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Lindsay C. Rabalais

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The Impact of Image and Gender Politics In Hillary Clinton's and Angela Merkel's Pursuit of
Chief Executive Offices

by

Lindsay C. Rabalais

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Dr. Danny Shipka

Department of Mass Communication

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Louisiana State University
& Agricultural and Mechanical College
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Introduction

“Women are never front-runners,” according to Gloria Steinem in a January 2008 quote.¹ Indeed, women in power face a unique set of challenges, but nowhere more visibly so than in the realm of politics. The volatile role of women in politics, especially executive positions, has fascinated and in some cases polarized an international audience.

The United States has never been led by a woman. However, in 2008, Hillary Clinton came closer to the American presidency than any other woman before her. Angela Merkel made history in 2005 when she was elected not only the first female chancellor of Germany, but also the first chancellor from the former East Germany. Clinton and Merkel share a number of striking similarities. Primarily, both had significant image problems, some concerning their gender. However, Clinton lost her contest, while Merkel emerged victorious from her election. By analyzing the various structural, cultural and image-related factors present in each situation, some conclusions can be drawn about why each election turned out as it did. Furthermore, examining these two candidates has implications for the future. By understanding what worked and what did not for these women, one can more easily project how likeminded female candidates will fare in the future.

Background

Hillary Rodham Clinton is distinctive from other presidential candidates for a number of reasons, including the fact that she was the first lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001. She became the first American first lady to run for public office, and New York elected her as a

¹ Regina G. Lawrence and Melody Rose, Hillary Clinton's Race For the White House: Gender Politics and the Media on the Campaign Trail (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2010) 21

senator in 2000. She controversially voted in favor of the Iraq War Resolution in 2002.²

Although this upset many of her supporters, it demonstrates the extent to which she was helping to make important policy decisions. She won her re-election campaign in 2006 by a wide margin and announced via her Web site on January 20, 2007, that she would run for president of the United States. Although she was an early front-runner for the Democratic nomination, she was eventually defeated by Senator Barack Obama from Illinois, who went on to win the presidency.

Angela Merkel was raised in East Germany as the daughter of a Protestant minister. She was not very involved in politics until 1989, when the fall of the Berlin Wall ignited in her a desire to become politically active. She joined the Demokratischer Aufbruch (Democratic Awakening), or DA, that same year.³ The DA party was disbanded in 1990, and Merkel joined the Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Party), or the CDU.⁴ She was elected to the Bundestag (the lower house of the German parliament) in December 1990. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, a member of the CDU, appointed her as the Federal Minister for Women and Youth in 1991, and as Minister for the Environment and Nuclear Safety in 1994. Merkel was elected president of the CDU in April 2000, in the wake of a scandal involving Kohl's acceptance of illegal campaign contributions. The CDU announced on May 30, 2005, that Merkel would be their candidate to run against the incumbent chancellor Gerhard Schröder, a member of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party), or SPD. After neither the CDU nor the SPD succeeded in gaining a majority of the vote, the parties began negotiations. Merkel emerged as the new chancellor of Germany after the CDU made major

² John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime (New York: HarperCollins, 2010) 45

³ Clifford W. Mills, Angela Merkel (New York: Chelsea House, 2008) 41

⁴ *Ibid.*, 45

concessions to the SDP.⁵ She is not only the first woman to hold the position of German chancellor, but also the first former East German to lead the country.⁶

Structural Considerations

Although the primary focus of this thesis is image, it is necessary to first discuss political structural considerations. Structural considerations are “those hurdles that are built into the political institutions and the ‘rules of the game.’”⁷ They can shape the outcome of an election, as well as the way candidates prepare their campaign strategy.

Several traits of the American political system, as well as standard procedures of the Democratic party, disadvantaged Clinton. The political party system in general tends to recruit males more aggressively, which can make it challenging for the American public to envision a female chief executive.⁸ “Part of the problem in politics is the self-fulfilling prophecy that men tend to seek the help of other men, particularly those who owe them, those with whom they do business.”⁹ Also, the caucus system is designed in such a way that key components of Clinton’s constituency could have been discouraged from voting. There are no absentee ballots; therefore, voters must arrive in person and stand in line for hours at a time. This made voting less appealing for publics such as single mothers, active-duty military personnel and the elderly.¹⁰ The primary system also influenced how Clinton’s team had to structure her campaign. It ultimately had to serve two purposes: securing both the Democratic nomination and the presidency. Therefore, the campaign’s strategies and tactics had to make her appear more

⁵ Mark Landler, “Angela Merkel: Politician Who Can Show a Flash of Steel,” *The New York Times* 11 Oct. 2005

⁶ Mark Landler, “The Front-Runner in Germany Runs Scared,” *The New York Times* 11 Oct. 2005

⁷ Lawrence and Rose, 24

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Susan Estrich, *Sex & Power* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2000) 228

¹⁰ Heilemann and Halperin, 153

favorable than Obama while still persuading Americans that she would make a better president than the Republican nominee. Merkel, in contrast, did not have to win a nomination contest for the CDU and could focus her campaign on one opponent, Schröder.

Finally, the U.S. presidential system may hinder female candidates from obtaining the chief executive office. Many other countries employ a prime ministerial system, where chief executives are elected by their legislative peers that they have worked alongside and with whom they have built a reputation. “The U.S. presidential system forces ‘entrepreneurial’ candidates to stand for public election, and as a consequence, media and image ... become more significant predictors of success.”¹¹

Additionally, the Democratic party had rules governing nomination procedure that crippled Clinton. For example, the Democratic National Convention elected to punish the states that had their nomination contests prior to February 5 by taking away their delegates. Therefore, the primary would essentially be null and void. Clinton won both Florida and Michigan handily; however, both of these states held their primaries before February 5. Consequently, Clinton lost those delegates. She eventually lobbied the party’s Rules and Bylaws Committee and regained some of the delegates. However, this was not a significant amount.¹² Also, 23 primaries and caucuses were scheduled for February 5, which became known as “Super Duper Tuesday.” Clinton invested a huge amount of resources into those February 5 contests, and when she lost 14 of them she found herself with exhausted reserves and no defined strategy for how to proceed.¹³

In order to understand the nature of Merkel’s victory, one must first understand German coalition politics. Due to the number of political parties (six major parties, along with several

¹¹ Lawrence and Rose, 24

¹² Ibid., 235-236

¹³ Ibid., 237

smaller ones), it is virtually impossible for one party to gain more than 50 percent of the seats in Parliament. Therefore, parties usually must form coalitions with one another in order to gain a majority. Because of the CDU's and SPD's signature colors (black and red, respectively), the colloquial term for these two parties joining forces is a "roulette coalition."¹⁴

One thing that must be made clear is that Merkel and the CDU did not win the election by a wide margin. Rather, when election day was over in September 2005, neither party had a majority. The CDU received 35.2 percent of the vote, and the SPD/Green coalition had 34.2.¹⁵ Therefore, the two parties began tense negotiations that lasted nearly three weeks. In the aftermath, Merkel emerged as the new chancellor of Germany. In return, though, the SPD would hold eight of the 15 cabinet seats.¹⁶

Another structural consideration to consider for both Clinton and Merkel is their respective backgrounds. Aside from the fact that she had previously served as the first lady, Clinton's background is typical of an American politician; she is white and has a background in law and public service.¹⁷ Merkel, on the other hand, stayed out of politics for a good portion of her life. In many ways she is an atypical German politician. She stood out from her peers, who were generally male, West German, Catholic and had worked in law. Therefore, her gender was not the only factor that set her apart. She was raised in East Germany, where she "learned to love freedom more than people who were already used to it."¹⁸ Also, Merkel does not have a law degree and did not spend her years prior to her political involvement working in law or

¹⁴ Mills, 44

¹⁵ Ibid., 72

¹⁶ Mark Landler, "Angela Merkel: Politician Who Can Show a Flash of Steel," *The New York Times* 11 Oct. 2005

¹⁷ Regina Lawrence, Personal interview, 9 Feb. 2011

¹⁸ Jana Hensel, "Country Girl," *The New York Times* 22 Sept. 2005

business. Instead, she obtained a Ph.D. in physics and worked in physical chemistry research for several years.

Merkel's unique background was an asset for a few reasons. She had a wealth of knowledge and expertise from which to draw during her time as Minister for the Environment and Nuclear Safety. This likely helped to build her reputation for problem-solving and dependability among Germans. Also, many Germans were largely dissatisfied with the SPD. They blamed the party and Schröder for the country's economic woes, especially the high unemployment rate.¹⁹ Many Germans were looking for a politician who represented more than "politics as usual," and Merkel's ability to face problems from a new perspective was refreshing.²⁰

The final structural consideration to evaluate is each candidate's opponent. Clinton faced a formidable adversary in Barack Obama. At only 47 years of age, his age was certainly a benefit that likely helped him appeal to younger voters.²¹ Though Clinton's campaign eventually tried to discredit him for his lack of experience, this tactic backfired. The American public tends to relate experience to age; by accentuating Clinton's full resume, her campaign inadvertently drew attention to her age. "While for many, experience equals competence, for others, older age in a woman is problematic."²² Furthermore, race was a very visible issue in the election. Lawrence and Rose explain that decisions about race are made with more thought than those about gender. We judge others more involuntarily on their gender than on their race; consequently, it is easier to overcome attitudes toward race.²³ Finally, Obama inspired a

¹⁹ Mills, 61

²⁰ Richard Bernstein and Mark Landler, "A German Contender Is Hard to Read," *The New York Times* 29 May 2005

²¹ Regina Lawrence, Personal interview, 9 Feb. 2011

²² Lawrence and Rose, 136

²³ *Ibid.*, 215

following that at times bordered on fanatical. One of the most notorious images of the 2008 election was the “Obama Girl” video, featuring 26-year-old model Amber Lee Ettinger swiveling her hips while singing suggestive lyrics about Obama. He was charismatic with the media and deeply alluring to the American public.²⁴ “The media’s general aggressive demeanor toward Hillary Clinton in the primaries stood in stark contrast to the warmth shown by the mainstream media toward Senator Obama. The contrast was so patently evident that it was satirized by a newly relevant player in the national election—*Saturday Night Live*.”²⁵

Merkel did not face the same challenges. Instead of being enthralled by her opponent, the German public was generally frustrated with him. Primarily, Germans felt Schröder’s policies were harming the economy and were particularly unimpressed with his reform program, which included cuts to welfare and other programs.²⁶ Many Germans believed Merkel would “push harder to reduce extremely high labor costs and eliminate political impediments to high-tech competitiveness.”²⁷ Furthermore, the fact that Merkel was so strongly connected to the CDU was refreshing to Germans who were disenchanted with the SPD and looking for a change.²⁸ Also, some Germans missed the “balanced policy of close friendship with the United States” that Schröder had neglected to foster. They believed Merkel, whose policies were more in line with those of George W. Bush, would help bring Germany and the United States closer.²⁹

²⁴ “Barack Obama: Here’s Looking At You, Kid,” *The Economist* 18 Sept. 2008

²⁵ Richard E. Vatz, “A Democrat Suffers Media Bias: Hillary’s Fight Against Pro-Obama Coverage,” *Cracked But Not Shattered: Hillary Rodham Clinton’s Unsuccessful Campaign for the Presidency*, ed. Theodore F. Sheckels (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009) 204

²⁶ Mills, 64

²⁷ Bernstein and Landler

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Mark Landler, “Angela Merkel: Politician Who Can Show a Flash of Steel,” *The New York Times* 11 Oct. 2005

To be fair, Schröder's personality is largely credited with narrowing the initially wide lead that Merkel had as the early front-runner.³⁰ Schröder bested Merkel in terms of personality and charisma. While he certainly did not have the "rock star" appeal of Obama, Schröder was still viewed as friendly.³¹ In contrast, Merkel did not seem to care what people thought of her personality. She wore frumpy clothing and "wagged her finger like a stern headmistress" at campaign events. Merkel didn't attempt to joke around or incorporate levity into her campaign speeches; instead, she provided detailed solutions for the problems plaguing Germany.³² One article written shortly after the election remarked that "even in victory ... she remains less popular personally than the avuncular Mr. Schröder."³³

Despite her no-nonsense personality, though, many Germans were impressed with her problem-solving skills. In an interview with National Public Radio, teacher Edith Coverlink observed, "She's not funny ... And she doesn't seem to be a very feminine person. But I think it isn't necessary for a woman to be very charming. It's necessary to have the possibility to be a good politician."³⁴ Coverlink was certainly not alone in this assessment; too many Germans felt that Schröder had been provided ample time to stimulate Germany's economy. It was now time for a candidate with a fresh perspective to approach the challenges facing Germany.

Cultural Attitudes

It seems that women who aspire to political office face a number of obstacles, regardless of their geographical location, due to their gender. Many struggle to reconcile traditional gender roles (mother, homemaker, wife, caretaker) with the thought of a woman in power.

³⁰ Mark Landler, "The Front-Runner in Germany Runs Scared," *The New York Times* 16 Sept. 2005

³¹ Mark Landler, "Angela Merkel: Politician Who Can Show a Flash of Steel," *The New York Times* 11 Oct. 2005

³² Mills, 44

³³ Mark Landler, "Angela Merkel: Politician Who Can Show a Flash of Steel," *The New York Times* 11 Oct. 2005

³⁴ Mills, 65

Clinton faced a significant amount of harsh and at times obscene criticism because she was a woman. Detractors wore shirts and carried signs with slogans that ranged from “Hillary, Iron My Shirt!” to “Life’s a Bitch so Don’t Vote for Her”³⁵ to the macabre “I Wish Hillary Had Married O.J.”³⁶ Presidential candidates can generally expect some degree of bullying from their critics; however, many of the messages aimed at Clinton were deeply rooted in gender stereotypes. “For young women and men who had never seen blatant misogyny before, who had never heard a woman called a ‘cunt’ or seen the size of a senator’s thighs referred to on a T-shirt, these in-your-face examples of gender-based resistance to Hillary were eye-opening.”³⁷

Such sexism partially stems from political stereotypes such as Christian tradition and the “Cult of True Womanhood.” The “Cult of True Womanhood” is the nineteenth-century concept that men are made to serve in the public domain (for example, by holding political office) and women should serve in the private realm. Women contribute to society by making a happy home and supporting their husbands’ work in the public sphere. Furthermore, a woman must be pious, pure, submissive and domestic, so as to serve her husband and bring him back to Christ if he falters.³⁸ Americans have certainly progressed past this attitude, and it is now culturally acceptable for women to have careers and serve society in the public realm. Indeed, a growing proportion of women earn more than their husbands and are the “breadwinners” in their families. Still, the idea of the “Cult of True Womanhood” continues to subtly permeate political theory. Any woman who wants to lead the nation “is still running with hundreds of years of ideological

³⁵ Rebecca Traister, Big Girls Don’t Cry: The Election That Changed Everything for American Women (New York: Free Press, 2010) 66

³⁶ Lawrence and Rose, 201

³⁷ Traister, 67

³⁸ Lawrence and Rose, 31

baggage strapped to her ankles. Is it any wonder that she might trip?”³⁹ Many stereotypes that Americans hold about women provide significant obstacles for those pursuing political office. Women are generally viewed as being well-suited for positions such as governor because these offices primarily work with domestic issues such as education. Conversely, the American public views women as being less adept with foreign policy, which puts women running for senatorial positions at a disadvantage.⁴⁰ Although most people view Clinton’s time as a senator to be successful and productive, the fact remains that many Americans believe a woman’s natural skills and capabilities are not compatible with those required for the presidency. It is challenging for female candidates to establish credibility with their publics because of this dissonance.

Furthermore, women running for the presidency must attempt to strike a balance in a series of “double binds,” where they have to “choose between nonchoices.”⁴¹ Put simply, these are “lose-lose” situations; regardless of which side the candidate chooses to lean more heavily toward, her decision will be met with adversity. One of the double binds Clinton struggled with the most was femininity vs. toughness. Many of her detractors questioned her womanhood and claimed that she was not feminine enough, citing everything from her style choices to her laugh as evidence of her lack of femininity.

Clinton’s background did her little favors; as the former first lady of the United States, she was “literally attempting to move from a ceremonial location to the hub of political and policymaking power.”⁴² Moreover, Clinton was an atypical first lady. She was the first first lady to have a postgraduate degree and a full-time job, and during his campaign for the

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 34

⁴¹ Ibid., 347

⁴² Ibid., 88

presidency, Bill Clinton even promised the American public they would receive “two for the price of one” if he were elected.⁴³ She experienced serious backlash after she famously told Chicago reporters “I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided to do was fulfill my profession, which I entered before my husband was in public life.”⁴⁴ This comment led many to believe that Clinton frowned upon motherhood and was likely an unfit mother herself. Furthermore, her ability to satisfy her husband and be a good wife had long been questioned. Additionally, some of the rhetoric she used in speeches was masculine and militarized (especially when contrasted with the language Obama used). “Clinton’s style has not fit the feminine style of rhetoric that is typically associated with women in politics. Her style ... has been more masculine in nature, perhaps more fitting in a courtroom setting and perhaps more acceptable to society if it were used by a male candidate.”⁴⁵ For example, she said the U.S. would “totally obliterate” Iran if it launched nuclear weapons at Israel.⁴⁶

However, she also faced harsh criticism as a result of her rare moments of emotion; many feared that she was too feminine in this respect, and that she would likely crumble under the pressures of the presidency. The most prevalent example is when Clinton’s voice cracked and she appeared to cry during a question and answer session in New Hampshire on January 7, 2008. The story was everywhere, and people began to take sides on the issue. While the incident seemed to appeal to some, as it made Hillary appear more human and relatable, it turned many people off to her. John Edwards, who at the time was also another worthy competitor for the Democratic nomination, seized the opportunity to publicly call into question her ability to handle

⁴³ Kathy Kieley, “Two Clintons: One Too Many?” *USA Today* 23 Jan. 2008

⁴⁴ Traister, 16

⁴⁵ Spiker, Julia A., “It Takes a Village to Win: A Rhetorical Analysis of ‘Hillary for President,’” Cracked But Not Shattered: Hillary Rodham Clinton’s Unsuccessful Campaign for the Presidency, ed: Theodore F. Sheckels (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009) 118

⁴⁶ “Iran Condemns Hillary Clinton For Threatening to ‘Totally Obliterate’ It,” *New York Daily News* 1 May 2008

pressure.⁴⁷ Clinton struggled to convince Americans that she was feminine enough to play into their notions about womanhood while still maintaining her reputation for being responsible, smart and tough.

Clinton's campaign team also seemed to be conflicted as to whether or not she should broadcast herself as a symbol for women in power. They generally leaned toward downplaying her femininity. Her campaign strategist Mark Penn looked to Margaret Thatcher as an example of the image the team should strive to generate for Hillary; Thatcher was intelligent, shrewd and straightforward. Penn assumed that young women would instinctively gravitate toward Clinton; he took their votes for granted and decided to focus instead on winning over male voters.⁴⁸ Although she did show glimpses of femininity (for example, when she appeared on the morning television show *The View*), her team generally marketed her as "a competent masculine norm rather than a nut-cracking or lily-livered feminine exception."⁴⁹ Obama scooped up many of the votes that Penn presumed would be Hillary's. His rhetoric and emotional appeals, along with the support of opinion leaders such as Oprah Winfrey, helped him to accomplish this.

Clinton's team attempted to downplay her femininity by accentuating her political acumen, particularly at the expense of Obama. "I have a lifetime of experience I will bring to the White House," she declared on March 3, 2008. "Senator McCain has a lifetime of experience he will bring to the White House. And Senator Obama has a speech he made in 2002."⁵⁰ While this approach was somewhat successful in emphasizing Obama's slimmer resume, it also had the effect of making Clinton appear to emasculate him. Because she, a woman, was challenging the

⁴⁷ Traister, 96

⁴⁸ Ibid., 67, 71

⁴⁹ Ibid., 73

⁵⁰ Heilemann and Halperin, 232

expertise of a man, many consequently doubted her femininity. Furthermore, because many Americans associate experience with maturity, this strategy highlighted her age. The propensity of Americans to more harshly judge women based on age, coupled with Obama's youth, made this strategy backfire on Clinton.⁵¹

Prior to German reunification in 1990, there were some marked differences between East German women and West German women. Although there were exceptions, West German women generally embraced traditional gender roles more readily than East German women. West German women were more likely to be Christian (especially in the southern portion of the country, which has a strong Catholic presence), conservative and adhere to the ideal of the "German Woman," who made her mark on society by bearing German children and keeping a clean and happy home.⁵² They were taught to mind the "three Ks" of "Kinder, Küche and Kirche" (children, kitchen and church).⁵³ Also, West German women generally chose children over careers; those who decided to work generally felt that motherhood was impossible to balance with professional responsibilities.⁵⁴ Conversely, many women in East Germany "went out to work – and often looked after the house, too."⁵⁵

Germany is still struggling to reconcile these two attitudes in the years after reunification. In comparison with other European countries, Germany maintains a traditional perspective toward gender roles. While Merkel has become a widely respected figure, there are not many women who serve with her in the German government. In comparison with other European countries such as France and Ireland, Germany lags in the number of female university chairs

⁵¹ Regina Lawrence, Personal interview, 9 Feb. 2011

⁵² Eva Kolinsky and Hildegard Maria Nickel, Reinventing Gender: Women in Eastern Germany since Unification (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003) 263

⁵³ Andrew Purvis, "Why Merkel Is Not Enough," Time 22 Jan. 2006

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

and research scientists it has. Furthermore, many young people in Germany embrace the traditional attitudes toward women, rather than rebel against them.⁵⁶

Merkel was not immune to the effects of gender stereotypes during her campaign. Stay-at-home mothers tended to be harshly critical of Merkel. “Career mothers’ worst enemy is not the testosterone-ridden boss but the neighborhood earth mother. If a mother is not home at 1 p.m. to cook spaghetti for her kids she is judged to be a Rabenmutter.”⁵⁷ “Rabenmutter” translates to “raven mother,” and is based on the misconception that female ravens abandon their young.⁵⁸ Merkel was criticized for not raising children at home by many detractors, but most famously Schröder’s wife.⁵⁹ Women from her own hometown even censured her on these grounds.⁶⁰ Some male members of her own party did not support her candidacy simply because they were “unable to accept a woman in this position.”⁶¹

Interestingly, some of Merkel’s most popular attributes were her candor and her support of military action, features that many would view as masculine. Although her personality in and of itself was not extremely popular, her no-nonsense attitude appealed to many Germans. Therefore, it would seem that downplaying her femininity benefited her. However, Merkel deliberately chose to not broadcast herself as an icon of women in political office. She only mentioned policies on women’s issues three times in her entire campaign,⁶² and this strategy backfired and cost her a good deal of female support.⁶³ A September 2005 article from *Der Spiegel* indicated that if Germans could vote directly for the chancellor (which they cannot do

⁵⁶ Mills, 96-97

⁵⁷ Purvis

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Charles Hawley, “Angela Merkel Realizes She’s a Woman,” *Der Spiegel* 7 Sept. 2005

⁶⁰ Mills, 20

⁶¹ Purvis

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Mark Landler, “Angela Merkel: Politician Who Can Show a Flash of Steel,” *The New York Times* 11 Oct. 2005

because of the prime ministerial system), only 42 percent of women would vote for Merkel, as opposed to the 48 percent that would vote for Schröder.⁶⁴

The best explanation for these seemingly conflicting findings is that Germans wanted a new kind of leader, someone who could approach their problems (especially the economic ones) with a fresh perspective. Here was a woman pursuing the chancellorship, which flew in the face of traditional gender roles. Indeed, Merkel was the first woman to run for chancellor of Germany.⁶⁵ She was not just any woman, though – the idea of a Christian East German with a science background running for chancellor on the conservative ticket is full of contradictions that surely appealed to a German public that was hungry for new solutions. Germans saw Merkel as a fresh face who could offer new ideas and solutions.⁶⁶ It is no surprise, then, that her strategy to restrain her femininity flopped. Had she opted to present herself as a symbol for women, perhaps her image of being a refreshing change would have been further promulgated. Additionally, many women were likely lost and confused in the attempts of the West and the East to reconcile in terms of gender politics. These women would have likely responded positively to having an example in the form of Merkel, a woman who retained her Christian/conservative values while successfully pursuing her career goals. While her approach was clearly not a total failure (she did win the chancellorship, after all, and remains a respected figure), it represents a missed opportunity that could have possibly resulted in a less narrow victory due to increased female support.

Finally, one characteristic that seems to be inextricably linked to femininity is appearance. Both Clinton's and Merkel's appearances were picked apart and sometimes panned

⁶⁴ Hawley

⁶⁵ Mills, 63

⁶⁶ Bernstein and Landler

by their respective publics. As the first first lady with a postgraduate degree and a full-time career, Clinton became an easy target for many Americans to express their frustrations at the changing role of women in society. One of the ways this infuriation manifested itself was through the merciless jabs at her appearance. Her headbands became infamous, and she sported “weird amounts of ineptly applied makeup.”⁶⁷ She famously remarked while she was the first lady, “If we ever want to get Bosnia off the front page, all I have to do is change my hair.”⁶⁸ During the late 1990s, however, she began to polish her look. Her hair and makeup became more refined, and her clothing started to look more like that of her predecessors.

Though she certainly looked more elegant during her presidential campaign with her polished coif and array of pantsuits, the constant barrage of insults aimed at her appearance only intensified. Because of her team’s strategy to highlight her experience, Clinton’s age was inadvertently emphasized. In December 2007, the Web site The Drudge Report famously posted a picture of an exhausted Clinton in Iowa, leading conservative talk-radio host Rush Limbaugh to inquire, “Will this country want to actually watch a woman get older before their eyes on a daily basis?”⁶⁹

Aside from her age, the press was fascinated with basic components of Clinton’s anatomy. In 2007, Clinton spoke to congress about higher education and selected a slightly low-cut blouse for the occasion. The *Washington Post* responded with an article titled “Hillary Clinton’s Tentative Dip into New Neckline Territory,” in which author Robin Givhan dissected and analyzed the thought process behind and implications of the blouse. Clinton’s head of women’s outreach, Ann Lewis, responded with an e-mail to supporters, appropriately titled

⁶⁷ Traister, 15

⁶⁸ “The Year In Hillary,” *People* 25 Oct. 1993

⁶⁹ Traister, 78

“Cleavage.” She began her message by exclaiming, “Can you believe the *Washington Post* wrote a 746-word article on Hillary’s cleavage? ... I’ve seen some off-topic press coverage—but talking about body parts? That is grossly inappropriate.”⁷⁰ Lewis was justified in pointing out how anomalous such journalistic behavior is—no presidential hopeful has ever been subject to such speculation about his basic anatomy. In comparison, while male presidential candidates are occasionally mocked for their style choices, it is usually done with the purpose of feminizing them. Traister cites John Kerry’s rumored Botox injections and Edwards’ expensive haircuts as examples. However, “the scrutiny was much more intense for Clinton, because for women value is intrinsically tied to desirability and attractiveness.”⁷¹

The German media were more captivated with the novelty of Merkel’s historic run as a female candidate from the former East Germany than they were with her appearance. Though her style was sometimes mocked in the media, as well as by popular comedians, discussion about her appearance largely subsided after she polished her look at the request of her advisors during her campaign. Moreover, most Germans were impressed with her dramatic transition. Her “strong and fearless” style so inspired fashion designer Wolfgang Joop that she served as the inspiration for his 2006 fall/winter collection.⁷² It is worth noting that after wearing a low-cut dress to the Oslo Opera House, Merkel received treatment from the media similar to what Clinton experienced in 2007.⁷³ Although this had no bearing on her campaign, it is indicative of the scrutiny to which many female politicians around the world are vulnerable.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 75-76

⁷¹ Ibid., 76-77

⁷² “A Model Of Inspiration, Merkel Turns Fashion Muse,” *Deutsche Welle* 4 March 2006

⁷³ “Plunging Neckline: Merkel Surprised By Attention to Low-Cut Dress,” *Der Spiegel* 15 April 2008

Though the criticisms slung at Merkel were perhaps not quite as graphic, she experienced her fair share of disparagement. When she debuted on the political scene, Merkel had limp hair, scant makeup and an overall harsh look. She preferred to wear frumpy clothes instead of more tailored and trendy fashions. The Germans were well aware of her dowdy style; one man referred to her as a “clown” in reference to her hair style in an interview with National Public Radio’s Emily Harris.⁷⁴ The criticism did not seem to bother Merkel; before the campaign started she remarked, “If all people have to worry about is the way I look then their lives must be very fortunate.”⁷⁵ Her advisors eventually convinced her to overhaul her look in the summer of 2005. She tried a new haircut, got highlights and hired a professional makeup artist.⁷⁶ She also seemed to develop an affinity for brightly colored, Clinton-esque pantsuits.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Germans’ mocking of Merkel’s hair and clothing was more light-hearted than the harassment Clinton received as a result of her appearance. Many of Clinton’s disparagers used her fashion and style choices to suggest a lack of femininity or that she was a lesbian, a possibility that seemed to appall traditional Americans.⁷⁸ The fashion-related jabs aimed at Merkel seemed to be more for humorous purposes, and there was less malice behind those attacks. As previously established, it is difficult for female candidates who are not seen as “feminine” enough to establish credibility with many Americans. Therefore, Hillary’s image problem was more detrimental to her campaign than Merkel’s was.

⁷⁴ Mills, 65

⁷⁵ Ibid., 66

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ “Merkel Surprised By Attention to Low-Cut Dress,” *Der Spiegel* 15 April 2008

⁷⁸ Lawrence and Rose, 202

Media Coverage

The media played a significant role in determining the outcome of both elections. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, each candidate's personality was broadcast in a certain light through the lens of the media. Both controlled media and uncontrolled media had a hand in shaping the general perception of these two women.

Controlled Media

When candidates have control over the messages broadcast about themselves, they are utilizing controlled media. For example, campaign advertisements and social media (Facebook, Twitter, et. al.) are common controlled media. Both Clinton and Merkel had deliberate strategies that manifested themselves in the controlled media that each campaign disseminated.

Initially the front-runner for the Democratic nomination, Clinton "liked being seen as formidable and imposing. She had no taste for softening her image or for pandering to the base" at the beginning of her campaign.⁷⁹ Like Merkel, she generally toned down her femininity. She used militaristic language in her speeches and turned down an offer to grace the cover of *Vogue* magazine because she was worried it would cause white men to question her leadership abilities.⁸⁰ She largely saved her rare feminine moments for female audiences, such as that of *The View*, where she discussed how empowering her efforts were to other women. Still, she hid these statements among more masculine assertions of strength and her political prowess.⁸¹

Clinton's team was initially adamant about not projecting her as the "first" female presidential candidate. They felt that to do so would be to depict her as a novelty; consequently,

⁷⁹ Heilemann and Halperin, 84

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 101

⁸¹ Traister, 67, 72

her credibility would be compromised. However, after a poor performance in a debate at Drexel University in October 2007, Clinton began to use more gender-charged language. In claiming that her opponents were attacking her because of her frontrunner status, not her gender, she said, “If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen ... Well, I’m really comfortable in the kitchen, and I’m going to stay in there and absorb the heat.”⁸² Many mainstream media began to discuss Clinton’s use of the “gender card,” a term that did not experience common usage prior to the Drexel debate. Although some of this coverage found that Clinton had used the gender card and was justified in doing so, most believed that playing the gender card was a mistake. There was virtually no coverage that did not claim she played the gender card at this point.⁸³

After losing the Iowa caucus and 12 of the 22 Super Duper Tuesday caucuses, her team had to regroup and revamp its strategy. The upcoming Texas and Ohio contests were crucial “make it or break it” events; she would have to win both to justify staying in the race. Her team accordingly realigned the campaign’s focus. “If Clinton found her voice in New Hampshire, in Texas and Ohio she discovered a new persona: the fighter, the populist, the resilient underdog.”⁸⁴ One of the most memorable products of this shift was the “3:00 a.m.” television ad released in Texas on February 29. Although the ad featured a sleeping child, a seemingly maternal image, it focused on Clinton’s ability to protect and guide the country in the event of a crisis (symbolized by a phone ringing in the White House). The ad’s script asked, “When an international crisis hits, who do you want picking up the receiver in the Oval Office?” Clinton calmly picks up the phone, signifying her ability to meet such a challenge. “3:00 a.m.” was intended to reach the male voters in Texas. In the wake of John Edwards’ January 30

⁸² Lawrence and Rose, 124

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 347

⁸⁴ Heilemann and Halperin, 232

announcement that he would suspend his campaign, male votes (especially white male votes) were crucial. The ad also emphasized her foreign policy expertise, an essential trait for the presidency and one that women are usually viewed as lacking.⁸⁵

Merkel's campaign shares a few similarities with Clinton's. Her strategists wanted to emphasize her experience over her femininity. While Merkel did not benefit from an opponent with less experience than she, Germans gravitated toward her because she boasted a different kind of experience and the ability to attack problems from a new angle. Whereas Clinton's campaign frequently relied on masculine, as opposed to feminine, language and expression, Merkel steered clear of gendered rhetoric in general.

A 2005 television ad demonstrates Merkel's emphasis on her experience and expertise. The ad begins by showing a dim room with a long table upon which several objects stand. At one end of the table, a male hand (presumably intended to symbolize Schröder) lets go of a ball, which rolls across the table. As it travels, it knocks over several items, such as a cup of pencils and a glass of water. The ball causes a neat stack of papers to scatter and a pen to flip across the table's surface. While the ball is wreaking havoc, the narrator enumerates the various economic failures of the current SPD/Environmentalist Party coalition. The last thing the narrator says is, "Red-green (the colors of the respective SPD and Environmentalist parties) promised a lot, and gambled a lot. The people ache for perspective." At this point, Merkel's hand appears and stops the ball from rolling off the end of the table. The rest of the camera features Merkel impressing upon her audience that Germany needs "reliable politics" now. She shows her readiness to tackle the country's economic woes when she says, "the CDU and I personally ask you for this

⁸⁵ Lawrence and Rose, 129

assignment.” The focus of this ad is clearly on Merkel’s ability to face the problems plaguing Germany.

A comparison of these two ads reveals underlying American and German cultural considerations. Most of the commercial is comprised of sleeping children, and Clinton’s face is only shown at the end. This is also the only part of the commercial where she speaks, to say that she “approves this message.” Although there are some feminine images (such as a mother checking on her children while they sleep), the focus of the ad is ultimately on Clinton’s ability to protect the nation and “[keep] watch while a nation unaware of the lurking danger sleeps.”⁸⁶ Furthermore, the ad highlights Clinton’s experience. It suggests she is “someone who already knows the world’s leaders, knows the military – someone tested and ready to lead in a dangerous world.”

While Clinton’s ad focused on images related to the home and family, Merkel’s ad is more industrial. It features a long office table, steel chairs and the gray ball that rolls across the surface of the table. Merkel addresses the camera directly for 22 seconds – nearly half of the entire ad. Direct eye contact is a quintessential German characteristic; it indicates trust and reliability. The focus of the ad is on the dependability and competence of Merkel and the CDU: “For more growth and more employment, for a safe future for everyone, the CDU and I personally ask you for this assignment.”

Both ads, however, spend some time condemning the opponents. Clinton’s ad implies that Obama is not as qualified or experienced as she is. Merkel’s ad is blunter; it directly blames the current administration for the economic problems in Germany.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Merkel's ability to make her intelligence and competence the focal point of her campaign is particularly impressive in light of the fact that her personality was not popular. She came across as "dogged, earnest, almost willfully bland," and made virtually no attempts to "humanize" herself.⁸⁷ Even after her election, Schröder was still regarded as more likeable and personable. Still, Germans chose to overlook her lack of charisma and instead gravitated toward her abilities and perspective.

Uncontrolled Media

Candidates are not able to dictate the messages broadcast in uncontrolled media; examples include newspaper articles, television segments, opinion pieces and blogs about the candidates. Clinton and Merkel share, among other things, a checkered relationship with the media. Though it would be unfair to claim that they were never portrayed in a positive light, both were generally depicted as "ball busters," and their appearances and marriages were dissected at length by the media.

The issue of sexism in election coverage was a contested topic in 2008. Some of Clinton's team members and supporters accused the press of blatant sexist coverage; in response, her adversaries dismissed this behavior as whiny.⁸⁸ Generally, though, not many people spoke out in Clinton's defense.

"There certainly was sexism in the mainstream media, but there wasn't a pervasive sexist bias against Clinton that was really palpable," Lawrence explained. "Was there blatant sexist

⁸⁷ Mark Landler, "Angela Merkel: Politician Who Can Show a Flash of Steel," *The New York Times* 11 Oct. 2005

⁸⁸ Lawrence and Rose, 124, 126

treatment of Clinton? No. But on cable news there were some people saying blatantly sexist things about her. It did seem that whatever response there was to that was very muted.”⁸⁹

Whether it was due to her gender, her background or some other factor, the media appeared to hold Clinton to an especially stringent standard. “It’s not like I have any margin for error whatsoever. I don’t. Everybody else does, and I don’t,” she lamented to a reporter. “And that’s fine. That’s just who I am, and that’s what I live with.”⁹⁰

Clinton’s media problem was twofold, though. She not only had to contend with an unfavorable relationship with the press, but also the media’s utter fascination with Obama. *Saturday Night Live* went so far as to pillory the favorable coverage Obama enjoyed in a few sketches. *SNL*, however, may have been Clinton’s most vocal advocate. Obama had charmed not only the mass media, but also Hollywood. A few exceptions aside (including Jack Nicholson and Eva Longoria), few celebrities or opinion leaders defended her. Obama, however, greatly benefited from several celebrity endorsements, the most famous being his relationship with Oprah Winfrey. “Winfrey had leveraged decades of cultural capital to endorse Barack Obama, giving him a boost that may have helped put him over the top in Iowa.”⁹¹ Obama also enjoyed endorsements from several other figures, from Robert De Niro and George Clooney to starlets giddy with admiration such as Scarlett Johansson and Olivia Wilde.

The German press generally seemed confused as to how to approach Merkel. “Merkel is not easy to identify; it’s hard to find out what she wants,” the *Berliner Zeitung* pondered.⁹²

Some members of the press seemed intimidated by her ambition and serious persona and

⁸⁹ Regina Lawrence, Personal interview, 9 Feb. 2011

⁹⁰ Heilemann and Halperin, 45

⁹¹ Traister, 248-249

⁹² Richard Bernstein and Mark Landler, “A German Contender Is Hard to Read,” *The New York Times* 29 May 2005

consequently portrayed her as a “political man-eater.”⁹³ Many, however, were more fascinated by her intelligence and expertise, such as the *Suddeutsche Zeitung*: “In the recent past, her numerous critics within the party have belittled her, but today nobody is laughing anymore. Because Merkel during the last years has been able to gain respect, both with delicate and less delicate means, showing tenacity, strong nerves and an ability to get her way politically.”⁹⁴

Merkel quickly became a popular topic; whether the press was questioning her marriage, extolling her political acumen or comparing her to Margaret Thatcher, she seemed to constantly be on the media’s mind. She eventually became “the subject of more articles, conversations, portraits and debates than almost any other figure in recent German political history.”⁹⁵ Aside from the fact that she was the first woman to pursue the chancellorship, her unique background as an East German provoked the media’s fascination.

She eventually appeared to cultivate a largely positive relationship with the press. Though she was the early front-runner, she lost a significant amount of support over the course of her campaign, more so than any other candidate in German history. However, the media overlooked this issue and barely touched it at all.⁹⁶

Finally, both women found serious media roadblocks in the form of their husbands. Bill Clinton’s antics are something of an American legend; his most notorious escapade is the Monica Lewinsky scandal of the late 1990s. In the aftermath of the scandal, Clinton opted to stay with her husband, a decision that radically changed her image. Many who had initially supported her, especially feminists, were appalled when Clinton did not end her relationship with

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Hensel

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Bill. In 2009 Gloria Steinem speculated that, for some women, their exasperation with Clinton had more to do with their anger toward their own husbands; perhaps they wished to live vicariously through Clinton and gleefully watch her put Bill in his place. Princeton professor Melissa Harris-Lacewell was disgusted “not that she stayed with her husband, but that she did not speak out in defense of a barely-older-than-teenage girl who was harassed by her husband.”⁹⁷ The scandal had the opposite effect on Americans who had previously loathed her, though. Many had long been intimidated and repelled by her power, and the ordeal showed them she was not an omnipotent force—after all, she had not been able to control her husband. “For some it was comforting to see mighty Hillary brought low; for others the scandal provided an antifeminist moral about professional women unable to keep their men satisfied.”⁹⁸ This idea that Clinton was a failure as a wife became prevalent among her detractors; “Even Bill Doesn’t Want Me,” became a popular slogan. Her marital problems seemed to translate to a lack of femininity because she wasn’t “woman enough” to keep her husband from straying. Their marriage became a popular media topic, and the public enjoyed speculating as to whether or not they still slept in the same bed. *The New York Times* wrote a 2006 article about the Clinton marriage, suggesting that it was nothing more than a political tactic; furthermore, the article implied that Bill Clinton’s seemingly uninhibited lifestyle could hinder Hillary Clinton’s political aspirations.⁹⁹ Clinton knew she had to separate herself from her husband in her campaign.¹⁰⁰ His bachelor-type antics contaminated his reputation and, consequently, her own as well.

⁹⁷ Traister, 23

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Heilemann and Halperin, 47

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 42

Despite her marital woes, though, Bill seemed dedicated to helping his wife with her campaign. Though he initially played a minor role on her team, he eventually became more involved. He advised Clinton before many speeches and public appearances and became so frustrated with the media's pandering to Obama that he "broke down in tears" on more than one conference call with the campaign team.¹⁰¹

Though his motives seemed to be pure, he hurt her campaign much more than he helped it. "The conventional wisdom is that he played a large and detrimental role in her campaign because he never saw a microphone that he didn't love, and he couldn't keep himself from talking to reporters," Lawrence explained. "And then he said things that were problematic."¹⁰² Therefore, her team minimized his involvement. Bill reportedly realized Clinton's team viewed him as a nuisance and a burden, and obediently tried not to interfere with the campaign. Still, the baggage he had contributed to her campaign appeared to be permanent in the minds of Americans.

Joachim Sauer, Merkel's second husband, was the anti-Bill Clinton in the sense that he shied away from media attention at all costs. A deeply private man, his marriage to Merkel seemed to confuse Germans. Aside from the lack of physical affection they showed each other in public, Germans did not respond positively to Sauer's absence from his wife's campaign; they wanted to see Merkel's husband gazing at her adoringly while she delivered campaign speeches. The press speculated as to why they were such a private couple and why Sauer remained largely absent from his wife's campaign. After a rare public outing together at the Bayreuth opera

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 228

¹⁰² Regina Lawrence, Personal interview, 9 Feb. 2011

festival, reporters nicknamed him “The Phantom of the Opera.”¹⁰³ Some newspapers went further and implied that Merkel had an emasculating effect on her husband, noting that he did more gardening than she did.¹⁰⁴ The fact that this was Merkel’s second marriage and that she also had no children did her no favors. Being an atypical candidate helped Merkel in many ways; her being divorced, childless and married to a virtual hermit was not one of them.

Conclusions About Image

Using the preceding analyses as premises, some conclusions can be drawn about the image of each candidate, as well as the way it impacted her campaign.

It is crucial to first state that both women had image problems. The mere fact that Merkel won her contest and Clinton lost hers does not signify that the former expertly managed her image while the latter’s was a lost cause. Furthermore, one should remember that Clinton came very close to winning the Democratic nomination, and Merkel nearly lost the election for chancellor. It is truly the unique mix of structural and cultural considerations, coupled with media coverage and external factors, that contributed to one woman’s victory and the other’s defeat.

Although her willingness to be flexible with her wardrobe and beauty choices helped her cause, Merkel largely won her election in spite of her appearance, not because of it. She was greatly advantaged by a nation frustrated with the current administration and yearning for new perspective. She successfully groomed her appearance to be more polished and sophisticated;

¹⁰³ Mills, 70

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 66

still, her personality remained dry, blunt and stern. “She could and did soften her appearance for the cameras, but she was who she was.”¹⁰⁵

It is perhaps this dedication to stay true to herself that won over so many Germans. Merkel may have had several personality-related shortcomings, but she was certainly genuine; she did not seem to be a calculated political mechanism encased in shiny plastic—she was just herself. “She has so much courage,” 58-year-old Hanna Kaltenbach said in a *New York Times* article. “Schröder is a media star, but he is shallow.”¹⁰⁶

Merkel’s victory can also be partially attributed to the love of efficiency and problem-solving that is so characteristically German. She virtually never used emotional appeals in her campaign or flowery language in her speeches, and she approached the German public with detailed plans for solving the country’s economic woes. Furthermore, though she largely remained faithful to CDU/CSU ideals, she was able to operate independently of her party. For example, Merkel was not afraid to condemn Kohl publicly in the wake of his financial scandal, even though some CDU members denounced her as being unfaithful to the party.¹⁰⁷ Germans wanted a chancellor who would be something more than “politics as usual,” and who would avoid the typical political games—they clearly found such a candidate in Merkel. Moreover, Merkel had shown the German public she was able to solve problems calmly and efficiently. For instance, Merkel experienced her first political crisis during her time as Minister for the Environment and Nuclear Safety. In the wake of a series of nuclear power plant problems, Merkel was “then portrayed as being the defender of a suddenly unpopular German nuclear industry, and not caring enough about the people exposed to radiation from the containers.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Mark Landler, “The Front-Runner in Germany Runs Scared,” *The New York Times* 16 Sept. 2005

¹⁰⁷ Mills, 53

Many groups called for her resignation.”¹⁰⁸ Merkel remained calm and collected during the ordeal, however, and the uproar eventually subsided.

Though her marriage and family situation was cause for concern among many Germans, she generally avoided many of the snags Clinton had to contend with. It is probably because of the Germans’ focus on their economic problems and their desire for new perspective that they overlooked her personality and appearance flaws.

Clinton experienced the majority of the problems Merkel faced, but generally to a greater extent. Merkel’s husband was maligned because he was camera shy; Clinton’s husband was maligned because of his multiple extramarital affairs. A German comedian mocked Merkel’s hair cut in one of his acts; demeaning comments about Clinton’s anatomy were emblazoned on T-shirts and bumper stickers. Merkel’s opponent was a popular incumbent chancellor, yet one who had disappointed his constituents; Clinton had to compete against one of the most charismatic politicians in history, who ignited audiences with his hopeful speeches and seemed to have the media on his side. The extent to which Clinton had to cope with these pitfalls is a significant reason why she did not win the Democratic nomination.

Femininity was a much more daunting problem for Clinton than it was for Merkel. She seemed to be constantly doing political acrobatics to try to satisfy the femininity “double bind.” One day, she was too harsh and manly, the next she was being depicted as an overly emotional woman who could not be expected to handle the rigors of the presidency.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 52

Implications for the Future

Both women currently enjoy a generally favorable reputation. After being elected president of the United States, Obama appointed Clinton to serve as secretary of state. She has recently been in headlines frequently as a result of the WikiLeaks controversy and the crises in Egypt and Libya. She has generally fielded the various issues competently and efficiently. “People credit her for giving this administration some spine.”¹⁰⁹

Merkel was re-elected as chancellor in 2009 and formed a new coalition with the Free Democratic Party (FDP), which is generally looked on as a failure. However, Merkel herself remains popular, much more so than her government. Germans continued to be impressed by the diligence and proficiency with which she solves issues. Still, “she comes across as approachably ordinary rather than forbiddingly professional.”¹¹⁰

Merkel experienced a surge in international popularity and visibility after her election. In 2006, she was named *Forbes*’ “World’s Most Powerful Woman.”¹¹¹ She was not even included in the 2005 list of powerful women.¹¹² She has found herself in the midst of some controversies; for example, she recently made international headlines for announcing that multiculturalism in her country was a “failure,” referring to the issues between Germans and the migrant Turks who settle in Germany. She was also criticized for presenting an award for free speech to Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, who depicted Allah in one of his provocative cartoons. Still, many praised Merkel for defending free speech.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Patrick B. Pexton, “How Is Hillary Clinton Doing As Secretary of State?” *National Journal* 26 Oct. 2009

¹¹⁰ “Germany’s Leader: The Constant Chancellor,” *The Economist* 5 Feb. 2011

¹¹¹ Tatiana Serafin, “The 100 Most Powerful Women,” *Forbes* 31 Aug. 2006

¹¹² Mills, 95

¹¹³ “Merkel Defends Press Freedom, Condemns Koran-Burning” *Der Spiegel* 9 Sept. 2010

It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these women have helped the women who will pursue political office in the future. Though her campaign largely neglected women's issues,¹¹⁴ Merkel involuntarily became a symbol for women when she became the first female chancellor of Germany. Although Clinton was not the first woman to run for president, she came the closest to the White House and made the biggest strides. "That Hillary Clinton got as close as she did suggests that the ceiling is ready to shatter."¹¹⁵ However, some feel that the media's treatment of Clinton will discourage potential female candidates from running for president.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, although the 2008 election probably led many young females to take a more active interest in politics, it is difficult to attribute that to Clinton instead of to Obama.

Although it is nearly impossible to say how much Clinton and Merkel have helped their successors, one conclusion is certain. Their efforts have served to desensitize a Western society that is not fully acclimated to women in power. In societies that would have been shocked to see a female candidate half a century ago, these Hillary Clinton and Angela Merkel have helped to normalize women in pursuit of political office. Rather than being dismissed as novelties, they will begin to be seen as viable candidates.

¹¹⁴ Purvis

¹¹⁵ Theodore F. Sheckels, *Cracked But Not Shattered: Hillary Rodham Clinton's Unsuccessful Campaign for the Presidency* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009) 214

¹¹⁶ Lawrence and Rose, 223-224

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Appendix A: Clinton's "3:00 a.m." Ad (Transcript)

Clinton's "3:00 a.m." ad was first shown on February 29, 2008, in Texas.

"It's 3:00 a.m. and your children are safe and asleep. But there's a phone in the White House and it's ringing.

Something's happening in the world. Your vote will decide who answers that call, whether it's someone who already knows the world's leaders, knows the military—someone tested and ready to lead in a dangerous world.

It's 3:00 a.m. and your children are safe and asleep. Who do you want answering the phone?"

Appendix B: Merkel's 2005 Ad (Transcript, translated from German)

This ad debuted during Merkel's campaign in the summer of 2005.

"What is going to happen with our country? After seven years, red-green is leaving behind a terrifying account: we have had the smallest growth in all of Europe for years; there have never been more people without employment, Germany loses 1000 workplaces per day. Every hour, our debts increase by 6 million euros.

Red-green promised a lot, and gambled a lot. The people ache for perspective."

Merkel: "This isn't an election like any before. There is a lot to lose. Germany needs an explicit line of action and reliable politics. For more growth and more employment, for a safe future for everyone, the CDU and I personally ask you for this assignment. Germany will do it!"

