts and empirical evidence, akin to Guatemala's cultural backdrop, the machismo culture holds significant sway within Nicaraguan society. Prevalent patriarchal gender norms have hindered the ability of female individuals to surpass dominant male figures. Despite Nicaragua being considered one of the most successful countries in attempting to reduce the gender gap, visible limitations still exist in terms of practical constraints against women (Jackson, 2023). Changes in policies have undoubtedly made positive societal impacts on women's empowerment, yet this long-standing philosophy remains one of its largest barriers until now.

Through the persistent endeavors of individuals advocating for women's rights, numerous laws were enacted in Nicaragua during the 1980s. Various accounts on this matter have highlighted that these policies have had a positive impact on both urban and rural households led by women, with various social programs targeting this specific demographic (Takeo & Rice, 2021). The legal frameworks implemented by the government included gender policies and a financing plan focused on women's education, health, housing, labor, security, and production (UN Human Rights Office, 2023).

These changes have facilitated the ascension of female individuals to leadership positions that were previously exclusively held by males. One notable figure in Nicaragua is Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, who served as Nicaraguan president from 1990 to 1997. She was not only Central America's first woman president but also the only Nicaraguan woman to have held that position to date (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). Other influential women figures include Rosario Murillo, the current vice president, as well as Daisy Torres, Martha Elena Ruiz Sevilla, Julia Mena, and others. The sustained influence of female figures in both political and societal spheres underscores the contemporary progress achieved through established policies of the Nicaraguan government (*Nicaraguan Female Leaders*, 2023).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of Cuba's historical development in addressing gender-related social issues, it is essential to examine major events in relation to this matter. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 stands out as a pivotal moment in the country's history, as it ushered in significant changes in perceptions of female roles. Prior to

the revolution, Cuban women were confined to traditional roles within oppressive societal systems and norms (Beaulac, 2023). However, the revolution challenged entrenched gender standards of patriarchal society, as well as the integration of machismo culture. Beaulac notes that women's contributions were instrumental to the success of the movement, prompting revolutionary leaders to acknowledge the importance of female participation (Beaulac, 2023).

During the post-revolutionary period, policies were implemented to support not only rural areas but also to promote gender equality throughout Cuba. While improvements in gender policies have been recognized, some scholars argue that the efforts made thus far remain insufficient. They contend that inequalities and stereotypes will persist in a society where structural discrimination and cultural influences are omnipresent (Léonard, 2021).

However, the changes that have been implemented remain highly significant in the history of women in Central America. In fact, Cuba has been ranked third among all nations in terms of female representation in the country's main governing body, with women comprising 49 percent of their Congress (Wadley, 2015). For comparison, the United States was ranked seventy-sixth, with women constituting only about 20 percent of Congress, according to data from the Berkley Center. This disparity underscores Cuba's impressive achievements in reducing societal discrimination against women. The universalization of education played a fundamental role in this development ("Gender, Sexuality, and Revolution in Cuba," 1996). Access to education, coupled with government encouragement and particularly initiatives from the Federation of Cuban Women, led to an increase in the number of women in the paid labor force.

Returning to the Revolution, Padula notes that the proportion of women participating in formal politics and activism roughly doubled from 18 percent in 1959 to 39 percent in 1985 ("Gender, Sexuality, and Revolution in Cuba," 1996). This trend can be attributed not only to the revolution itself but also to the establishment of state-provided day-care centers, which alleviated women's responsibilities as mothers.

Therefore, Guatemala should consider adopting policies similar to those implemented by Cuba and Nicaragua to mitigate discrimination against women. In particular, the establishment of day-care centers, as part of Cuba's strategy, could yield positive outcomes. It is crucial for the government to prioritize increasing the representation of women in Congress and other leadership positions to promote the equal distribution of practical power within society. The active participation of women in the political realm is likely to lead to societal changes regarding the perception of women in the community.

## Conclusion

Thus far, this paper has focused on examining past records and contemporary issues regarding gender inequality in Guatemala to delve deeper into the domestic influences of female leadership. Central to this investigation is the machismo culture, which shapes the societal structure of gender norms and disparities. While Guatemala's familial structures are characterized by familism and machismo, the presence of familism is often overshadowed by the dominance of machismo cultural practices. The machismo culture perpetuates ideals of aggressiveness and hypersexuality, reinforcing the concept of male dominance. The significance of male individuals within the societal structure greatly impacts the limited freedoms available to women and perpetuates beliefs in their inherent inferiority.

Continuing from this, the paper has examined the efforts made by the government and their outcomes. The COCODEs, established by the Municipal Code to support women's leadership and provide them with greater opportunities, were discussed. However, these organizations often hinder such activities due to the pervasive presence of machismo culture. To address these challenges, the Guatemalan government has implemented a national plan to promote women's development and gender equality, focusing on eradicating domestic violence and ensuring fair participation. This has led to successful allocation of funding for gender equality from national budgets for the fiscal years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, amounting to \$568 million and \$525 million respectively. While these figures indicate progress, they represent only a small fraction, averaging 5%, of total spending in these sectors. This suggests that while the positive impact of financing plans is notable, further changes are needed to advance gender equality more significantly.

Based on the observations regarding governmental efforts to address gender inequality, it was imperative to investigate specific examples reflecting the current state of women's political participation. Significant female figures in Guatemalan society, such as Gloria Núñez, who has made substantial contributions to women's empowerment in the region, were studied to assess the extent of female engagement. The impact of these inspiring female leaders in various political and social realms suggests that they are influencing generations. However, various statistical data indicate that corruption in the nation contributes to systematic discrimination. While the increase in women's engagement is an encouraging sign of the influence of female leadership, the reality remains that only a few have actually held top positions. Therefore, it is crucial for Guatemala to implement different strategies that reshape the structure itself to include more women than it currently does.

Specific approaches that Guatemala could adopt could be gleaned from the experiences of Nicaragua and Cuba. Given that both nations share a background of machismo culture, this external observation has been conducted under the assumption that culture plays a major role in perpetuating female inferiority.

Nicaragua's approach to mitigating gender issues offers valuable insights. They not only focused on increasing the actual number of women participating but also addressed the working conditions when implementing new policies. Emphasizing women's human rights in general further enhanced their inclusion and integration across various sectors.

Similarly, Cuba's historical records highlight the importance of acknowledging the significance of female participation before implementing any changes. Implementing such strategies in Guatemala could create a positive societal atmosphere, facilitating the implementation of new policies with minimal opposition. Additionally, the establishment of day-care centers, as seen in Cuba, should be considered. This approach effectively doubled women's participation figures and would positively impact society by assisting women with practical matters. In summary, Guatemala could benefit from considering the diverse strategies employed by the Nicaraguan and Cuban governments to address gender disparities.

Considering that Nicaragua and Cuba have been recognized as successful nations in overcoming the setbacks of gender inequalities, Guatemala would be able to implement similar strategies to comprehensively address the same problems. This would primarily involve deconstructing societal structures that hinder women from acquiring leadership positions. The influence of female leadership is significant, as it encourages women across generations to participate in various sectors of society. Therefore, acknowledging the importance of female figures would be crucial for Guatemala to overcome gender issues.

This paper has endeavored to comprehensively offer an understanding of the factors that have primarily contributed to the gender disparity issues in Guatemala. While the intent was to identify which components of Guatemalan culture have played significant roles in the central issue addressed in this paper, it acknowledges the existence of other potential causes of gender disparity in the country. However, it was necessary to primarily focus on the characteristics of machismo in current Guatemalan society, as historical records indicate that the Central American region as a whole highly values its cultural roots, consolidating the importance of machismo culture.

Additionally, while the limited parameters of the survey method implemented in this research may be questioned, the paper focused on the following generation as they serve as determinants of the extent of influence the implemented changes have.

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