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Female Political Campaigns: Just the Right Amount of Femininity

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FEMALE POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS:

JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF FEMININITY

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to understand how female politicians develop their public identities to meet and reject the gender stereotypes society holds of women. The case study looks at Margaret Chase Smith's political career, with a special focus on her 1964 presidential campaign. The research analyzed Smith's career through the newspaper coverage of her in order to understand Smith's choices surrounding her public identity and the media's response. The analysis identified four distinct points of interest that contributed to Smith's public persona: physical appearance, examples of housewifery, dialogue on women's issues, and legislative accomplishments. These factors demonstrate how Smith presented her level of femininity in the public eye. Smith balanced her attempts to appear feminine and in touch with the lives of average housewives with her sharp rhetoric against feminism and gender discrimination. At the same time, she assumed powerful positions in the male-dominated world of politics. This thesis will use Margaret Chase Smith to explore the ways that she developed her public identity to meet societal and gender expectations of women while pushing the boundaries of acceptable female aspirations. These findings compared with contemporary literature on gender stereotypes of women in politics search for what, if any, differences there are in expectations of women running for the presidency versus women running for lower levels of public office. Creating a dialogue around the distinct efforts made by female political candidates to navigate gender stereotypes is the first step in alleviating these challenges to women.

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INTRODUCTION

In the United States, women have been reaching for new heights within politics since earning the right to vote in the early twentieth century, yet the progress has been slow going. In 1947, women composed less than 2% of Congress. In 2019, that number was less than 25%. (Women in Congress, 2020) Women have held almost every office within the federal government, with the exception of the United States presidency and vice-presidency. One reason for this limited progress is that female candidates face unique challenges when it comes to running for public office, specifically with the management of gender stereotypes.

Sen. Smith represents several glass ceiling-breaking achievements for women, which exposed her to many of the challenges women still face in the twenty-first century. Despite the barriers, Sen. Smith served several decades in Congress and ran in the Republican presidential primary in 1964. A contemporary understanding of gender and politics will shed light on the unique challenges female politicians face and how she was able to combat these challenges. Sen. Smith's papers and complete documentation of news coverage over her lifetime will provide the basis for comparison and give insight to the public response to her career. This paper seeks to answer how female politicians conform to and challenge gendered expectations while pursuing political aspirations through the analysis of Margaret Chase Smith's media cover during her presidential run of 1964 with reliance on newspaper coverage from the period.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first step to alleviating the additional challenges faced by women in politics is to understand the careful decisions they make in an attempt to respond to social expectations. Researchers have explored if gender stereotypes influence voters, the unique challenges stereotypes pose for female candidates and politicians, and how women find ways to manage the balance of the societal expectations of women and the expectation of politicians. Female politicians also face the challenge of balancing their public identities with societal expectations of women. Women throughout U.S. history have made efforts to proactively navigate these ideas. Some women choose to appear more feminine, while others attempt a more masculine approach. Other research has sought to understand how gender stereotypes intersect with differences in news coverage, linguistic sexism, the influence of party and incumbency, and campaign design.

The literature review methods involved narrowing down potential sources through a systematic search of peer-reviewed articles. The search used research databases such as Google Scholar and JSTOR. Searches containing key phrases, such as: "female politician" and "gender," "public identity" and "female politicians," "gender" and "politics," and "gender stereotypes" and "politics" narrowed the field of results. The search only included sources that were based in the United States. Follow up advanced searches included material on the significance of female politicians and "incumbency," and "voter cues." The relevant articles' references identified more sources to use.

Gender stereotypes typically fall into two categories: professional competence and personal attributes (A. Carson et al., 2019). Men and women are thought to have high

aptitude in certain career skills and to have particular traits. These traits and abilities that people most closely associated with gender are a product of societal conditioning of how each gender should behave and look. Research has shown that even in cases where voters appeared uninfluenced by the gender of the candidate, the candidates themselves may make choices to avoid negatively impactful stereotypes (Dolan, 2014).

Women face the possibility that voters hold stereotypical views. There are two types of stereotypes. The first is descriptive stereotypes. These stereotypes provide a reason for how a person is acting. For example, a person who views a woman who is expressing a strong emotion, such as sadness, may use the stereotype that women are emotional to rationalize what they are seeing; for example, she is crying because women are emotional. This second type of stereotype can hurt female candidates more, which is prescriptive stereotypes. Prescriptive stereotypes "lead to the expectation, before the actual observation of behaviors and characteristics, that women behave in a stereotype-consistent manner" (Bauer, 2013). As cited in Bauer, the difference between the two stereotypes is that descriptive stereotypes operate as beliefs of what women are, while prescriptive stereotypes define what are acceptable behaviors for women. Given that the traits associated with public office often contrast with the traits associated with women, female candidates often have to act in counter-stereotypical manners. Voters with prescriptive stereotypes will be more turned off to a female candidate, regardless of her experience or platform, because she is not acting in accordance with the gender expectations.

Many studies have sought to identify what behaviors and traits have strong associations with either males or females. Research shows people perceive female

candidates to have stronger associations with kindness, honesty, compassion, and integrity compared to their identical male counterparts (Khan 1996, McDermott 1997). The traits associated with women come in contrast to the expectations of politicians, a position typically held by men, which include being tough and assertive. This demonstrates the potential conflict of female candidates based on general assumptions. The association of women with kindness is the opposite association connected with being a politician.

People associate politicians and other leaders with certain leadership traits. One study published in *Political Research Quarterly*, analyzed the attribution of leadership traits associated with men and women in order to determine if and what gender stereotypes were held by the public. Alexander and Anderson (1993) looked at three pairs of one male and one female running against each other and found that respondents believed women were more competent in domestic issues, such as childcare and welfare, but considered dramatically less able than a man at issues such as military spending. The study also found women were associated with being compassionate 67.3% of the time as compared to only 1% of men, and 29.6% had no association (Alexander and Anderson, 1993). When it came to handling family responsibilities, being honest, and finding compromises, almost half reported having no gender association and the other half associating it with women.

This study also found that beliefs around gender roles may

> predispose a voter to a more or less favorable view of women politicians… those who are traditional in their sex role beliefs simply have a less positive view of women candidates' attributes and may enter a campaign season less favorably inclined toward women candidates. (Alexander and Anderson, 1993)

Another study found that participants of the study who had less favorable views of women would rate the female candidates much lower on the "masculine" items than they rated the male candidates (Rosenwasser et al. 1987). Gender stereotypes become especially significant in low information elections. When people go to vote, they may come across individuals on the ballot that they do not know or have only heard small bits of information about. The information available may only include the person's name, which can often suggest their sex, party, and possibly other demographics or incumbency. In the case that a person only knows a person's gender and party, people use their preconceived ideas to determine more information on a candidate. In these situations, people may rely on their stereotypical ideas of a person based on their conceptions of gender stereotypes.

A series of studies found that, when comparing the policy stances and voting records of legislators, women were more liberal than their male counterparts (Sanbonmatsu, 2009). Sanbonmatsu's study found that voters used political parties as information cues about female candidates. The study concluded that political party assumptions were more beneficial to Democratic women than Republican women. In a study conducted by King and Matland (2003), found that a "hypothetical Republican woman candidate was perceived by Republicans as less conservative than an identical male Republican candidate" (Sanbonmatsu, 2009). This study also found that there is evidence to suggest that female Republicans may have a more difficult time winning in primaries, and they may face harsher treatment by their party's voters than Democrats by theirs (Sanbonmatsu, 2009). Therefore, in low information settings, conservative women

may not appeal to a conservative voter who perceives her to be more liberal, given that she is a woman.

In a low information election study, researchers determined the effect that gender may have on political races. The study included races with men vs. women, women vs. women, and looked at both Republican and Democratic candidates. The study used real election data from 1986 to 1994 House elections as a baseline to compare the experimental data, which had respondents ideologically rate each candidate, with respondents who had contact with the candidates and those who had not. The study found that voters often stereotyped women of both parties as being more liberal than men. This can be very helpful for liberal women, but for conservative women, this presents another challenge. According to the study, the perception of women of both parties is better among liberal voters than they are with conservative when compared to men of the same party (McDermott, 1997). There is a perception that women are more liberal than they may actually be.

Prescriptive stereotypes can hinder the success of female candidates in low information settings before being able to adequately share their platform or qualifications (Bauer, 2013) While the total coverage of candidates varies based on a number of factors, the content of female airtime often will include personal questions that their male counterparts do not face. Women who appear to be too in line with gender stereotypes of women, empathetic, kind, etc., can suffer for not appearing enough like a candidate. In contrast, if they appear counter-stereotypical, they may face criticism for being too outside the stereotypical expectation of women. This pendulum is difficult for female candidates to balance on top of running for office and working as politicians.

When female candidates conform to these expectations, their qualifications or legitimacy might face criticisms (Bauer, 2013). This requires women to walk a fine line that balances societal expectations of them as a woman, while they make their way into male-dominated fields. A common example is if a woman mentions her family too much, then people will question her commitment to the job. Yet, if she does not discuss her children, people question who is taking care of the kids.

There is a perception that men and women receive different amounts of coverage during elections. In an extensive study of state and national elections, news coverage of male and female candidates on local news channels were very similar; however, this does not mean that the content of news coverage is the same for men and women. On average, in local news coverage, women had 25.9 mentions compared to 32.2 mentions for men (Hayes, 2016). The same research team concluded that women did not receive disproportionate attention to their appearance in local newspaper coverage. Studies of different races, such as presidential races may yield different results. However, a 2014 survey of voter impressions of House candidates found that women were more likely to have descriptions that reference gender by the respondents (Hayes, 2016). This suggests the awareness of gender might perpetuate gendered language. In a survey of voter's perception of female candidates' experience, more than half of female respondents and male Democrats agreed with the statement, "women who run for office are subjected to sexist media coverage." Only 38% of male Republicans agreed with the statement. Respondents agreed most on the sentence, "Too much attention is paid to women's appearance when they run for office," with 71% of Democratic women, 63% of Democratic men, 61% of Republican women, and 50% of Republican men agreeing

(Hayes, 2016). The question remains as to why is the perception of media sexism higher than actual data collected from news sources? Reasons for this could include the difference between local and national news coverage, the exclusion of more extreme newspapers, or the studies may neglect other popular sources of news not classified as news sources. For example, political memes now serve a similar purpose to political cartoons and are much more widely spread.

It remains unknown how many of candidates' actions are natural and how many are actions taken in response to stereotypes. A slightly older study conducted in the late 1990s, found the coverage of policy issues in Senate campaign ads to align with trait competency assumptions. Male senators mentioned economic and foreign policy issues more often than female senators, who mentioned social issues and social programs dramatically more often than men (Khan, 1996). Khan (1996) also found in a study of the impact of news coverage on the evaluations of senate campaigns, that "gender differences in news patterns are important and produce distinct images of the candidates."

The focus of many studies is on the female side of gender stereotypes. Another study by Khan (1996) that looked at the impact of sex stereotypes on senate candidates did not find the presence of male stereotypes. However, the results suggested that the stereotypes for women acted in their benefit. The perception of women is that they are more compassionate and honest. While this may increase voter's opinions on the candidates as people, it does not mean that it helps the women as candidates.

Like male candidates, women make deliberate efforts for voters to see them in the best light. Unlike male candidates, this requires women to craft their public image to, in some ways, counter gender stereotypes as well as follow traditional expectations of

women. Gender and appearance play significant roles in the marketing of female politicians and has even been referred to as a political statement itself (Sanghvi et al. 2015). Appearance is another area that leads to assumptions in low information settings. The appearance of a woman, "is used as an indicator of her character flaws and becomes a point of reference for determining whether she is performing an intelligible and acceptable version of gender in the public realm" (Mandziuk, 2008). With the research in *Gender Advertisements,* Erving Goffman explains how human behavior and appearance send cues to audiences about their "social identity, mood, and intent" (Goffman, 1979). Goffman argued that these cues, such as clothing or hair choices are polysemic, meaning that they suggest more to the audience than simply existing.

These silent indicators are especially relevant to female politicians. Men in politics almost exclusively wear a suit and tie, often understood as their "uniform." Women, on the other hand, wear dresses or pants suits, often accompanied by heels. Therefore, female attire is outside the "norm," even while comparably appropriate. As a result, this provides the media with an additional talking point. Female politicians face the challenge of making their appearance "unremarkable" in order to prevent a small faux pas from becoming a major news story (Sanghvi et, al. 2015). The candidate's platform and policy stances receive less coverage when the media focuses on their appearance. A study of Senate candidates found women were much more likely to wear formal attire in their political advertisements (Khan, 1996). This practice was consistent among female candidates who were incumbents and as well as challengers. A similar study found that while male and female candidates were equally likely to talk about policy issues in

campaigns, more paragraphs discussing policy stances were published daily for male candidates for incumbents and challengers alike (Khan, 1996).

It is important to understand the actual impact that gender has on voters, as well as additional factors such as incumbency and prestige of office in order to better understand the complexities of female candidacies. There are still pockets of missing research in this area, despite decades of studies. Several studies have tried to calculate the impact that gender stereotypes have on voter outcomes. A few examples of these studies include Fox and Smith's (1998) and Falk and Keski (2006). Fox and Smith's research discovered female candidates suffered more at the ballot box, but the study was unable to conclusively blame stereotypes. The Falk and Keski (2006) study found during wartime female candidates were less favorable and that people who claim to be unwilling to vote for a female president, may be willing if the woman becomes their political party's nominee. This outcome supports the claim that party loyalties may be stronger than gender loyalty or gender stereotypes. Several studies, like Sigelman and Sigleman (1982) have been unable to find evidence of gender bias in voter outcomes. One factor to take into consideration with these studies is the source of the population sample. The Fox and Smith (1998) research team gave the same survey to two different universities; one in Wyoming and the other in California. The results found that the university in California showed no significant gender bias, while the university in Wyoming did. The disparity may suggest that in some regions, gender has more or less of an impact on voter outcomes. Another consideration to the findings that show gender has no impact on voting outcomes is the lack of exposure these studies give the respondents. In a real campaign, exposure to gender stereotypes or gender cues could impact a voter's decision.

This may not be able to be recreated in simulated studies, where participants are only given descriptions of candidates or are only exposed to a candidate for a short period before making their judgements.

Another study published in *Political Research Quarterly* tested participants' attitudes towards women and attitudes towards real female candidates who were running in 2010. The results of the study found little influence of abstract attitudes, but did find data to suggest that political parties play a role in opinions. Party stereotypes were found to be more significant than gender stereotypes in influencing voter decisions. This study explained the need for further study into gender politics for male candidates in order to develop a complete picture of how candidates navigate the political world. (Dolan, 2014) This research in the field of gender and politics provides a framework to analyze previous campaigns. The knowledge gained about stereotypes facing women, the influence of political party, and how candidates market themselves in the contemporary, can show the unique circumstances of the first women to run for prestigious offices within government, one example of which is Margaret Chase Smith.

METHODS

The majority of the research on Margaret Chase Smith relied on archival research methods within the Margaret Chase Smith Museum and Library's collection. The collection includes scrapbooks, which hold every newspaper article that mentions Sen. Smith, beginning in her earlier years throughout her whole life and is still continuously growing as articles mention her. The articles are organized by date and include local and national coverage as well as public opinion pieces. The collection also includes Smith's personal memos, speeches, letters, and published writings. These sources provide a complex view of who Smith was, or at least presented herself as. There is a limited ability to discern what parts of Sen. Smith's public identity were also part of her private one. However, her personal writings provide an understanding of how she presented herself, and access to newspaper coverage allows access to the perception of Smith in her own time.

The most significant questions coming into this research were (1) What was Smith's relationship with being a woman and femininity (2) In what ways did Smith present feminine and masculine cues and (3) How were these cues presented by the media? These questions required the identification of feminine and masculine cues or traits within Smith's public identity. The analysis of these various cues in relation to each other and the findings within the literature review yielded the areas of focus for the case study.

The four points of interest are (1) Smith's physical appearance, (2) traditional demonstrations of housewifery, (3) dialogue on women's issues and feminism, (4) and

legislative achievements. These four points contribute to the balance of Smith's gender expression. Physical appearance is one of the most obvious ways to demonstrate gender, which Smith used to appear very feminine. The way Smith talked about gender issues demonstrates a way she avoided becoming a spokesperson for solely women's issues, which feeds into her legislative achievements. Smith was able to accomplish a significant amount in Congress, primarily in committees deemed masculine, such as the Armed Forces Committee. Smith's occasional displays of housewifery allowed her to appear less as a senator and more as a typical housewife. These factors are lenses to understand the articles published on Smith. The research sought to understand how these factors fit with each other, and into her larger public personality that was on display.

The archival research primarily focused on documents from her 1964 presidential primary run but also included research into other significant periods within her career. The researcher flagged materials that appeared related to the four points of interest listed above for further analysis during the processes. Within the related news coverage, notes were made of gendered language. Scholars have shown (see Strange, 2011, chapter 10), the ways language can oppress and liberate individuals depending on the way it is used. Language choices within public articles speak volumes about the documentation of women during the mid-twentieth century, which may have been a factor in how women chose to present themselves. It is important to note that contemporary interpretation of language may go beyond the original intent behind the words. However, interpreting the meaning of language can be a reliable method as long as the interpretation fits within the historical context of the words.

CASE STUDY

Background

Margaret Madeline Chase was born on December 14th, 1897 in Skowhegan, Maine, where she would maintain residency her whole life. After completing high school, she worked a variety of jobs, such as a phone operator and the circulation manager of the Independent Reporter, a local weekly newspaper owned by Clyde Smith. Despite their twenty-one year age gap, Margaret and Clyde married in 1930. In 1936, Clyde won his election for the United States House of Representatives. Margaret served as his personal assistant and traveled between Skowhegan and Washington D.C. with him. During this time, Margaret became well acquainted with the duties and responsibilities of life as a congressperson, which would benefit her greatly in the years to come. Her job as Clyde's secretary essentially served as an apprenticeship for her future as a legislator herself. She also founded and served in the local Business and Professional Women's Club, among other political organizations for women. This experience provided her with strong networking skills and community for her future career in politics. Ten years into their marriage, Clyde suffered a heart attack and later died. Upon his death bed, Clyde had a letter written, likely by Margaret herself, which insisted that Margaret finish his term in the House of Representatives. Margaret won the special election and became the first woman from Maine to serve as a United States Representative. A few months later, she was re-elected for another term. With her election to the United States Senate in 1949, Margaret Chase Smith became the first woman from Maine to serve in the Senate, and the first woman ever to serve in both chambers of Congress.

During her time in Congress Smith served on a number of committees, including the House Naval Affairs (1944-1947) and Armed Service Committees (1947-1949), as well as the Senate Armed Service Committee and subcommittees (1958-1972), the Senate Aeronautical and Space Committee (1961-1972), and the Appropriations Committee (1953-1972). She was also the first woman to serve as the Chair of the Senate Republican Conference. Other notable moments of Sen. Smith's career includes her decision to speak out against fellow Senator Joseph McCarthy, known for his aggressive smear tactics within the anti-communist movement of the 1950s, known as McCarthyism, in her speech called the Declaration of Conscience, as well as her part in legislation that gave women serving in the armed services permanent status. In 1964, Sen. Smith became the first woman of a major political party to run for president and to have her name placed in nomination at the party's convention. While she ultimately lost, she earned almost 25 percent in the Illinois Republican primary despite refusing campaign donations of any kind. Sen. Smith served in the Senate until eventually losing her seat in 1972. Despite her loss, Sen. Smith held the record for the longest-serving female senator for decades to come. Sen. Smith lived until age 97, before passing away in 1995, after serving in Congress for over three decades and becoming an inspiration for many future female leaders.

Sen. Smith was first elected in a special election to the House of Representatives when fewer than ten women were serving in either body of Congress, many of whom had succeeded their husbands' positions through appointments (Women in Congress). It was quite common for women to succeed their husband's seats. There have been 57 women to ever serve in the Senate, 18 were appointed, and five won a special election. A third of

the 18 appointments happened by 1954. The first woman appointed to fill her husband's seat in the Senate was Hattie Caraway in 1931, only nine years before Smith was elected to fill her husband's seat in the House of Representatives. When Smith was elected to the Senate in 1949, she became the first woman to do so without having previously been appointed to fill a male vacancy in the chamber. (Women in Congress)

In Smith's first election after the special election to take over Clyde's seat, Smith's campaign advertisements boasted that people could have confidence in her ability, experience, and sound judgement. In her subsequent reelection advertisements, Smith listed her congressional achievements to demonstrate competence to voters. Women were still operating primarily in the home or religious and community events, so it was significant to see a woman serving in national politics. Of the six female senators before Smith, half had college degrees. Her image of commitment to honesty and integrity proved successful. Smith frequently won campaigns by significant margins, which demonstrates her ability to demonstrate competence and sincerity to voters.

As a woman in the mid-1900s, society expected that Margaret Chase Smith might work until she married, then have children, and take care of duties within the home. According to a Vital Statistics of the United States report, 66% of women over the age of 14 were married in 1950. The birth rate at the time showed that 68% of women ages 14 to 44 had at least three children, 42% had four children, and 20% had five children. Instead of following this path, Smith launched her political career as a childless widow. To still seem relatable to other women, she still needed to display acts of femininity and housewifery. Yet she could not appear too feminine as it may undermine herself as a politician. While Smith would have publicly disagreed, her gender was a tool that could

allow Smith to appear more or less feminine depending on what was needed, which was to look and act like a woman but work like a man. As a result, Smith balanced her public persona by appearing feminine, but speaking against feminine privilege and rejecting the idea of women's issues. At the same time, she conquered her role in the male-dominated Congress.

Smith got her start before the second wave of feminism swept over the United States. The first wave of feminism focused around the suffrage movement, to ensure political equality such as voting rights. In contrast, the second wave dealt with a broader array of gender issues, such as gender discrimination, reproductive rights, and sexuality, with published works like *The Second Sex* and *The Feminine Mystique*. The beginning of this movement started in the 1960s and continued until the 1980s. Smith's unwillingness to vocalize support for feminist issues likely contributed to the Maine feminist's movement efforts to remove her from office in 1972. While women had always been a strong part of her supporter basis, "a new generation worked actively to discredit her" (Sherman, 2000) Smith later acknowledged this in a letter in which she said, "During my time women had to achieve on their own individual effort but for the past few years they have had women's liberation organizations pressuring for them like NOW, which ironically worked to defeat me in 1972" (Letter to John Griffith). The 1972 election was the first and only time Smith lost a political election. However, if Smith acknowledged the discrimination she faced as a female senator, she would risk being seen more for her gender than for her capabilities with her mostly male fellow legislators. She also could have become a beacon for gender issues, which Smith did not want. Smith's committee positions dealt with the armed forces and the space program, neither of which were

significant areas where she could address major gender issues. Smith was a champion for women to pursue careers in whatever they were good at, but she wanted women to be seen for their capabilities and not simply as their sex. As a result, Smith minimized her conversations around how being a female impacted her role as a legislator. She also refuted claims that she took any privileges from her gender. This was all a way to distance herself from becoming the "female senator."

Nevertheless, Smith very quickly became known as "that female senator from Maine," upon announcing her candidacy for president. Smith's presidential candidacy came at a time when the Republican party was becoming increasingly conservative. Her primary competitors in the Republican primary were Barry Goldwater and Nelson Rockefeller, of whom she had 12 and 18-year seniority respectively in Federal politics. She declared herself an alternative that was left of Goldwater and right of Rockefeller. Conservatives wanted the Republican party to adopt their ideologies, but for years had not had a viable candidate that could unite the party. The movement selected Goldwater to be their spokesperson, and this was a key reason for his success in gaining the Republican nomination (Brewer and Stonecash, 2009). Smith's moderate stance earned her support from individuals who wanted a less conservative candidate but lacked the money and support of a movement.

Smith announced that she ran for president after receiving an abundance of letters urging her candidacy. With her champions, also came many people who questioned Smith's abilities, specifically for the office of the presidency. Smith had an impressive record in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Yet, people began to suggest the vice presidency as a more realistic goal even before Smith's official announcement. A

housewife in Cleveland stated in an article titled, *Sen. Smith -- No chance, Say Cleveland Gals*, "I can see her possibly as vice president, but not as president" (Royse, 1963) Another article published in the *Lauderdale News* polled local community members and reported, "Women are a force in a community but aren't ready to grab at the presidential reigns or support a woman who does"(Hoffstetter, 1963). Many people shared similar sentiments in their newspapers throughout the campaign.

A story on the Senator written by Claire Boothe Luce, who also served in the House of Representatives and became a U.S. Ambassador in Italy and Brazil, questioned how women would react to Margaret Chase Smith, given her untraditional lifestyle. She explained, "Senator Smith can project an admirable personal image but, unfortunately widowed and childless, she cannot project that "family" image which tradition associates with the aspirant to the White House, and which offers the main appeal to many women voters in the national election"(Luce, 1963). The desire for a first family, rather than solely a president, is one that impacts everyone running for office, regardless of gender. However, this idea could provide further reason for Smith's actions to appear like an average housewife in the ways that she could.

In an interview, near the end of Smith's life, she reflected on her run for presidency stating, "Women were and are seen as stern moralists and people were not ready for that in a President in 1964, nor in 1993" (*Never Underestimate*, 1993). While running, Smith had called her own presidential campaign, "a test of how well an individual can do in running for major office with no organization, no money and no time to spend campaigning" (Bill Lockwood, 1964). Regardless of Smith's rhetoric that attempted to deny that there were double standards for men and women within Congress,

her actions and occasional words demonstrate that she was aware of them and made attempts to proactively avoid further problems. In a letter to a young constituent named Alison Wilby, Smith said that even if there were "there were any instances of discrimination, I chose to ignore them" (Letter to Alison Wilby, 1981). Margaret Chase Smith worked at balancing gender expectations and stereotypes by embodying femininity when possible, removing herself from language that demanded more of a change for women's rights in order to have the respect and freedom as a competent civil servant.

Physical Appearance

When Sen. Smith announced her run for president in January 1964, it prompted many newspapers across the United States to write about her. Articles often referenced Smith's gender and appearance through emphasizing her gender with phrases like "lady senator" or explicit descriptions of the senator's attire, hair, or age. In 147 articles published in January 1964, there were over 90 instances of articles highlighting Sen. Smith's physical appearance, her age, and emphasis on her gender with key phrases like, "white-haired senator," "lady senator," and referring to her actions, "[as] woman-like" or "as women do." Another common instance was a play on the traditional phrase, "tossing a hat into the ring," frequently altered to emphasize her gender by saying Sen. Smith "tossed her bonnet into the ring." While these small word choices may not initially appear to be important or carry any intentional sexism meant to undercut women, it demonstrates the subtle indicators that Sen. Smith was a woman in a man's position. Sen. Smith even addressed how often articles written about her mentioned her age in an interview on the Radio Press International Panel Program named "From the People." She

uncharacteristically compared her coverage to that of men, stating, “Each story starts out, ‘the 66-year-old senator from Maine. I don’t know I ever see them write about men that way. I wonder the age of men” (Clarkson, 1964). In polls taken later in the campaign, Smith had the title “Mrs.” in front of her surname, while her opponents did not have a gender identifier. This labeling once again demonstrates the media’s roles in emphasizing Sen. Smith’s gender.

Often, even in articles attempting to praise the Senator, they would include descriptions of her appearance or personality. An example of this comes from a feature of Smith in a newspaper segment, “As Starnes Sees It,” written by a journalist named Richard Starnes, in November of 1963. In the article, Starnes writes, “The lady senator would attract numerous women voters, presumptively, and she could also win a lot of male votes. She is tiny, (five feet four inches tall), she dresses smartly, she has carefully groomed silver hair, and she is altogether a refreshing change from the hog-jowled throttle-bottoms who generally run for Vice President” (Starnes, 1963). Starnes’ statement assumes that not only women are supportive of her, but given her appearance, she is a good alternative to the less attractive male candidates. Starnes assumed that Smith’s goal was the vice presidency, as if the presidency was too out of reach to consider. The article concludes, “... that little woman packs quite a wallop.”

As another article put it, “Mrs. Smith is no tub-thumping latter-day suffragette; rather she is a United States Senator (and a capable one) with more than twenty years experience in Congress … She would be not just a woman candidate, but a woman candidate with credentials” (*Enter Margaret Chase Smith*, 1963) This is an important quote that demonstrates the duality for some individuals. Smith is either an opinionated

feminist, or she is a capable United States Senator. It was critically important for Smith to maintain her distance to the women's movement or from appearing to focus on women-specific issues. As she gained more years of experience in politics, proving her competence was an easier task because she had her record to stand behind. Yet, had she decided to be more vocal on issues regarding women, than newspapers may have been less friendly toward her when covering the presidential primary.

In an article published in AP Newsfeature, the author calls attention to how Smith's colleagues in the Senate praise her work ethic (Arne, 1954). However, the article went on to describe her unique abilities as a woman. The article wrote Smith could exert her femininity and "manage to be the center of attention of an admiring circle of men most of the day, get her name in numerous headlines and become known as 'glamorous' instead of hardworking and intelligent." Ironically, the article also refers to the senator as "slim," "attractive," and made direct comments about the style of her hair.

Many people who worked with Smith often praised her work ethic. President Kennedy once said, "I think if I were a Republican candidate, I would not look forward to campaigning against Margaret Chase Smith in New Hampshire or, as a possible candidate for president. I think she is very formidable if that is an appropriate word to use about a very fine lady. She is very formidable as a political figure." (Sherman, 2000, p. 181) Expressed shortly before his death, Kennedy's words were widely quoted during her presidential race. Kennedy reinforced the idea that being formidable and being a fine lady were not something that mixed. Had Smith won the primary, she would have been competing against Kennedy for the United States presidency. While the quote was meant to be a compliment at the time, it also demonstrates the clear divide of desirable

leadership qualities and the qualities of "fine" women. It is an example of the respect that Smith was gaining during her time in Washington while maintaining her appearance as a 'lady.' Only a short time later, Russian premier Nikita Khrushchev called Smith "a warmonger behind a rose" and possessing "all records of savagery" for her hard stance during the Cold War (Stuart, 1963). Smith never received similar descriptions from fellow members of Congress.

Sen. Smith often appeared in professional attire. While Smith rarely spoke on her own about her clothing choices, the newspapers of the time would frequently discuss it. As a woman growing up in the early twentieth century, Smith exclusively wore dresses. She continued this practice through her entire life. In addition to her dresses, she often wore a set of pearls. The most notable feature was her stark white hair and fresh red rose attached to the front of her dress. The red rose became iconic to Smith's appearance. After the death of President Kennedy, Smith brought an additional rose to the floor that day and placed a rose on his former desk as tribute (John, 1964).

Sen. Smith elected to still wear her dress and heels even while campaigning in New Hampshire in negative thirty-degree weather. An article extensively documented Smith's attire on the campaign trail recorded, "As she traveled southward, Mrs. Smith swapped out her snowshoes for a pair of pretty three-inch spike heel pumps. She was usually wearing a simple, size ten black or navy blue sheath dress under her three quarters length beaver coat" (Gibson, 1964). Smith once did a feature in a fashion magazine, where she discussed at length her fashion choices. In the article, Smith stated that she preferred to wear dresses with a jacket with pockets in order to limit the need for a purse. The Senator reflected that she had been partial to blues during the day and red in

the evening but had recently expanded into wearing other colors such as gray, green, and brown. Regardless of the weather, Sen. Smith would wear heels, nylons, and a dress at all times. This habit even continued up until her passing in 1995. Her refusal to wear pants was likely a product of fashions during her childhood and early adult years. However, it still serves to demonstrate how Smith was able to project an image of femininity through her attire.

In February of 1964, Smith appeared in a magazine feature titled, *Not Well-Dressed Without a Hat? The Ladies Disagree*. The article interviewed four women on their opinion of head accessories. In the article, Smith said, "I learned early in my career that hats take attention away from what you have to say, especially at a men's group. I prefer not to wear a hat if the occasion does not formally require it" (Hanes, 1964) Instead, she stated she usually carried her hats, rather than wear them. This is an interesting quote because Smith demonstrates that she is aware that her appearance could take the attention away from her, yet when she announced her presidential candidacy she embraced the female spin on the classic phrase, "tossing a hat into the ring." Newspapers frequently used the phrase "tossing her bonnet" to describe Smith's entrance into the presidential primary (see *Into The Ring,* 1964).

Image 1: Presidential Bonnet

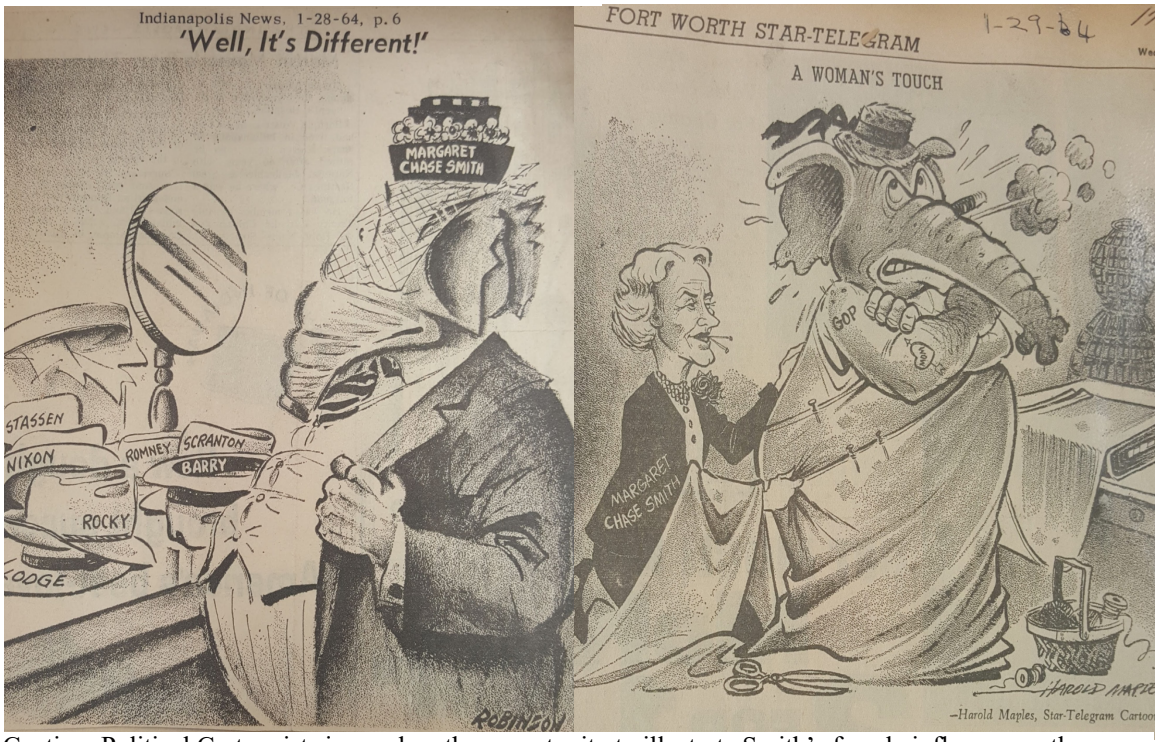
Caption: This bonnet was given to Smith upon her announcement for president. Image courtesy of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.

Smith once appeared in the magazine *HairDo*. The article discussed the hairstyles of eight women within the political realm, which also included figures such as the First Lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson. The article states, "A woman can be as good a president as a man, feels Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, a serious contender for her party's nomination. Senator Smith keeps her striking white hair in a gentle curved do that always looks neat and natural" (HairDo, 1964) The coverage of Smith's hairstyle is a rare case where the attention is meant to be on the senator's looks, but her political campaign is not neglected. The descriptions of the other women, many of whom were male politicians' wives, only included a single line about their hairstyle, and not anything about their ambitions or accomplishments as with Smith.

Smith publicly stated that she "learned long ago it is not wise for any woman to pass judgment upon the clothes, style, personality and look of another woman" (Henshaw, 1964). Despite having learned this lesson herself, many of those who wrote about Smith did not share the same feelings. Newspapers and articles often discussed her feminine appearance, which sent subtle messages that she was different from other

senators. When Smith announced her presidency, many of the political cartoons used female attire as a way to bring attention to Smith's gender. One way to show the Republican party's disapproval of a woman president was through caricatures of the Republican elephant feeling uncomfortable or angry in female clothes; reinforcing the idea that a female president was abnormal.

Image 2: Political Cartoons



Caption: Political Cartoonists jumped on the opportunity to illustrate Smith's female influence on the Republican elephant and the political race. Image courtesy of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.

Housewifery

Sen. Smith never remarried nor had any children of her own, uncommon for a woman during this time. Sen. Smith discovered other ways to fulfill the idealized societal image of a woman by displaying a traditional domestic side. She often posed for professional photographs by appearing to do domestic and or feminine tasks, such as making a bed, arranging a fruit bowl, and even combing her hair. Smith willingly posed for these shots. These images relay subtle messages that reinforce gender stereotypes associated with women, especially at this time. Smith used this technique as far back as her first election, as she posed doing housework for a news article published by the *Portland Sunday Telegram* and the *Sunday Press Herald*. The article published on May 19th, 1940, showed an image of her in a garden, ironing, taking a phone call, and staring at a picture of her late husband. The article stated, "Mrs. Margaret Chase Smith shows herself to be a typical present-day woman… Below at the left [image of her ironing], we see her as the attractive housewife not "above" the daily tasks that confront every-day living" (Maine's First Woman, 1940).

Image 3: Maine's First Woman in Major Political Race

Caption: Smith posed in her garden, looking at her late husband, ironing, and taking a phone call in 1940. Image courtesy of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.

Smith posed doing housework later on in her career to reinforce her connection to typical housework. A month after announcing her bid for the presidency, Smith appeared in an article published by the *Evening Express*. The article features several pictures of the senator, from high school to taking her oath as a representative, as well as an image of

Image 2

her making her bed. The caption said: “Even senators cannot escape domestic chores: here she straightens out the bedroom of her apartment in Silver Spring, Md.”

Smith was also photographed occasionally with children. While there is nothing to suggest that these photographs were inauthentic, they do present Smith as a mothering figure. With individuals like Claire Boothe Luce, who questioned Smith’s ability to project family values without a husband or children, images such as this suggest otherwise. Despite Smith not having any children of her own, she is still able to project a caregiver presence when with children. On the campaign trail, Smith was once photographed with small children whose parents brought them along to the rally. Smith likely did not have pictures taken with children as a specific act to portray femininity and feminine values. Yet, it is still significant to address as it did contribute to the image that the public saw of Smith. Often modern politicians, especially presidential candidates, hold babies and interact with children for photographs, so it would not be inconceivable that Smith chose to have herself photographed with children to influence her public persona as a family person.

Image 4: Bipartisanship

Margaret Chase Smith gave James Valeo, the three-year-old son of Secretary of State Majority, Francis R. Valeo, a “dollar for candy.” Image courtesy of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.

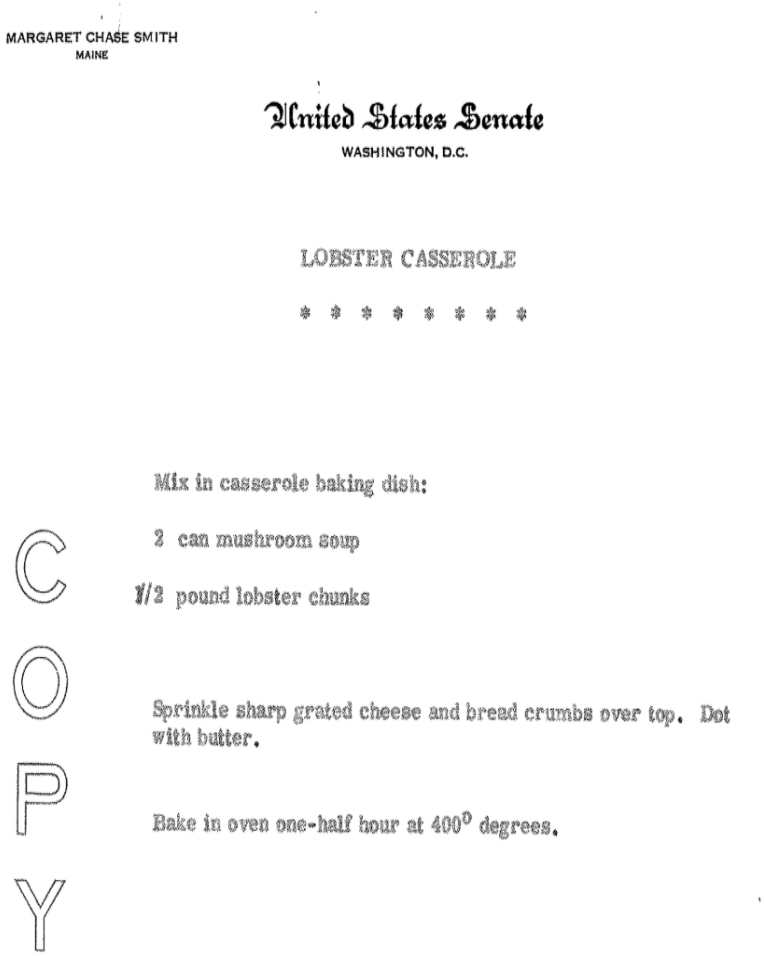
Another method that Sen. Smith used to appear like the average woman was through the use and sharing of recipes. Recipes tell not only about the owner's life but also about the lives of women more broadly (Tye, 2010). The recipes show what ingredients were available, an estimated number of servings, and what role the food filled. Given her role as a United States senator and the fact she lived alone, it is hard to imagine Smith would have had the time or reason to cook large or elaborate meals. Smith herself shared that she preferred simple meals. The meals she would have been cooking would have been only served when she was hosting at her home or for her colleagues in Washington D.C. According to Marjorie DeVault, a scholar of sociology and women's studies, "feeding work has become one of the primary ways that women 'do' gender" (Tye, 2014). The act of preparing and serving food is deeply rooted in traditional gender roles. Therefore, Smith's decision to showcase her recipes clearly demonstrates her gender as well.

Smith became known for sharing recipes with constituents. Smith used her Senate stationery to print the recipes for those seeking them. These requests often came from individuals looking to assemble fundraiser cookbooks, or simply from a curious constituent who wanted Smith's take on a recipe. Interestingly, many of her recipes printed on her senate papers did not appear in her personal collection of recipes. Perhaps this was due to Smith knowing the recipes by heart or because the recipes were cherry-picked to give out to constituents. Some recipes may have been selected because they were popular dishes of the time or because they included prominent exports of Maine. Many of Smith's recipes included Maine staples such as lobster, baked beans, and blueberries. One constituent wrote to William "Bill" Lewis, Smith's personal assistant,

asking, “does [Smith] have a favorite “Maine” menu when she entertains in Washington?” (Letter to William Lewis, 1972). This constituent wanted to include a recipe for a fundraiser cookbook and correctly assumed that Smith entertained her colleagues in Washington. Smith replied when she served guests, she prepared a full spread that included “home-baked beans, homemade brown bread, hot rolls, mixed salad, angel cake, ice cream and coffee” (Letter to Mrs. Gross, 1972).

In her collection of ready-to-send recipes, there were also more widely popular dishes such as casseroles. Smith had recipes for beef mushroom casserole and chicken casserole printed on her Senate stationery. These recipes had few ingredients and relied on the usage of canned items, like cream of mushroom and cream of chicken soups. The casserole dishes were of the most realistic daily food a busy woman like Smith may have made. Casserole dishes became a popular trend in the 1950s, especially for working women. Women who were becoming more involved with their community needed a “no-nonsense, practical way” to feed their families (Weiss, 2001). The results of these quick but enjoyable meals was that women could appear adept at cooking and provide their family with filling meals without the hassle of being tied to the kitchen for a long time. While the casserole dishes were not among the most requested recipes from Smith’s collection, they were another example of Smith appearing relatable to female constituents. The casserole recipes could have been a method to appease potential voters by appearing to embrace traditional values; even though Smith was a senator, she still made time to tend to womanly duties. Sen. Smith’s repeated attempts to present herself like other women of her time are an attempt to properly mold her public identity to fit traditional gender roles of women.

Image 5: Lobster Casserole Recipe



MARGARET CHASE SMITH
MAINE

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, D.C.

LOBSTER CASSEROLE

* * * * * * * *

Mix in casserole baking dish:

2 can mushroom soup

1/2 pound lobster chunks

Sprinkle sharp grated cheese and bread crumbs over top. Dot with butter.

Bake in oven one-half hour at 400° degrees.

Caption: Lobster casserole is the perfect combination of showcasing Maine pride and quick and easy meals for busy housewives. Image courtesy of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.

Dialogue on Women

Margaret Chase Smith has often been regarded as a trailblazer for women. Despite this, Sen. Smith rejected the label feminist in her time in order to prevent herself from becoming the "woman's candidate." She often shared that there were no such thing as women's issues; rather, there were only human issues. This was Smith's attempt to remove gender from the discussion. Smith did not want to be seen as the female senator who only fought to relieve the problems of women, but rather helped her whole constituency. She also was quick to refute any claims that female senators faced any unique challenges or receive any special privileges. Whenever asked anything around this issue, she would quickly refute and pivot the conversation, even when writing with young female constituents. Once in correspondence with a young woman who wrote to Sen. Smith about the challenges of being a woman in politics, Sen Smith adamantly denied any unique struggles for women. She continued to state that women should refrain from taking any advantages from being a woman. In the letter, she wrote, "The woman's role in the American society is not different from that of a man's if she is willing to be accepted as an equal and not demand or accept feminine privileges" (Letter to Alice, 1967). Whenever the senator received letters about the unique struggles of women in politics, she would typically direct them to her speech *The Challenge To Women*, in which she states, "a woman's proper place is everywhere." Therefore, Smith argued that there was nothing unusual about a woman taking a role, however, women should choose roles matching their skills.

She often expressed that she did not take any special treatment as a woman, nor did she receive any worse treatment. The newspapers echoed this sentiment. The

Lewiston Daily Sun wrote in advance of her presidential announcement that throughout her time as a legislator she, "has not sought nor accepted favors because of her sex. Rather she has been outspoken and fighting congressmen and senators battling toe to toe with the best on the masculine side" (see *Testing Sen. Smith's Strength*, 1963). Smith shared on several occasions and even in her correspondence with constituents that she refused to take any special favors on account of being a woman. Therefore, it is likely that this statement links directly to Smith's narrative about her own behavior.

In some instances, Smith did speak to women and the unique role they play. In a speech called "Women's Progress" at an event hosted by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Smith stated that women were the "governors of the home." She went on to say, "The dearth of women in state, national and international roles stem from the women's lack of will for public roles. They cannot become leaders of the world until they have become leaders within their own nation and community" (Smith, 1949). Smith was particularly favorable to the WCTU, calling them the "foremost soldiers in our army of moral force." The senator believed that moral force, championed by women, would help bring about world peace.

In a letter to a high school student in 1980, Smith reveals that her greatest obstacle "with respect to my service … especially in getting elected was -- women" (Letter to John, 1980). She continued by citing of example such as the women who helped circulate the smear campaign against her in 1948, the Dean of Women at Colby College who had told the Girls State to oppose her, Maine NOW who had said she "represented all that the Women's liberation movement wanted to eliminate" and the all-woman board of Voter Registration who tried to have her removed from voting in Skowhegan in 1974. Smith

appeared to become more vocal about her treatment in Congress after she left office. She had once shared in a letter with someone from California, that she "refrained from complaining about any prejudices against women in public office because I have felt that having sought public office it was not becoming for me to complain" (Letter to Dorothea, 1967) This particular quote demonstrates how Smith felt it unfair to complain, given her choice to enter politics. Smith would likely have faced a backlash from any comments made about her particular circumstances.

Years later, Smith reflected on her treatment by the feminists of Maine:

> Here I was, a woman with this background and this record - I cosponsored ERA throughout my Senate tenure, stopped Everett Dirksen from knocking the word "sex" out of the Civil Rights bill, got women full regular status in the Armed Services, and championed many women causes in Congress - and they said I didn't do anything. NOW was calling for a male candidate to replace me while at the same time calling for more women in political office. They didn't like me because I would not join them, fight with them. But I could not have gotten elected if I did those things. Women just don't understand the political reality. (Sherman, 2000)

In Smith's eyes, it was not possible for her to openly team up with feminists, especially given the actions of "radical feminists." Yet, she believed that she had accomplished much for women, given her power as a single senator. Smith was angry with her treatment by the movement, because she believed that she had championed women in the way that she could and that was accessible to her. Still, it was not enough because she would not publicly declare herself a feminist.

Legislative Accomplishments

Many of Sen. Smith's actions outside the legislature demonstrated her femininity and stance on gender issues, yet her actions within the legislature proved her prowess within a masculine territory. In addition to being the first woman to serve in both houses

of Congress, the first woman to run for president of a major political party, and the first woman to head the Republican National Convention, Smith also served on the House Naval Affairs Committee and House Armed Services Committee, before going to the Senate and eventually joining the Senate Armed Services Committee and Appropriations Committee; making her the first woman ever to do so. Smith recalled that while in the House of Representatives, her goal was the Naval Affairs Committee. To accomplish her goal, Smith asked for Appropriations knowing she would not get it, and instead was assigned to Naval Affairs (Women of Congress, 1996). She had strong foreign policy stances as well as national defense. Smith first expressed her belief in military preparedness while working as Clyde's secretary, and maintained that belief throughout her career. The presence of Bath Iron Works in Maine also made it important for Smith to be on the Naval Affairs Committee. During Smith's presidential campaign, her formal position on national defense supported a cut to military spending without sacrificing military prowess. She also believed strongly in the growing technological advances in military technology. While Smith believed missiles could eventually surpass the need for individuals, she realized technology would not reach that point until well into the future, so she emphasized the importance of hybrid approaches with manned bombers and missiles.

Throughout Smith's tenure in Congress, the United States faced concerns about the rise of nuclear power and the spread of communism, making her position as the only female to sit on many of the defense committees more impressive. Smith was adamant about listening and learning all that she could before making a vote. Despite only having a high school diploma, Smith kept herself educated and received some assistance from

her longtime assistant Bill Lewis. On Smith's world tour from 1954-1955, she became the first U.S. Senator invited to Moscow since 1930 (Vallin, 1998). Her first-hand experience around the world and position on defense committees gave her additional power in regard to the United States foreign policy.

While in the House of Representatives, Smith was given the title lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserves after championing a new department for the Air Force (Vallin, 1998). During this time, Smith also worked to pass a bill called Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services (WAVES), which created a branch within the United States Navy for female servicemen to enlist with full-time status that allotted them with the same benefits of male servicemen. Prior to this bill, women were only able to serve as nurses. Smith became known as the Mother of WAVES, thanks to Smith's effort in passing the bill. Passing the WAVES bill was a significant accomplishment in Smith's career. Despite her rhetoric on not fighting for women's issues, she was the one to introduce and fight for this particular legislation.

Image 3: Appropriation Committee

Caption: Smith is easily found in this photograph of the Appropriation Committee thanks to her blue jacket and red rose. Imagae courtesy of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.

One of Smith's most notable moments within the legislature was her Declaration of Conscience speech. On June 1, 1950, only a year and a half into her first term in the Senate, Smith criticized the anti-communist smear campaigns led by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Although she never addressed him by name, the speech clearly targeted McCarthyism. Smith declared that individuals had the right to protest and to express their beliefs, even if unpopular. Furthermore, Smith stated, "The nation sorely needs a Republican victory. But I do not want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny- Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear (Smith, 1950)." Smith displayed immense courage in being the first person to directly challenge McCarthy, and for that she suffered the political consequences. McCarthy had Smith removed from her position on important committees and unsuccessfully supported a challenger to her seat in 1954. Smith later claimed in her presidential campaign announcement that a "longtime politician had stated that her Declaration speech, 'would have made Margaret Chase Smith the next president if she were a man" (Cheshire, 1964). Smith's campaign faced a lot of normal challenges like finances, but gender was an additional weight that she had to carry throughout the race. Smith had to prove her ability to handle the position as a woman before anyone wanted to hear about her record or ideas for when in office.

DISCUSSION

Smith characterized her “forward-looking” campaign as “pioneering the way for a woman of the future - to make her more acceptable - to make the way easier - for her to be elected President of the United States” (Sherman, 2000). Smith knew the chances of her securing the Republican nomination was low, but her campaign was more significant than just her. Smith’s campaign laid the groundwork for many future women to come. When Smith entered the national spotlight during her presidential campaign, the newspapers jumped to begin writing about her. At the time written, many of these articles would not have been considered sexist or thought to contain sexist language. However, the use of contemporary research of gender stereotypes, sheds light on the potential impact of word choice. The focus of many articles, both positive and negative, centered around Smith being a woman. Articles in support of Smith cheered that she would be the first female president, while those critical of her questioned her capacity as a woman to fulfill the role. The constant reminder of gender likely contributed to the narrative that being a woman and being president do not normally mix. However, Smith was hopeful that women would eventually be accepted in the role.

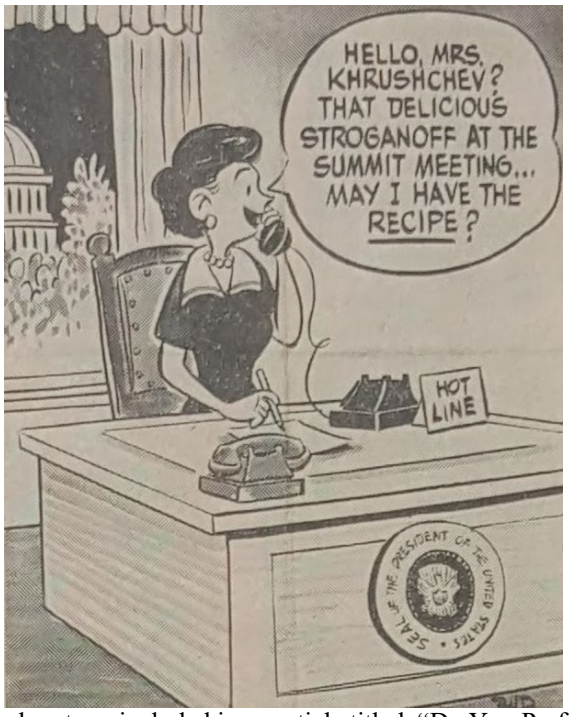
Margaret Chase Smith knew her actions were groundbreaking for her time. She had become a well-respected legislator. She had to follow traditional expectations, maybe partially for herself, but also for her audience of constituents. Her identity needed to have certain traditional aspects in order to avoid appearing “above” regular women. While at the same time, she needed to demonstrate her ability in the legislature to appear as a competent politician.

Smith made deliberate attempts to keep the attention on herself as a political figure, and not as a woman in the position. To achieve this, Smith sought to appear feminine to the point where she would not face questions on why she was lacking certain feminine values. At the same time, distancing herself from the feminist movement, which could undermine her respect as a legislator. Smith's appearance, displays of domesticity, and dialogue on women's issues needed balance in order to satisfy social expectations. A woman must be feminine, but not too feminine that it interferes with work outside the home. Without such a balance, news outlets and individuals would attack on these issues, as seen with printed public opinion statements in news articles.

When Smith ran for president, many people jumped to express that a woman was not capable of the job, without even knowing who Smith was as a candidate. The fact Smith was female, activated prescriptive stereotyping, which led to many ungrounded criticisms. One of the many examples of this was an angry article written by Larry Fields, in which Fields argued that Smith should not be president because she would make "all astronauts female" and when dealing with Nikita Khrushchev, Smith would respond by saying "Oh Nikki how could you say such nasty things? You are no gentlemen" (Fields, 22). These were among many other sexist claims. One historian noted the imagery of Smith scolding and flirting with Khrushchev and asking for his wife's recipes "exposed the anxieties of Americans who liked their presidents masculine and their foreign policy virile" (Sherman, 2000). Had the author known Smith as a politician, he would have known that Smith's tough foreign policy stance had incited Khrushchev to call Smith a "devil behind a rose" and a "war-monger" only a few months prior. Smith also had served on the Aeronautical and Space Sciences Committee and had numerous times

expressed her thoughts on where a woman belongs; in short, everywhere, but not simply to serve as the token female. This article is a great example of the challenges facing Smith throughout her career and especially during her presidential election. It was crucial Smith was able to present herself as a capable leader regardless of her sex.

Image 7: Khrushchev Recipe Cartoon



Caption: Political cartoon included in an article titled, "Do You Prefer Your Politicians… In Pants? … Or Petticoats?"
Image courtesy of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.

As much as Smith tried to neutralize the conversation surrounding her attire, news articles continued to cover her appearance. By wearing typical professional wear of a woman in her position, Smith could limit the conversation on her clothing. In the twentieth century, Smith's "uniform" was her dresses. It would have been more of a talking point had she decided to wear pants instead. The news would comment less on her clothing but would comment on her beauty or femininity. Her iconic rose was a tool that

did draw her positive attention; however, it could have just as easily had a negative impact.

The significance of her public recipes is too valuable to overlook. Food is something that unites everyone. It is a tool to bring people together in physical space as well as together in a cultural space. Smith's willingness to share her recipes contributes to the idea that she was just like other women of the time. Her recipes demonstrate a pride for the state of Maine, her ability to host, and make her relatable.

Smith's experience in the legislature proved to be counter to even current stereotypes on issue expertise. Areas of national defense and taxes are stereotypically considered areas in which men excel, while women are better in areas of education and healthcare. Despite this, Smith asked to be on committees deemed "masculine," even by contemporary audiences. Smith had several impactful achievements from her work in the Armed Services and Naval Affairs Committees and was the first woman to ever sit on the Appropriations Committee. Smith publicly stood up to McCarthy, who was her senior in the Senate, alone. It was several years later before the Senate took action against McCarthy's behavior. Despite the backlash Smith knew she would face, she was courageous and, in the words of Kennedy, formidable.

Smith's commitment to her role as a legislator took priority over any personal life she could have had. In Janann Sherman's biography on Smith's life, she shared that the library was Bill Lewis' last gift to Smith because "in the absence of a private life she had never cultivated, he knew she would need a public life to sustain her" (Sherman, 2000). Smith dedicated herself completely to her role as a public servant. She never remarried or had children. She had no personal distractions to keep her from her work in Washington

D.C., and even refused to miss a vote while she was campaigning for president. Fellow congresswoman, Francis Bolton of Ohio remarked, “[h]er dedication to this image imposes an austere existence. Her workday is seldom less than 12 hours, and her high heels can be heard echoing down otherwise empty hallways even on holidays” (Cheshire, 1964). Smith made public service her whole life, yet she still faced immense doubt of her ability to fill the role of the presidency, which demonstrates the impossible level of qualification expected of women to fill prestigious offices.

CONCLUSION

Margaret Chase Smith was a powerful woman who found ways to soften her image where needed while exercising political power that had previously been held exclusively by men. In the early and mid-twentieth century, women primarily still operated within the home. In order to connect to those women and avoid accusations of being unwomanly, Smith would display characteristic traits that an average housewife would possess during that time. Her recipes, magazine interviews, and particular posing displayed her feminine nature. Smith made sure not to appear too feminine at the risk of being connected to the second wave of feminism, which could have brought political consequences for the senator. By appearing too feminine or too concentrated on making change for women's lives, Smith risked being considered unfit in her role in Congress. To protect against claims that she was too weak or unfit, Smith proactively avoided being seen as the "woman's candidate." When Smith ran for president, the whole nation faced the question, "can a woman be president?" and more specifically, "should this woman be president?" The response to this debate demonstrated the ways in which the country was still struggling with what a leader should look like and if a woman could ever meet those expectations. Margaret Chase Smith took a proactive approach to balance her gender into a palatable amount of womanly qualities expected of a female during this time, while also appearing strong and confident in her abilities as a legislator.

In the time since Smith was in office, women have continued to pursue careers in politics, thus helping to create a new image of what a politician looks like. While contemporary research suggests that gender may be less of a factor today, women still

face biased media attention for their personalities and appearances. At the same time, it is now more acceptable for women to have careers, with or without families, and to operate outside of the home. Sexism is still prevalent in pockets around the United States, but as more women are elected, it becomes less about the fact that the elected official is a woman and more about her qualifications. In some ways, the bar is higher now for women than in Smith's time. One example of this is the expected educational level. Almost all members of Congress have an academic degree, and congressional races require a vast amount more money to be successful, much greater than Smith ever spent. Until there are more women elected into Congress and multiple women are elected president in the United States, debates over female competency will likely continue, and female politicians will continue to face gender expectations that cause them to act in anticipation of sexism and gender stereotypes. In 2016, Hillary Clinton became the Democratic nominee for president, and the 2020 Democratic primary had six female candidates. These women still face the "gender question," but with each of their campaigns, being a female candidate becomes less of a talking point. It is essential to understand the challenges women face, such as double standards in qualifications and unconscious assumptions about policy competence and personality traits. By understanding the challenges to women, we can begin to remove the hurdles women have to overcome before being considered for prestigious elected offices.

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