Media-Made Moms: Politics, Publishing, and the Power of the Presidency in American Women's History.

During the 2012 American election campaign, Michelle Obama was widely described in the media on both sides of the Atlantic as the nation's 'mom in chief.' Whilst this designation played to the family-friendly image that Americans, perhaps more so than any other nation, prefer their politicians to display, it was a somewhat backhanded compliment. By emphasising the First Lady's domestic and maternal role it spoke volumes about the perceived place of women in politics, even in the twenty-first century United States, calmed the unease that the nation still displays when women move beyond the domestic sphere, and offered the reassurance that this particular First Lady was not likely to reinvent herself any time soon as a future Secretary of State.

Professor Grant's lecture considers the ways in which motherhood continues to define, and at times defend, the gender divide in America, and explores the extent to which presidential wives have themselves manipulated, and been manipulated by, a media that seems still wedded to an historical ideal of 'republican motherhood' as the only safe power behind the political throne.

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