

Three Networks, Two Candidates, One Problem: Sexist News Commentary During Hillary Clinton's Presidential and Sarah Palin's Vice-Presidential Campaigns

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This paper examines the political commentary of three major U.S. television news networks for their portrayal and criticism of and sexist commentary on Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin during their 2008 presidential campaigns and Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. I reviewed coverage by CNN, the news source "bordering the neutral zone" (Langlois); MSNBC, the news outlet with a "slightly more liberal audience" (Blake); and Fox News, the "perceived as right-leaning" media outlet (Rothwell). While I originally sought to assess imbalances in criticism of these women from opposing parties on each network (would one woman "catch a break" on a certain network but not from others), I instead found an even display of criticism and negative portrayal based on sexist commentary across all three. This finding suggests a connection between openly biased and sexist news media coverage of female candidates for national political office and underrepresentation of women in congressional and presidential politics. Through negative commentary on female politicians' appearance, family roles, and competence based on stereotypes like "emotionality," mainstream news media play a powerful role in women's continuing struggle to occupy the White House.

In 2013, the United States broke a record for the highest number of women elected to the United States Congress. Out of the total 535 seats in Congress, 101 of those seats were occupied by women, including 20 in the Senate (Blackwill). Many commentators were quick to call these numbers and milestones "ground-breaking" (Blackwill), and perhaps they were. Just two years before the 2013 mid-term elections, the 112th Congress was comprised of only 91 women, of whom only 17 served in the Senate. In 2018, the United States Congress saw a "record-breaking

number of women" (Zhou) with 117 women elected to Congress, totaling 127 seats held by female politicians. Even with this ground-breaking surge of incredible women stepping into the political arena, a whopping 76 percent of our lawmakers are men, making it difficult for the rights, needs, and health of women to be sufficiently represented. This shallow margin of gender representation is also a testament to how slow-moving gender equality in the U.S. political arena truly is, especially when it comes to obtaining the presidential nomination.

In 1789, the United States elected George Washington as our first president. In the 229 years since, only 19 women have run for the two highest government positions, President and Vice-President. According to Rutgers University's Center for American Women and Politics, only five women have run for Vice-Presidential in our nation's history: Frances "Sissy" Farenthold (1972), Toni Nathan (1972), Geraldine Anne Ferraro (1984), Winona LaDuke (1996, 2000), and Sarah Palin (2008). Fourteen women have run for President: Victoria Woodhull (1872), Belva Ann Bennett Lockwood (1884, 1888), Margaret Chase Smith (1964), Shirley Anita Chisolm (1972), Patsy Mink (1972), Ellen McCormack (1976, 1980), Sonia Johnson (1984), Patricia S. Schroeder (1988), Lenora Fulani (1988, 1992), Elizabeth Hanford Dole (2000), Carol Moseley Braun (2004), Michele Bachmann (2012), Hillary Rodham Clinton (2008, 2016), and Carly Fiorina (2016). Among these, Hillary Rodham Clinton was "the first female major party nominee in the country's history," in 2016 (Hayden). Although Clinton did not win, her presence and persistence in the presidential race has forever made an impact on women in politics. The *New York Times* reported that "Emily's List, the largest national organization devoted to electing female candidates, said that in the 10 months before the election in 2016 ... 1,000 women contacted [the organization] about running for office ... and since the election ... that number has exploded to more than 22,000" (Tackett). Outrage over Donald Trump's victory has sparked a national call-to-action by women, and the outcome of the 2018 mid-term elections suggests this momentum is not decreasing. The question

remains, why now? Why did it take so long for a woman to reach this historical milestone, and at what cost? Why is the gender balance among our public servants so uneven? What cultural, environmental, and social factors are keeping this country from reaching gender parity and having a woman reside in the Oval Office?

When I was in grade school, family from various career fields were asked to present about their jobs and how they got where they are. I distinctly remember one parent not looking like the rest: a woman dressed in a suit. There were plenty of dads in their button-ups and dress slacks, but this was the only mom dressed like the dads. She was a defense attorney for the state of Nebraska, and her case load consisted mostly of domestic violence cases. I remember listening to her speak and thinking about how powerful and important she seemed. Not only did her work sound so impressive and important, but her suit made her look like a real-life superhero.

When my uncle picked me up from school that day, I told him about my plan to become a superhero defense attorney just like my classmate's mom. He turned, scoffed, and said, "yeah, good luck with that." Just like that, my interests and aspirations were dismissed. I was not aware of it then, but this interaction that I had with my uncle impacted me well into adulthood. Through this one backhanded comment, he had convinced me that I was perhaps not cut out to be a lawyer. Whenever I share that story with fellow female colleagues or friends, everyone seems to have a similar story about "that uncle." Whether it is truly an uncle or not, the universal experience of "you are not good enough because ..." is widely felt by women.

It was “those uncles” of the world, in the form of large news media organizations, that helped to reinforce similar harmful narratives during the 2008 and 2016 presidential elections. Throughout the campaigns, misogynistic undertones were wildly prevalent. The idea that women do not look presidential or are somehow unqualified for political office because of their gender is one *New York Times* author Jessica Bennett is all too familiar with. In her 2016 article, “Girls Can Be Anything, Just Not President,” she states that women politicians are told that they “[need] to be nice,” and that “the average person finds it easier to pair words like ‘president’ and ‘executive’ with male names, and words like ‘assistant’ and ‘aide’ with female names.” Bennett suspects this is why Hillary Clinton had such an uphill battle during both her presidential campaigns. Bennett states that Clinton “represented female power in spite of the reality that a woman’s likability is inverse to her leadership status—that is, we like her less the more she rises—while the opposite is true for men.” This struggle with society’s perception of women in authority contributes greatly to the prediction that women will not “reach parity in electoral politics until 2121” (Henderson).

Coverage of female politicians by major political news networks is partly to blame for the perpetuation of these stereotypes. I researched commentary from the three major U.S. television cable news networks, with three different positions on the political spectrum: Fox News, as the more conservative news source, MSNBC for more left-leaning coverage, and CNN as a source for more “unbiased” news coverage. I looked at these networks’ coverage of Hillary Clinton in the 2008 Democratic

presidential primary and 2016 as the Democratic Party nominee for President, and Sarah Palin in 2008 as the Republican Party nominee for Vice-President. I focused on these networks’ commentary on the candidates’ appearance, family roles, and how their display of emotions related to their overall qualifications for office. These areas were constantly raised during the 2016 presidential election, in the form of comments on Clinton by opponent Donald Trump that she was a “nasty woman” or was “just playing the woman card” to get votes. And, spoiler alert, these disparaging comments seemed to do the trick—Trump won. The negative portrayal of women politicians in news media is one we must not only address but overcome if we ever want to break the glass ceiling in national politics.

Candidate Appearance

When it comes to media commentary on these two women’s appearance, the types of comments made could not have been more different, yet still had the same detrimental impacts. Clinton was seen as the pantsuit-wearing, uptight candidate, while Palin was portrayed in a much more sexually objectifying manner. Diana Carlin and Kelly Winfrey, in “Have You Come a Long Way, Baby? Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and Sexism in 2008 Campaign Coverage,” explain that “sexist portrayals of Palin stemmed from her beauty queen background, her youthful appearance, wardrobe, and her unabashed feminine nonverbal communication such as winking,” and “emphasis on her physical appearance began when news sources revealed she had participated in beauty pageants” (330). Therefore, naturally, Palin would not be seen in something like a “plain navy pantsuit”; rather she

was praised by various Fox News contributors for taking “pride in keeping herself in shape and presenting herself as someone interested in looking good” (McGevna). Fox News also described her as “the poster girl of that new generation” of female politicians (McGevna). Even after her vice-presidential campaign was over, this demeaning description of Palin continued. Fox News offered her a job as a contributor, and correspondent Steve Castleton said that the only reason she got the job was because she was “eye candy,” and that “her appearance ... gets shows more notoriety” (McGevna). Castleton added that Palin should exploit all of this if she wanted to gain any attention in the world of politics because it was “something Hillary didn’t have the option to do [because] Hillary couldn’t be on the cover of a magazine in running shorts” (McGevna). A few years after Palin’s loss in 2008, former Fox News CEO Roger Ailes confirmed that he only “hired Sarah Palin because she was hot and got ratings” (Wemple, 2011), not because of merit or sufficient qualifications for the job.

Clinton also faced this type of aesthetic and wardrobe objectification throughout her presidential campaigns. She was often critiqued for wearing pantsuits that made her seem a lot less accessible, and not as youthful. In fact, on an episode of MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, a panelist commented on an orange jumpsuit that Clinton chose to wear to a campaign event in 2015. Panelist Donny Deutsch stated that the suit “looks like it belongs to Chairman Mao,” and host Joe Scarborough jumped on the bandwagon, talking over co-host Mika Brzezinski to agree that it looked like “a prison jumpsuit” (Hains). After this incident, Fox News passively-aggressively praised Clinton for “getting

a political makeover in a bid to show a gentler, more personal side of the now-Democratic presidential candidate” during the latter half of her second presidential campaign (“Clinton’s 2016 Makeover”). Clinton’s pantsuits continued to make headlines on almost every major news station, including CNN. Headlines on CNN included “Going Crazy Over Clinton’s Pantsuits,” as correspondents made comments on how she needed to “step up her pantsuit game” and how wearing designers like Ralph Lauren would help her to pull off this signature look (Moos).

However, big name designers didn’t seem to quell the wardrobe critiques either. Throughout Palin’s 2008 campaign, she was criticized for the amount of money the RNC spent on her expensive brand-name look. CNN’s Campbell Brown reported that “the Republican National Committee spent more than \$150,000 on clothes, hair, and make-up for Palin on the campaign trail,” compared to “the attention given to Senator Barack Obama’s \$1,500 suits or Senator John McCain’s \$520 Ferragamo shoes” (Brown). Due to this expense, Palin was asked to comment on, and justify, this fashion spending. However, in doing so, she was faced with criticism from political producers such as CNN’s Peter Hamby, who berated her on air for spending a whopping four whole minutes on “the shopping escapade” before she finally was allowed to talk about her political opponent at the time, Barack Obama. Although Palin was asked a direct question regarding the amount of money that was spent on her clothing, she was still raked over the coals for not getting through all her talking points, and instead spending time on shallow subjects such as clothing. The fact that

her wardrobe became a hot button issue is a problem, and it is not a problem that her male opponents or her male running mate ever dealt with at such length.

Then there was Clinton's "exposed collar bones" controversy during her 2008 presidential campaign. News sources such as the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* still have articles about this "scandalous" exposure by Clinton; however, MSNBC has since taken down videos of on-air discussions on this topic. No video of the Clinton event in question is accessible, but the transcript is. During a related news segment, MSNBC host "Amy Robach ... introduced the story by saying ... Senator Hillary Clinton may be trying to cash in on her 'cleavage'" (Biedlingmaier, "MSNBC Cleaves"). While this one comment is bad enough, Matthew Biedlingmaier, of *Media Matters for America*, reports that "from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET on July 30 ... MSNBC devoted a total of 23 minutes and 42 seconds to segments discussing Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's 'cleavage'" (Biedlingmaier, "MSNBC Cleaves"). Perhaps such national buzz over a scoop-neck top under her blazer is the reason Clinton has since stuck with the high necklines that have shaped her classic look; her collar bones should not take center stage over policy positions, qualifications, character, and ability to lead the United States.

Comments like these perpetuate conversations and ultimately become news article titles, such as "Is America ready for an all-female ticket?," written by CNN's Chris Cilizza in 2019 referring to the upcoming 2020 presidential election. Change one word, "female" to "male," and it begs the question whether the article would have obtained any online traction, or even been published at all. The merit and qualifications of an all-male ticket have simply never been questioned,

yet poll after poll and article after article question America's "comfort level" with this radical change. Conversations and articles like these prompted Hillary Clinton, post-2016 loss, to comment regarding women's place within the current political arena: "It doesn't fit into the—the stereotypes we all carry around in our head. And a lot of the sexism and the misogyny was in service of these attitudes.... We really don't want a woman commander in chief" (Cilizza, 2019).

Family Roles

Much like Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in the 2008 election, Republican vice-presidential nominee Sarah Palin fell victim to harsh criticism regarding her role as a mother from both ends of the political spectrum. She received especially harsh criticism given the fact that she was not only a mother to a young child, but a young child with special needs. Conservative activist Brent Bozell said that "Palin's special-needs child prompted CNN's John Roberts to argue that 'children with Down's Syndrome require an awful lot of attention. The role of Vice President ... would take up an awful lot of her time, and it raises the issue of how much time will she have to dedicate to her newborn child'" (qtd. in Carlin and Winfrey 333). Even though Palin has a supportive husband, his responsibility in helping with their children is never mentioned as a viable option. Instead it is questioned whether or not Palin should even consider the position at all if it is going to take away from her time as a mother. In "It's (Still) Only Women Pols Who Get Judged on Their Family Life," Rebecca Traister discusses the lack of tangible proof that a woman is capable of being president, unlike her male counterparts:

“Women’s worth has never been assessed based on easily calculable, publicly available statistics, like innings pitched or bills passed . . . there is no accounting of female professional achievement that does not also add up the raw data on personal, familial effort; there is no admiration that is not instantly accompanied by interrogation: How does she do it?... How many affairs has she had, or has she forgiven, or, most insidiously, has she inspired through her inattention to wifely duty?”

This idea that the evidence of a female candidate’s qualifications is her role within her family unit, specifically as a mother, is perpetuated in news media. Carlin and Winfrey discuss how this motherly stereotype was used to discreetly cast the female 2008 candidates in a negative light when they debated their male opponents. This stereotype was evident when CNN’s Jack Cafferty described Clinton’s debate with then candidate Barack Obama as “a scolding mother, talking down to a child” (Cocco). Using parenthood to undermine professional qualifications is, of course, very one-sided; it is a problem that affects mothers, not fathers.

If Palin was known for one thing, it would be her depiction as a devoted mother throughout the entire 2008 campaign. To this day she is still often introduced in articles as “a hockey mom with five children” (Frumin) or just the “hockey mom.” This motherly image that Palin painted of herself at first seemed well-received by her political base. However, that all started to change when news broke of Palin’s 17-year-old daughter Bristol’s pre-marriage pregnancy. This news sparked some concern about John

McCain’s judgement from commentators, who questioned if McCain and his team had jumped the gun in putting Palin on the ticket before she had been fully vetted. This question of preparedness was all too evident when Sally Quinn, another CNN contributor, was quick to point out the role that Palin herself needed to play in her young child’s pregnancy. She states that

“everyone knows that women and men are different and that moms and dads are different and that women . . . when you have five children, one a 4-month-old Down’s Syndrome baby, and a daughter who is 17 . . . with her own baby coming, I don’t see how you cannot make your family your first priority . . . and I think if you are going to be president of the United States . . . I think that’s going to be a real stretch for her.”

Bristol Palin’s pregnancy was a hot topic of discussion the entirety of the 2008 campaign. If correspondents were not spending their time wondering whether or not Palin was equipped to be both an attentive mother to her pregnant daughter and a Vice President, CNN correspondents were shaming her for choosing to pursue this milestone in her political career by saying that she had chosen “her own political ambitions” over her “17-year-old pregnant daughter’s right to privacy” (Creamer). They asked “why her mother would have subjected her to this kind of scrutiny by accepting this high-profile position” (Brown). No matter what Palin chose, political ambition or motherhood, it seems like it would have been the wrong choice in the eyes of news media. This implication that as soon as politicians take on the role of a

mother, anything they do afterwards is simply taking away from their ability to be a good parent, or even fully parent, is not only unfair, it is simply not true.

Similarly, if comparing Clinton's debate tactics to that of a mom scolding her child were not enough, there were also plenty of criticisms about why Clinton had her daughter, Chelsea Clinton, out on the campaign trail to help host rallies and give speeches. MSNBC correspondent David Shuster commented that "there's just something a little bit unseemly to me that Chelsea's out there calling up celebrities, saying support my mom, and she's apparently also calling these super delegates ... doesn't it seem like Chelsea's sort of being pimped out in some weird sort of way?" (Marsh, 2008). Clinton having Chelsea out on the campaign trail hardly compares to the slew of children then presidential candidate Donald Trump had campaigning for him eight years later. But whether on MSNBC or Fox News, when Clinton did it, it made her a bad mother. On Fox News' segment "The Five," contributor Lisa Boothe even went so far as to call Clinton "the most soulless woman on the planet," saying she "would literally sell her daughter to be president, literally sell her only child to be president" (Carter).

Chelsea is not the only member of Clinton's family who was brought up during the 2008 and 2016 presidential campaigns. Time and again, her husband President Bill Clinton and his indiscretions during their time in the White House were drudged up in an effort to not only paint Clinton as an inattentive wife, but also to diminish all of her accomplishments after that scandal. On *Morning Joe*, a popular MSNBC program, *Hardball with Chris Matthews* host Chris Matthews stated, "her election to the Senate

and all that's come since was a result of ... the sympathy for her because her husband embarrassed her by the conduct that led to his impeachment, because he ... 'messed around'" (Davis). For Matthews to suggest that Clinton only received her position in the senate out of sympathy is not only a bold claim to make, but also implies that her extensive and impressive political résumé had nothing to do with her earning that Senate seat. Alongside MSNBC's Chris Matthews' explanation as to why Clinton has her husband to thank for her career success, a Fox News report stated that Clinton was lucky that she brought her husband along at all, because he "is better able to explain her positions on hot issues like Iraq" ("Report"). This idea that the best person to try and articulate Clinton's position on issues is her husband, not herself, is incredibly sexist. Of course no one suggested that Barack Obama was lucky he had Michelle there to more effectively explain his position on difficult topics.

These women are more than wives and mothers; they are ground-paving, glass ceiling-breaking, intelligent politicians. But it could be hard to tell that from news media coverage across the political spectrum.

Competence Factors You Didn't Know Were a Thing

Whether it be commentary on their emotionality, their "rashness," or perhaps how they carry themselves in their professional lives, there was always something for news media to home in on when it came to discrediting Palin's and Clinton's competence and capability as political leaders. In a CNN Election Center transcript from 2008, contributors talk about the distinct differences in the way that Clinton and Palin

speak and present themselves. They state that Palin “knows how to balance being soft-spoken with being tough, unlike Hillary Clinton” as “many would say ... she came across at times angry ... [as well as] strong and hard” (CNN Election Center). This idea that “if a woman acts assertively or competitively, if she pushes her team to perform, if she exhibits decisive and forceful leadership, she is deviating from the social script that dictates how she ‘should’ behave” (Cooper) is absurd. Yet it was a fine line that both Palin and Clinton rode throughout their entire campaigns. In 2008, CNN political commentator Dana Bash explained that it was important for McCain’s team “to showcase Palin as a woman who is likeable, funny, and smart”; otherwise she would end up being perceived the way her female political rival was by correspondents on CNN: “the stereotypical bitch” (Biedlingmaier, “CNN’s, ABC’s Beck”) that makes men like MSNBC’s Tucker Carlson “involuntarily cross [their] legs” (Seelye and Bosman).

Another piece that seemed to factor into these women’s ability to lead was their age. Palin was often described on Fox News as representing a “new generation of women in the public eye ... and [having] sexual confidence” (McGevna), whereas Clinton was not portrayed in the same “positive” light when it came to her age. Chris Matthews talked quite extensively about Clinton’s stamina and ability to keep up during the 2016 campaign. Even though her opponent, Donald Trump, was older than she, no comment was made regarding his stamina. Matthews stated that he wondered “sometimes [about] her ability [and] ... stamina.” While Clinton was stuck dealing with the more “classic” type of ageism that tend to afflict women, Palin was battling another

form of sexism and ageism. Throughout the campaign, Palin was viewed as youthful female energy, but that label came at a price. Author Nicholas Graham, of the Huffington Post, briefly described the contents of a Fox News report where “Palin turned nasty with her staff and began to ... throw ‘tantrums’ over the negative coverage.” Palin was going after misleading information that her staff had given her about an interview she was doing with Katie Couric. Instead of dealing with the ageism that happens to women of an older age, like Clinton dealt with, Palin dealt with a form of ageism that mocked her youth by pegging her as emotional, irrational, and child-like.

Implications

As a woman who aspires to enter the political arena someday, I am constantly reminded of the public attention I would receive. Topics such as personal life, appearance, and emotionality are just a few of the concerns that one has to consider; all of these concerns, I believe, play into the problem women face with political parity. News media’s commentary on, and portrayal of, what a life in public service is like is scaring women to the point where they feel afraid to put themselves, and their ideas, out there for the world to hear. From my study we can recognize three clear implications in this sexist news media commentary that we, as a society, need to consider if we are ever going to break that glass ceiling.

News Media Perpetuate Untrue Stereotypes of Women

In their article “Measuring Stereotypes of Female Politicians,” researchers Monica Schneider and Angela Bos “have tried to understand why women do not have parity in elected offices” (245). One of the reasons

they pose is that “voters have expectations of the [feminine] traits that women possess,” such as having a tendency to be compassionate, and “female politicians might be negatively evaluated because these feminine qualities are inconsistent with the masculine traits necessary for leadership roles” (245). With news media reinforcing stereotypes regarding these “feminine qualities,” all they are accomplishing is a reiteration of this narrative regarding a female’s incapacity to be rational, taking none of her qualifications into account.

Schneider and Bos found that when they asked study participants to describe the traits that successful female politicians possess, the top five were “well-educated, confident, assertive, well-spoken, and hard-working” (254). These findings suggest that people generally have a positive idea of what a female politician is, in regard to her demeanor and work ethic, before being exposed to different biases. However, “female politicians still scored significantly lower than male politicians on leadership and competence, [the] two characteristics central to being a successful politician” (259). Therefore, when mainstream news media outlets play into these stereotypes, it only solidifies a generally negative opinion regarding female politicians’ ability to lead.

Clearly Qualified Women Are Discredited by News Media

All the issues discussed in this paper can be understood as tactics used to discredit women. Critiquing superficial elements such as clothes or how a candidate looks in running shorts promotes only one kind of conversation: a shallow one. Society has given women countless concerns to feel insecure about in an attempt to stunt our

growth. Both Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin were more than qualified to take on the position they were after; however, news media going after their appearance and their family roles created doubt and mistrust about the candidates among voters.

Do not misunderstand: I am not advocating for special treatment for female politicians, but rather for equal treatment. News media need to stop playing the broken record of stereotypical gender roles, because it is distracting from real issues that deserve attention. What these media outlets fail to cover is the simple fact that these women are prepared and are capable of handling the issues that our country is facing.

This Media Commentary Silences Women

There is a lot of conversation regarding “bringing women to the table” within the political arena; however, it is hard to believe women would even feel comfortable there. In 2003, Richard Fox and Jennifer Lawless studied the willingness of women to get involved in public office. They found that “research on women who have sought public office suggest that the initial decision to run is often among the most formidable barriers to entering the political arena” (21). However, when women did decide that they were going to take the leap and run for a political position, Fox and Lawless found, the process became increasingly more difficult because “it seems that women have less freedom to abandon their professional careers or family opportunities to seek political careers” (38). If they did, many would fear a backlash for doing so. This lack of freedom within family structure is one of the biggest obstacles driving women away, but when they decide to get over that obstacle, they are faced with looks of bafflement, and even judgment, all

the while having to explain how they can possibly take the time away from their family to focus on their career.

I previously noted the *Washington Post* report that women will not reach political parity until the year 2121 (Henderson). Let that sink in for a minute: over *100 years* from now; that is how long it would take at current rates for the House and the Senate to have an equal ratio of women to men. News media have spent so long marginalizing women in just about every way possible that it could take 100 more years to eliminate underrepresentation. Through tactics like shame and guilt for not being there for their children while they work on their political careers, as well as the intense surveillance of every article of clothing on these politicians' bodies, it is no wonder women stay away from politics.

Changing the Conversation

If the goal is to have more women involved in the decisions regarding this country's future, then we need to stop deterring them from a life in public service with this stone-age commentary. We need to stop discussing the suit a woman chooses to wear, and instead work to redirect colleagues who bring up such topics to talk about the latest

piece of legislation a woman is working to pass instead. Don't call her emotional, describe her as passionate. And let us not forget that women can handle being mothers, wives, and politicians with grace.

The commentary of these three major news organizations demonstrates that sexism is not a network issue, or even a party-line issue, as I had originally thought. Rather this is a cultural issue bleeding into and out of major news organizations that reach vast audiences every single day. Though there is still much work to do in changing how the public views females in a position of authority, I would be lying if I said that we have not come a long way. Through movements like #MeToo and holding each other accountable for our words and actions as a collective, we are changing the cultural narrative.

Although it seems daunting, change is on the horizon. It only takes one woman to break through that glass ceiling for all of us, and I have a feeling that day is almost upon us. In the meantime, we just have to keep fighting for political equality and change of a very gendered narrative in the mainstream media, as well as our everyday lives. Senator Barbra Mikulski said it best: our only choice as women is "to square our shoulders, put our lipstick on, and fight on" (qtd in Scott).

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