

Choice and Hillary Clinton: Politician, Grandmother, TBD

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On April 17, 2014, philanthropist and former First Daughter Chelsea Clinton announced the pregnancy of her first child during No Ceilings, a Clinton Foundation event. Secretary Hillary Clinton, stood by her daughter as she shared her news with the world (Rucker, 2014). Almost immediately, internet headlines appeared on social media, mainstream newspaper websites and blogs regarding Hillary Clinton's political career: "What Will a Grandchild Mean for Hillary?" (Wolfgang, 2014); "Will Clinton Baby Affect 2016, and Is It Sexist to Ask?" (Kreutz, 2014); "Hillary Clinton: Grandmother-in-Chief?" (Miller, 2014). To be fair, most of the headlines focused on Chelsea Clinton and the new addition to her family, but an alarming number of the articles noted Secretary Clinton and the circulating rumors around her 2016 presidential campaign.

The discourse around Clinton as a grandmother highlights cultural ideas about feminine and masculine roles through recent current events in popular media. Headlines, blogs, and discourse around the newest addition to the Clinton family creates a dichotomy between future political success and being a grandmother. Running for president is waged labor, usually suited for men, and taking a domestic role of grandmother—and stepping down from political campaigns—is feminine labor. Popular media outlets are creating an arbitrary "choice" and Clinton is finding pressure from the patriarchy of capitalist driven media sources to have her political career take a back seat in order to tend to feminine, care-taking roles.

As expressed in interviews with Clinton, she does not personally feel the tension of choosing between feminine and masculine roles, (grand)motherhood and political responsibility are roles that can both be managed simultaneously. However, dominant ideologies about

working women alters the way Clinton negotiates her duties. Christine Amanpour from CNN asks Clinton, “Hard choice, grandmother or the possibility of being the first female President of the United States of America?” Clinton replies, “A lot of grandfathers have done it” (CNN, 2014). This question made light of Clinton’s recent book *Hard Choices*, but at the same time implies that a *choice* needs to be made between the two roles. Clinton’s response to this question highlights that this concept of “choice” is gendered. This particular choice does not apply to men; there is no speculation of the challenges a grandfather might face in balancing an executive role with paternity.

Work Cited

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