

WHITE HOUSE, GLASS CEILING: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF GERALDINE
FERRARO, SARAH PALIN AND KAMALA HARRIS'S VICE-PRESIDENTIAL
NOMINATION SPEECHES

by

Grace M. Morton BA, BLA

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
with a Major in Communication Studies
December 2021

Committee Members:

Joshua Miller, Chair

Ann E. Burnette

Elizabeth K. Eger

COPYRIGHT

by

Grace M. Morton

2021

FAIR USE AND AUTHOR'S PERMISSION STATEMENT

Fair Use

This work is protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-553, section 107). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgement. Use of this material for financial gain without the author's express written permission is not allowed.

Duplication Permission

As the copyright holder of this work I, Grace M. Morton, authorize duplication of this work, in whole or in part, for educational or scholarly purposes only.

DEDICATION

For my beloved older sister Sommer. You are the handprint on my heart.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge the incredible work of Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro, Governor Sarah Palin and Vice President Kamala Harris. Without them not only would I not have a thesis (thanks, ladies!) I also would not have had the great pleasure of living in a world where women are nominated by major political parties. Thank you to all of the incredible women who opened up the doors for me.

This thesis would never have been written if I had never learned to read and write. I want to acknowledge and thank my wonderful mom and dad for the hours they spent homeschooling me, counseling me, and always encouraging me to keep pursuing my dreams. They instilled and nourished my love for learning from a young age; I would not be the academic I am without them.

Additionally, this thesis would not exist without the tireless and kind work of Dr. Joshua Miller who has been excited and gracious about this project from the moment I proposed it as a semester project in his Rhetorical Methods graduate class – thank you for not letting me bite off more than I can chew, and for keeping me accountable through this project. Thank you for your honesty, your perseverance, and your wealth of knowledge that you have been generous enough to share with me.

Thank you to Kristi Fiedler, my second mother, the woman who schooled me through the entirety of high school and has never, ever given up on me – even when I would give up on myself. You always point me to think higher on every level. So much of who I am today is because I know you.

Finally, thank you to Maggie. You are the kind of little sister everyone should have.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. GERALDINE FERRARO.....	20
III. SARAH PALIN.....	34
IV. KAMALA HARRIS.....	55
V. CONCLUSION.....	65
REFERENCES	71

I. INTRODUCTION

“We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller.

We say to girls, ‘you can have ambition, but not too much.

You should aim to be successful, but not too successful. Otherwise, you would threaten the man.’”

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists*

Women in the United States make up 58.3% of the adult population, according to the 2019 census. In 2016, 63% of women registered to vote in the United States voted in the Presidential elections, outshining men’s 59% of registered voters participating in the election (Pew Research, 2016). While women have consistently demonstrated stronger voter turnout every year since 1984 women still make up less than 25% of Congressional seat holders (Pew Research, 2020). A mere 23.2% of House Representatives are women, and an even 25% of United States Senators are women. Political ambition, for women, is encouraged but not often fulfilled. On an overall ratio of one woman to four men, women do not get to put other women into political office. At the time of writing this thesis, a woman has not been elected President of the United States. Three women have been nominated to run for Vice President in the two major political parties, and of those three, only one has been successfully elected to the position.

These three women, coming from starkly different cultural and family backgrounds, and each having served in roles in government at vastly individual times in history, all accepted the nominations of their parties and set forth on ground-breaking campaigns in pursuit of the vice presidency. Built on the developing feminist movements surrounding

them, the working-class parents who raised them, and a constant hunger to extend themselves further in American public service, Geraldine Ferraro, Sarah Palin and Kamala Harris changed the world of United States politics with their presence on the ballot and the power of their rhetoric.

In this first chapter, I justify the project as lending my own, small contribution to conversations surrounding the identity work presented by women running for vice president, and the way that they use feminine style in their rhetoric to present their gendered personas.

A Note on My Positionality

Due to the uniqueness of each of these women's positionalities, I note that I, as a white woman, am limited in perspective when attempting to describe the complexities of the situations each of these women had been placed in when delivering their acceptance speeches. While I have worked to include diverse literature, my own critiques are inescapably informed by my race, age, class, and generation. Nevertheless, it is with hope that this work can serve as a small building block to continue to elevate the strong perspectives that must be written in the future.

Justification and Purpose

As a rhetorical critic, I seek to examine the unique challenges that each of these women faced due to their identities and the assigned gender expectations that accompany them, the political position for which they were running, and the historical context of their time. I will investigate the speeches of these three women as their own distinct genre, exploring their situational, stylistic, and substantive similarities. As my analysis

will provide portable insights into how women navigate this historical exclusion from the highest political offices, I focus on the three women who were closest to breaking the proverbial glass ceiling. I use genre criticism to extend the already existing bodies of research regarding women in politics as well as Vice Presidential rhetoric, and appraise the ways in which these three women used their Vice-Presidential acceptance speeches to navigate these rhetorical challenges and advocate for voters to support their ballot. Regardless of the shifting positions that women hold societally in the United States, the Democratic and Republican Parties have largely excluded women from being nominated to run for Vice President. Since the Vice-Presidency of John Adams in 1789, the only nominated Vice-Presidential candidates representing the Democratic party were men until 1984 when Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro received nomination. Similarly, the Republican Party abstained from nominating a woman to the Vice-Presidential ticket until 2008 when Governor Sarah Palin was offered a place on the ballot. While both Ferraro and Palin shattered their own respective glass ceilings, it must be highlighted that it wasn't until 2020 that the Democratic party extended a Vice-Presidential candidacy to a woman of color. Kamala Harris holds the distinction of being the only woman of color to date and to win the office of the Vice Presidency.

For the above stated reasoning, the text of my master's thesis will be the acceptance speeches given by Ferraro, Palin, and Harris after being nominated to run for Vice President at their respective national conventions. I will focus largely on the application of feminine style within their speeches and categorizing where they fall within the genre of women vice-presidential candidates nomination speeches. I perform my analysis on their National Convention acceptance speeches for two reasons: First, the

analysis of potential women candidates in politics is continuing to develop in academia and this analysis will aid in furthering that literature. Second, because of the nature of National Convention acceptance speeches for political candidates, much of a candidate's "identity work" is given in these speeches. "Identity work" refers how candidates develop their personae as they address specific audiences. This aids my research in understanding how Ferraro, Palin and Harris navigated their identities and the interlocking oppressions they faced on the political ticket. "Persona" is defined as an assumed and presented identity (Oxford, 2021), "identity" is defined as the characteristics, the feelings and the beliefs that make people individual from others (Oxford, 2021).

To illustrate the specific situation that Ferraro, Palin, and Harris faced, I will first detail the role of Vice-Presidential candidates in electoral politics. It is no secret that Vice-Presidential candidates are chosen for diplomatic reasons to earn votes in elections. For example, President John F. Kennedy himself was amongst a long line of politicians who chose a previous political rival and critic as a running mate to appear more diverse and appealing to American voters. During the 1960 Presidential campaign, Johnson skillfully navigated the need to appeal to a wider variety of voters for the Kennedy ticket. During his acceptance speech to run for Vice President, Lyndon B. Johnson spoke of national unity, and called upon reverence for the US Constitution to inspire Americans of all demographics to think of themselves as "we the people" (Johnson, 1960). Most recently, President-elect Joe Biden himself received criticism for his choice in Vice President Kamala Harris as a running mate, after Harris's public remarks in opposition to Biden during the Democratic primary. Cited by the *National Review* regarding the first Democratic debates in 2019, Harris had criticized Biden from the stage for his opposition

to forced integration of schools via busing (Descantis, 2020). Due to these previous public criticisms, the campaign, and Harris in particular, needed to create appeals that would invite not only party unity but also prompt the electorate to look past Harris's previous criticisms of Biden.

While a Vice-Presidential candidate must be formally nominated by the political party that they are representing, this is a formality and is custom of American politics. The choice of running mate for a presidential ticket is made by the presidential candidate and their campaign team. When a presidential candidate is considering their options for a running mate, they are not just choosing their best "second-in-command" for the executive branch of the United States government; they're also choosing who they believe will give them the best leverage over their opponents on the political ballot. Strong candidates develop rhetoric that helps the ticket capitalize on their inclusion on the ballot. When Ferraro, Palin and Harris accepted the nomination to run for Vice President, each of these women had to understand how to navigate their rhetorical position as women and as Vice-Presidential candidates to best negotiate and persuade voters in support of their ticket.

When considering the rhetorical aspects of the office of Vice President of the United States, one can see that it is one of the most unique offices for which someone can run in our government. For example, formally, the Vice President serves executive branch functions but also has legislative responsibilities such as managing the Senate and voting under the condition that there is a Senate tie. However, other than various tasks that the President may bestow upon them, the main job of the Vice President is to step in if the President is unable to complete his or her role as Commander-in-Chief.

The media speculated that Congresswoman Ferraro, Governor Palin and Vice-President Harris were each chosen, not because their campaign partners saw them as the best “second option” as President, but rather, because they brought diversity and vibrance to the campaigns of Mondale, McCain and Biden (Meeks, 2012; Malik, 2020).

Challenges that Ferraro, Palin, and Harris each had to meet were ideas that executive offices are typically held by men, and a need to prove that they were fit for office “despite” their gender identity while still critiquing the opposing campaign as Vice-Presidential candidates typically do (Meeks, 2012). This essentially supports the perspective that women are considered for office only when their male running mate’s campaign does not have enough interest from women. The media, in turn, tokenizes these women, portraying these serious politicians as the “main attraction” or “diversity hire” of a Presidential campaign. President Biden himself, in March of 2020, stated that “If I’m elected president, my Cabinet, my administration will look like the country, and I commit that I will...pick a woman to be Vice President” (Stevens, 2020). As political commentator Brad Polumbo wrote for *Medium*, “this leaves us with the politically incorrect reality that Harris...competed against a smaller pool of candidates” (Polumbo, 2020). Because of the media speculation about them, Ferraro, Palin, and Harris needed to navigate the gendered dynamics that surrounded their campaigns..

To better understand the thesis being introduced, one also must take time to understand the conflicts and challenges that were uniquely presented to each of these women in the public political eye.

In 1984, the Democratic Party had the challenge of creating a campaign that could adequately compete with the successful Reagan/Bush administration. Walter Mondale,

former Vice President for the Carter administration, had a relatively stagnant campaign before choosing Ferraro as his running mate. In a June, 1984 poll of nearly 2,000 registered voters, NBC News found that President Reagan's campaign held a 15-point lead over Mondale. After the Democratic National Convention and the introduction of Congresswoman Ferraro, Mondale's campaign leapt to 34% approval, with over one-fourth of polled participants reporting that they approved of Congresswoman Ferraro more than Mondale himself (Smith, 1984). Vice-Presidential historian Joel Goldstein reflected that, "The Ferraro pick represented the intersection of principle and politics" (Goldstein, 2017) proving that, as Lesley Kennedy wrote for History.com, "Walter Mondale's public service was dedicated to opening doors for disadvantaged groups and he constructed his VP selection process...with that commitment" (Kennedy, 2021). Later, in his book *The Good Fight*, Mondale stated that his choice in Ferraro wasn't solely based on whether she was the most appropriate candidate for office. Mondale even claimed, "I also knew that I was far behind Reagan, and that if I just ran a traditional campaign, I would never get in the game" (Mondale, 2010). Mondale was not incorrect. After announcing his choice in Ferraro as his running mate, his campaign saw a marginal approval boost bringing his campaign to nearly even with that of Reagan's (Kennedy, 2021).

In 2008, after a successful eight-year reign for Republicans in both the House and the Senate, as well as the White House under the Bush administration, Governor Sarah Palin was nominated to serve as the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate alongside former Senator John McCain for President. As reported by Michael Cooper and Dalia Sussman for the *New York Times*, Senator McCain was well-known and respected within

his party, but scattered Republicans believed that his choice in Palin demonstrated poor leadership (Cooper & Sussman, 2008). According to independent polls taken in 2008, 57% of unaffiliated voters had an unfavorable view of Palin as Vice President (Rasmussen, 2008). As a woman running in a deeply “traditional” party, with gender roles firmly in place, Palin had to use her rhetoric on the campaign to garner support from voters who weren’t terribly interested in seeing a woman in office, as well as affirming that she wasn’t a “femi-nazi” and a turn-off for her more traditional voters. Sarah Palin served as both the youngest and first woman governor of Alaska. She had not served a full term as governor at the time of her nomination to serve as Vice President alongside John McCain. Palin, known for her “beauty queen” hairstyles, Alaskan accent and red lipstick, was often described as a “pit-bull” by the press. This was due to her own statement “the difference between a hockey mom and a pit-bull is her lipstick” (quoted in Harp, et al., 2010). Coming from a party that has an acute focus on gender roles and performance, Palin walked the narrow line of appearing both strong and capable, without appearing intimidating to men. She emphasized her femininity by rarely appearing in pants, and almost always sporting her signature red lipstick. Palin’s style even caught the attention of the *Los Angeles Times*, which reported that, “when Sen. John McCain accepted the nomination Thursday night, she wore a black satin jacket that dipped just low enough in front so you could see some cleavage. In this political marriage, Palin clearly knows she’s the trophy” (Moore, 2008). In their 2010 article, “First Impressions of Sarah Palin: Pit Bulls, Politics, Gender Performance, and Discursive Media (Re)contextualization,” Harp et al. argue that Palin’s gender performance in dress, mixed with her arguments that she was raised like “one of the boys” creates a “mixture of

masculine and feminine performances...a combination of both typical and unique elements of mediated female politicians” (p. 291).

In the 2020 election, Kamala Harris sought to take on a different role as a Vice-Presidential candidate. Rather than the emphasis being placed solely on her gender, Harris also had the responsibility of representing women of color in the United States. After Harris’s nomination, President Biden gave a statement that, “this morning...little girls woke up – especially little Black and brown girls, who so often feel overlooked and undervalued in their communities...just maybe, they’re seeing themselves, for the first time, in a new way” (quoted in Gambino, 2020). Harris was acutely aware throughout her rhetoric that she represented American women of color, and honored this during her campaign by often making reference to the many women that she believed had paved the way for her. An example of this can be found in her nominal speech to the Democratic National Convention when she paid tribute to Mary Church Terrell, Mary McCleod Bethune, and others whom she stated “we’re not often taught their stories. But as Americans, we all stand on their shoulders” (Harris, 2020). However, representing women of color did not come without its costs. Invoking a long history of racist rhetoric, former President Donald Trump was the first to use violent language against Vice President Harris after her nomination. In an interview with Fox News, Mr. Trump described Vice President Harris as “A mad woman...she was so angry and – such hatred with Justice Kavanaugh...these are seriously ill people” (Cox, 2020).

As these three women illustrate, although the world of United States politics does remain a male-dominated field, women in politics have continued to break through previously daunting glass ceilings in and used their own rhetorical style in their speeches

– namely, feminine rhetorical style. With the emergence of Geraldine Ferraro, in her 1984 campaign as Vice-President, scholars renewed their attention to women in major party politics, as news headlines boasted of the great turn for feminism that Ferraro was making (Everbach, 2014). Additional scholarly research was done on Governor Sarah Palin after she secured her position as Vice President for the Republican ticket in 2008. According to Harp, et al., media exploration of Palin’s gender performance after Palin’s own comparison between herself and a Pit Bull (Harp, et. al. 2009). The rhetoric of Vice President Kamala Harris, as a woman of color, has also been studied as scholars scramble to draw conclusions from her rhetoric and her success as a politician (Wang, 2020). Scholars of political communication and rhetoric have already developed a robust body of literature on the topic of gender in political communication. These scholars have engaged in discussion about the sexist ways that women in politics are scrutinized, from the ways that these candidates physically present themselves in public, to the higher stakes that women often are pressured to meet in politics (Everbach, 2014; Meeks, 2012). Within these studies of gender and political communication, particular attention has been given to analyzing the messages of power that are conveyed by women in their political speeches (Meeks, 2012).

Literature Review

The Office of Vice President and Women Politicians

Due to the interlocking oppressions that women politicians must overcome, this section places several bodies of rhetorical and political communication scholarship in conversation. For the sake of this thesis, I will be demonstrating the proposed methods for putting the National Convention speeches of Ferraro, Palin and Harris in conversation

with bodies of literature regarding the office of Vice President and women in politics. To develop deeper insight in these speeches, I start by connecting some of the academic literature on women-identifying political candidates with literature on Vice-Presidential candidates.

Due to the limited nature of the office of Vice President, along with the rhetorical situation of being a “lady in waiting” for the President, Vice Presidents have been described in unfavorable terms throughout political history. Vice President to Franklin Delano Roosevelt from 1933-1941, John Nance Garner infamously referred to his role as being, “not worth a warm pitcher of spit” (Garner, 1960). Comparisons to the Vice-Presidency are described as being like a heteronormative married couple, such as President Johnson’s Vice President, Hubert Humphrey: “You are his choice in a political marriage, and he expects your absolute loyalty” (Humphrey). A disgruntled Vice President John Adams wrote of his office in a 1793 letter to his wife Abigail, “My country has in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or of his imagination conceived” (Adams, 1793).

Vice Presidents have been called a “political sex object” (Bostdorff, 1991 p.1) due to the servility that Vice Presidents must offer to the President. Vice-Presidential candidates, as soon as they are nominated, must submerge their identity into defending and cheering for the policies of their running mate. While this is one of the roles of the Vice President, Kamala Harris was criticized during the 2020 Democratic primary for her critiques of Joe Biden for discrimination against Black children in schools (Descantis, 2020) and considered a hypocrite for then running on Biden’s ticket. Scholars have stated that one central tasks of Vice-Presidential candidates is to defend and bolster the

Presidential candidate . In 2005 William L. Benoit and David Airne conducted a functional analysis of Vice-Presidential debates, solidifying the emphasis on acclaims and attacks as part of their role on the campaign trail. Benoit and Airne found that 40% of the themes of these debates were attacks on the opposing candidate (compared to 34% in the Presidential debates), along with 57% of the themes focused on acclaim for the Presidential candidate (2005, pg. 29). Due to this imposed defensive role that is fulfilled by the Vice-Presidential Candidate/Vice President, it can be particularly challenging when a candidate has been on record criticizing the Presidential candidate in the past. Comparable to a dutiful, old-fashioned housewife, Vice-Presidential candidates are expected to take on the role of complete defense and protection of the image of their Presidential candidate.

With all of this said, this thesis engages the imperative question about how barriers related to gender, race, and class influence how these women can run for office and the rhetoric that they engage with when they do so. Spanos (1994) states that multiplicity refers to a person's distinct versions of themselves, built on social constructs. In turn, positionality refers to the ways that a person's versions of themselves overlap – like a quintessential Venn diagram of positionality (Crenshaw, 2013). Even though it has been hypothesized that the office of Vice President fits as a rhetorically feminine role, it remains that only three women have been nominated to run for Vice President by the United States' two major political parties. These are not “cookie-cutter” women; Ferraro, Palin and Harris are multi-faceted. Ferraro, Palin, and Harris make up a “club” of politicians that consists of a first-generation daughter of Italian-immigrants, a woman fighting to manage her positionality as a woman who is separated from feminists around

her, and a bi-racial woman of color

There is an inescapable bias that comes into play when analyzing how a Vice-Presidential candidate performs in a debate. As Patricia Sullivan pointed out in her analysis case study of the 1984 Vice-Presidential debates, politics are already so over-populated with the intentions of “male others” these debates, as a result, are “cast in a male framework” (p. 339). The bias of a male framework is an additional reason this thesis will focus on the National Convention acceptance speeches of Ferraro, Palin and Harris rather than another source of their rhetoric such as debates.

It is well known that women in politics are expected to jump through more hoops than their male counterparts. Women in politics are expected to fulfill three specific roles: the loving mother, the beauty queen and the tough politician (Gibson & Heyse, 2014).

However, these women must never appear to be “too much” of any role, at the risk of appearing incapable of prioritizing either of the remaining roles thrust upon them. As a loving mother, she must never appear too devoted to her children to appear to have her attention stolen from her role in office. As a beauty queen, she must never appear too beautiful to seem overly consumed with her appearance. And, as a tough politician, she must never appear to be too tough of a politician so as to be condemned as rude, arrogant or unapproachable.

These three candidates faced intense challenges to their campaign in relation to sexism in politics. These women had to navigate gender-role assumptions while also developing rhetorical strategies that met the unique challenges of running for Vice President. Furthermore, these three candidates needed to face the distinctive ways that the demands of Vice-Presidential candidates and women candidates connect. These women

needed to defend their presidential candidate and attack the opposing candidates – in accordance with their role as Vice-Presidential candidate – without invoking overtired tropes about women candidates as being “emotional” or “bitchy.”

The following section will explore the method that I will be using to analyze Ferraro, Palin and Harris’s National Convention Speeches. By exploring the genre that these speeches fall into, as well as analyzing their use of feminine style in their speeches, I will further contribute to the bodies of literature pertaining to women in politics as well as academic literature exploring the role of the Vice President. By placing both genre and feminine style in conversation with one another, we can develop a deeper understanding of rhetorical situation at hand for Ferraro, Palin, and Harris and how they responded to it with style and substance.

Genre

Understanding feminine style is the beginning of analyzing the rhetoric of Ferraro, Palin and Harris. Feminine style is characterized as being personal, narrative-driven, and it relies on an audience connection in order to work effectively (Vigil, 2014 p. 279). When applying a feminine style to the rhetoric of Ann Richards, Bonnie J. Dow and Mari Boor Tonn, argued that feminine style relies upon experiential knowledge and inductive reasoning (Dow and Tonn, 1993 pp. 289). A large portion of a Vice President’s role during the campaigns is to bolster the ticket for President, and to help persuade voters to cast their vote in their favor. This, then, can lead to the conclusion that a Vice Presidential candidate must be able to draw on these audience connections in order to be an effective running mate to the Presidential candidate.

By placing both genre and feminine style in conversation with one another, we can develop a deeper understanding of rhetorical situation at hand for Ferraro, Palin, and Harris and how they responded to it with style and substance.

Genre is found at the intersection between the rhetorical situation and the discourse at hand (Miller, 2015, p. 152). As Campbell and Jamieson argue in “Rhetorical Hybrids: Fusions of Generic Elements,” genre is not just a series of similar acts, but rather, “a constellation of recognizable forms bound together by an internal dynamic” (pg. 21). This thesis argues that, in this particular case, this constellation is based on a similar situation, substantive, and stylistic dynamic among the acceptance speeches of Ferraro, Palin and Harris at their party’s national conventions. In order to develop a generic analysis, I will identify the core situational, substantive, and stylistic elements of a specific rhetorical act. Specifically, I illustrate how these three female candidates used the feminine style to address the situational demands they faced. For example, the three candidates need to marshal support for the presidential candidates and widen the potential base for the ticket constitutes a shared situational debate that the three candidates faced. Their speeches can, arguably, fall under the genres of Vice-Presidential rhetoric, feminist advocacy, or even simply women in politics. However, when viewing the complexity of the rhetorical situations that each of these women found themselves in, it becomes clear that these three speeches easily fall into a genre of their own: Female Vice-Presidential Speeches. Because genre criticism must acknowledge the interdependence among situation, style, and substance, the critic should closely examine the rhetors’ stylistic and substantive responses to their situation. As such, this thesis will identify the stylistic and substantive choices made by Ferraro, Palin, and Harris to understand the genre Female

Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speeches (King, 2017). Additionally, when addressing the chronological order in which each of these speeches takes place, the genre analysis becomes enriched with analyzing the progression of historical context and shifting values in social transformation (King, 2017).

Feminine Style

Historically, feminine style – also known as feminine rhetorical style – was developed as a strategic marriage of opposing cultural norms for 19th century women speakers. Women who first attempted public address and advocacy were silenced because public argument and rhetoric was considered “masculine” and in opposition to their femininity (Campbell, 1998). To combat these gendered expectations, women speakers developed ways to leverage their assumed “purity” and “piousness” as being naturally equipped to weigh-in on matters of morality (Campbell, 1998). Thus, women developed a form of rhetoric that relies on personal narrative, disclosure and valuing emotion—what scholars call the feminine style.

Scholars have argued about the dimensions of the feminine style in political rhetoric. Many of these such arguments are grounded in the advantages and drawbacks of women utilizing feminine style in their rhetoric. Feminine style is characterized as being focused on audience participation and interaction, and pertains to building on the personal emotions and experiences of the speaker to engage with the audience. Jamieson and Campbell go so far as to applaud the use of feminine style in women’s rhetoric due to the emotionalism that has historically demonized feminine communication (Jamieson & Campbell, 1995). However, in a 1996 article “Gendered Politics and Presidential Image

Construction: A Reassessment of the ‘Feminine Style’” Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles counter that this applause is hasty, due to the fact that feminine style is contingent upon “prevailing masculine values and themes” and “reflect the continual marginalization of women in the political process and the general exclusion of women from political office and political power” (p. 338). When analyzing the rhetoric of Ann Richards’ address at the Democratic National Convention, Dow and Tonn (1993) concluded that feminine style is far from limited to only applying to feminist discourse and thus, as Danette Johnson argues the feminine style “promotes empowerment through synthesizing form and content of the message” (Johnson, 2005, p. 7).

Due to American politics being rooted in patriarchy, it is rather impossible for there to be a form of political rhetoric that is not, in some way, also drawing from patriarchal influence. As a result, it is fruitless to speculate on whether feminine style is a step forward for feminism. Rather, feminine style should be viewed as a means-to-an-end for politicians to engage with their audience of potential voters. Feminine style is a strong choice for a Vice-Presidential candidate to engage with situational challenges of addressing their political party for the first time, because the goal of their speech is to not only introduce themselves as the presidential candidate’s running-mate, but also, to reveal to the audience why they themselves endorse the Presidential candidate for office. Additionally, because American voters are not without sexist assumptions and expectations for the gender roles of women, woman Vice-Presidential candidates can make strong use of feminine style by delivering a strong speech that allows them to soothe and fulfill many of the assumptions that voters still carry toward women in politics. Because feminine style is such a strong choice for Vice-Presidential candidates

to use when writing a speech to engage with potential voters, it is imperative that I investigate the use of feminine style in Ferraro, Palin and Harris's nominal speeches. To center feminine style within this analysis, I closely read the nominal speeches of Ferraro, Palin and Harris looking for anecdotes, personal narrative, audience participation in emotion and self-disclosure.

Chapter Outline

Due to the chronological order of these three Acceptance Speeches, I will be writing an analysis of each speech in their historical order. My prospectus serves as a first draft of the introductory chapter; a robust explanation of the chosen theory and method for my analysis along with providing context for the identity work that Ferraro, Palin and Harris took on as women in politics and as Vice-Presidential candidates in their place in history.

The second chapter of my thesis will be an analysis of Geraldine Ferraro's Vice-Presidential nominal speech at the 1984 Democratic National Convention. In this analysis I will seek to understand Ferraro's use of rhetoric within genre and her use of feminine style to connect with her audience of voters. I will take Ferraro's identity as the first woman to be nominated to the Vice-Presidential ticket in the Democratic party and her background as a first-generation Italian-American into consideration.

The third chapter of my thesis will chronologically move to an analysis of Sarah Palin's Vice-Presidential nominal speech at the 2008 Republican National Convention. Similar to the previous chapter, I will seek to understand Palin's use of rhetoric within genre and

her use of feminine style to connect with her audience of voters. For my analysis of Palin's rhetoric, I will consider Palin's identity as the first Republican woman nominated to the Vice-Presidential ticket as well as the complexity of her assumed gender role when seeking a position of power within a party so greatly focused upon traditional male and female gender roles and performances.

The fourth chapter of my thesis will examine Kamala Harris's Vice-Presidential nominal speech at the 2020 Democratic National Convention. As with the previous two chapters, I will examine Harris's rhetorical use of genre and feminine style to connect with her own audience of voters. When analyzing Harris's rhetoric, I will include consideration of Harris's identity as the second woman to be nominated as Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate and first woman of color nominated to the Democratic Vice-Presidential ticket.

The fifth chapter of my thesis will conclude the analysis by highlighting the key takeaways from my analysis of Ferraro, Palin and Harris's nominal speeches. I will use this chapter to describe the contributions that this thesis serves for the bodies of literature regarding women in politics, Vice-Presidential candidates, and political rhetoric.

CHAPTER 2

“Ladies and gentlemen of the convention: My name is Geraldine Ferraro. I stand before you to proclaim tonight: America is the land where dreams can come true for all of us.” –
Geraldine Ferraro, 1984

Introduction to Chapter 2

With these words, Geraldine Ferraro, second-generation American, first woman to be nominated to serve as Vice President for the Democratic Party, placed herself in the spotlight for what would become an historical United States Presidential election.

Before she became the first woman to be nominated as Vice President of the Democratic Party, Geraldine Ferraro was Congresswoman for the Queens district of New York from 1979 through 1985. Chasing after a seat that had been previously held for thirty years, Ferraro was quickly labeled as “an exciting choice” (Weinraub, 1984). Known amongst her friends as “Gerry”, Ferraro was a former teacher and former attorney-turned-politician with her eyes on positive change for United States citizens. In her opening remarks to the Democratic National Convention where she accepted the 1984 nomination to run for Vice President, she identified herself as, “the daughter of a woman whose highest goal was a future for her children...the daughter of working Americans...the daughter of an immigrant from Italy” (Ferraro, 1984).

As demonstrated in this thesis, several of Ferraro’s identity components would be influential to her role as a Congress Woman, her role as a mother, her role as a second-generation American in the Italian-American community, and her role as a Vice-

Presidential candidate. Ferraro, for example, experiences her identities as a woman and as a Vice-Presidential candidate. Another example is how Ferraro experiences the components of her identities as a second-generation Italian-American and as a mother. The juxtapositions of these identities, created a specific set of goals that Ferraro had in presenting her speech to the American people, beyond bolstering Mondale's ticket.

The Situation

Ferraro as an Italian-American

At the time of this speech, Italian-Americans were still a largely marginalized group in the United States. Historical examples of this include articles that describe Italian-Americans as being contrary to “burdensome” expectations (Fallows, 1983) and “coming into their own” (Hall, 1983). While it was generally accepted that Italian Americans were the “superior” immigrants in the United States, they still experienced large amounts of discrimination regarding their assimilation into American society. Demands to learn American customs, the English language and fit perfectly within American social norms weighed prevalently upon first-generation Americans, such as Ferraro's parents. At this time in the United States, legal immigrants accounted for 25% of the population growth the previous year (Pear, 1984). Out of that 25%, Italians accounted for 7% of immigrants coming to the United States (Hall, 1983). Due to Ferraro's identity as the daughter of Italian immigrants in the United States, she was heralded as a highlight for this marginalized population and their emergence as “distinguished” members of the American community. This was highlighted in a *New York Times* article quoting 78-year-old Ernest DeMattei – an Italian immigrant from

South Philadelphia – “she’s my paisan” (countryman). The article went on to highlight quotes from Italian immigrants across the United States, voicing their support for Ferraro due simply to her Italian heritage (Robbins, 1984). These responses were unique to Ferraro’s identity as a person of Italian heritage, contributing to the rhetorical situation at hand for Ferraro when she approached the stage at the 1984 DNC.

Ferraro as a Woman

However, Ferraro was more than an Italian-American running for office; her gender identity also contributed to the rhetorical situation at hand. At the time of her speech, women in the United States were on the end of a second wave of feminism and approaching the cusp of third-wave feminism. In her memoir, published the year after the 1984 election, Ferraro reflected on her second run for Congress and challenges that she faced as a woman in politics. Referencing voter turn-out for the Equal Rights Amendment, Ferraro wrote “Overnight, it seemed, pollsters discovered a new voting bloc that voted not only in greater numbers than men but differently than men. And the gender gap was recognized” (Ferraro, *Ferraro: My Story*, p. 60 1985). Ferraro’s acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention was, in many ways, her “coming out party” to the American people. This was her first opportunity to address the many potential voters in attendance and tuning in over the television. Days before her official nomination, rumors had swirled through the media that Mondale had chosen Ferraro as his running-mate for the presidential campaign; Ferraro’s only response to these rumors had been simply to state that she was still “in the running for the job” (Balz, 1984). With this as her first address to potential voters, Ferraro had to establish her identity with the general public. Ferraro’s identity as a woman, as an Italian-American and a candidate for

Vice President all aided in her personification to the audience in front of her. Ferraro's identity as a woman immediately made her identifiable for many American women on their way to the ballot box. Representing Italian-Americans, Ferraro needed to demonstrate her identity in this speech to highlight her role as what could be considered the embodiment of the American Dream to many voters.

However, even with the positives of this representation, Ferraro also had to combat many negative views that were placed on her due to her identity. Politics have long been referenced as a "boys' game", with 1984 being no exception. While very little published commentary exists regarding Ferraro's gender before her nomination, *The Cut* reported that Barbara Walters insinuated that Ferraro was an absent mother due to her work in Congress. While on the campaign trail, Ferraro was asked in Mississippi, "Can you bake a blueberry muffin?" (Weinraub, 1984). Ferraro was faced with the exhaustive task of being "feminine enough" to be relatable to other women and, driven enough to be inspiring, without ever isolating any members of the American voting office.

Ferraro as a Vice-Presidential Candidate

Beyond the challenges Ferraro encountered regarding her personal identities, Ferraro additionally needed to uphold the traditional role of a Vice President in her speech. Traditionally, Vice Presidents have a very specific set of needs that they need to fulfill for the President when running for office. As characterized by Denise Bostdorff in her 1991 article, "Vice-Presidential Comedy and the Traditional Female Role: An Examination of the Rhetorical Characteristics of the Vice Presidency", there are four specific roles that a Vice President must fulfill in order to successfully "support" the

President: celebration, confrontation, vindication and submission (p. 7). The personification of these roles can include celebrating the presidential candidate, confronting incongruities in the opposing candidate's stance (such as criticizing policies presented by the opposing ticket) as well as confronting challenges to the Vice President's policy not aligning with their own Presidential candidate's policies. Additionally, vindication is enacted when a Vice President explains previous incompatibilities with their Presidential candidate, and/or explanation for why Mondale was the better candidate to represent the American people. Finally, the act of submission as a Vice President, includes resigning that rhetorical discussion will focus more and more on the Presidential candidate, with the Vice-Presidential candidate becoming less and less noteworthy (Bostdorff, 1991). While these described roles are typically enacted throughout the duration of their candidacy, their first address as the Vice-Presidential candidate is a prime opportunity to begin fulfilling these roles for the Presidential candidate. Throughout the close-reading of this speech, I will be seeking examples of these roles being performed by Ferraro.

A note on Feminine Style and Ferraro's Speech

As previously highlighted, the history of feminine style in rhetoric was born from women defying social norms as public speakers, and using the "purist" social norms expected of them as a means of persuasion in their rhetoric. Because it was believed that women should not "subject themselves" to the "perils" of public address, women connected with their audiences through personal experiences to ascend their arguments (Campbell, 1998). Now, nearly a hundred years after this rhetorical creation, Ferraro

using feminine style in her address to the nation, in a role traditionally held by men, is beautiful to behold. While the use of feminine style is not exclusive to women rhetors (Campbell, 1998), Ferraro's use of feminine style in her speech is somewhat poetic. As previously written in this thesis, Feminine style is known for strong focus on narrative and audience connection (Vigil, 2014 p. 279), and is the perfect rhetorical style to use when doing an analysis of a speech such as this due to the traditionally feminine roles expected of a Vice President in submission to the President (Bostdorff, 1991). Feminine style assembles itself through shared experiences between the orator and audience, as well as inductive generalization (Dow & Tonn, 1993, p. 289). Ferraro's identity work in this speech revealed her attempt to build bridges with her audience as an Italian-American, as a woman, and, conclusionary, as a candidate for Vice President of the United States. As the first woman to be nominated for Vice President by the Democratic Party, Ferraro was aware that she was standing on a glass ceiling that she would soon shatter under her own feet (Ferraro, 1985).

Outside of the Vice-Presidential roles that Ferraro needed to fulfill in her nominal speech, along with the identity work that she needed to present, the iconic Reagan administration was not a "small dog" against which Ferraro could wield her own attack. The following chapter portion attempts to highlight some of the historical context surrounding the 1984 Presidential election.

Historical Context

There are several factors that made the Reagan's first term as president iconic: Reagan's large tax cuts, his success with the Iran hostage crisis, endorsement of the first

woman on the Supreme Court, and the beginnings of his negotiations with the Soviet Union (Miller Center, 2020). Reagan's presidency resulted in, as former Prime Minister of England Margaret Thatcher stated, "millions of men and women who live in freedom today because of the policies he pursued" (Thatcher, 2004).

With approval ratings at 50.3 his first term in office (Gallup, 2020) Reagan accomplished his proposed 30% tax cuts, garnering concern from economists on both Democratic and Republican sides (Kaiser, 1980). With headlines calling Reagan a "Rich Man's President" (Pear, 1983) and televised discourse from other politicians criticizing Reagan's tax plan (Cannon & Edsall, 1981) four years of arguing over Reagan's "Reaganomics" created the perfect "sensitive spot" for Ferraro to confront her opponent's administrative tax deal as well as potentially celebrate Mondale as a Presidential candidate. Critics opposed Reagan's tax plan for the way it emphasized tax cuts for Americans who made more than \$50,000/year (Canon & Edsall). As *The Washington Post* reported in 1981 when Reagan first announced his tax plan, Rep. Ken Holland (S.C.) stated "I'm not going to vote for his tax package which lets the wealthy keep theirs and the working family keep right on shouldering the burden" (Holland, 1981). Reagan's tax plan was defined by what was referred to as "trickle-down" economics, or "supply side" economics – the theory that tax cuts for the wealthy could be used as an incentive for Americans to produce goods (supply) rather than consume goods (demand) (Editors History.com, 2010). Reagan's emphasis on taxes that naturally benefited Americans with higher gross salaries allowed Mondale's campaign to target Reagan as being out-of-touch with lower-income and middle-class Americans.

Ferraro's nominal address to the nation was much-anticipated for that election cycle first because of the position for which she was running, but also for women around the world. After delivering her nomination speech, Ferraro received countless responses from around the world, largely from women and Italians, voicing their joy in her candidacy even if they wouldn't have the opportunity to vote for her. In a correspondence from an Italian priest, Ferraro was told that "You certainly have widened the door for women! Brava!" (Priest to Ferraro, 1984). A woman medical student in Bangladesh wrote after Ferraro's speech congratulating her on such a "courageous address" (Student to Ferraro, 1984).

Analysis of Ferraro's Speech

By dividing her speech into four main themes, Ferraro addressed the United States as "The Land Where Dreams Come True", highlighted the importance of "Playing By the Rules", voiced her belief that there was "Change in the Air" and finally closed with emphasis on "The Gift of Life". It is due to this speech organization that the analysis of this speech will be read in this same manner. While doing a close reading of these four themes, I will seek to highlight examples of Ferraro enacting feminine style in her speech in order to fulfill the necessary roles of Vice President.

The Land Where Dreams Come True

When addressing the audience in attendance for her historical nomination, Ferraro chose these words to break her media silence that she had maintained until her official nomination: "Ladies and gentlemen of the convention: My name is Geraldine Ferraro. I stand before you to proclaim tonight: America is the land where dreams come true for all

of us.” By lending to the folklore that America is a promised land where dreams come true for all who live here, Ferraro pays tribute to the realization that she is, in fact, a dream come true for many Americans. Regardless of her political leaning, her ideas for America’s future, and even for her role in the administration she was hoping to serve, many viewed Ferraro’s place on the ballot as a dream realized. Recalling the words of another famous American rhetorician, Ferraro cited a direct quote from the late Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King when he stated, “Occasionally in life there are moments that cannot be explained by words. Their meaning can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart” (King, 1965). “Tonight,” Ferraro said after directly quoting King, “is such a moment for me. My heart is filled with pride” (Ferraro, 1984). By using this feeling of pride, Ferraro is demonstrating how honored she is to have been nominated to such a high office, and also as a representative of the American people, as she later will go on to describe. Ferraro’s sense of pride is one that she engages with along with her audience – allowing them to feel as though they are part of this moment with her. With the statement, “I proudly accept your nomination for Vice President of the United States” Ferraro allows those in attendance, who took pride in her nomination, and this historical event, to feel as though they were sharing that experience with Ferraro herself. By getting personal with her audience, Ferraro extended the invitation to audience members to engage in the emotional moment she was experiencing and thus, allowed them to experience this feeling as well. This is directly reflective of feminine style’s strong emphasis on audience connection.

Ferraro continued to build on this theme of emotional pride by describing her own upbringing in the Northeastern United States, an experience to which many Americans

could relate. When Ferraro stated that her place on the ballot was evidence that “America is the land where dreams come true” Ferraro assigned herself as a representative of the embodiment of the American Dream. Ferraro assigning herself this role extended beyond an attempt to connect to the audience; Ferraro’s analogy articulated a place that was being carved for immigrants, women and working-class Americans in the typically Anglo-White-Male American Dream. Reframing the American Dream, in this way, operated as a source for typically marginalized communities in the United States to get “on board” with the Mondale ticket. Additionally, spanning far beyond the immediate audience of voters before her, Ferraro’s vision of the American Dream served as a cornerstone that shaped our understanding of whom is included in the American Dream today. Describing herself as, “the daughter of a woman whose highest goal was a future for her children...the daughter of working Americans...the daughter of an immigrant from Italy...” Ferraro made herself relatable to every woman in the audience who has experienced their own mother’s dreams for their future. Ferraro also emotionally connected herself with every parent and grandparent in the DNC audience who had dreams of the future for their own children, especially their daughters. Because part of her role as the Vice-Presidential candidate was to celebrate Mondale’s candidacy, and the need to establish an emotionally rewarding narrative with her audience through feminine style, Ferraro began her speech by highlighting biographical components to her identity as an American woman just like anyone else, and raised with “good old American values” like hard work and education. Examples of this in her speech are when she highlighted her past as an American school teacher who went to law school at night, and her heritage as an Italian-American woman raised on the belief that, “if you work hard

and play by the rules” (in America) “you can earn your share of America’s blessings” (Ferraro, 1984). Thus, Ferraro used her ownership of these values to create authority for herself to celebrate Walter Mondale as the Presidential candidate. An example of this arrived when Ferraro described the background that Mondale came from. Painting patriotic scenes that sound charmingly like a piece of Norman Rockwell art, Ferraro highlighted backdrops of grain elevators that children in Elmore (Mondale’s hometown) walk past on their way to school, contrasting the subway stops children pass on their way to school in Queens (Ferraro’s hometown). Ferraro then ties these similarities together when stating “On the Fourth of July in Elmore, they hang flags out on Main Street; in Queens, they fly them over Grand Avenue. But all of us love our country, and stand ready to defend the freedom that it represents.” It is as if Ferraro is attempting to highlight that while Americans may come from different places, have different backgrounds and have starkly differing experiences, all are brought together by love of country and willingness to defend the United States and their symbolic flag. By describing these two backgrounds as being unique but still bound together through patriotism, Ferraro not only invites her audience to participate in remembering scenery from their own childhoods, she also celebrates the diversity and understanding that she and Mondale would bring to the White House should Mondale be elected as president. Ferraro’s attempts to build a feeling of unity between the audience and herself, as well as between audience members toward one another, built a level of rapport for herself and, in turn, for Mondale within her speech.

Playing By the Rules

After achieving nostalgic and poetic connections with her audience, Ferraro turns to her list of rules – rules that she believes to be instilled in all Americans and rules that she argues had been broken by the Reagan and Bush Administration. Fulfilling her role to confront “weak points” in the opposing candidate’s policies for the Presidential candidate, Ferraro addresses the audience with her list of grievances that she believes Reagan and Bush had committed against American voters. In her position as the offender on behalf of Mondale, Ferraro faced the risk of appearing to be an “angry feminist” or “bitchy” to her audience, even after building a strong amount of rapport with her audience. This is why Ferraro skillfully builds on her connection with the audience before her and states her grievances against Reagan as a list of injustices against the American people themselves. Ferraro states that, “Americans want to live by the same set of rules. But under this administration, the rules are rigged against too many people” (Ferraro, 1984). Ferraro states that, “Americans want to live by the same set of rules. But under this administration, the rules are rigged against too many people.” Ferraro called into play Reagan’s tax plan, which caused the taxes paid by individuals to increase year-over-year, while “the share paid by large corporations is getting smaller and smaller.” Ferraro stated that those who would be shouldering the burden of Reagan’s tax plan were women, children and older Americans (Ferraro, 1984).

“The rules of a decent society say, when you distribute sacrifice in times of austerity, you don't put women and children first. It isn't right that young people today fear they won't get the Social Security they paid for, and that older Americans fear that they will lose what they have already earned. Social Security is a contract between the last generation and the

next, and the rules say: You don't break contracts. We're going to keep faith with older Americans” (Ferraro, 1984).

Ferraro uses these attacks to not only point out examples of the Reagan administration not having the best interest of all Americans at heart, but also, to once again celebrate Mondale as the superior choice to represent Americans in the White House. Ferraro never states “Reagan is untrustworthy” or scathes attacks on Reagan’s policies directly. Instead, she builds upon familiar imagery and injustices suffered by Americans in order to attach Reagan’s choices. This use of familiar imagery in order to connect with her audience is a distinct trait of feminine style in rhetoric, in which Ferraro used the rapport she built with her audience to bolster Mondale’s ticket as not just a good candidate for President but the preferred candidate over Reagan.

Conclusion

When Geraldine Ferraro introduced herself to the nation in her nomination acceptance speech, she was attempting to not only demonstrate her persona for voters so that they could understand components of her identity, but also, do it in a way that was gendered and fit with their expectations of her so as not to appear unfamiliar to Americans. Ferraro anchored the rhetoric surrounding her presented persona in feminine style. Additionally, Ferraro used the rapport she had built with her audience when fulfilling the expected role of Vice President to defend and celebrate Mondale as a candidate without coming across as “harsh” or “angry”.

CHAPTER 3

“I love those hockey moms. You know, they say the difference between hockey mom and a pit-bull – Lipstick.” – Sarah Palin, 2008.

Introduction to Chapter 3

As I historically progress to Sarah Palin’s 2008 Vice-Presidential candidacy, I will use this chapter to do a close reading of Palin’s 2008 acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention. I will frame Palin’s speech through the historical context of the time and seek to understand examples of the Vice-Presidential roles she sought to fulfill in her acceptance speech. Through this close reading I will continue to look for examples of Palin using feminine style to create her arguments and fulfill the highlighted roles of a Vice President. Due to Sarah Palin’s presence as the first woman to be nominated for Vice President by the Republican party, Palin had a unique need to fulfill specific, gendered-expectations (Gibson & Heyse, 2010) leading to what was described as a “faux maternal persona” with a specific lean toward “hegemonic masculinity” (Gibson & Heyse, 2010).

This chapter will be organized similarly to the previous chapter, with a description of Palin’s identity, providing historical context surrounding the rhetorical situation, and finally, a close reading of Palin’s acceptance speech itself. I will be seeking examples of how Palin fulfilled the Vice-Presidential needs to celebrate, confront, vindicate and submit (Bostdorff, 1991) as well as look for examples of Palin demonstrating feminine style in her speech through identity work, audience participation,

narrative and emotional connection (Vigil, 2014) (Campbell, 1998) (Down & Tonn, 1993). Palin developed specific personae in her address. In this chapter, I will analysis the three personae: (1) Palin as a woman, (2) Palin as a mother and (3) Palin as a “people-first” politician.

The Situation

Palin’s Identity as a Woman in the Republican Party

When Sarah Palin took to the Republican National Convention stage in July of 2008, she was introducing herself to the American voting community in what would become one of the most iconic moments of her political career, due to the anomaly of a republican woman being nominated for Vice President. Born in 1964, Palin grew up in Alaska at a time when the United States was cresting through the second wave of feminism. This second wave of feminism included women’s fight for reproductive rights, financial agency and the beginnings of outlawing marital rape. During this time, Palin herself was growing up in Alaska where she participated in many activities that were typically gendered and only for girls OR boys – such as hunting and fishing as well as competing in beauty pageants and participating on her high school cheer team. (*Going Rogue: American Life* Palin, 2009). In 1992, Palin got her start in politics on the local level by running for City Council. Palin credited her desire to improve her children’s education as reason for running for City Council, and later serving as mayor of Wasilla (Palin’s RNC Speech, 2008).

Palin ran as a conservative from City Council up through her success as Governor of Alaska. Palin shattered more than her fair share of glass ceilings even before

becoming the first woman to be nominated as the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate; Palin was the first woman to successfully be elected as Governor of Alaska, the youngest person to be elected as Governor of Alaska and was the first Alaskan Governor to have been born after Alaska received its American statehood (Britannica, 2021). Even Palin's choice to run on a Republican ticket was an interesting one, considering the historical indifference that the Republican party had shown towards women in leadership. Examples of this include the number of Democratic women elected as governors (21) versus the number of Republican women elected as governors (14) (History of Women Governors, 2007), the continued under-representation of women elected to many local offices in the Republican party (Elder, 2021) and much of the harmful rhetoric against women that has been expressed by male leaders in the Republican party (Och & Shames, 2019). Nevertheless, Palin's advances as a woman successfully operating within such a conservative party speak for her abilities as a rhetor and skill as a politician.

Palin as a Mother

One of the ways that Palin was able to emphasize her identity to be more appealing to her audience was to affirm her role as a mother. By highlighting her motherhood Palin was engaging with one of the original forms of feminine style – audience connection. As previously mentioned, women historically used feminine style in rhetoric to play into their traditionally feminine roles as a means to counter criticisms that they were, in fact, breaking their gender roles by becoming rhetors in the first place (Campbell, 1991). Palin, in turn, used rhetoric surrounding her motherly role to ease the

audience's concerns over a woman breaking the glass ceiling over their heads. Examples of this will be further discussed in later portions of this chapter. Palin wasn't just one "kind" of mother, however.

Like most mothers, Palin wore multiple hats. Within the first 300 words of her speech, Palin identified herself as a silver-star mother, with a son who had enlisted in the Army infantry. She described her daughters as "strong and kind-hearted" and having "the same ups and downs as any other" and finally, the mother to her "perfectly beautiful baby boy named Trig" (Palin, 2008).

Palin as a Mother to a Child with Disabilities

In 2007, on a trip to New Orleans, Palin discovered that she was pregnant with her fifth child, whom she later would discover has Down's Syndrome. At the time of writing this thesis in the United States, roughly 1 in every 700 babies are born with Downs Syndrome each year (CDC, 2021). While more common in pregnancies when the mother is over the age of 35, research has shown no clear reason for what determines this syndrome, which is defined by having an extra chromosome in their genetic makeup. In an interview with Barbara Walters in November of 2009, Palin admitted that she had had a fleeting moment of doubt after learning of her son's diagnosis. "I thought, 'God unless You know more than I do about all this, how in the world will I handle this?'" (as cited in Goldberg & Thomson, 2009). While this level of candor regarding her son's diagnosis was not mentioned in her National Convention Speech, Palin's public choice to choose life in a deeply challenging circumstance is one that aligned well with the Republican Party's historically pro-life position. While not all Republicans identify as being pro-life,

the GOP website itself has an entire portion dedicated to Republican Pro-Life bills, with a page header that reads, “Priority: Abolish abortion by enacting legislation to stop the murder of unborn children; and to ignore and refuse to enforce any and all federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, and court rulings which would deprive an unborn child of the right to life” (GOP website, 2021). Palin’s first pledge within her speech was specifically to families that have special needs members. Palin stated that “if we’re elected, you will have a friend and advocate in the White House.” Using mention of her identity as a mother to a child with disabilities, Palin was able to build rapport with Pro-Life voters and voters with family members with disabilities.

Palin as a Mother to a Service Member

At the time of Palin’s speech to the RNC, over 1.5 million active service members were in the United States armed forces (World Bank, 2008). When standing before the Republican National Convention in 2008, Palin’s son Track was less than ten days from deploying to his station in Army Boot Camp. “As the mother of one of these troops” Palin said to the audience before her, “this (John McCain) is exactly the kind of man that I want as commander-in-chief” (Palin, 2008). As will be later highlighted, Palin was able to use her identity as a mother to a member of the military service as a means to connect with her audience. Overwhelmingly, military veterans tend to identify with the Republican party (Price, 2020; Newport, 2009), creating an ideal situation for Palin to lean into feminine style and once again connect emotionally with her audience. The community surrounding active military families is one that has only recently begun to see adequate study. The strength of a community surrounding the support of military families

lies upon two primary pillars: (1) shared responsibility for the community members, and (2) collective competence for addressing community needs (Huebner et al., 2009). These contexts create multiple dynamics that members of military families experience and can often lead to a sense of “tribalism” within military communities (Mancini et al., 2008). Due to these factors, voters with family members in the armed services look for those whom they identify as fitting with that tribe (Russomanno, 2019, p. 542). Palin’s identity as the mother of a United States military service member allowed her to fit directly into the tribalist community system. Senator McCain, who had famously been an American Prisoner of War during Vietnam, was already beloved by many veterans, and Palin’s personal endorsement as a service mother only further extended community trust in McCain’s ticket.

Palin as a Mother to Daughters

On the first day of the Republican National Convention, the McCain campaign announced the pregnancy of Sarah Palin’s oldest daughter Bristol (Biography Editors, 2014). While it was quickly included in the statement that Bristol was engaged to be married to the father of her baby (West, 2008), there were challenges that the McCain ticket could have suffered due to Bristol’s pregnancy while she remained unwed (West, 2008). Bristol’s pregnancy created an opportunity for the McCain ticket to show loving support for a teen mother – one of just an estimated 750,000 young women who would conceive a child before the age of 20 in the United States yearly (Kost & Henshaw, 2014). While Palin did not discuss her daughter’s pregnancy in her acceptance speech, throughout the campaign it was made public that Bristol was receiving “complete love

and support” from both the Palin and McCain families. This was highlighted in an article from *The Guardian* covering the official statement from Todd and Sarah Palin, which stated “We’re proud of Bristol’s decision to have her baby” (Stevenson, 2008). By emphasizing their pride that their daughter chose to have her baby, Palin was further emphasizing her pro-life stance to Republican voters.

Palin as a “People-First” Politician

As previously discussed, Palin’s advances through politics started at the local level: Palin a City Counselor, then mayor of her hometown, and finally, governor of Alaska. Palin was the first woman to be elected governor but also the youngest person to serve as governor of Alaska. Also as previously mentioned, while it is part of Palin’s role to celebrate the Presidential candidate, Palin also took significant time to emphasize her own political work in her acceptance speech. While these themes will be explored in greater detail in the analysis portion of this chapter, there were three key components that Palin attributed to her identity as a “people-first” politician: (1) that Palin was not “a member of the permanent political establishment”, (2) drastic cuts to budget spending on unnecessary government luxuries, (3) utilizing American resources. Examples of these themes will be explored more thoroughly in the analysis portion; however, they are important to mention as components to Palin’s identity that she spoke of in her acceptance speech and used to build trust with her audience.

A Note on Feminine Style and Palin’s Acceptance Speech

Due to Palin's identity components that matched well with her audience of Republicans (such as being the mother of a service member and a pro-life supporter) she was able to elevate her experiential knowledge of these identities to bond with her audience. Palin's arguments to celebrate McCain's candidacy and highlight discrepancies with Obama's campaign were skillfully crafted through her use of feminine style. Palin had to sell personal narratives and appear as relatable as possible to voters in order to establish a level of familiarity and rapport with her potential voters to bolster McCain's ticket. Additionally, Palin's narrative allowed her to also appear as a suitable "second-in-command" behind McCain in the case that she would need to soldier the responsibility of leading the United States as Commander in Chief.

The following historical context will demonstrate a framework for what some of the most pressing current events were in the United States at that time, as well as opportunities that were presented for Palin to address in her acceptance speech.

Historical Context

Opportunities to Celebrate McCain

In 2008, questions regarding the economy, education, terrorism and health care were at the top of mind for voters in the United States (Pew, 2008). One of Palin's tasks when delivering her speech to the RNC was not only to create a narrative identity that Americans could relate to and trust in, but also to provide examples of how much she also valued the concerns that many Americans held. In 2008, Americans graded US public schools as being less effective than the police departments and post offices (Howell et. al., 2008). Faith in government spending was also beginning to dwindle, with

higher-income communities stating that they had trust in the US government while working-class households cited lower trust in government (Pew, 2008). This created an opportunity for Palin to demonstrate reason for why voters could let these concerns rest with the McCain ticket. Examples of how Palin achieved this will be highlighted in the analysis portion of this chapter.

When speaking before the Republican National Convention attendees and those tuning in over the television, Palin had the task of demonstrating her concern for these issues, thereby vouching for McCain's concern for these issues, and celebrating that Senator McCain was the trustworthy candidate for these challenges. The 2008 election was the first time in an eight-year sequence when there would no longer be an incumbent candidate, allowing new candidates from all political parties to emerge. While Senator Obama was heralded in the media for his charisma and "cool politician" demeanor (Beaty, 2008), Senator McCain of Arizona was appearing as a practical, but not terribly charismatic choice. Known for his bipartisan efforts and "grumpy" demeanor, McCain emerged as the GOP's choice to run for president. However, early pollsters didn't show much confidence in Senator McCain's campaign (Berman, 2007). This created an opportunity for Palin to capitalize on this fact to downplay knowledge from media sources and emphasize her and her audience's experiential knowledge – all of which will be demonstrated in the analysis portion of this chapter.

The following portion highlights the historical context for two of the confrontations to Senator Obama's campaign that Palin posed in her speech to the Republican National Convention.

Opportunities to Confront Obama

Pipelines

In addition to task of introducing herself to the American electorate, Palin had several opportunities in her speech to critique Obama's campaign and help advance the themes developed by McCain's campaign. At the time of the 2008 presidential campaigns, the Industrial Commission of North Dakota reported that pipelines filled over 2 million miles of US soil, with about 170k of those miles carrying petroleum and petroleum product. At this time, the United States was guzzling about 21 million barrels of petroleum products daily. An estimated 143 billion gallons of gasoline and 66 billion gallons of diesel were consumed by American machinery in 2007 (Makelky, 2008). Yet even with continuous pipeline drilling in the United States, American dependence on oil from the Middle East had been increasing yearly since the Nixon administration. This was highlighted by Massachusetts senator Will Brownsberger when he shared a report to his website stating that "About 1/3 of the United States total energy consumption of approximately 100 quadrillion BTUs is imported, up from less than 1/5 in 1973...we import roughly 2/3 of our petroleum consumption" (2008). In August of 2008 (one month before the Republican National Convention), Senator Obama spoke of his plan to solve United States dependence on foreign countries for oil. "We simply cannot pretend, as Senator McCain does," Obama spoke to his audience of Michigianians "that we can drill our way out of this problem. We need a much bigger, and bolder set of solutions" (Obama, 2008). Senator Obama went on to propose investing in technology to help the US harvest more oil from the land currently being used for drilling, and focus on oil-efficiency to reduce oil consumption rates domestically, and pay \$1,000 to every working

family as an energy rebate, paid for by the profits of American oil companies. (Obama, 2008).

Obama's statements, while enthusiastic, did not offer proposed solutions for reducing dependence on imported oil directly. Obama even made statement that these were "short term" proposals for relief. This provided an avenue for Palin to point attacks at Obama's oil relief plans, and confront what she believed to be inconsistencies in his plan. Examples of this will be further explored in the analysis portion of this chapter.

A second place where Palin found an area to confront Obama's rhetoric regarded the war taking place in the Middle East.

America's Participation in War in the Middle East

As wars over oil in the Middle East continued, Senator Obama delivered a campaign speech voicing his concerns about America's participation in the war in Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. In July, Obama stated his criticisms of McCain for supporting US participation in a war for resources. Obama said,

"I was opposed to going to war in Iraq; Senator McCain was one of Washington's biggest supporters for war. I warned that the invasion of a country posing no imminent threat would fan the flames of extremism, and distract us from the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban; Senator McCain claimed that we would be greeted as liberators, and that democracy would spread across the Middle East...that's why I strongly stand by my plan to end this war" (Obama, 2008).

McCain's campaign needed to respond to these accusations. Because Vice Presidential candidates often work to protect their top of their ticket, Palin's speech would need to navigate the dynamics surrounding her gender as she refuted Obama's criticisms.

American reasoning for participation in war in the Middle East is complicated, to say the least. Whether American presence is justified continues to be up for debate – which is why Obama's strong stance to remove American troops from the Middle East provided an opportunity for Palin to counter his statements and confront reasons for why the McCain campaign believed that the US military presence should remain in the Middle East. An example of this will be explored in the analysis portion of this chapter.

Upon outlining components of Palin's identity that she highlighted as means to connect with her audience, as well as creating historical context for some of the confrontations that Palin presented to Obama's campaign, I will now begin my close reading of Palin's Republican National Convention acceptance speech. I will organize my analysis by first seeking to illustrate ways that Palin used her identity to connect with her audience through feminine style in the rhetoric of her speech, then I will provide examples of how Palin either fulfilled or fell-behind in her fulfillment of the rhetorical roles of the Vice President.

Analysis of Palin's Speech

On September 3rd, 2008, Sarah Palin walked onto the stage at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minneapolis. Amidst the applause, the cheers, the waving American flags and signs that voiced support for Senator John McCain's

presidential run, Governor Palin spoke these words: “my fellow citizens, I will be honored to accept your nomination for Vice President of the United States” (Palin, 2008). In that historical moment, Palin became the first woman nominated to run as Vice President for the GOP. Before her nomination, it is worth noting that the McCain campaign had announced their endorsement of Palin on August 29th, less than a week before her official nomination. This gave the American people a limited amount of time to learn much about Palin before her speech, placing an even greater amount of pressure on Palin to introduce herself to the American people.

In Palin’s speech, she introduced her identity to the crowd as a means of building emotional connections and establishing her rapport through feminine style. Additionally, Palin worked to fulfill her role as Vice President to celebrate McCain as a nominee and point confrontations against Senator Obama’s rhetoric and attacks against the McCain campaign.

I will use the first portion of this analysis to explore the ways that Palin established different facets of her identity with her audience, and highlight areas where this demonstrates feminine style.

Palin’s Identity Work

Palin as a Mother

Palin adopted the persona of motherhood in her RNC acceptance speech, providing her opportunities to identify with multiple facets of the American public. As

previously mentioned, Palin famously was a mother of five when running for the office of Vice President. Her position on the ballot, while also being a mother of five – three of whom were under the age of 18, potentially could have served to either disqualify her as a fully engaged candidate, or bring a sense of familiarity to voters looking for someone on the ballot to whom they could relate.

Meeting the need to build on a narrative that was personal and relatable, Palin talked about her family much like any other mother might talk about her family when meeting a group of new friends for the first time. “I’m just one of many moms who will say an extra prayer each night for our sons and daughters going into harm’s way,” (Palin, 2008) she said of her son Track, who was about to leave for Boot Camp in the Army. After describing her “three, kind, strong-hearted daughters” and her son Trig as her “perfectly beautiful baby boy” she surmised her family as having “the same ups and downs as any other, the same challenges and the same joys” (Palin, 2008).

Palin normalized her family with her narrative of being just like any other mother – she just happened to also be the governor of Alaska. By talking about her family in such a personal, intimate, manner, Palin defied what had ordinarily been seen in women in politics, by leaning into an emotional conversation rather than avoiding it on the basis of gender (Campbell, 1998). This point was highlighted in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s discussion of Hillary Clinton’s challenges when struggling to perform traditional femininity publicly in his article “The Discursive Performance of Femininity: Hating Hillary”. In this article, Campbell addresses the great disadvantage held by Hillary Clinton – along with any other woman attempting to assert herself within politics – due to societal expectations of women to be demure, yet emotionless, welcoming, yet

autonomous. As Campbell summarized the struggles of women in politics; “she (Clinton) symbolizes the problems of public women writ large, the continuing demand that women who play public roles or function in the public sphere discursively enact their femininity...only to a limited degree...roles that are gender coded masculine” (Campbell, 1998). What Palin skillfully did, however, was to build upon the traditional use of feminine style to woo her audience with her wholesome, down-to-earth, “normal mom” demeanor. Feminine style, having found its roots in the need for women to balance their rebellion in public forums (Campbell, 1995, p. 15) was the ideal place for Palin to place her stylistic choices when speaking as the first woman to be nominated for Vice President of the Grand Old Party.

Palin as a Public Servant

“I had the privilege of living most of my life in a small town. I was just your average hockey mom and signed up for the PTA” (Palin, 2008).

When Sarah Palin discussed her relationship with politics in her RNC speech, she created a narrative that she worked much like a concerned citizen looking to make the United States government a better servant of the people. She described her entrance into politics as a PTA member and later a city council member because “I wanted to make my kids’ public education even better.” She then casually mentioned that “Before I became governor of the great state of Alaska, I was mayor of my hometown.” Palin’s use of her humble narrative of her experience in politics, and weaving its beginnings being motivated by a desire to assist her children, illustrates a point made by Chodorow in

1978, that sharing personal experiences is used to encourage relationships and enhance perspective (p. 178).

Palin additionally took a rather matter-of-fact approach to illustrate what she had done in office as governor. When discussing her ability to manage government budgets, Palin shared “I got rid of a few things in the governor’s office...that luxury jet was over-the-top. I put it on eBay” (Palin, 2008). While this was met with the sound of applause, it should be noted that Palin did not sell the governor’s jet on eBay due to not receiving enough bids. The luxury plane was eventually sold through an aviation broker, with the sale costing Alaska several hundred thousand dollars in the deal (Kornblut, 2008) (Kyle, 2008). Palin, however, used this experiential knowledge as a selling point for voters to find her as a trustworthy manager of their tax dollars.

As previously discussed, Vice Presidential candidates typically fulfil several roles for the Presidential candidate. In Palin’s acceptance speech examples of celebration of McCain as a candidate as well as examples of confronting attacks against McCain can be found.

Palin Fulfills Vice-Presidential Roles

Palin Celebrates McCain

Palin celebrated McCain through her experiential knowledge of military families, providing reasoning for why McCain would make a suitable commander-in-chief to the United States military. After sharing the news that her son had recently enlisted in the Army, she concluded by saying “as the mother of one of these troops, that is exactly the kind of man that I want as commander-in-chief” (Palin, 2008). Later in her speech, Palin

continued to celebrate McCain's military service by stating "There is only one man in this election who has ever really fought for you in places where winning means survival and defeat means death. And that man is John McCain." This comment worked to both bolster McCain as a candidate who had already proven his resolve to serve the United States by his military sacrifice, but also, serve to defame Senators Obama and Biden for their lack of previous military service.

Building on McCain's military service to further celebrate his candidacy, Palin shared stories from when McCain was held as a prisoner of war in Hanoi. Invoking the narrative of McCain's fellow prisoner of war, Tom Moe, Palin told the audience of how McCain had not only suffered torture as an American prisoner, but also, the way he had always told Moe, with a smile and thumbs-up, "we're going to pull through this." To this story, Palin concludes, "that is the kind of man America needs to see us through the next four years" (Palin, 2008).

In the midst of sharing some of the choices she had made to balance the Alaskan state budget, Palin also noted that "Senator McCain also – he promises to use the power of veto in defense of the public interest...as a chief executive, I can assure you it works" (Palin, 2008). Here, Palin uses her experiences as an executive public servant to further bolster her expertise to endorse McCain.

Palin also leveraged previous examples when pollsters underestimated a politician's chances as an avenue to demonstrate reasons to celebrate McCain as a candidate (Berman, 2007). Upon the selection of Sarah Palin as McCain's running mate, it quickly became part of Palin's role as an effective Vice-Presidential candidate to boost morale for the McCain campaign despite the nay-saying pollsters. The role of the Vice

President has been described as necessarily stepping in front of the Presidential candidate to defend attacks against their campaign (Bostdorff, 1991). At the top of her speech, Governor Palin began her boosts for McCain's ticket by stating "It was just a year ago when all the experts in Washington counted out our nominee because he refused to hedge his commitment to the security of the country he loves" (Palin, 2008). "The pollsters and the pundits...overlooked just one thing when they wrote him off," Palin continued, "...the caliber of the man himself, the determination, the resolve, and the sheer guts of Senator John McCain" (Palin, 2008). After her attacks on the faceless, ambiguous pollsters, Palin continues with "us vs them" narrative when she tells the audience, "The voters knew better" as if to say that, only those who are smart enough to see past the façade of political pollsters could see that Senator McCain would, in fact, be the next President of the United States. This is where we can see Palin's skillful use of feminine style to foster a narrative for McCain that voters could feel confident in and relate to. Palin emphasized experiential knowledge to counteract the pollsters' expertise and to reassess McCain's chances for victory on election night. Additionally, this highlights Palin's experiential knowledge as well as the experiential knowledge of her audience to build upon. By using this narrative that McCain continued to "beat the odds," Palin was creating a narrative that emphasized distrust in political analysts and highlighted McCain as a hero. This was important because, should there be continued political criticism of McCain's campaign, Palin had already set the stage for McCain's supporters to hold faith that McCain would "beat the odds."

Building narrative, sharing honorable and intimate stories, and using experiential knowledge are all examples of how Palin used feminine style in her rhetoric to celebrate

McCain's ticket, and fulfill her position as Vice President. I do criticize that Palin spent significantly more time bolstering her own experiences as a governor than McCain's work as a senator for the United States, and that some of her celebration of McCain was "sprinkled" in with celebration of her own accomplishments. However, this could have been because Palin felt that she needed to continue to display her own expertise in office before focusing her attention on celebration of McCain.

Next, I will provide examples of when Palin confronted criticisms that had used McCain's policies.

Palin Confronts Criticism of McCain

Fitting with the rhetorical role that Palin sought to fill for McCain, she focused significant attention on confronting attacks that the Obama campaign had incited against McCain's policies. The first that I will address is Palin's response to Obama's remarks on American oil usage and international importation of petroleum products.

As previously mentioned in the historical context portion of this chapter, Obama had expressed concern for American use of overseas oil, concluding that we cannot drill our way out of these problems (Obama, 2008). This allowed Palin to counter with her own confrontation to his statements.

"The fact that drilling won't solve every problem is no excuse to do nothing at all" Palin stated (2008). Palin then promised that, should McCain be elected, starting the following January "we're going to lay more pipelines, and build more nuclear plants, and create jobs with clean coal, and move forward on solar, wind, geothermal, and other

alternative sources. We need...American energy brought to you by American ingenuity and produced by American workers.” Palin then concluded that, “we need to produce more of our own oil and gas...and take it from a gal who knows the North Slope of Alaska: we’ve got lots of both.” Once again, Palin uses her own experiential knowledge as an Alaskan as evidence to build her expertise and counter previous arguments. Palin positions her regional identity as a valuable source of expertise, which enabled her to portray herself as more knowledgeable about energy than Obama.

A second opportunity that Palin took to confront Senator Obama’s rhetoric was in reference to his resolve to remove the United States from the war in the Middle East during his hopeful administration. As previously described, Obama had stated “I strongly stand by my plan to end this war” (Obama, 2008). In response, Palin launched several arguments.

First, Palin pointed out what she finds to be an irony hearing Obama speak of ending the war in the Middle East and, “never use the word ‘victory’ except when he’s talking about his own campaign.” Second, Palin went on to say that, “Victory in Iran is in sight, and he (Obama) wants to forfeit...Al Qaida terrorists still plot to inflict catastrophic harm on America, and he’s worried that someone won’t read them their rights.” By staking these claims to Obama’s intentions, especially on the heels of her critiques of his energy plan, Palin worked to “go for the jugular” in her criticisms of Obama. Doing so enabled her to portray herself as a tough politician, which combatted gendered assumptions about how a woman would be worse on security issues than a man. In developing her motherly persona, she also allowed herself to position herself in this way

while still maintaining a feminine style. She positioned being protect of the country as a natural extension of motherhood's protective nature.

Conclusion

Palin's speech was historical, breaking glass ceilings for women in politics as the first woman to be nominated as Vice President of the GOP. However, despite the novelty of her presence on the ballot, Palin still fulfilled the traditional roles of Vice President in service to the presidential candidate by celebrating their presence on the ballot, and pointing confrontations to the opposing candidate's campaign.

In addition, Palin invoked a distinctive use of feminine style in her speech by building on common audience experiences, drawing on her own experiential knowledge, connecting with her audience through intimate stories and emotional sharing.

CHAPTER FOUR

“My mother instilled in my sister, Maya, and me the values that would chart the course of our lives. She raised us to be proud, strong Black women. And she raised us to know and be proud of our Indian heritage.” – Harris, 2020

Introduction to Chapter Four

I now come to my third, and final Woman VP Candidate to give a nominal speech before one of the two major political parties in the United States. In this chapter I will develop a close reading of Harris’s 2020 nominal speech to the Democratic National Convention. I will continue to recall the themes that were proposed in the first chapter: understanding how Kamala Harris used feminine style in her speech to breach the historical and positional challenges she had as a Vice Presidential candidate in 2020. Additionally, I will describe the historical context of the time and how it provided opportunities for Harris to fulfill the rhetorical roles that a Vice President must offer to the Presidential candidate. In this chapter, I analyze the identity work of the third woman to be nominated to Vice President by a major political party in the United States. While Harris is the third woman to receive such a nomination, she is the first Woman of Color to be nominated as well as the first woman to be inaugurated to the role of Vice President of the United States. When considering feminine style for Harris’s acceptance speech, it is important to note the emotional and narrative-driven connections that Harris needed to make with her audience to understand her use of feminine style (Campbell, 1991). As a woman rhetor in a male-dominated field, Harris needed to use feminine style to “trojan horse” her arguments to her audience (Campbell, 1991). “Trojan horse” refers to the

large, hollow, wooden horse constructed by the Greek Army during the Trojan war of 1299 BCE. The Greek Army constructed this large, hollow horse, then had Greek Warriors waiting inside of it. A Trojan advocate, Sinon, convinced the Trojans that the horse was a gift from the Greeks as an offering to Athena, the goddess of war. The Trojans accepted the horse into their city and, after nightfall, the Greeks emerged from the horse and overtook the city. This story has now become metaphor for when an individual or group uses a seemingly innocent tactic to drive a larger front.

Chapter Organization

Similar to the preceding two chapters, this chapter will be organized starting with a description of Kamala Harris's personae that she developed in her speech, followed by historical context for the rhetorical situation that Harris was placed in as a candidate in 2020, and finally, a close reading of Harris's acceptance speech itself. In this chapter, I will be seeking to provide examples of Harris using feminine style in her speech, highlighting opportunities for Harris to enact her rhetorical role as a Vice Presidential candidate, and analyzing examples of when Harris did enact these roles within her speech. Harris developed personae related to her experiences as a woman of color raised by a single mother, her work within the criminal justice system, and her identity as a politician who welcomes marginalized groups to be better represented in the United States. Examples of each of these will be explored throughout this chapter.

The Situation and Historical Context

Harris's Identity as a Black Woman of Color

At the time of Harris's nomination to run for Vice President, 49 of the 435 elected representatives in Congress were women of color (Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics, 2021). Historically, women of color have been left behind in American political advances for women, including exclusion from the Women's Suffragette movement (Staples, 2018), conversations on political equality (Julien, 2021) and, as a result, has led to continued under-representation of women of color in feminist movements. Koa Beck advanced this argument in her book *White Feminism* where Beck argued that, "white feminism...has completely different priorities, goals, and strategies...a practice and a way of seeing gender equality...much like racism or hetero sexism or patriarchy" (2021, p. 67). With arguments such as this becoming more and more prevalent in our conversations regarding race and gender, politicians have continued to seek what is known as the "sister vote" (Rauch & La Raja, 2017). The call for women of color to be placed in decision making positions in politics continued to heat up. An example of this is found in a 2020 NPR interview, Glynda Carr – CEO of Higher Heights for America – stated that "we are demanding a return on our voting investment...we are also looking to claim seats at the decision-making tables" (Carr, 2020). Joe Biden himself, upon receiving the Presidential nomination from the Democratic National Party, announced that, no matter who he chose for his running mate, it would be a woman (Stevens, 2020). After this announcement, the Sisters Lead Sisters Vote – a coalition of Black Women, working for the equality of women of color – wrote an open letter to Biden, calling on him to specifically nominate a Black Woman for Vice President (Khalid, 2020). However, Harris was not an obvious choice as Biden's running mate. During the initial presidential debates when Democratic candidates volleyed for the Presidential nomination, Harris publicly criticized Biden for

having worked closely with segregationist senators and his opposition to bussing (Stevens, 2019). As a result, Harris had work to do within her speech in order to confront her own critiques of Biden when addressing the nation. In addition to addressing her criticisms of Biden, Harris had to respond to the criticism of her history with the criminal justice system.

Harris's Work in the Criminal Justice System

Known for her “tough on crime” candidacy since the 1990’s (Lopez, 2020), Harris served as the District Attorney of Los Angeles from 2004-2011, followed by serving as the Attorney General of California from 2011-2017, before serving as a US senator from California from 2017 until becoming Vice President of the United States in 2021 (Whitehouse.gov, 2021).

However, while serving within the criminal justice system, Harris was not without receiving strong criticism for some of her decisions while in office. Examples of this include her decision not to prosecute California Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin for illegal foreclosures, refusal to prosecute Planned Parenthood clinics for the illegal sale of fetal tissue (Cooper, 2017), and three-strike penalty laws (Demby, 2020).

When Joe Biden’s campaign announced the partnership of then-senator Kamala Harris as the Vice-Presidential choice, the announcement was met with a fair degree of criticism and backlash. There were those who saw Harris’s place on the ticket as being a “diversity hire” (Muralidharan, 2020); a way to drum up liberal support for Biden’s “sleeping duck” campaign (Kumar, 2020). Still others found concern with Harris’s previous choices as the Attorney General of California. During the summer of 2020,

before the Democratic National Convention, the United States saw a recent swell in what was a long-overdue call for racial equity and political accountability for the treatment of Americans in marginalized groups. After George Floyd of Fayetteville, North Carolina, was murdered by former officer Derek Chauvin, protests began in North Carolina and spread across the United States. This was just a few short months after Colorado's Breonna Taylor was murdered in a botched police-raid on her home. As greater and greater attention was drawn to both of these cases, calls for political and legal reform became louder and louder in the United States.

Each of these components contributed to Harris's need to fulfill the need for confrontation as a Vice Presidential candidate (Bostdorff, 1991) creating opportunities for Harris to demonstrate that she was the candidate to best partner with Biden as his running mate. Harris not only had the experience within the legal system to demonstrate authority to understand the legal system, her positionality as a woman of color gave her a unique understanding of the justice system in the United States.

After discussing the rhetorical situation as it pertained to Harris's identity as a candidate, and the historical context surrounding the timing of her speech to the nation, I now transition into the analysis portion of this chapter. In this portion, I will discuss how Harris addressed the nation in light of this historical context, and how she attempted to support Biden's campaign and confront challenges that had been posed against it.

Analysis of Harris's Speech

Harris's Identity Work

“In the streets of Oakland and Berkley, I got a strollers-eye-view of people getting into what the great John Lewis called ‘good trouble’” (Harris, 2020). At a time when protests in the United States was receiving global attention (Westerman, 2020), it appeared fitting that Harris would mention her own experiences with protesting. The image of a woman who had been taken to protests, literally from the time she was in a stroller enabled Harris to engage with feminine style and to build on a shared experience that many of her audience members could have experienced in the last year as they themselves had been protesting for the equal protection and rights of Black Americans in the justice system. Octavia Reese, a single, Black mother from Chicago was quoted stating that Harris’s speech showed her as “a woman connected to people” (Reese, 2020). By bringing her own experiences with protesting in the same year that Americans saw the largest Civil Rights wave in the ongoing Civil Rights movement, Harris invited connection between her own person and the millions of Americans that had also been in similar “good trouble” at this time. Harris tied these connections to her audience by stating “I have been guided by the words I spoke from the first time I stood in a courtroom: Kamala Harris, for the people” (Harris, 2020). Harris continued to weave the powerful influence of her mother throughout her speech as a guiding force in her public service, letting audience members relate to how their own matriarchs have influenced them, and how many may hope to influence their own daughters, nieces, and granddaughters.

By referencing her mother’s vision for an inclusive country, Harris developed an implicit critique of President Trump’s divisive rhetoric. Doing so allowed her to warrant change from the status quo while maintaining a more feminine style. Harris described the

America that her mother had taught her to believe in and serve, “A vision of our nation as a beloved community – where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from or who we love” (Harris, 2020). With these statements, Harris appears to have outlined support for immigrants, “all are welcome”, opposing racism and ableism, “no matter what we look like”, challenges nationalism and nativism, classism “where we come from” and support for the LGBTQIA+ community, “who we love”. Her sentence structure envisions a diverse and united country and, importantly, a diverse electoral coalition. Harris used these descriptors and visions for the United States as a way to connect with her audience, in close alignment with feminine style (Campbell, 1991). She also proactively distinguished the Democratic ticket from the current Trump administration, implicitly critiquing Trump’s divisive form of political. Her use of feminine style allowed to challenge divisiveness without appearing that she was contributing to that division.

Continuing with her engaging speaking style, Harris turned her attention to ways to encourage Biden as a candidate, thus fulfilling part of her role as the Vice-Presidential candidate for Biden.

Confronting Trump

After describing scenes from her youth, Harris turned her attention to the contrasting experiences in the United States that she was seeing at the time of her speech in 2020. “Today...that country feels distant. Donald Trump’s failure of leadership has costs lives and livelihoods” (Harris, 2020). After describing the picturesque vision of America that Harris longs to serve, she then went on to drop a large rock in the glass-

pond image of Americans welcoming and serving one another. Harris went on to speak to parents and teachers regarding the covid-induced education system “if you’re a parent...if you’re a teacher...you know that what we’re doing right now isn’t working.” Harris continues her use of the feminine style by emphasizing experiential knowledge to critique the status quo and Trump’s leadership.

Harris continues with her connections to her audience by calling to racially marginalized groups; “Black, Latino and Indigenous people are suffering and dying disproportionately” (Harris, 2020) and places the blame directly at the feet of the current administration, “right now, we have a president who turns our tragedies into political weapons” (Harris, 2020). One risk of such a direct critique is that it will feel disconnected from Harris’ feminine style. Yet, Harris’ positionality as a biracial women of color allowed her to situate this critique within her experience and as an authentic concern for her community. “We gotta’ do the work” (to end racism) Harris charges the audience, and continued to build on emotional ties to marginalized groups by evoking the names of two of the most famous victims of police brutality that year; Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. Harris states that “we’ve gotta’ do the work to fulfill that promise of equal justice under the law. Because none of us are free...until all of us are free...” quoting both Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Emma Lazarus – both outstanding orators and activists for marginalized groups in the United States. By turning the frustrations that many Americans were feeling with isolation, quarantine, remote work and school, police brutality, challenges with the justice system, toward President Trump as the sole reason for the problems Americans were facing, Harris build an emotional connection with her audience and provided the rationale for why voters should trust her ticket more so than

the current occupant of the White House. With Donald Trump's approval ratings having dropped to a meager 29% (Pew, 2020), many audience members could likely relate to feelings of distrust and anger with the Trump administration.

After Harris's critiques of the Trump administration, Harris then turned her attention toward her encouragement of Biden as the presidential candidate.

Encouraging Biden

Because Harris had critiqued Biden in the primary, it was not enough for her to rebuke Trump's leadership. Harris needed to bolster Biden's image and tend to potential wounds that resulted from the primary. After stating her attacks on the Trump administration, Harris turned her focus to bolstering the Biden ticket. Using her long history with the Biden family, Harris described intimate scenes of Joe Biden preparing breakfast for his two sons when he was a single-father. "This is the leader who wrote the Violence Against Women Act, and enacted the Assault Weapons Ban...implemented the Recovery Act...championed the Affordable Care Act...." Harris cites these as examples of "putting in the work" relating back to her call for all Americans to "put in the work" regarding confronting racism and structural biases and inadequacies in the American justice and social system. While it is not stated explicitly, these examples of Harris encouraging Biden as a candidate worked to justify to her audience why she would participate as his running mate after her harsh criticisms of Biden's past political decisions. Describing Biden as a politician who had "put in the work" she confronts her own criticisms against Biden and encourages him as a candidate.

Conclusion

By using strong narratives to connect with her audience and describe shared experiences, Harris used strong feminine style throughout her speech. By the end of her speech she had created bonds with her audience through her identity work, confronted attacks against Trump, bolstered Biden as a candidate, and encouraged her belief in Biden as a candidate for his work that he had done to make America a better place, and demonstrate reasoning for why she believes he will be a strong President to repair the United States.

Conclusion Chapter

Be careful, there's glass lying shattered on the floor. When Geraldine Ferraro, Sarah Palin and Kamala Harris aimed for the success described by Chimamanda N'gozi Adichie at the beginning of this thesis, they aimed at, cracked, and shattered a glass ceiling that had held women back from taking a seat at the Vice-Presidential table for the entirety of United States history. And, this thesis has demonstrated how they drew upon their rhetorical expertise to help the peruse the second highest office the United States has to offer.

Geraldine Ferraro used her identity as a woman and as a daughter to breach the gendered gap between herself and her voters, weaving feminine style into her rhetoric by highlighting the inspiration that her parents gave her in raising her to be a woman of character, and describing scenes from her youth thus inviting her audience members to join in these memories and reflect upon their similar childhood experiences.

Palin used her identity as a mother, leveraging feminine style by describing details of her family and disclosing personal information about their dynamics and relationships in order to present herself as a trustworthy and relatable politician to the Republican party.

Harris, in turn, enacted her identity as both a mother and a daughter, highlighting stories from her youth and sharing personal experiences with her audience, inviting a bond with those in attendance and working to create a level of rapport in order to encourage voting for the Biden ticket.

Examples of feminine style in their speeches included personal story telling such as when Palin told of her work in office as Governor, connecting through shared experiences such as when Ferraro described different scenes from her youth, and the inductive reasoning provided by Harris in her arguments regarding Donald Trump in her acceptance speech.

In this thesis, I discussed the ways that Ferraro, Palin and Harris enacted their personas in their speeches as a vehicle through feminine style to persuade their audiences. The enactment of these personas fall into two distinctly gendered categories for women: mothers and daughters.

For Ferraro, she used her identity as a daughter and spoke of the persona in her speech – making reference to her childhood, her parents, and repeatedly referring to herself as a daughter. In turn, for Palin, she used her identity as a mother and wife and crafted personae based on these identities in her speech by talking about her husband and children, sharing stories of experiences with them, and talking about how her children motivated her to enter public office. Finally, Harris enacted her identity as both a mother and a daughter through the stories she told of her childhood, reference to her mother, and her children. Each of these candidates' personae fit with gendered expectations for women to highlight their statuses as mothers and/or daughters.

Each of these women had unique backgrounds from one another. Women of different races, different cultural backgrounds, different experiences and roles within government, different families and different historical times. And yet, all three of these women confronted similar challenges that are unique to their sex: the need to perform a gendered version of their identity, resulting in personae that fit the gendered expectations

placed upon them. With these gendered expectations, these three speeches from these three women are connected to one another in a way that acceptance speeches from male vice-presidential candidates are not. Women must first perform complete the same functions that male VP candidates have to (such as celebrating the presidential candidate's candidacy and confronting criticism of the presidential candidate) and second, they had to navigate the gendered expectations that had been placed upon them. These three speeches fall into and create their own distinct genre; acceptance speeches from women vice presidential candidates. These three speeches do, in fact, still fit within the genre of nomination speeches from vice-presidential candidates, but I argue that this does not exclude them from having their own genre specifically. Due to their own similarities in the substance and style of their discourse, the speeches of these women create the genre, nomination speeches given by women running for vice president in the United States. By investigating aspects of these women's identities that they enacted in their speeches, I could analyze specific "trees" within the "forest" of this genre, thus enriching our understanding and adding to the literature on these women candidates and their speeches. Additionally, it is my hope that this thesis operates as a small building block for future opportunities of research on the speeches given by these women and future women running for political office.

This thesis has demonstrated that there is a genre for women vice presidential candidates, and that there is a need to further develop critical understanding of this genre. While previous research has revealed that there are specific roles that women take within feminine style, this thesis has suggested that the roles of attack dog and grateful daughter could also emerge. By examining these possible roles for women, through feminine style,

the understanding of how rhetors can use feminine style continues to deepen. Examining these suggested roles and how feminine style can inform our understanding of them drives the conversation surrounding feminine style to continue in its growth. It is not enough to merely investigate these speeches as they pertain to the genre of vice-presidential candidate speeches, nor is it enough to see how they pertain to the genre of women in politics. Because these women are in the unique position as politicians running for Vice President and as women, their speeches must be examined within the genre of Vice-Presidential speeches given by women.

Opportunities for Future Research

In Kenneth Burke's analogy of the "unending conversation" – also known as the Burkean Parlor – we learn that discourse and conversation around rhetoric will never end. Rather, we are guests in the Burkean parlor where we are free to listen to the arguments being made, defended and rebutted, and once we feel we have listened long enough, we are welcome to interject with our own contribution to the conversation. This thesis is my small contribution in the unending conversation around women running for political office in the United States, the rhetoric given by people running for Vice President, and the gendered roles that are expected of women within our sexist society.

Because this is merely my own contribution, it is not without limitations. Due to my whiteness, I cannot write without having a Euro-centric perspective as a rhetorical critic. This then means that this thesis, as with all studies, has been written with that limitation of this author's perspective overshadowing it. As such, this thesis can only hope to serve as a small block for future rhetors with broader perspectives than my own

to be able to build upon and expand. Therefore, future research on the identities of these women candidates and how they informed the performance of their identities in their speeches is crucial to greater and further understanding of barriers women face in politics. The scholarly conversation should include voices with greater perspective than my own. As society changes and the platforms that women stand upon change, we must continue to push the conversation forward by including the dynamics of race, class, cultural background, religion, sexuality, and age – and how they all inform the identities presented in the rhetoric of women running for office.

This analysis demonstrates just a few of the constraints placed on women political rhetors. Women are expected to change innumerable facets of themselves in order to become more appealing to voters based on the gendered expectations placed upon them. As N’gozi highlighted in her poem “We Should All Be Feminists”, women are taught to shrink themselves from a young age, in order to be smaller. When a woman runs for office, her very presence on the ballot is a rebellion against the expectation that she shrinks herself. As a result, by having conversations about how women are able to resist the societal binds that encourage them to shrink themselves, we are able to encourage a change in the status quo for women in politics. Thus, the work presented here encourages a call to action to confront sexism – especially in politics – and build arguments that challenge us to change situations to fit women, rather than demanding that women change to fit situations. In Karen Anderson’s “Every Woman is the Wrong Woman,” Anderson argues that because American politics are built upon patriarchy and sexism, every woman is working against an entire systemic system put in place to keep out women. In order to challenge and dismantle this system, these arguments must continue

to be developed and posed. With hope and hard work, we can challenge and shift the gendered expectations that shape how women can run for office. If we can craft more inclusive and just expectations, perhaps one day female candidates running for the highest offices will no longer need to develop their own distinct stylistic and substantive responses to the unique marginalizing situations they address.

REFERENCES

- John Adams to Abigail Adams, 19 December 1793,” *Founders Online*, National Archives.
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-09-02-0278>
- Alperin E. & Batalova J. (2018 August, 1). European immigrants in the United States. *Migration Policy*.<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/european-immigrants-united-states-2016>
- Atkinson, R. & Sawyer, K. (1984 September, 13). Ferraro defends her abortion stand, but is criticized by Scranton bishop. *The Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1984/09/13/ferraro-defends-her-abortion-stand-but-is-criticized-by-scranton-bishop/953ea75c-f762-4a2d-9b21-e90c88d9409d/>
- Balz, D. (1984 July, 12). Mondale to name Ferraro running mate today. *The Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1984/07/12/mondale-to-name-ferraro-running-mate-today/946bcae6-061e-4193-b597-6c1f090233c3/>
- Beaty, P. (March 19, 2008) Cool we can believe in, *The New Republic*.
<https://newrepublic.com/article/64307/barack-obama-cool-we-can-believe>
- Beck, K. (2021). *White feminism: from the suffragettes to influencers and who they leave behind*. Atria Books.
- Benoit, W. L., & Airne, D. (2005). A Functional Analysis of American Vice Presidential Debates. *Argumentation & Advocacy*, 41(4), 225–236. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/00028533.2005.11821632>
- Berman, J. (2007) McCain campaign struggling, reduces staff. *ABC News*.
<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=3338856&page=1>
- Bostdorff, D. M. (1991). “Vice-Presidential Comedy and the Traditional Female Role: An Examination of the Rhetorical Characteristics of the Vice Presidency”. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 55(1), 1–27. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/10570319109374368>
- Bristol Palin Biography*, 2014, Biography.com, <https://www.biography.com/personality/bristol-palin>
- Brownseberger, W. (2008) How much energy does the United States import? *WilliamBrownsberger.com* <https://willbrownsberger.com/how-much-energy-does-the-united-states-import/>
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *The Economics Daily*, 60 percent of college graduates born from 1980 to 1984 were married at age 33 at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/60-percent-of-college-graduates-born-from-1980-to-1984-were-married-at-age-33.htm> (visited August 25, 2021).

- Campbell, K. K. (1995). Gender and genre: Loci of invention and contradiction in the earliest speeches by U.S. women. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 81(4), 479–495.
- Carolyn R. Miller. (2015). Genre as social action (1984), Revisited 30 Years Later (2014). *Letras & Letras*, 31(3), 56–72. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.14393/LL63-v31n3a2015-5>
- Carr, G. (March 1, 2020). What Black women want to see in candidates’ policy proposals. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/810873406>
- Causey. M. (1984, September 19). Oaker to pressure senate to act on pay equity. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1984/09/19/oakar-to-pressure-senate-to-act-on-pay-equity/0170805d-315d-4e30-bda8-c895b4e460fb/>
- Chodorow, N. (1978). *The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender*. University of California Press.
- Clifton, D. (2020, August 17). *Trump deploys ‘the angry Black woman’ trope against Kamala Harris*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/trump-deploys-angry-black-woman-trope-against-kamala-harris-n1236975>
- Cooper, M. & Sussman, D. (2008, October 30). *Growing doubts on Palin take a toll, poll finds*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/31/us/politics/31poll.html>
- Cooper, R. (August 4, 2017). Why leftists don’t trust Kamala Harris, Cory Booker, and Deval Patrick. *The Week*. <https://theweek.com/articles/715955/why-leftists-dont-trust-kamala-harris-cory-booker-deval-patrick>
- Cox, P. (2008). *Not worth a warm bucket of spit*. The History News Network. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/53402>
- Demby, G. (October 14, 2020). Let’s talk about Kamala Harris. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/13/923369723/lets-talk-about-kamala-harris>
- Descantis, A. (2020, August 13). *Rewriting history on Harris v. Biden*. National Review. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/08/kamala-harris-criticisms-joe-biden-democrats-media-downplay-conflict/>
- Dow, B. J., & Tonn, M. B. (1993). «Feminine style» and political judgment in the rhetoric of Ann Richards. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 79 (3), 286–302.
- Elder, Laurel. “Why aren’t there more republican women in congress?” *The Washington Post*, August 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/08/19/why-arent-there-more-republican-women-congress/>
- Everbach, T. (2014). “American women never again will be second-class citizens”: Analyzing New York Times coverage of Geraldine Ferraro’s 1984 vice-presidential bid. *Southwestern Mass Communication Journal*, 29(2), 1–30.

- Facts about downs syndrome, 2021, CDC,
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/downsyndrome.html>
- Fallows, J. (1983, November). Immigration: How it's affecting us. *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1983/11/immigration/305928/>
- Gambino, L. (2020, August 13). *'It sends a strong signal': Black voters respond to Kamala Harris' nomination*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/aug/13/kamala-harris-vice-president-reaction-black-voters-activists>
- Gibson, K., & Heyse, A. (2010). "The difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull": Sarah Palin's faux maternal persona and performance of hegemonic masculinity at the 2008 Republican National Convention. *Communication Quarterly*, 58(3), 235–256. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/01463373.2010.503151>
- Goldberg, A., & Thomson, K. (2009) *Sarah Palin on trig: 'I thought god...how in the world would I handle this?'* ABC News, <https://abcnews.go.com/2020/Palin/sarah-palin-trig-raising-syndrome-son-exclusive/story?id=9127544>
- Graham, B. (1981 July, 4). West Germans see indications of growing Anti-Americanism. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/07/04/west-germans-see-indications-of-growing-anti-americanism/8848ac9b-2af2-4349-b990-da409ee551f4/>
- Harp, D., Loke, J., & Bachmann, I. (2010). First impressions of Sarah Palin: Pit bulls, politics, gender performance, and a discursive media (re)contextualization. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 3(3), 291–309. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2010.01072.x>
- History of women governors*, 2021, Rutgers University, <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/history-women-governors>
- Hopkins, Kyle. "Palin tries new tactic to unload hated jet." Anchorage Daily News, 2 Sept. 2008
- Howell, W. G., et al. (2008) The 2008 education next-peg survey of public opinion. *Education Next*. <https://www.educationnext.org/the-2008-education-nextpeg-survey-of-public-opinion/>
- Huebner, A. et al. (2009) Shadowed by war: Building community capacity to support military families. *Journal of Applied Family Studies*.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2008.00548.x>
- Humphrey, H. BrainyQuote.com
https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/hubert_h_humphrey_164043
- Italian Priest to Ferraro. 1984. In Fordham Archives.
https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1164&context=vice_presidential_campaign_correspondence_1984_international

- Jamieson, K. H., & Campbell, K. K. (1982). Rhetorical hybrids: Fusions of generic elements. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 68(2), 146-157. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/00335638209383600>
- Johnson, D. I. (2005). Feminine style in presidential debate discourse, 1960–2000. *Communication Quarterly*, 53(1), 3–20. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/01463370500055814>
- Johnson, L. B. (1960, July 15). *Accepting nomination*. JFK Library. https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKCAMP1960/1033/JFKCAMP1960-1033-008#folder_info
- Kennedy, L. (2020, August 11). *Geraldine Ferraro's 1984 VP nomination was historic, but failed to clinch a win*. History.com <https://www.history.com/news/geraldine-ferraro-vice-presidential-candidate>
- Khalid, A. (June 12, 2020). Pressure grows on Joe Biden to pick a black woman as his running mate. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/12/875000650/pressure-grows-on-joe-biden-to-pick-a-black-woman-as-his-running-mate>
- Kilborn P. (1984 November, 4). The major economic issues. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/11/04/business/the-major-economic-issues.html>
- King, K. R. (2017). Three Waves of Gay Male Athlete Coming Out Narratives. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 103(4), 372–394. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/00335630.2017.1360509>
- Kornblut, Anne. "Plane Not Sold on eBay." The Trail, washingtonpost.com, 5 Sept. 2008
- Kost, K. & Henshaw, S. (2013) U.S. teen pregnancies, births and abortions, 2008: State trends by age, race and ethnicity. *Guttmacher Institute*, 212 (2) 248-111. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.668.9495&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Kumar, A. (August 14, 2020). Kamala Harris's historic run boosts Biden campaign. *The American Bazaar*. <https://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2020/08/14/kamala-harris-historic-run-boosts-biden-campaign-442089/>
- Lopez, G. (August 12, 2020). Kamala Harris's controversial record on criminal justice explained. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/1/23/18184192/kamala-harris-president-campaign-criminal-justice-record>
- Makelky, M. (2008) Pipelines and refined products report. *Industrial Commission of North Dakota*. <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/pipe/publica/rppaper0804.pdf>
- Malik, N. (2020). *Joe Biden's drive for diversity in top political jobs is only an illusion of change*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/07/biden-diversity-top-political-jobs-illusion-change-america>

- Mancini, J. et al. (2018) Community social organization and military families: Theoretical perspectives on transitions, contexts, and resilience. *Journal of Family Theory and Review* (10) 550-565
- Mayer, J. (2021 April, 19). Remembering Walter Mondale. *The New Yorker*.
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/postscript/remembering-walter-mondale>
- McDougall A. & Hayghe H. (1984, March). Monthly Labor Review. *Research Summaries*.
<https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1984/03/rpt3full.pdf>
- Meeks, L. (2012). Is she man enough? Women candidates, executive political offices, and news coverage. *Journal of Communication*, 62(1), 175–193.
- Mondale, W. (2010). *The good fight: A life in liberal politics*. Scribner.
- Moore, B. (2008, September 7). *Sarah Palin's style: The issue at hand*. Los Angeles Times.
<https://www.latimes.com/nation/politics/politicsnow/la-ig-notebook7-2008sep07-story.html>
- Muralidharan, S. (August 14, 2020). Diversity hiring, the Biden way. *Medium.com*
<https://medium.com/@msruthi/diversity-hiring-the-biden-way-8b99b0d9d6c9>
- Newport, F. “Military veterans of all ages tend to be more republican: The political difference amongst younger veterans” *Gallup*, May 25, 2009,
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/118684/military-veterans-ages-tend-republican.aspx>
- Obama, B. H. (2008) Obama’s remarks on Iraq and Afghanistan [speech transcript]. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/15/us/politics/15text-obama.html>
- Obama, B.H. (2008) Obama’s speech in Lansing, Michigan [speech transcript]. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/04/us/politics/04text-obama.html>
- Och, M. & Shames, S. (2018) *The right women: Republican party activists, candidates and legislators*. Praeger.
- Oxford University Press. (2021). Identity. *Oxford English Dictionary*.
<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/identity>
- Oxford University Press. (2021). Persona. *Oxford English Dictionary*.
<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/persona?q=persona>
- Palin, Sarah. *Going Rogue: An American Life*. Toronto: HarperCollins Canada, 2009
- Parry, G. S. J. (1), & Parry, G. T. (2). (n.d.). Gendered politics and presidential image construction: A reassessment of the “Feminine Style.” *Communication Monographs*, 63(4), 337–353. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/03637759609376398>

- Pew (2008) Issues in the 2008 Election: Top issues for 2008. *Pew Research Center*.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2008/08/21/section-3-issues-and-the-2008-election/>
- Pew Research Center. (August, 2020.) *Fact Tank 2020*. Pew Research.org.
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_electronic_sources.html
- Polumbo, B. (2020). *How tokenistic identity politics undercut Kamala Harris's historic achievement*. Medium. <https://medium.com/arc-digital/how-tokenistic-identity-politics-undercut-kamala-harriss-historic-achievement-2cd0ca62dc2b>
- Price, J. "Veterans usually vote strongly republican but that may change this year" *KPBS*, October 29, 2020. <https://www.kpbs.org/news/midday-edition/2020/10/29/veterans-usually-vote-strongly-republican-polls-su>
- Pro-Life Legislation*, 2021, Texas gop, <https://texasgop.org/pro-life-legislation/>
- Rasmussen, S. (2008, November 7). *69% of GOP voters say Palin helped McCain*. Rasmussen Reports.
https://web.archive.org/web/20081223223347/http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/election_2012/69_of_gop_voters_say_palin_helped_mccain
- Rauch, J. & La Raja, R. J. (2017). Re-engineering politicians: How activist groups choose our candidates long before we vote. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/re-engineering-politicians-how-activist-groups-choose-our-politicians-long-before-we-vote/>
- Reese, O. (August 20, 2020). Kamala Harris speech: what was the verdict on how she did? *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2020-53838209>
- Russomanno, J. (2019). Tribalism on Campus: Factions, iGen and the Threat to Free Speech. *Communication Law & Policy*, 24(4), 539–586. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/10811680.2019.1660554>
- Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics. (2021). Facts on women of color in office. Retrieved from <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/fact-sheets-women-color>
- Smith, H. (1984, August 14). *Mondale, in poll, fails to gain lift from convention*. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/08/14/us/mondale-in-poll-fails-to-gain-lift-from-convention.html>
- Staples, V. (July 28, 2018). How the suffrage movement betrayed Black women. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/28/opinion/sunday/suffrage-movement-racism-black-women.html>
- Statista Research Department. (2021). Number of children living with a single mother or a single father in the U.S. from 1970 to 2020. Retrieved from <https://nvcguides.libguides.com/c.php?g=283577&p=1895691>

- Stevens, M. (2020, March 15). *Joe Biden commits to selecting a woman as vice president*. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/15/us/politics/joe-biden-female-vice-president.html>
- Stevens, M. (July 31, 2019). When kamala Harris and joe Biden clashed on bussing and segregation. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/us/politics/kamala-harris-biden-busing.html>
- Stevens, M. (March 15, 2020). Joe Biden commits to selecting a woman as vice president. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/15/us/politics/joe-biden-female-vice-president.html>
- Stevenson, R. (2008, Sept. 1) Sarah Palin reveals 17-year old daughter is pregnant. *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/sep/01/palin.republicans2008>
- Student to Ferraro. 1984. In Fordham Archives.
https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1164&context=vice_presidential_campaign_correspondence_1984_international
- Sullivan, P. A. (n.d.). The 1984 Vice-Presidential Debate: A Case Study of Female and Male Framing in Political Campaigns. *Communication Quarterly*, 37(4), 329–343. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/01463378909385554>
- The White House. (2021). Kamala Harris the vice president. *White House.gov*
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/vice-president-harris/>
- Vigil, T. R. (2014). Feminine Views in the Feminine Style: Convention Speeches by Presidential Nominees' Spouses. *Southern Communication Journal*, 79(4), 327–346. <https://doi-org.libproxy.txstate.edu/10.1080/1041794X.2014.916339>
- Wang, J. (2020). Feminism fights to the forefront: “[Kamala Harris] vice presidential] nomination as a woman of color and a mixed-race woman is very significant--especially when we look back at the history of feminism in this country, which has had a complicated relationship to intersectional issues.’. *USA Today (Magazine)*, 2906, 30.
- Weinraub, B. (1984 August, 2). Mississippi farm topic: Does she bake muffins? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/08/02/us/mississippi-farm-topic-does-she-bake-muffins.html>
- Weinraub, B. (1984 July, 13). Geraldine Ferraro is chosen by Mondale as running mate, first woman on major ticket. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1984/07/13/us/geraldine-ferraro-chosen-mondale-running-mate-first-women-major-ticket.html>
- Westerman, A. (December 30, 2020). In 2020, protests spread across the globe with a similar message: Black lives matter. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2020/12/30/950053607/in-2020-protests-spread-across-the-globe-with-a-similar-message-black-lives-matt>

Zong, J. & Batalova J. (2016 April, 14). Frequently requested statistics on immigrants and immigration in the United States. *Migration Policy*.
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states-2014>