German Politics

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fgrp20

A Critical Departure for Women Executives or More of the Same? The Powers of Chancellor Merkel

Farida Jalalzai

Available online: 22 Sep 2011

To cite this article: Farida Jalalzai (2011): A Critical Departure for Women Executives or More of the Same? The Powers of Chancellor Merkel, German Politics, 20:3, 428-448

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2011.606570

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
A Critical Departure for Women Executives or More of the Same? The Powers of Chancellor Merkel

FARIDA JALALZAI

Applying a typology of political systems and executive power, this article focuses on German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s powers and autonomy in relation to other female executives worldwide. Like most women leaders, Merkel operates within a dual executive system and is subject to a vote of no confidence. Powers are exercised within a cabinet, suggesting collaborative governance. Coalition politics requires Merkel’s cooperation with other actors. State powers also compete with the Federal government. In these ways, Merkel supports the prevailing model of the more constrained female executive. However, German presidential powers are generally symbolic, positioning Merkel as the dominant executive. She also enjoys greater insularity from dismissal than most prime ministers. As the only female head of state in a G-8 country, Merkel plays a visible and central role in global politics. In these ways, Merkel ultimately challenges the weaker model of the female executive, suggesting a mixed pattern overall.

INTRODUCTION

Applying a typology of political systems and executive power in relation to gender, this article focuses on Angela Merkel’s powers and autonomy as Chancellor of Germany. Of central concern is whether Merkel’s case challenges or reinforces prevailing patterns of female executive office holding around the world. Most women prime ministers and presidents tend to share power with others in dual executive systems and are disproportionately weaker political actors. They are also more often prime ministers than presidents, generally suggestive of more constrained authority and autonomy. Lastly, women seldom lead countries that are influential on the world stage.

Merkel operates within a dual executive system and is subject to a vote of no confidence. Executive powers are exercised within a framework of cabinet government, suggesting a more collaborative form of governance. A multi-party system, coalition governments require Merkel’s cooperation with other actors. The importance of the states also competes with the power of the Federal government. In these ways, Merkel supports the prevailing model of the more constrained and collaborative female executive.

At the same time, German presidential powers are generally symbolic, with the Chancellor clearly exercising dominance over the Federal President. Article 67 of the Constitution specifies a ‘constructive vote of no confidence’ to oust a prime...
minister, a more rigid form compared to those used elsewhere. Angela Merkel thus enjoys greater insularity from dismissal than most prime ministers since her removal is dependent upon election of a successor by a majority of the Bundestag. As the only female head of state in a G-8 country, Merkel plays a highly visible and central role in global politics. This is particularly the case for economic matters, portrayed as a decidedly masculine policy realm.

While coalition governance weakens Merkel’s potential autonomy, her security is strengthened since it lessens the chances that another person could gain a majority vote to become prime minister. The 2005 elections resulted in her centre-right leaning party – the CDU/CSU – sharing power with the left leaning SPD. This ‘grand coalition’ required a high degree of inter-party cooperation for success, understandably difficult given ideological divergences. However, despite numerous challenges posed by the grand coalition, Merkel retained the chancellorship, successfully completing her first term. Indeed, because this partnership required more close collaboration with opposing ideological groupings, her skill in developing compromises put her in a promising position as she successfully attempted a second term.

The September 2009 elections resulted in a coalition of the CDU/CSU–FDP union, placing her in an arguably more auspicious location since she now operates within a more ideologically cohesive government. However, preliminary assessments indicate that Merkel’s authority has been undercut on the domestic front due to the internal disputes within her new coalition. Having clear ideological divergences from the SPD required closer teamwork and conciliation, a style of governance that generally led to more favourable perceptions of Merkel’s leadership style than she is currently experiencing. As a whole, Merkel’s chancellorship suggests a mixed pattern of executive power for women.

Little research examines women national leaders, especially relating executive powers to gender. Instead, emphasis is placed on paths and leadership of individual female presidents and prime ministers. Most likely due to her high profile as a major European leader, several studies have now been published documenting Chancellor Merkel’s path to power, a subject more than aptly dealt with in other scholarship including articles in this volume. In contrast, little emphasis has been placed on the powers and potential influence Merkel has as Chancellor and whether this challenges or reinforces established patterns of female executives worldwide. This is the central focus of this article.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WOMEN EXECUTIVES?

The limited research examining gender and power in executive office emphasises the importance of institutional arrangements to women’s ultimate influence. Women’s executive participation has generally been constrained due to the high degree of masculinity embedded within institutions. However, masculinity differs based on the specific executive systems and structures at work. Parliamentary systems are characterised by a fusion of executive and legislative authority. Prime ministers share power with their cabinet and other party elites. Negotiation, deliberation, and collaboration are fundamental to the exercise of this type of power; all of these traits are also stereotypically feminine. In contrast, presidents act relatively autonomously of the
legislature; this necessitates rapid and decisive leadership, often linked to masculinity.\textsuperscript{6} Women’s lower degree of political autonomy and greater acceptance as collaborators and deliberators help explain their relative success in ascending to prime ministerships rather than presidencies.\textsuperscript{7}

Two important facets of executive positions are the paths required to obtain a post and the security of an executive once in place. Prime ministers rely on appointment, bypassing a potentially biased general public. While party gatekeepers’ own sexism may result in women being bypassed for leadership posts,\textsuperscript{8} ascension to the presidency typically relies on some sort of popular vote, a relatively more challenging prospect for women although this clearly depends on the electorate.\textsuperscript{9} Whether through party elections, dissolution of parliament, or a vote of no confidence, prime ministers may leave office at any time. In contrast, presidents generally have fixed terms, although they may be impeached under extreme circumstances. This generally places presidents in a more secure position, while prime ministerial terms are more tenuous. Overall, the positions for which women are generally in contention are appointed, insecure, and weak. As such, women’s inclusion as prime ministers is less threatening to the gendered order.\textsuperscript{10} Women seldom exercise dominant presidential power, and those who do still rarely come to power through the popular vote and without familial ties.\textsuperscript{11} Other female presidents entering office through the popular vote are often of only symbolic import.

The presidential/president and parliamentary/prime minister dichotomies do not adequately capture the large variation in executive systems and positions; these differences have numerous gendered implications. Several systems feature a dual executive structure and are a mix of presidential and parliamentary governments. Rather than lumping these diverse systems into a catch-all ‘semi-presidential’ category, careful analysis of the powers and procedures allows for a more precise typology.\textsuperscript{12} Similarly, real executive power within the presidential and prime ministerial positions must be discerned.

A TYPOLOGY OF EXECUTIVE SYSTEMS, POWERS, AND POSITIONS

A major factor affecting executive power is whether the executive is structured as unified (where only one figure wields power) or dual (where two executives rule). Dual structures suggest a dispersion of power, although this is still highly dependent upon the duties and authorities held by the respective executives. Linking this to gender, women ascend more frequently as executives within dual executive systems because their powers are less concentrated and there are double the seats at stake. However, women regularly occupy weaker positions, illustrating limits to their ultimate authority.\textsuperscript{13}

While several studies classify comparative systems and executive powers, Siaroff most parsimoniously details constitutional powers and accounts also for those exercised in practice.\textsuperscript{14} Based partially on Siaroff and my original analysis, I classify systems as one of the following unified or dual executive types:

1. **Unified Presidential**: Has a president possessing both substantive and symbolic powers that are strong and unrivalled. The president is almost always directly elected by the public or by an electoral college tied to the popular vote and retained
in office unless impeached. The total number of presidential terms one is able to serve is usually limited, though restrictions may be placed solely on holding consecutive terms. Examples of unified presidential systems include the United States, the Philippines, and several Latin American countries such as Chile.

2. **Unified Parliamentary**: Features a prime minister sharing powers with a cabinet in a typical parliamentary form of government. Though subsequent terms are unlimited, tenure is dependent upon staying in favour with the legislature and or sometimes party. The United Kingdom and New Zealand are unified parliamentary systems.

3. **Dual: Presidential Dominance**: Consists of a very powerful president elected in some fashion serving with a much weaker prime minister. The prime minister is often, but not always, appointed directly by the president, though for this to take effect in some countries the selection requires legislative approval. The prime minister frequently faces presidential dismissal but is also usually subject to parliamentary dismissal (as in Haiti). Legislative dependence through votes of confidence makes these systems – at the most basic level – parliamentary. Though rarely, sometimes the prime minister is unaccountable to the parliament and acts as more of a presidential aide, making it similar to a presidential system as in Guyana, Sri Lanka, and South Korea. Still, even if presidential powers are substantial, I hesitate to classify these countries as simply presidential given the dual executive nature.

4. **Dual: Powerful Presidents**: Features a president who is not dominant but possesses considerable powers (possibly to dissolve the legislature) while the prime minister is still generally more influential though still vulnerable to removal by parliament. These executives are generally the most evenly matched in power. Among dual systems, this is also the rarest configuration. This has included countries like Turkey and Pakistan at various points in time and Croatia currently.

5. **Dual: Weak or Figurehead Presidents**: These systems are typified by presidents who have no substantive powers or very limited authority, sharing power with a prime minister who is unquestionably dominant though subject to a vote of confidence. This system operates in a very similar way to a traditional parliamentary system. Presidents may be directly elected by the public or by the legislature, and are secure unless impeached. Terms are usually limited but these vary in length. The president does not unilaterally dismiss parliament. The presidencies in India and Ireland are examples.

 Though related to systems, executive power still needs further clarification. I use a multi-method approach including analysis of country constitutions, media articles, scholarly works, country reports, and websites, as well as biographies. Legal and constitutional designs provide an important first glimpse into offices and processes. However while powers on paper are instructive, the reality sometimes diverges from these procedures, particularly over time. For example, the Irish and Icelandic presidents are constitutionally much stronger than in practice. Thus, integrating other sources provides a more comprehensive picture of power. Also important to note is that when classifying women executives who have come to power over this time period (1960–2009), the situation as it existed when they first entered their posts...
must be taken into account; major changes in political structures occur temporally, particularly in unstable systems.

Based on ranges of points, I classify executives as one of five types. Executives are awarded one point for each of the powers they possess. In some dual executive systems, both the president and prime minister have sway in the same domain and are thus both given a point for this power. However, if one is clearly charged with the larger share of the responsibility then they alone are credited one point. In other cases, powers (such as declaring emergencies) are provided solely to the legislature; neither executive is then given points for this.

1. Making appointments: Authorising pivotal appointments of various governmental officials including cabinet ministers, judges, and in some cases where there is a dual executive structure, the prime minister. While these powers may require legislative approval, the executive plays an important rather than nominal role in nominations. This excludes executives who formally approve officials but do not engage in real decision-making. Appointment powers allow an executive to substantively affect the composition of government and ultimately policy.

2. Chairing cabinet meetings: Chairing cabinet meetings signifies some control over deliberation. This goes beyond chairing solely the first cabinet session of the administration that is customary in some systems.

3. Vetoing legislation: Possessing veto power suggests having an important role in policy-making. In cases where an executive veto cannot be overridden by the legislature, it is especially likely that this individual exercises substantial powers. Though prime ministers are often authorised to resolve disputes over policy between their cabinet ministers, they are not provided with veto power as some presidents are, thus this power is president specific.

4. Authorising emergency decrees: This includes the power to circumvent the legislature to authorise emergencies or unlimited authority to extend emergencies beyond the dates set by the legislature.

5. Foreign policy powers: This is determined by whether executives are able to appoint key officials who craft foreign policy, represent the country at political summits or meetings, and possess individual power to influence relevant policy. This is generally considered a highly masculine domain and thus more resistant to women.

6. Defence role: Having a defence role includes being a ‘commander in chief’ of the armed forces. Defence is a stereotypically masculine issue and an area that would seemingly require more masculine attributes. This role must extend beyond possessing symbolic authority. For example, if a president is ‘commander-in-chief’ but exercises this policy under the direction of the prime minister, the prime minister is given this power instead.

7. Playing a major role in governmental formation: This is indicated by the executive’s ability to appoint or retain members of the cabinet or possibly even the prime minister in some contexts.

8. Dissolving the legislature: This power is fairly typical for prime ministers. For presidents, the power to dissolve the legislature lacks various requirements including the government receiving a vote of no confidence or dissolution upon the approval of the prime minister.
While not a specific power, election by popular vote is relevant because it underscores legitimacy, providing an additional power base. Further, having a partisan identity generally suggests playing more of a substantive role. Once again, these possibilities are only open to presidents. It also makes sense to deduct a point from prime ministers if they face presidential dismissal, which usually, though not always, exists along with the prospect of parliamentary discharge. Therefore, presidential powers range from 0 to 10 points; prime ministers –1 to 7. Based on these powers, I classify presidents and prime ministers as one of the following five types:

1. **Dominant President** (6–10): President with full powers in unified presidential systems (Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia) or president that is stronger than the prime minister in dual systems (Chandrika Kumaratunga, Sri Lanka).

2. **Powerful President but weaker than the Prime Minister** (4–5): These presidents hold significant powers but are on balance still less powerful than the prime minister. Examples include Tarja Halonen of Finland.

3. **Weak Presidents** (0–3): Presidents in dual systems where the prime minister is clearly dominant and the president is mainly symbolic (Mary McAleese, Ireland; Pratibha Pail, India).

4. **Dominant Prime Ministers** (4–7): Prime minister with full powers in unified parliamentary systems (Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norway) or prime minister stronger than the president in dual systems (Angela Merkel, Germany).

5. **Weak Prime Ministers** (–1–3): Prime ministers with very little power who serve in dual executive systems with a dominant president (Michèle Pierre-Louis, Haiti).

Obviously, there is more variation among presidents than prime ministers; prime ministers are generally either clearly dominant or submissive actors while presidential powers are more nuanced. It is also more difficult to assess prime ministerial powers than presidents. Prime ministers are less directly referenced in constitutional documents. For example, the government or cabinet of ministers may be mentioned repeatedly, but the prime minister more rarely. Presidents are routinely focused on as independent actors in terms of requirements for their position, paths to power, and powers in office. Media reports, therefore, are especially critical to understanding the pivotal events within one’s executive tenure that centre on the degree of power one holds.

The place a country occupies on the world stage is also telling of an executive’s ultimate powers. Two important indications of this are economic and military standing. Leading a G-20 country illustrates one’s status as a major industrial or emerging economy. Argentina, France, Germany, India, United Kingdom, Canada, South Korea, and Turkey are all part of this collective and, at some point, have had a woman executive. However, this grouping has only formally existed since 1999 and is not necessarily reflective of the economic prosperity during women’s tenure. In 2009 G-20 countries led by women were Argentina, Germany, and India. While Argentina is a unified presidential system and Merkel is the dominant executive in Germany – a point clearly established subsequently – India’s female president has nominal power. The G-8 represents the most elite economic players including Canada, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. Kim Campbell of Canada and Edith
Cresson of France were in power for very brief periods and the latter’s authority was rivalled by a dominant president, particularly since her term was not during a period of cohabitation. Further, the economic influence of all the remaining women leaders should not be overstated in that they all represent forms of parliamentary systems where their respective finance ministers hold particular sway over this policy area.

A country’s nuclear capabilities are a measure of military might. Among current nuclear powers, The United Kingdom, France, India, Pakistan, and Israel have had female leaders. However, only Margaret Thatcher truly headed a nuclear power since women executives did not occupy posts that would have had much influence in this realm and or served before the country was a nuclear power. Still, military spending may also indicate military prowess. What also must be taken into account is how active individual leaders are in constructing military policy and, in general, how pivotal that country is in its foreign relations role. All of these dimensions are explored in relation to Merkel’s chancellorship.

COMPARATIVE WOMEN EXECUTIVES

Having established my typology of positions and systems, I now briefly review the number of women executives who have come to power since 1960 (the first year a woman – Sirimavo Bandaranaike – became prime minister of Sri Lanka) occupied a non-monarchical national executive post through the end of 2009. Of critical importance are the systems in which women led and the positions they have held. From this overview, the gendered dimensions of executive power are clearer and set the stage for an application to Merkel’s case. The ultimate goal is to understand the extent to which she challenges or merely replicates existing patterns of executive leadership for women.

Table 1 displays the positions, systems, paths, and regions where women executives have come to power through December 2009. Cases excluded are as follows: acting or interim leaders, executives from non-autonomous countries, and those from countries with a non-traditional structure such as a collective presidency. Restricting analysis to the 56 non-temporary leaders, 35 (63 per cent) are prime ministers while only 21 (37 per cent) are presidents. Thirty-seven serve in dual as opposed to unified executive systems, accounting for 66 per cent of the total (see Table 1). Women therefore serve more often in systems where executive authority is relatively dispersed. Among those in unified systems, 11 are presidents and 7 prime ministers. Thus, several women have unrivalled authority as national leaders, though this is still the exception rather than the rule. However, recall that prime ministers are generally highly vulnerable in their positions. Even prime ministers that share power with a weaker president are still susceptible to being ousted and they cannot dismiss the president. However, if for a dominant president sharing power with a prime minister, the potential power is great. Only two women presidents have ever shared power with a weaker prime minister (Jagan, Guyana; Kumaratunga, Sri Lanka). Subsequently, of 56 women leaders only 9 have ever held fairly unrivalled authority in the position of president. Further, all but one of these dominant female presidents (Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia) possess kinship ties to a former executive or opposition force. Therefore, women executives are relatively constrained in their powers and relatively
less secure in their posts. Women presidents serving in a unified presidential system or dual presidential dominance configuration are rare, especially those without familial links to power.\textsuperscript{18}

Before going further, a quick word is in order regarding the power men hold in their positions in comparison to women. In doing so, I analyse 162 countries using the percentages of male and female leaders in office in August 2009.\textsuperscript{19} While this technique may be criticised since, as opposed to the prior analysis of women leaders, it only concentrates on one particular period as opposed to men’s entire history as leaders, it would be impossible to offer a direct comparison of the entire universe of male leaders. Not only are their numbers enormous compared to women, they also extend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>L. America</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unified presidential</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified parliamentary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual executive</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified presidential</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified parliamentary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parl., pres. dominance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parl., powerful pres.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parl., symbolic pres.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>L. America</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant president</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak president</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful but weaker president</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant prime minister</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak prime minister</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paths</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>L. America</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Popular vote</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative appointment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential appointment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional succession</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familial ties</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>L. America</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporary appointments</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>L. America</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Europe tally includes presidents of the Swiss confederation.
The total of 56 does not include temporary appointments.
much farther back in time than is possible to study with reliable data. Furthermore, countries have radically altered their institutions over time, making it also very difficult to make valid comparisons.

Among countries around the world, 90 have a dual executive structure, while 72 are unified. As a proportion, women are much more prone to come to power in dual executive systems than men (75 per cent versus 55 per cent respectively). Overall, 134 presidencies and 118 prime ministerships exist, resulting in total of 252 executive posts. 236 men occupy these posts while only 16 women do (see Figure 1). 20

Most presidential posts are considered dominant, while fewer are weak or powerful. In contrast, there is a more even split between dominant and weak prime ministerships, though a greater percentage of prime ministerships are invested with dominant power. Of critical importance is where women and men are placed respectively in terms of power. Among the ten women presidents, only five are dominant, two are weak, and three are powerful. In contrast, of the 124 male presidents, 90 are dominant, 18 are weak, and 16 are powerful. Only six women are prime ministers – two dominant prime ministers and four weak – while 112 men are prime ministers – 65 dominant and 47 weak. Men are virtually ubiquitous as presidents and prime ministers, regardless of power type.

Another way of looking at these numbers is simply to compare proportions of men and women within positions. The largest percentage of female executives in any one position are dominant presidents, accounting for nearly one-third of their cases (see Figure 2). However, when considering all categories, the majority of women still occupy weaker posts.

Similar to women, the largest percentage of male executives fall into the dominant president category. However, across all executive types, the vast majority of men hold dominant as opposed to weak positions. In fact, barely more than one-quarter of men hold weak presidencies and prime ministerships (see Figure 3).

The findings firmly demonstrate that women are rarely executives. When they rule, they occupy weaker posts; few possess strong authority. They also generally wield powers that are more fragmented. Given that women in 2009 represented their highest proportion of world executives than at any other time, one can assume that
their representation was relegated to even fewer and less powerful positions in previous years.

PLACING ANGELA MERKEL IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

What remains is a clear assessment of Angela Merkel’s powers relative to the patterns of female executive representation outlined thus far. Does her case appear to be a continuation of women’s relatively weak authority and insecurity? In contrast, does it represent a sharp break from these previous patterns, ultimately challenging prevailing models of feeble and dependent female executives? Overall, Merkel is a much stronger executive than most female leaders coming to power thus far, particularly those lacking familial ties to political leaders. Like most women executives, Merkel operates within a dual executive system. However, a major difference is that she holds the more powerful position. As the German Chancellor, she enjoys greater security than most prime ministers. Perhaps the biggest departure of all is that her individual authority is
coupled with Germany’s high international stature; Merkel’s visibility as a world leader is undeniable. Indeed, her world prominence is generally perceived to be greater than her domestic standing, a point discussed further below.

Still, the nature of the chancellorship (which is virtually identical to a prime ministership) affords Merkel less security and influence relative to leaders in presidential or presidential dominance systems. Not only does Merkel share power with her party, Germany’s multi-party system is characterised by coalition governments, making her dependent upon key players from other parties; this dynamic highlights traditional constraints facing most female national leaders. At the same time, since women leaders are generally perceived to be greater conciliators than they are unilateral actors, it is not completely surprising to find a woman leading coalitions. Overall, Merkel’s case represents a departure from the majority of female executives while it reinforces some of the same obstacles that they encounter in exercising executive power. To understand Merkel’s influence, I will first examine the Federal President with whom she shares power.

The Federal President
The Federal President of Germany exercises some powers, but these are few and generally constrained. Until June 2010, Merkel served with Federal President Horst Köhler. After Köhler’s resignation in May 2010, Christian Wulff succeeded him. As other presidents, they were both indirectly elected by a Federal Convention comprised of members of the Bundestag and representatives from the state governments (Länder). Specific duties include representing Germany on diplomatic missions. As far as influencing the make-up of the government, the president selects and dismisses judges and civil servants. He formally appoints members of the Federal cabinet, but the Chancellor selects and also releases them. Though the President formally proposes the Chancellor, candidates are chosen by the parties and must receive a majority vote in the Bundestag. If a candidate does not secure a majority, the Bundestag has the opportunity to select another candidate who must also receive a majority. If this does not occur, the President may either appoint the candidate or dissolve the Bundestag.

The President’s policy role is quite limited. He assists with promulgating treaties, though they must be approved by the Bundestag. He officially signs legislation, but this is a formality since he is generally perceived to lack veto power. However, presidents have refused to sign bills into law on occasion when the legislation appears at odds with the Constitution, a duty they are charged with. In 2006, President Köhler refused to sign a bill on constitutional grounds that would privatise an air traffic control provider. He also denied initial approval of the Lisbon Treaty because the Constitutional Court said it needed to review it. Presidential orders or decrees must be counter-signed by the Chancellor. Though they generally belong to a political party, upon election Federal presidents are expected to act as non-partisans, also indicating a restricted policy role.

A major potential influence is the President’s ability to dissolve the government. In cases where the Chancellor initiates a vote of no confidence to which the Bundestag does not assent, the President may dissolve the Bundestag within 21 days. However, this can only happen upon the proposal of chancellors – generally when they want to force new elections – not undertaken as a presidential whim. At the
same time, the President may only dissolve the government if he believes it can no longer govern effectively. Still, the Constitutional Court ultimately determines whether this dissolution is in keeping with the Basic Law. In terms of his own security, the President is elected to a five-year term and is eligible for one re-election. The Federal Constitutional Court may turn him out of office if impeached by a two-thirds vote of either the Bundesrat or Bundestag and then convicted of wrongdoing.

The limitations placed on German presidents can be seen from President Köhler’s resignation following the fallout from comments he made in Afghanistan regarding the role of the German armed forces. He stated that German troops were deployed on peacekeeping missions to protect the economic interests of Germany. This went against the presumed presidential role of transcending partisan divides. His resignation was particularly significant since it was the first time in 40 years a German president voluntarily left office. It was also depicted as a major blow to Merkel since she was his ally and a major proponent of his election and re-election campaigns. His successor, Christian Wulff, however, was also propped up by Merkel. Since his election occurred after three ballots when members of Merkel’s new ruling coalition opposed his candidacy, Wulff’s weak win was not considered a victory for the Chancellor. However, she would have been severely hampered had Wulff lost. Though a fellow CDU member, Wulff had been portrayed as a future Merkel rival. With his presidential win, any chancellorship ambitions must probably wait until he finishes his four year term. His presidential election effectively politically neutralises him, which serves to further Merkel’s political interests.

In all, the preponderance of evidence suggests that the Federal President of Germany is weak – generally of symbolic import – though not completely devoid of substance. Some presidents, including von Weizsaecker and Herzog, were noted internationally for their forceful speeches. Given patterns outlined earlier, it would be expected that if there were a female leader of Germany, she would occupy the figurehead position. However, as Chancellor, Angela Merkel is not only the dominant player, she has wielded power over two male presidents.

The German Chancellor

Like most of her female counterparts, Merkel came to power through an indirect election, not a direct popular vote. This procedure was outlined in detail earlier since it involved the Federal President. However, it is still helpful to briefly discuss the specific circumstances related to Merkel’s ascension to the chancellorship in order to more fully understand relevant procedures. In 2005, Social Democratic Chancellor Schröder called for a vote of confidence in hopes of prematurely dissolving the government due to concerns his party was falling apart. His losing the vote of confidence made Merkel’s rise possible. It is worth noting that her ascension has repeatedly been attributed to the sudden opening of the chancellorship during a time in which members of the male party elite were caught up in scandals. Since even seasoned women are excluded from the inner realms of male networks, they are regularly sheltered from the scandals in which their male counterparts become embroiled. In this way, Merkel’s ascension is similar to many of her female counterparts worldwide – a significant portion come to power in contexts of political change, many due to unexpected leadership vacuums following scandals.
Still, Merkel’s eventual chancellorship was not wholly unanticipated. She managed to obtain the leadership post of her party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in 2000. Acquiring this post provided her with a much more promising base of support as a future chancellor candidate. In the subsequent parliamentary elections, Merkel’s party (CDU/CSU) won 226 seats or 36.8 per cent of the Bundestag while its closest competitor, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), lagged only slightly behind with 222 seats or 36.2 per cent of the Bundestag. Schröder initially claimed victory, sparking a drawn-out chancellor selection process. The SPD’s agreement to a CDU/CSU government was evident once it decided not to run a chancellor candidate. Even so, Merkel still required a majority vote in the Bundestag before officially becoming Chancellor. Since Merkel was the obvious choice of the coalition parties, she was officially put forth as the chancellor candidate. She eventually obtained 397 out of 612 votes of attending members or support of 66 per cent of the Bundestag. As procedures dictated, the Federal President officially pronounced her as Germany’s first female Chancellor. Since she only required 308 votes, her victory appeared auspicious, given that other chancellors, including Adenauer, Schmidt, Kohl, and Schröder, barely received a majority. Still, there is speculation that a sizeable number of SPD members voted against her.

Merkel’s security is generally greater than most female executives, particularly prime ministers. A full chancellor’s term lasts four years. The German system has two types of confidence votes that could shorten a chancellor’s tenure. One is initiated by the Chancellor and the other by the Bundestag. In Germany, if a Chancellor wants to call early elections, the chancellor vote of confidence requires her to convince members of her own party to vote against her, followed by presidential approval and court oversight. Thus, when Schröder called a vote of confidence to trigger elections, this was a rather ambitious undertaking. This procedure offers chancellors greater odds of finishing a term. At the same time, they are more constrained in calling early elections at their own discretion. In most other parliamentary systems like Great Britain, prime ministers may call early elections when they believe they have a good chance of victory – another route to superior safety. Still, on balance, the German Chancellor still benefits greatly from having a constructive vote of confidence as opposed to a more traditional form. In this case, a dismissal requires a majority of the Bundestag to elect a new chancellor (subject to the majority vote procedure already outlined). The difficulty involved in finding a consensus replacement is most likely why the constructive vote of confidence has only been attempted twice and been successful only once, in 1982 when Kohl came to power. Traditional votes of confidence do not require a replacement for the ousting of the prime minister and dissolving of parliament, positioning the German Chancellor in a relatively more secure position. This can also be evidenced by the continuity of German leadership. In fact, since 1949, Germany has had only eight chancellors. Thus, relative to many female executives, Merkel is generally safer in her position.

Regarding the exercise of powers, though, the dual structure suggests a more fragmented type of executive authority; Merkel is stronger than the Federal President. As Chancellor, she is the main policy actor. It is her responsibility to select members of her cabinet to head the various ministries. She may also unilaterally dismiss them. However, policies are designated to the appropriate ministries. According to Article
65 of the Constitution, the Chancellor is responsible for guiding general policy but ‘each Federal Minister conducts the business of his department autonomously and on his own responsibility’. One of the most important cabinet officials tends to be the Foreign Minister since he or she generally represents the Chancellor on foreign missions. This key post is generally given to a member of a coalition party. The Constitution charges the Federal government, not the Chancellor, specifically with resolving conflicts between the ministries. Nevertheless, successful governance requires close collaboration between cabinet members and the Chancellor. In Germany’s case, this necessitates working closely with members of other parties since governments are generally comprised of coalitions. She also convenes the cabinet and chairs meetings. These are not only constitutional authorities, but ones Merkel exercises in practice.

One of the most masculine roles available is that of commander in chief. According to the Constitution, power over the command of the armed forces is charged to the Minister of Defence. Merkel is obviously able to influence defence policy through appointment and retention. However, in times of war, Merkel assumes military control. Thus, she occupies a similar role to commander in chief. Still, any actions of the Chancellor must be approved by the Parliament. All military deployments must be approved by the Bundestag and oversight of the Federal Constitutional Court diminishes the Chancellor’s ultimate authority in military matters. In practice, recent events have suggested an increased the importance of prior approval of the Bundestag for troop commitments. For example, in February 2010, amidst various disagreements with coalition partners and in the face of public protests, the Bundestag increased the numbers of German troops in Afghanistan by 850, resulting in nearly 5400 total deployed to that country. While still a significant increase, this was less than Merkel and fellow NATO forces initially proposed. This suggests an undercutting of Merkel’s independent military authority.

The federalist structure places a great deal of influence within the states, providing a major constraint on Merkel. Still, Merkel unquestionably operates as a prime minister in a parliamentary system with a weak or figurehead president. In her position, she is clearly the dominant actor. She makes pivotal appointments, chairs cabinet meetings and plays a major role in governmental formation. She is also integral to foreign policy and defence, though her ultimate influence is tempered by her respective ministers. She is unable to veto legislation, though she is clearly critical to the formation of policy. She is also not in a position to pronounce a state of emergency. Her ability to dissolve the legislature at will and hold new elections is restricted given the procedures outlined above. Based on all powers examined in the Constitution and those exercised in practice, Merkel received a total score of six out of seven powers. In fact, no female prime ministers have thus far exceeded this number of powers, though some have tied with her. Like other prime ministers, Merkel lacks unlimited emergency powers.

One of the major constraints Merkel faces is that her party does not have a majority of seats in the Bundestag. Coalition governments are the rule, not the exception, of German politics. However, ‘grand coalitions’, those headed by fewer and larger major parties, are rare. Apart from Merkel’s grand coalition, this formation has only occurred once before during a three-year period under Kiesinger. Kiesinger (also a CDU member) was overshadowed by his finance minister, Kurt Schiller from the SPD. Likewise for Merkel, this alignment suggested that strong chancellor rule
characterising some German governments seemed unlikely during her first term. Due to this coalition, ‘Merkel’s room for maneuver in highlighting her political agenda as ‘chief executive’ was more restricted than that of any other recent German Chancellor’. The coalition agreement between the parties consisted of nearly 200 pages of text. Aspects of this agreement entailed a specification that meetings could be called at any time at the prompting of any of the coalition partners and several individual players. Thus, though Merkel called and chaired meetings, this power was lessened due to power sharing. While prime ministers in parliamentary systems are expected to share power with their cabinet, in Merkel’s case this also meant appointing a greater share of ministers from the coalition partner, the SPD, than from the CDU/CSU. As is traditional, the critical role of Foreign Minister was filled by an SPD member, Frank-Walter Steinmeier (who was an unsuccessful chancellor candidate in 2009). However, in practice, Merkel’s exercise of power indicated that she largely overshadowed him in foreign policy, illustrating a form of chancellor rule. However, this policy dominance was not transferred to the domestic realm. Still, it generally illustrates Merkel’s ability to exercise substantial authority in spite of the presumed constraints of leading a grand coalition, as other articles in this volume attest. The preliminary evidence available since the beginning of her new coalition suggests that this continues to be the case.

As stated previously, the CDU/CSU just barely finished ahead of the SPD in the 2005 elections. A major cause of this was due to the successful performances of three smaller parties. The FDP, Greens, and the Left Party each secured between 8 and 10 per cent of the vote – a much better outcome than in previous years. Though in 2009 the CDU/CSU received a lower percentage of votes than in 2005, the SPD experienced its worst showing in history, taking it out of governing contention. This victory allowed the CDU/CSU (which together received nearly 40 per cent of the vote) and the preferred partner – the FDP – to form a centre-right coalition. This coalition appeared to place Merkel in a more advantaged position than did the grand coalition. Merkel’s ideological closeness with her coalition partners in her second government seemingly made consensus more likely than under the grand coalition, also possibly enhancing her power base as she began her second term. These new conditions also were seen as superior to overseeing a coalition consisting of many more small parties which offer little cohesion and increase the odds of dissolving early.

While her second term is still in its infancy, initial assessments do not point to Merkel enjoying greater cooperation or enhanced power. To the contrary, she has now been repeatedly accused of exercising weak leadership and having a lack of zeal. Instead of competing with Frank-Walter Steinmeier (whom she still generally outperformed in foreign affairs), she is being overshadowed by her Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, a member of CDU’s more conservative sister party, the CSU. In a recent survey, nearly one-quarter of Germans believed that Guttenberg would be a better chancellor than Merkel; only 14 per cent favoured the incumbent. There is actually much more internal squabbling with members of her new ruling coalition, particularly members of the FDP and CSU. According to one government official, the former grand coalition ‘suited Angela Merkel’s leadership style much more. With the SPD it was all about consensus, and that’s the way she likes to reach decisions.’ This suggests that the larger, less ideologically cohesive grouping
played more to Merkel’s strengths to facilitate cooperation as it also hints at the greater pressure placed on coalition partners for their teamwork. Subsequently, Merkel’s power may have been stronger in her first term than her second, ultimately raising potentially critical questions about whether grand coalitions can facilitate women’s enhanced powers rather than stifling them.

As suggested, Merkel’s executive influence must also be understood by grasping her role on the world stage. Among the G-8 countries, only Germany has a female leader and is only the fourth country to ever do so (after the United Kingdom, Canada, and France). Merkel also has the distinction of being the second woman (Margaret Thatcher was the first) to chair the G-8. This places Merkel in a very high-profile position. Not only is Germany Europe’s largest economy, according to the International Monetary Fund it is the third largest economy in the world. It is also the world’s leading exporter. Merkel clearly challenges other cases of female leaders in the immense economic influence she has as Germany’s Chancellor. The importance of this area has greatly intensified since the beginning of the global economic crisis. Her more recent domestic unpopularity is somewhat surprising given that Germany’s federal deficit when Merkel first came to power was a record €38 billion. While it faces many economic troubles, Germany’s economic performance one year after Merkel’s ascension had greatly improved. Germans rated Merkel’s party as much more competent in this area than her rivals, an important strength she had going into the September elections. However, she has recently suffered from a lack of support among the general public regarding her handling of the European economic crisis.

Based on military expenditures, Germany is one of the top ten military spenders in the world. However, Germany faces many military restrictions dating back to the end of World War II when its military force was dissolved and its defence handled by the United States and European allied powers. This set the stage for its growing connection to the United States. With the dominance of the Soviet Union, Germany was gradually permitted to increase its own military posture, though limited to protecting NATO countries in defensive missions. The German armed forces (Bundeswehr) are still somewhat constrained. Germany’s inability to develop nuclear technology obviously lessens its world influence.

Though its military importance to the United States has diminished since the end of the Cold War, Germany still plays a vital role in foreign relations. Germany’s willingness to engage in various multinational structures including NATO and the European Union, its strong and stable relationship with important allies including the United States and France, and its current distaste for military intervention and adherence to self-imposed restrictions since World War II situates Germany very well as a coalition builder within and outside Europe. However, the recent rivalry she is experiencing with her Defence Minister Guttenberg is hampering her authority.

Germany’s potential to build coalitions is especially promising under Merkel. Her leadership in the European Union is evidenced by her rescue of the Constitutional Treaty. She also recently led the European Union in rejecting a bailout for Eastern Europe, demonstrating that she shows no fear in challenging the economic actions of other major world actors. Given the current world context, coalition building is by no means easy. At the same time, the very difficulties connecting countries allows Merkel an important opportunity to bridge significant gaps.
foreign policy importance is bolstered by its economic strength. Moreover, its geographical location makes it a key actor in building relations between an increasingly dominant Russia and former Soviet countries. According to Joyce Mushaben, Merkel is particularly well poised to work with Russia: ‘Angela Merkel understands Putin better than Bush and other world leaders do.’ This is largely due to her upbringing under Soviet dominance, experiences in Russia, and fluency in Russian. Overall, Germany occupies an important place in both European and world politics. Merkel has thus come to power at a pivotal period in term of foreign relations and generally appears to be seizing the opportunities presented.

Still, some of Merkel’s current disfavour among the Germans centres on the economic bailouts of other (Western) European Union member countries including Greece. Indeed, Merkel is seen as much more of an influential player on foreign affairs than within the domestic sphere. This pattern is, however, not unique to Merkel but similar to the experiences of Schmidt and Kohl.

The fact that Merkel leads a country that is an integral part of the European Union adds a complicated dimension to assessing her power. Since Germany is one of the most important member nations, its influence on European Union policy is great. It could be argued that being a part of this entity also undermines Germany’s internal autonomy, placing it under important constraints from actors outside of its border. Further, Germany’s integration into the European Union has rivalled its domestic agenda. Indeed, she has recently come under fire for economic decisions regarding some of Europe’s failing economies in both the domestic and international spheres. Many Germans think that she is not taking a strong enough stance against economic bailouts of other European countries. Representatives of some European Union governments think she is not supportive enough of more direct intervention in the most troubled economies and of working against the common European good. Still, Merkel’s leadership thus far appears to reconcile these sometimes competing pulls, expanding her ultimate executive power, as other scholarship demonstrates – though to what extent she will be successful in the future remains to be seen.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, in light of existing patterns of female executive leadership, Merkel’s case presents a mixed bag. She undoubtedly is accurately categorised as a dominant prime minister within a dual executive system. As such, she holds some of the greatest powers among female executives to date, particularly among women lacking familial ties to power. Like many before her, she rules with another executive. However, unlike most women leaders, she is in the clearly dominant position. She is also relatively more secure in her post than other prime ministers, given procedures outlined thus far. Merkel clearly has been a pivotal player in economic and foreign policy, generally considered highly masculine realms. Merkel’s international stature is perhaps the single most important way she has defied the patterns of most other women executives who have come to power to date.

Ways in which she provides more of the same for women leaders is that she still leads in a parliamentary system and is extremely dependent upon her party in constructing governmental policy. As she leads a coalition government, she is also
constrained by her dependence upon other parties. Surprisingly, preliminary assess-
ments suggest that Merkel may now be more hampered in her domestic leadership
with her new, more ideologically similar coalition partners. This suggests a much
more complicated relationship between chancellor powers within grand coalitions.
The particularly influential role that state governments play in German federal politics
also hinders her ultimate influence. Finally, Germany’s more limited military role
makes Merkel a weaker executive than if she led a nuclear country, though it strength-
ens its coalition building role in the world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Farida Jalalzai’s research analyses the representation and behaviour of women and
minorities in politics and the role of gender in the political arena. Her work focuses
on women national leaders (Women and Politics 2004; Politics and Gender 2008;
International Political Science Review 2010, Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy
2010) gender and campaign coverage (Politics and Policy 2006), and the behaviour
of political widows compared to the husbands they replaced in Congress (Journal of
Women, Politics, and Policy 2008). She has also published research dealing with
Muslim American political behaviour (Politics and Religion 2009) and the impact
of discrimination on Muslim Americans since 9/11 (Politics and Religion 2011
forthcoming).

NOTES
1. Sarah Wiliarty, ‘Chancellor Angela Merkel – A Sign of Hope or the Exception that Proves the Rule?’,
(2008), pp.1–27.
Politics and Society, 24/3 (2006), pp.41–81; Anthony King, ‘The Outsider as Political Leader: the
Case of Margaret Thatcher’, The British Journal of Political Science 32/3 (2002), pp.435–54; Laura
A. Liswood, Women World Leaders – Great Politicians Tell their Stories (Washington, DC: The
Council Press, 2007); Olga S. Opfell, Women Prime Ministers and President (Jefferson, NC: McFar-
(ed.), Women as National Leaders (London: Sage, 1993), pp.70–102; Mark Thompson and Lidmilla
4. Clemens, ‘From the Outside In’ Myra Marx Ferree, ‘Angela Merkel: What Does it Mean to Run as a
Making of Chancellor Merkel’; Sarah Wiliarty, ‘Angela Merkel’s Path to Power: The Role of Internal
5. Georgia Duerst-Lahti, ‘Reconceiving Theories of Power: Consequences of Masculinism in the Execu-
tive Branch’, in Mary Anne Borelli and Janet M. Martin (eds.), The Other Elites (Boulder, CO: Lynne
Rienner, 1997), pp.11–32.
(1999), pp.79–98.
10. Ibid.
pp.85–108.
12. Alan Siaroff, ‘Comparative Presidencies: The Inadequacy of the Presidential, Semi-Presidential and
16. While her relationship with Mitterrand aided her advancement to the post, because they were both from the Socialist Party, he had wide latitude in nominating her and retaining her, diminishing her influence. According to her own account, she had little independent power to appoint her cabinet; instead she had to select from Mitterrand’s friends (Liswood, Women World Leaders, p.122). Rather than toeing the party line, Cresson was very outspoken, which repeatedly created tensions within the executive branch. When the Socialist Party failed dismally in local elections in 1992, Mitterrand demanded her resignation (Jane S. Jensen, Women Political Leaders: Breaking the Highest Glass Ceiling (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.50).
17. This includes seven from unified systems and the two from dual executive systems already noted. However, it excludes the two women presidents of the Swiss Confederation. They are technically from unified systems since only one person leads the Federal Council at a time. However, the President has only the power to chair council meetings – hardly a dominant force. Thus, women executives are still fairly constrained in their powers and often insecure in their positions.
18. Latin American women leaders are recently beginning to break this trend of reliance on family ties. However, although Michelle Bachelet is generally not considered to have family ties to power, her father, Alberto Bachelet Martinez, was an Air Force General and major opposition figure. He was imprisoned under the Pinochet regime and ultimately died of cardiac failure. Bachelet and her mother were also imprisoned because of their opposition to the regime. While a political actor unto herself, her family ties through her father should not be ignored. Still, while two other women in this region were elected president in 2010 (after the time analysed in this article), neither Laura Chinchilla of Costa Rica nor Dilma Rousseff of Brazil have family ties to power, though their close linkages to the outgoing male presidents were pivotal to their electoral successes and compensated for women’s traditional barriers to the presidency. They were surrogates of popular male presidents who were unable to remain in power due to term limitations.
19. I analyse all countries that meet the following criteria – they are politically autonomous, conform to a traditional executive structure, are not absolute monarchies and executive office is open to contestation such as one-party communist states or absolute military dictatorships (even though in some cases politics may overall be less than democratic).
32. Ibid. (accessed 25 April 2009). This right is terminated if the Bundestag elects another Chancellor by majority vote.
35. Ibid.
42. Jalalzai, ‘Women Rule’.
43. Wiliarty, ‘Angela Merkel’s Path to Power’.
44. The Chancellor does not have to be the head of the dominant party. Ibid.
45. Proksch and Slapin, ‘Institutions and Coalition Formation’.
46. Schröder’s motivation for refusing to cede the election may have been driven by his belief that a female chancellor would have been unacceptable, though it is impossible to firmly prove this.
48. The President is not required to put forward the party choice, but needs to name someone who will command a majority.
55. For example, Kim Campbell was Prime Minister of Canada for less than one year. Still, women like Margaret Thatcher were able to hang one for long tenures, though the risk of being ousted is always a possibility, limiting their ultimate autonomy.
58. Office of Chancellor website.
63. Independent analysis of the author of sources described in the text.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
73. Rinke and Brown, ‘Special Report: the Two Lives of Angela Merkel’.
74. Ibid.
75. France’s Cresson did not hold as much influence as prime minister as the president.
84. Maull, ‘Germany and the Art of Coalition Building’.
85. Paterson, ‘Weak Merkel Stokes Xenophobia as She Fights for Political Survival’.
86. Maull, ‘Germany and the Art of Coalition Building’.
90. Mushaben, ‘Madam Chancellor’.
93. Mushaben, ‘Madam Chancellor’.