Title of workshop:
Gender, Representation, and Power in the Executive Branch

Outline of Topic:
Two contemporary trends make this workshop timely: 1) women are entering the executive branch in unprecedented numbers, as cabinet ministers and chief executives; and 2) there is concern among scholars and the public in general about the increased concentration of power in the office of the chief executive and the corresponding declining policy role of cabinets and legislatures. These trends are evident in both presidential and parliamentary democracies. Women have won chief executive office in parliamentary democracies such as Germany and Australia as well as Chile and Liberia, both with presidential systems. Presidents, such as Bolivia’s Evo Morales, and prime ministers, such as Spain’s Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, have appointed ‘parity’ cabinets with men and women equally represented. At the same time, the scholarly literature on parliamentary democracies is filled with references to the ‘presidentialisation’ of politics (Poguntke & Webb 2005), and scholars of presidential democracies note the expanding influence of presidential advisers at the expense of cabinet ministers (Bonvecchi & Scartascini 2012). The simultaneous occurrence of these trends raises a number of critical questions to be addressed by this workshop: Are women entering cabinets in greater numbers just as these offices are losing power (Sykes 2009)? Does the power exercised by chief executives change when women occupy the office? How do recent institutional changes in the executive branch affect women’s recruitment to office? Answering these questions contributes to knowledge about the executive branch and also to the literature on gender and political institutions.

Relation to Existing Research:
The existing body of research on gender and executive office falls into two categories: 1) research on women’s representation in cabinet and routes to chief executive office; and 2) research on the policy impact of female executives. The workshop seeks to integrate and advance both strands of research, while also creating more links between this research agenda and existing comparative scholarship on the executive branch.

1. Research on gender and ministerial recruitment and routes to executive office:
Gender scholars have begun to investigate the factors that facilitate women’s recruitment to executive leadership and the career paths of male versus female ministers. Some use large datasets to test competing hypotheses relating to demographic, socio-economic or political factors (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor Robinson 2005; 2009, Whitford et al 2007, Krook and O’Brien 2012, Adams and Scherpereel 2010, Murray 2010). Some studies are exemplary and produce firm conclusions: for example Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson’s (2005) study of ministers in Latin America finds that the regional diffusion effect is more important than supply or demand factors. Nevertheless, there are still gaps in existing quantitative comparisons across time and space. So far, most studies do not systematically assess cross-regional trends in the feminisation of executive positions and few include a time dimension. In addition, there are inconsistencies in data categories regarding who counts as a minister, which means that researchers have struggled to produce common or definitive correlations about gender and executive recruitment. What is more, such broad-brush approaches, taken on their own, tend to overlook country-specific or party-specific factors that determine women’s recruitment to ministerial office.
In contrast, other gender scholars have employed institutionalist theories (particularly historical institutionalism) to explore the gendered nature of formal and informal rules of executive office, executive-legislative relations, and the inter-linkages of executive office with other gendered institutions (e.g. patterns of political recruitment and career trajectories). Such feminist and institutionalist approaches are able to provide more nuanced institutional accounts of the gendered paths to prime ministerial leadership (Beckwith 2009), presidential office (Franceschet and Thomas 2010), or ministerial recruitment (Annesley et al 2012; Annesley and Gains 2010; Franceschet and Thomas 2011). However, empirical case studies are scarce, and systematic comparative work has yet to be undertaken. Developing a systematic comparative research agenda on the gender dimensions of the executive branch, with particular attention to the informal aspects of recruitment and organisation, fits well with emerging trends in the field of comparative politics, such as the international network of scholars exploring the selection and deselection of ministers (Dowding and Dumont 2009, ECPR Joint Sessions workshop 6, St Gallen 2011), and recent acknowledgement that we need to deepen our knowledge about the inner workings of presidential executives (Bonvecchini & Scartascini 2012; Martínez Gallardo 2010).

2. Research on whether female ministers make a difference

Gender and politics scholars have also begun to investigate whether female cabinet ministers and female chief executives make a difference to policy outcomes that promote gender equality, but with conflicting conclusions (Annesley, Engeli et al 2010, Atchison 2008; Bauer and Tremblay 2011; Franceschet 2010). What is more, existing research uses concepts such as the ‘substantive representation of women’ developed to study women in parliament (Atchison 2008; Adams 2009). This is problematic for at least two reasons. First, routes to executive office differ: although in most parliamentary systems cabinet ministers are also elected members of parliament, in others, ministers can be recruited from outside of parliament. In presidential systems, all cabinet ministers are appointed from outside the legislative branch. Reaching executive office via appointment instead of election complicates our use of the concept of ‘substantive representation’.

Second, the size and nature of the constituency that cabinet ministers and chief executives represent are very different from those of legislators: While legislators tend to have territorially specific constituencies, chief executives and most cabinet ministers are expected to represent the entire citizenry. This is certainly true for the high—status portfolios (e.g., foreign affairs, finance, or justice). Some junior ministers may be expected to represent particular groups, such as minorities, youth, women, or citizens in particular regions. Either way, the constituencies represented by legislators, cabinet ministers, and chief executives are considerably different. As a result of different routes to office and different expectations about representation, it is critical to return to some basic scholarly exercises, such as conceptual development and the building of comparative typologies. Doing so will lay the foundations for meaningful comparative study and permit the development of a collaborative research agenda on gender and the executive branch. Development of a systematic comparative research agenda will also facilitate links with scholars working on ministerial recruitment and the organization of the executive branch.
Likely Participants:
This workshop will appeal to the growing body of researchers interested in the executive branch. We envisage that participants in this workshop will include gender and politics scholars exploring women’s recruitment to executive office, the impact of women’s presence on the policymaking processes, the role of cabinet within the executive branch, and policy outcomes. We also anticipate the participation of scholars with expertise in the politics of cabinet formation and ministerial recruitment more generally. Ideally, the participants will represent a broad spectrum of scholars with varying theoretical backgrounds, different methodologies, and knowledge of different geographic regions.

Type of Papers required:
In order to fill in the gaps in the existing literature, this workshop will seek three types of papers:

1) We seek papers that tackle conceptual and methodological issues: how should scholars study women in executive office? How reliable is the available data? What sorts of methods best capture the informal dimensions of executive institutions? How can we adapt existing concepts, such as the ‘substantive representation of women,’ to the executive branch?

2) We seek comparative empirical papers that analyse contemporary trends: How many women have reached executive office as ministers and prime ministers/presidents? What factors facilitate women’s selection, retention and deselection in ministerial posts? In what ways are these processes gendered? How do women’s experiences and career paths differ from men’s?

3) We seek qualitative case studies that explore women’s impact in the executive branch: to what extent do female ministers, presidential advisers, or female chief executives use their position to promote gender equality? What are the opportunities and obstacles to promoting gender equality faced by female members of the executive in particular political systems?

Biographical Notes:

Professor Claire Annesley (Professor of Politics at the University of Manchester), works on gender and the core executive, gender and welfare reform, and the substantive representation of women. Along with Susan Franceschet, Karen Beckwith, and Isabelle Engeli, she was awarded an ECPR Research Session at the European University Institute (2011), and the Carrie Chapman Catt Prize for research on Women and Politics (2011). Recent publications include ‘Gender Power and Change: The Core Executive in the UK’ Political Studies (coauthored with Francesca Gains), ‘Gender, Politics and Policy Change: The case of welfare reform under New Labour’ Government and Opposition.

Dr Susan Franceschet (Associate Professor in Political Science at the University of Calgary) works on gender and politics, gender quotas in comparative perspective, and gender and executive office. Her current research, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, examines gender and cabinet formation in Chile and Spain. She is the author of Women and Politics in Chile (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), and co---editor of The Impact of Gender Quotas (Oxford University Press, 2012). Her recent work has been published in Politics & Gender, Publius: the Journal of Federalism, and Political Research Quarterly.
References:
Holli, Anne Maria. 2008. 'Electoral Reform Opens Roads to Presidency for Finnish Women.' Politics & Gender, 4 (3): 496---509

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