



Woman President: Confronting Postfeminist Political Culture (Presidential Rhetoric and Political Communication)

Kristina Horn Sheeler, Karrin Vasby Anderson

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What elements of American political and rhetorical culture block the imagining—and thus, the electing—of a woman as president? Examining both major-party and third-party campaigns by women, including the 2008 campaigns of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin, the authors of *Woman President: Confronting Postfeminist Political Culture* identify the factors that limit electoral possibilities for women.

Pundits have been predicting women's political ascendancy for years. And yet, although the 2008 presidential campaign featured Hillary Clinton as an early frontrunner for the Democratic presidential nomination and Sarah Palin as the first female Republican vice-presidential nominee, no woman has yet held either of the top two offices. The reasons for this are complex and varied, but the authors assert that the question certainly encompasses more than the shortcomings of women candidates or the demands of the particular political moment. Instead, the authors identify a pernicious backlash against women presidential candidates—one that is expressed in both political and popular culture.

In *Woman President: Confronting Postfeminist Political Culture*, Kristina Horn Sheeler and Karrin Vasby Anderson provide a discussion of US presidentiality as a unique rhetorical role. Within that framework, they review women's historical and contemporary presidential bids, placing special emphasis on the 2008 campaign. They also consider how presidentiality is framed in candidate oratory, campaign journalism, film and television, digital media, and political parody.

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