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Professional First Ladies In the Media: Framing Of Clinton, Bush, and Obama In the Washington Post

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The University of Southern Mississippi

PROFESSIONAL FIRST LADIES IN THE MEDIA:
FRAMING OF CLINTON, BUSH, AND OBAMA IN THE WASHINGTON POST

by

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Abstract

This study examines how the news media portray and frame modern first ladies. By prefacing the research with background information about the history of the role of first ladies, and media theories such as framing, the reader is able to better understand the implications of this coverage. Other previous research delved into gender roles and how deviation from these roles is subject to criticism. The goal of the research is to examine the first 100 days of a presidency to determine if a first lady who steps out of bounds with the traditional societal female gender role is subject to criticism by *The Washington Post*. This study found that the media are concerned with physical appearance and attire more than other aspects of the role of the first lady. Only when she is involved with politics will she receive coverage other than what relates to her aesthetics, but she is more likely to be seen as a “professional” and not performing the traditional role of first lady.

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Introduction

Throughout American history, first ladies have been spotlighted prominently in the American public by way of the media; however, with no specific duties, the first lady's role is not highlighted in the United States Constitution. She is neither elected nor salaried, but she contributes to the presidency in many ways. Historically and traditionally, she has been a hostess of sorts, organizing social events for her husband, the President of the United States, and those close to him; specifically, "serving as the nation's hostess in the Executive Mansion has been the basic role played by every first lady from Martha Washington to the present" (Mayo, 2000, p. 577). The first lady contributes to the public image of the President of the United States whether negatively or positively, intentionally or not. Mayo (2000) adds, "a woman who was both socially adept and politically savvy could promote her husband's political agenda and structure the style and image of the presidential administration" (p. 578). Over time, the job as first lady has evolved from a social role to a more professional role. More first ladies are actively involved with politics or adopt causes that plague our nation such as health care reform by Hillary Clinton, literacy by Laura Bush and childhood obesity by Michelle Obama. They are also career-oriented: Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama have worked as lawyers; Laura Bush has worked as a teacher.

The duties and roles of a first lady are not clearly stated, but the expectation of the nation's first lady is expressed through many forms of the media. Watson (2003) argues that, "with first ladies, questions remain unanswered as to whether they should be politically active, whether this activism enhances their first ladyship, and so on" (p. 434). In some ways, the first ladies have been 'damned if they do, and damned if they don't' as,

absent definable parameters for the job, first ladies have been criticized for being too outspoken and active” (Watson, 2003, p. 434). The study of the role of first ladies is relatively new, and research of these women who are career-oriented and professional in their own right is, as well. The critical media consumer may notice that there is a discrepancy in the way “professional” first ladies should act. Since in modern times first ladies have taken on a more professional role becoming involved with policy-making, the media attempts to adjust to these changes from a traditional role in American culture. The media may respond negatively if the political wife does not adopt the conventional first lady role (Bissell & Scharrer, 2000, p 57), for example, being a hostess, fashion icon and homemaker. As public servants, news media professionals have the responsibility to accurately disseminate information to the American public. Yet, is it ethical to negatively respond to a woman that is contributing to the political process simply because she is not conforming to the stereotypical or “mother/homemaker” role of a first lady? It is important to know how the media respond to such changes that are slowly being embraced by the American public.

Journalists have a critical responsibility of relaying news to the public and notifying them about events in the world. Other aspects of journalism help the public understand and make sense of these things. Rhode (1995) agrees, saying, “the media play a crucial role in shaping public consciousness and public policy” (p. 685). Journalism has the power to shape public opinion using framing techniques. Framing may include selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of an event or issue, excluding information, and using a particular tone. Framing, in most cases, may shape cultural perceptions (Rhode, 1995).

This thesis will examine how the news media have framed the role of recent “professional” United States (U.S.) first ladies during the first 100 days of their husbands’ first term in office. Specifically, this research will investigate how modern first ladies like Michelle Obama, Laura Bush, and Hillary Rodham Clinton are framed in *The Washington Post* during this time. Obama, Bush, and Clinton were all educated, professional career women in their own right before assuming their roles in the White House, and this study aims to examine how media coverage of these women is framed for the public. Rhode (1995) contends that, “a central concern has always been how the media reflect and recast feminist issues” (p. 685) so it is important to know if the media portray them as modern, professional women, accept their professional roles and if their views are reflected in how each story is framed. Because “public opinion data offer support for the idea that candidates’ wives appeal to different, and frequently broader, audiences than their husbands,” this gives them a considerable amount of power but by association, can affect the public’s opinion of the President of the United States (Burrell, Elder, & Frederick, 2011, p. 3).

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of First Ladies

Dating back to First Lady Dolley Madison, the term “First Lady of the United States” refers to the woman who is married to the President of the United States. Although she is not salaried or deemed “first lady” by the U.S. Constitution, she rightfully earns her front row seat to the most powerful individual in America. Borrelli (2002) describes the first ladyship as a post that is mainly informal. The first lady’s role

is not officially defined; however, there are many expectations from the public that she must meet. Wekkin (2000) describes the position as one that is “comprised of conventions and understandings subscribed to by the various critical audiences who comprise the American polity” which includes the news media that relay information to the general public (p. 601). Today, the first lady just may have one of the most watched, critiqued positions in America.

In the history of the United States, the first lady is seen as an iconic figure with roles society assigns to females: “In the United States for instance, the traditional U.S. first lady role includes responsibilities such as role modeling, fundraising, counseling families and communities, and getting involved with patronage requests from charitable organizations” (Kalyango & Winfield, 2009, p. 7). Since the creation of the position “it has come to signify traditional femininity and domesticity, operating to constrain the actions and speech of the women who occupy that role” (Wertheimer, 2004, p. 22). Throughout the years, there have been conflicting views about the supposed function of a first lady, whether it is the traditional role or modern, professional role. According to Avineri (2009), first ladies are often better received when they show more emotion, are charming, and compassionate. In addition, the author claims that a first lady “will not be as popular if she is confident and asserts her qualifications and expertise” (p. 12). Hence, it is understood that women, and in the case of this study, first ladies, should follow the customary role (traditional) for women.

Evolution of the Role of First Ladies

Knight (2005) argues women have traditionally adopted campaigns involving moral issues, rather than those involving politics and notes the importance of studying the roles of first ladies through various historical periods in her dissertation “From Private to Public Life: Rhetoric of First Ladies in their First Year.” The study explains the shift of the role of first ladies over time.

In what Knight (2005) calls *The Early Years*, which covers the years between 1789-1899, writings about the first lady aimed to “portray an unbiased historical account based on available information” (p. 21). Much of the historical information is based on journaling and personal notes of the first lady. The researcher contends that much of the information from this time aims to give a description of the first ladies through “a collection of letters, journal entries, and other personal memoirs” (Knight, 2005, p. 21). Historians define scholarship of first ladies during this period as “obscure,” with more focus on the husband. As a result of research, she gathered that Dolley Madison “received a great deal of attention from historians of this period” (Knight, 2005, p. 22). Knight (2005) credits this attention to Madison’s lack of conformity to the traditional role, stating, “she broke out of the traditional role of the “true woman” through her brash attitudes and independent personality” (p. 23). This parallels a time in history when the average American woman began to work in the first factories: “After the war of 1812... young women from the farms began to work in them. [They] began to perform what had been the essential economic functions of women in the home. These developments lay

behind what was called the “woman movement” of the nineteenth century...” (Scott, p. 5).

Knight (2005) contends that historians “disregarded the importance of the role of the first lady to some degree” and “tended to focus on beauty and personality” (p. 23). During this period of time, there was a shift in focus from the husband to the first lady; however, it lacked a focus on her role and spotlighted her as more of an accessory to the President. It seems that first ladies were more humanized in this time period, with more focus on their lives. The role, if shown at all, remained “acting as a hostess and showpiece” (Knight, 2005. p. 23).

In the period she calls *Dramatic Changes for Women* from 1950-1974, Knight (2005) describes the first ladyship of the time (p. 24). These years are characterized by the rise of national feminism. This is important to this study because “the rise of feminism and demands for equal rights brought the role women play in society to the forefront” (Knight, 2005, p. 24). As a product of the time, the first ladies began to get more and more widespread attention. The standard was beginning to set. “The ideal for women in the 1950s encouraged women to be fashionable, intelligent, and devoted” (Knight, 2005, p.24)” At this time, the “devotion” did not refer to political issues, but devotion to her husband as President of The United States. However, the first ladies did become more outspoken about their life experiences through interviews. Also, more attention was shown to their lives: “Historians writing during this period seemed to understand the humanity of the first lady” (Knight, 2005, p. 24). The most important

aspect of this time period, for the purpose of this study, includes the involvement of the news media because during this time first ladies were faced with “the burden of intense media coverage” (Knight, 2005, p. 25). During this period, first ladies began to use the media to their own benefit (Knight, 2005, p. 25). This all happens during a time after women were finally granted the Constitutional right to vote, via the 19th Amendment. Smith states that around the World War II, opportunities for women to work outside of the home grew in a number of areas including the Air Force, Army and Navy (p. 10). There was also a rise in commissions, initially led by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, to address women’s issues of the time (Smith, p. 11).

The time period from 1975-2000 Knight (2005) calls *The Recent Years* (p. 26). This time period marks a time of increased interest in first ladies, past and present. “Because of the changes in attitudes toward women’s roles that came about during the earlier period, more scholarly research on the first ladies began to emerge” (Knight, 2005, p. 26). At this time, the President and the first lady are seen as having more of a partnership; first ladies still inhabit the hostess role, historians notice duties involving the implementation of various social programs and more concern with legislation are noticed during this time period (Knight, 2005, p. 27). The first lady of this time is more vocal and more involved than in previous periods. This comes at a time in where the average woman has gained more of a presence professionally in many fields and in the government. Girls, Incorporated notes that, “women and girls have many more opportunities and face different challenges. The playing field is not level, but neither is

gender bias as institutionalized as it once was.” The struggle of this time is a very different one.

The conventional role of women in society has, however, evolved into one that is more professional. This role is one defined as a woman who has worked with policy or advises the president (Troy, 2009). It can be argued that the modern first ladies represent a shift from the traditional role of a woman seen years ago. A traditional first lady is defined as one who serves as an escort for the President of the United States and an advocate for social causes (Troy, 2009). These modern first ladies are no longer only serving as hostesses for White House events, but they are getting involved with politics and addressing social issues.

The public prefers traditionalism and would prefer a first lady who simply supports the work of the president (Burrell, Elder, & Frederick, 2011). Many scholars agree that there is a sense of skepticism when a first lady is too involved in politics or in her husband’s work. For example, during the first term of Bill Clinton, polls suggested “about 70 percent of the American public preferred a traditional first lady” (Rhode, 1995, p. 694), causing Hillary Clinton to get “a kinder, gentler hairdo, more mother-child photo ops, and lower profile appearances, often standing by her man but not opening her mouth.” Becoming too involved is risky behavior because “a first lady arouses animosity when she dares to use political authority because the position is an acceptable face of femininity” (Kalyango & Winfield, 2009, p. 4).

Eksterowicz & Paynter (2000) argue that the former first ladies who could be

considered strong activists include Lady Bird Johnson, Rosalynn Carter, and Hillary Clinton. In this study, Hillary Clinton and the first ladies who follow her, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama, are examined. Each has earned degrees, established careers and is professional and successful in her own right. The role of first ladies is becoming a popular topic of research due to the growing popularity of first ladies. According to Watson (2003), “possibly due to the controversial and highly public first ladyship of Hillary Clinton coming on the heels of the controversial but powerful first ladyship of Nancy Reagan and the popular first ladyship of Barbara Bush, the office has generated much interest by the public, press, and scholars alike” (p. 424). There are some existing studies on first ladies, but this study aims to take a look at more modern first ladies during a time of change in the societal role of women. Watson (2003) calls scholarship on the first ladies “a quite recent phenomenon and, as a subfield, it is still maturing” (p. 424).

Biographical Information

Hillary Clinton

Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton was born in Chicago, Illinois, on October 26, 1947. She attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts from 1965-1969 where she obtained a degree in political science. She is a graduate of Yale Law School and practiced law. After marrying Mr. Bill Clinton, she initially kept her maiden name and soon gave birth to her daughter, Chelsea Clinton. Hillary Clinton, full partner at a law firm, was on the list of the top 100 most influential lawyers twice. After Mr. Clinton was elected governor of Arkansas, she worked in other capacities, including being appointed

by President Jimmy Carter in 1978 to the board of the Legal Services Corporation (National First Ladies' Library [NFL], 2009). Her first run with the title of first lady (of Arkansas) added to her accomplishments. "As First Lady of Arkansas for twelve years, she chaired the Arkansas Educational Standards Committee, co-founded the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, and served on the boards of the Arkansas Children's Hospital, Legal Services, and the Children's Defense Fund (NFL, 2009, np)."

During the presidential campaign, Bill Clinton introduced his relationship with his wife as a partnership, calling it a "two for one deal." As First Lady of the United States, she became the leader of a Health Care Reform task force within five days, initiated a program for children's health insurance, drafted policy legislation, and consulted with her husband before decisions were made. She also worked with international affairs, making her "one of the few international figures at the time who spoke out against the treatment of Afghani women by Islamist fundamentalist Taliban that had seized control of Afghanistan" (NFL, 2009, np).

Although most first ladies have played more traditional roles, Hillary Clinton "has broken from the traditional mold set by many of her predecessors by being active in political issues like health care reform" (Bissell & Scharrer, 2000, p. 56). She worked with policy, advocated for women and served as a close advisor to the president: "During the ensuing years in the White House, Hillary Rodham Clinton went beyond traditional hostess duties, playing a significant role in many legislative and policy decisions, but she did not deliberately seek out the spotlight" (Wertheimer, 2004, p. 425). Researchers claim that she has assumed "a more overtly political role than any of her predecessors;"

and being elected into Senate, has become the first first lady to be elected into office (NFLL, 2009).

Laura Bush

First Lady Laura Lane Welch Bush was born in Midland, Texas, on November 4, 1946. She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. She attended the University of Texas at Austin where she received her master's degree in library science. She has worked as an educator and as a librarian. First Lady Laura Bush is the mother of twins, Barbara and Jenna Bush.

When George W. Bush began his political endeavors, she ended her work as a librarian and began to offer time toward such causes as volunteering to care for sick children. After George W. Bush became Governor of Texas, his wife participated with lobbying efforts to increase state funds of early childhood development programs in the state, including literacy and reading. As First Lady of the United States, "she broke precedent by becoming the first presidential candidate's wife to address the convention that was nominating her husband" but avoided controversial remarks (NFLL, 2009, np). The National First Ladies Library (2009) notes "Laura Bush dramatically increased her role, delivering a policy-oriented speech at the Republican National Convention, making hundreds of stump speeches in which she addressed substantive policy accomplishments and goals of the Administration in economics, homeland security, and the Iraqi War" (np). After becoming first lady, her focus was on education: "She testified before the Senate Education Committee" where she "called for higher teacher salaries and better training for Head Start and day care workers" (NFLL, 2009, np).

Michelle Obama

First Lady Michelle Lavaughn Robinson Obama was born in Chicago, Illinois, on January 17, 1964. Mrs. Obama attended Princeton University where she studied sociology and African-American studies, then proceeded to Harvard Law School. Upon graduation, she began to work in a law firm in Chicago. First Lady Obama began to work as a public servant by working in Chicago City Hall and with Americorps. In 1991, Mrs. Obama was named assistant to the Mayor of Chicago. She was once an administrator at The University of Chicago and at The University of Chicago Medical Center (NFL, 2009).

During the presidential campaign, Mrs. Obama remained employed at the University of Chicago Medical Center, but also began speaking to various groups throughout the country. She became more active by “speaking to voters in different states about her husband but also drawing experiences from her own life that spoke directly to the goals of her husband’s presidency, finding a link to her audiences” (NFL, 2009, np). She delivered a speech at the Democratic National Convention, “which won overwhelming praise from the media and public, as reflected in polls” (NFL, 2009, np). First ladies have the power to be influential to the audience: “Tremendous media attention and public interest increased on Michelle Obama’s clothing as the weeks from Election Day approached Inauguration Day, with sometimes hyperbolic predictions of how she would seek to set a new national style” (NFL, 2009, np). Media and audiences have, however, responded negatively to comments made by the first lady, including one where she claimed to be proud of her country for the first time (ABCNews.com, 2008,np).

Scholarship for review on her political activity while in office is limited because she is currently still in her husband's first term of office. As First Lady, she has set her main goals as "helping mothers find balance between family and employment commitments, providing necessary support for American military families, and encouraging voluntarism in community service" (NFLL, 2009, np). Thus far, she has worked with issues such as childhood obesity and the support of military families. The first lady has held receptions to network with city officials, and she is aiming to be a "personal representative of the new administration and provide a sense of connection to the thousands of civil service federal employees" (NFLL, 2009, np)." National First Ladies' Library (2009) calls this an "unprecedented effort by a First Lady" (np).

These three first ladies are being used for this study due to their most recent positions in that role and because each had prior careers and was professionally established before becoming first lady. Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama worked in the legal field, and Laura Bush was a teacher and a librarian. Clinton, Bush, and Obama were involved with health care, literacy, and childhood obesity, respectively, and each addressed a social issue, similar to other first ladies, while their husbands served as president. The three have each been heavily involved in their husbands' campaigns; "From 1992 on, the spouses of presidential candidates have assumed busy campaign schedules, and they have become indispensable components of the campaign, a strategic response to the rise of candidate-centered presidential campaigns" (Burrell, Elder, & Frederick, 2011, p. 3).

Theoretical Framework: Framing

The theoretical basis for this project is media framing. Framing theories are important to the journalism field, in that they help the media consumer make sense of the world around them. The term “framing” was introduced to the public in the 1970s and was defined as a system that allows us to “locate, perceive, identify and label” the varied information that we are presented with (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). The first lady represents the broader societal role of women (Sulfaro, 2007), so attitudes of the media consumer change when the first lady does not adopt traditional roles. Entman (2004) defines framing in media as “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (p. 5). In other words, they include certain aspects of their story in order to create a certain understanding of the event/issue being covered. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) explain that framing “is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences” (p. 11). By choosing certain aspects of a story or an individual, the consumer can be influenced in different ways; “For that matter, the way the news media influence public opinion is socially and culturally set by the rhetoric of political mainstreaming without withdrawing from the normative stereotypes” (Kalyango & Winfield, 2009, p. 11).

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2009) agree that journalists “choose images and words that have the power to influence how audiences interpret and evaluate issues and policies” (p. 17). It is important to examine how the public understands society from the way media professionals make sense of the world. News can shape what is important to

the public and how the consumer perceives or understands the information that is received. Because women have not held as many powerful positions throughout history, researchers discovered that they might only receive media coverage when actions are not in accord with traditional female roles (Mendes, 2011, p. 34). Many scholars claim that defining framing is a difficult task, due to its definitions being inconsistent and vague in its usage. Kalyango & Winfield (2009) define framing as “a function of choices and selection made by news reporters and editors as they attempt to make sense of events and situations” (p. 11). Scheufele & Tewksbury (2009) state, “a much lamented phenomenon in communication research is the fact that framing remains an elusive concept without clear definitional boundaries” (p. 22). For the purpose of this study, the definition of framing is as an act that can potentially alter the public’s opinion of a particular subject or topic by consistent focus on a specific issue. This study will provide a way to understand how *The Washington Post* reports news about First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama to the public.

Framing of First Ladies

Common characteristics attributed to first ladies when being framed by media can include being an escort or companion to the president, fashionista, policy supporter, and charity advocate (Kalyango and Winfield, 2009, p. 4). Scholars also note, “other so-called traditional roles of the first ladies, which the press has used in the West to frame their character, are unviable, unnatural, incompetent, and weak....” (Kalyango & Winfield, 2009, p. 12). The traditional role of women holds today, and Kalyango & Winfield (2009) concur that it is viewed as negative if a woman breaks the mold: “News

coverage is also negative when the first lady exerts political influence or seeks policy changes” (p. 4). Scholars hold that the first lady should prevent being overly, publicly opinionated and refrain from activity involving policy-making. According to Wachai (1999), a first lady who challenges societal norms faces the probability of criticism.

There tends to be negative news coverage when it relates to the first lady’s involvement in politics and policy according to Kalyango & Winfield (2009) who state, “some studies have shown that the media demonize political spouses and other emerging women politicians despite their exemplary accomplishments in the public spotlight” (p. 12). Thus, first ladies, such as Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama may be prone to criticism due to their involvement with policy, social issues, or active role with her spouse’s work. Clinton, Bush, and Obama, along with other first ladies are bound to the “mold” that society creates for the “traditional” woman. No matter if they are being productive in assisting the Commander-in-Chief with his work, “news coverage is shaped by various societal customs that reinforce traditional female roles, despite the ideologies, contributions, and influence of women in society” (Kalyango & Winfield, 2009, p. 12). It is imperative to understand how the mass media respond to changes of these roles that have been historically assigned to women. As a result of those role changes, the public may be skeptical of a first lady who steps outside of what her role should be (Bissell & Scharrer, 2000).

The media provide the means for people to grasp the situations or events in our government and in politics. According to Wachai (1999), negative stereotypes by newspapers await politically active first ladies. The researcher explains, “one potential explanation for this finding... is that as a public figure’s power grows, the watchdog

function of the press grows as well” (p. 15). It is important to investigate the results of the changes in the role of the first lady from traditional to non-traditional and the way the media respond to those changes.

Gender Awareness and Roles

Engrained in our society is the need to fit into the role that is assigned to males and females. Easily stated but harder to understand, people are born a specific “sex,” but “gender” is learned. The media consumer is inundated with media images, including magazines, television and advertisements, that relate submission to femininity and dominance to masculinity. Scholars state “men and women who invest in traditional gender ideals tend to endorse female submission and male dominance in sexual relationships” (Sanchez, Fetterolf, & Rudman, 2012, p. 175). Thus, ones who endorse these roles tend to be the most compliant in the designated societal responsibility of the gender.

Gender roles are so strictly followed that failure to comply could lead the offender to “suffer penalties for gender deviance” (Sanchez, Fetterolf, & Rudman, 2012, p. 175). Therefore, the characteristics of the sexual “norms” must be conformed to for fear of ridicule and stereotyping. Growing children even face the pressure to act in accordance with their assigned gender role. According to some scholars, many magazines intend to promote submissiveness and passiveness in young girls in order to attract the attention of young boys (Sanchez, Fetterolf, & Rudman, 2012, p. 174). Men have been known as “providers,” while naturally comprising the skills to in areas of the public realm, including religious and political positions, while women are confided to roles that involve

relationship skills and sensitivity (Gross, 2003, np). Gross (2003) also adds that “the male gender role promotes physical prowess and cultural competence but male achievement usually has more to do with bravado than with sensitivity.”

Many people address the issue of gender awareness in different ways. According to some researchers, “Gender awareness implies the recognition of discrimination against women” (Martinez, Paterna, Roux, & Falomir, 2010, p. 1). Although many scholars have studied the implication of the issue toward women, studies have illustrated that some people still deny the presence of discrimination of women when it relates to gender inequality. Some scholars take this theory further, explaining, “Traditional gender roles are those in which there is an unequal distribution of power between men and women. Thus, it can be reasoned that traditional gender role attitudes reflect individuals’ endorsement of social norms that link men to the public sphere and women to caring roles” (Martinez, Paterna, Roux, & Falomir, 2010, p. 2-3). Although there is strict pressure to conform to these traditional, stereotypical roles, the practice may or may not be consensual due to the consequence one may face for going against the status quo.

Feminist Views and the News

Feminism

There are many definitions of “feminism,” including one that defines it as “freedom from the prison of gender roles” (Gross, 2003, np). Gross holds that the imprisonment lies in “the insistence that men must and should only be masculine while women must and should be only feminine” (Gross, 2003, np). This is a definition that is unbiased to gender and addresses not only women, but men as well.

Although the term can be defined in countless different ways, a consistent reaction to the term “feminist” or “feminism” has been reported. Freedman (2002) explains that much of the public fears feminism or feministic views because they believe that it “will unleash changes in familiar family, sexual and racial relationships” that can “produce antifeminist politics among those who wish to conserve older forms of social hierarchy” (p. 11).

By studying certain aspects of the media, scholars can analyze how the media define the roles of femininity. The media have sometimes labeled women who are too vocal or too outside of those gender roles as feminists. Academics hold that images may be inconsistent between the perceived roles of women and views of feminists (Mendes, 2011, p. 15). Feminists have battled gender roles: “Gender dictates how to dress, act and behave as a man or a woman, and is maintained through the presence of underlying ideologies (patriarchy, capitalism and race/ethnicity) – ideologies that position masculinity and femininity as binaries” (Mendes, 2011, p. 14).

The medium for this study is a newspaper. Mendes (2011) states that newspapers’ daily publication, circulation to a wide number and variety of consumers, and timeliness make content from this medium an option for this study (p. 23): “Newspapers also present a forum for many types of styles- news, features, editorials, comment, letters to the editor, advertisements and cartoons- all in the same publication, facilitating the opportunity for diverse discussion about the movement” (Mendes, 2011, p. 23). Some scholars argue that the structure of news is the cause. We are able to look at archived material to see nationwide changes of views on this issue. As such, this study will address the following research questions:

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the subject matter of the articles written on Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush, and Michelle Obama in *The Washington Post* during the first 100 days of being in office?

RQ2: Are First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama framed more frequently as professional or in traditional roles in *The Washington Post* during the first 100 days?

RQ3: Is adopting the “traditional” or the “professional” roles of the first lady framed as negative or positive in *The Washington Post* when it relates to the First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama?

Methodology

Past research proposes that coverage of first ladies has been framed to highlight certain issues regarding their role as the president’s spouse. Specifically, contemporary “professional” first ladies, Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama are of interest for the purpose this study because of their media coverage and their recent terms as first ladies. To answer the research questions, it is necessary to define the meaning of certain terms to understand the context in which they are used in the study: (Mendes,

2011) (Avineri, 2009) (Krippendorff, 2012) (Scott, 2008) (Avineri, 2009) (Avineri, 2009)

Professional: Professional is defined as “having a particular profession as a permanent career.” This study will specify a “professional” as educated, career-oriented, and professionally established in own right. (www.Merriam-Webster.com)

Traditional Role: Hughes and Peek (1986) define the traditional woman as one “focused on the home, more competent in private than in political matters” (p. 159). The

traditional role of women characterizes them as inferior to men physically and intellectually and delegates to them the role of cooking, cleaning and caring for children.

Policy: Policy is defined as a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, ruler, political party, etc. (www.Dictionary.com)

Negative frame: A negative frame indicates opposition or rejection of the role being played by the first lady.

Positive frame: A positive frame indicates support or acceptance of the role being played by the first lady.

Politically active: A politically active first lady is involved in politics or policy-making, wanting to take part in governmental process

The Washington Post is a medium that is published in Washington D.C., the residence of the first family, and was selected because of its proximity to the first family and the frequency of stories concerning their activities. *The Washington Post* is a daily, national publication and easily accessible via subscription or electronically. Eyck & Williment (2003) describe the Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper as one of the top opinion leaders in the nation. This aspect is significant for this particular study because it shows that it is a credible source that reaches a widespread audience daily.

The researcher aimed to answer the research questions using the method of content and critical analysis in order to examine the content of the selected medium, *The Washington Post*. Content analysis is defined as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). This type of breakdown helps the researcher review content to

find a link between the content and what the researcher is looking for: "Content analysis is often employed to assess the manifest characteristics of large quantities of media output" (Van Zoonen, 1994, p. 68). Krippendorff notes that content analysis has been used much throughout history, dating back to the beginning of the "conscious use of symbols and voice, especially writing" (2013, p. 1). Expanding on content analysis, the researcher states that it is "an empirically grounded method, exploratory in process, and predictive or inferential in intent" (Krippendorff, 2013, p.1). Researchers calculate and investigate the findings and find relationships between the data found, then infer about the messages from the material (Jenkins, 2002). This method creates the opportunity to explore the medium and determine what they mean for the analysis. Van Zoonen suggests this as the best method for this type of study: "One of the reasons for conducting such an analysis therefore, could lie in the desire to have fresh 'hard data' on the portrayal of women" (1994, p. 69). The researcher says, "Cast within a solid theoretical framework, content analysis can shed light on social and cultural matters of representation" (1994, p. 73). This study aims to use this method of analysis to understand what the content in the medium means to the consumer: "Content analysts examine data, printed matter, images, or sounds- texts- in order to understand what they mean to people, what they enable or prevent, and what the information conveyed by them does" (Krippendorff, 2013, p.2)

Using Lexis-Nexis, the researcher searched for articles that related to the three first ladies of interest for the study. Articles printed after the general election during the first 100 days of the presidency for each husband's first term were analyzed for content.

This time period was used to analyze the initial response to the first lady during a time the President is also being analyzed by the media.

Articles relating to Hillary Clinton came from the period January 20, 1993- April 30, 1993. Articles relating to Laura Bush came from the January 20, 2001- April 30, 2001 time period. Articles relating to Michelle Obama date from January 20, 2009- April 30, 2009. The researcher listed the first ladies names as key words, and the following were found: 40 articles relating to Hillary Clinton, 29 articles relating to Laura Bush, and 35 articles relating to Michelle Obama.

The researcher utilized two coders to calculate percentages for simple frequencies to describe the content found. Each coder was asked to read and analyze each article (titles located in Appendices A, B and C) once, then were instructed to read them again and fill out the code sheet after they were each given verbal and written instructions (located in Appendix D). A test was conducted to ensure understanding of the process of coding and intercoder reliability. Each coder was also given written instructions (located in Appendix D), in which they were asked to read each article and indicate on the code sheet the information that was found. They were to critically read the articles for understanding and note what each article suggested. Units of analysis included the news section, format, references, relevance to the story, role, topic and portrayal. There are a number of sections included in the paper. The following are related to this study: Main Section (world and national news), Style Section, Outlook Section (opinion), Health Section, Montgomery Extra (Montgomery County News), Metro (local news), Home, and

Extras.

Results:

A total of 104 articles were selected for investigation to answer the research questions. As stated, the articles were selected from those written during the first 100 days of office of the President to whom the respective first lady is married. The criteria for selection included those articles that directly referenced each first lady. After analyzing each article for relevance, I selected the following from the publication: 40 articles for Hillary Clinton, 29 articles for Laura Bush, and 35 articles for Michelle Obama. Two coders (undergraduate students) analyzed each set of articles separately. The following comparative tables indicate the results after calculating the percentages what each chart addressed:

Research Question 1: What is the subject matter of the articles written on Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush, and Michelle Obama in *The Washington Post* during the first 100 days of being in office?

Table 1: Relevance to the Story

	Hillary Clinton	Laura Bush	Michelle Obama
Only Subject	32.50%	10.34%	14.29%
Main Subject	27.50%	27.59%	40.00%
Secondary Subject	40.00%	62.07%	45.71%

*The table above indicates how often the first lady was the only subject, the main subject or the

secondary subject in the selected articles.

Table 2: Topic

	Hillary Clinton	Laura Bush	Michelle Obama
Political Activity	50.00%	10.34%	0.00%
Special Event	10.00%	51.72%	60.00%
Attire/Physical Image	27.50%	17.24%	25.71%
Personal Platform	12.50%	20.69%	14.29%

***The table above indicates the subject matter of the articles selected for each first lady.**

Table 1 expresses how relevant the first ladies were to each individual article. It is important to note if the issues surrounding the first lady could be seen as viable enough to be the only subject or a main subject in the publication. In the articles analyzed, 32.00% of the time Hillary Clinton was the only subject. More rarely was she the main subject with other subjects at 27.50%. More of the time (40.00%), she was a secondary subject of the article. In most of the articles about Laura Bush, she was the secondary subject 62.07% of the time. She was the main subject in 27.59% of the articles and the only subject in 10.34%. Michelle Obama was mainly the secondary subject (45.71%). In 40.00% of the articles, she was the main subject while 14.29% of the time she was the only subject. Obama was rarely the only subject featured in an article.

Table 2 details the topic of the articles selected. They related to political activity, a special event, attire and/or physical image, or the personal platform of the first lady. Hillary Clinton's articles related mainly to political activity with 50.00% of the articles

relating to her being involved with these things. Also, 27.50% related to Clinton’s attire and physical image. Clinton’s personal platform was of importance 12.50% of the time and 10.00% of time was spent discussing her and a special event. The topic of the articles related to Laura Bush taking part in a special event in 51.72% of the articles. Also, 20.69% related to Bush’s personal platform. Only 17.24% of the articles related to Laura Bush’s attire or physical image and 10.34% related to political activity. Articles pertaining to Michelle Obama related to her participation in a special event (60.00%). About a fourth of the articles (25.71%) referred to Obama’s attire or her physical image. Obama’s personal platform was the topic of discussion in the articles 14.29% of the time. None of the articles during the first 100 days referred to Michelle Obama participating in political activity.

RQ2: Are First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama framed more frequently as professional or in traditional roles in *The Washington Post* during the first 100 days?

Table 3: Role

	Hillary Clinton	Laura Bush	Michelle Obama
Traditional	52.50%	93.10%	94.29%
Professional	47.50%	6.90%	5.71%

Table 3 indicates the role the first lady is playing in the text. An important aspect

of this research is the role being referenced in the articles. Of the 40 articles chosen, she was referenced 52.50% of the time performing a traditional role and 47.50% of the time performing a professional role. Table 3 also indicates that the role mainly played by Laura Bush in most articles was “traditional” 93.10% of the time. She was reported professionally in 6.90% of the articles analyzed. The table also shows that Michelle Obama was referenced as traditional or performing a traditional role in 94.29% of the articles, while playing a professional role in 5.71%.

RQ3: Is adopting the “traditional” or the “professional” roles of the first lady framed as negative or positive in *The Washington Post* when it relates to the First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama?

Table 4: Portrayal

	Hillary Clinton	Laura Bush	Michelle Obama
Positive	80.00%	89.66%	91.43%
Negative	20.00%	10.34%	8.57%

Table 5: Format

	Hillary Clinton	Laura Bush	Michelle Obama
News Story	82.50%	96.55%	85.71%
Letter to Editor	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%
Editorial	10.00%	3.44%	14.29%

Neither/Other	5.00%	0.00%	0.00%
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Table 6: Section

	Hillary Clinton	Laura Bush	Michelle Obama
Main Section	60.00%	31.03%	37.14%
Style	25.00%	41.38%	45.71%
Outlook	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%
Health	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%
Montgomery Extra	0.00%	3.45%	0.00%
Metro	0.00%	24.14%	11.43%
Home	0.00%	0.00%	2.86%
Extras	0.00%	0.00%	2.86%

Table 4 indicates the tone of the article. The coders indicate whether the portrayal could be considered positive or negative. During the first 100 days, Hillary Clinton was mainly referred to in a positive manner (80.00%). 20.00% of the articles referred to Clinton negatively. Table 4 breaks down the portrayal of First Lady Laura Bush in the articles, whether positive or negative. Of the 29 articles that referenced Laura Bush during her first 100 days as first lady, 89.66 % of them portrayed her positively, while 10.34% of them portrayed her negatively. During her first 100 days as first lady, Michelle Obama was portrayed positively 91.43% of the time, while coverage was negative 8.57% of the time.

Table 5 indicates the type of story that the articles were considered. Most articles that referenced Hillary Clinton were considered News Stories (82.50%), while only ten percent were Editorials. Only 2.50% of the articles were Letters to the Editor, and 5.00% of all articles used were not news stories, letters to the editor, nor editorials. There were very few Letters to the Editor of the public directly expressing their opinion about First Lady Hillary Clinton. The majority of articles (96.55%) pertaining to Laura Bush were considered News Stories, while 3.44% were Editorial. Surprisingly, none were in the form of a Letter to the Editor. Table 5 also displays the format of the articles of the study for Michelle Obama. A very large percentage of the stories were considered news stories. Of the 35 articles relating to Michelle Obama, 85.71% of them were in the News Story format. 14.29% of the articles in the paper were considered Editorial. There were no Letters to the Editor.

Table 6 expresses the locations where the articles were found. 60.00% of all 40 articles were located in the Main Section of *The Washington Post*. Next, 25.00% of articles could be found in the Style section of the publication, followed by the Outlook section with 12.50% and the Health section at 2.50%. Most articles that were selected pertaining to Hillary Clinton were located in the first section of the paper. It is likely that it was there because much of her coverage related to political activity. Articles pertaining to Laura Bush were mostly located in the Style section of *The Washington Post* with 41.38% in that location. The Main Section of the paper consisted of 31.03% of the articles while 21.14% of them were found in the Metro Section. 3.45% of articles were in

the Montgomery Extra Section. It is likely that most of the articles appeared in the Style section due to media concern with the physical appearance of the president's wife. In articles referencing Michelle Obama, 45.71% of them appeared in the Style Section of The Washington Post. 37.14% of them were in the A Section while 11.43% were in the Metro Section. 2.86% of the articles were found in both the Home and Extras sections.

This study intended to examine articles in *The Washington Post* relating to the three most recent first ladies, Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama during their first 100 days as the president's wife. Many scholars have concluded that first ladies who venture outside of the traditional role, serving as hostess and family caretaker, into a more professional role, becoming involved in politics or commenting on them, are subject to criticism in the media. As the president's progress is examined during his first 100 days of service, the same time period was selected to analyze media coverage of the first lady during this crucial time in office. Using a content analysis of 104 articles referencing the first ladies, the objective was to answer the research questions.

Discussion & Conclusion:

The study conducted examined how *The Washington Post* framed modern First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama. Using articles from this medium, the researcher examined articles from the first 100 days of the first term of their respective husband's presidency. After reviewing literature on the history of first ladies, media framing theory, gender roles and feminism, the researcher analyzed the articles

using a content analysis in order to answer the following research questions:

(1): What is the subject matter of the articles written on Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush, and Michelle Obama in *The Washington Post* during the first 100 days of being in office?

(2): Are First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama framed more frequently as professional or in traditional roles in *The Washington Post* during the first 100 days?

(3): Is adopting the “traditional” or the “professional” roles of the first lady framed as negative or positive in *The Washington Post* when it relates to the First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama?

The researcher looked at the subject matter of the articles about first ladies. It is important to know what the media consider central for coverage when it comes to these women. In this study, 104 articles were examined in depth to see what the chief issues were that surround the first lady and their level of importance. Among the things the coders investigated, they were instructed to indicate the section in which each article was located, and the topic of the article. By analyzing the results of the findings, certain conclusions can be made.

This study found that the media are very much concerned with physical attire more than other aspects of the role of the first lady. Only when she is involved with politics will she receive coverage other than that, but she is more likely to be seen as a “professional” not performing the traditional role of first lady. Since only the first 100 days of the presidency were viewed, there were obvious limitations. This simply gave

the initial media response to the first ladies. Future researchers could go more in depth into the roles these first ladies have taken on after this period and the media response to deviation from the traditional role. Individually, the entire term of Hillary Clinton as first lady would be interesting to note and important to various studies relating to feminism, framing, and gender roles. The way media frame these women dictate the way we understand gender roles. Media professionals must understand the important role they play in our society because they have the power to shape the views of the general public.

The idea that *The Washington Post* frames first ladies negatively if they act outside of the traditional role of womanhood is not surprising, as studies have indicated that this is normally the case in media portrayals of powerful women. Our society is set up to teach children their role in our culture when they are first born. Baby girls are given pink blankets, while boys are wrapped in blue. Little boys and girls subconsciously learn the "tricks of the trade," learning exactly what toys to play with and what type of demeanor to have. The media also subliminally train little girls' psyches, teaching them to become damsels in distress: "...media reflect society's dominant social values and symbolically denigrate women, whether by not showing them at all, or by depicting them in stereotypical roles. The models that media offer are restrictive and endanger the development of girls and women into complete human beings and socially valuable workers." (van Zoonen, p.17). The standard is set that a successful woman, one worthy of admiration like the First Lady of the United States, is one whose role revolves around supporting her husband and maintaining her aesthetics. The media are prominent and teach children how to behave and what to become: "...the new themes that feminist

media scholars added to the agenda of communication research were the stereotypical images of women in the media and the effects of these images on the audience" (van Zoonen, p.16).

From the first 100 days in office, 40 articles were selected concerning Hillary Clinton. Of those 40 articles, the majority of them were found in the Main Section and 25.00% of them were found in the Style Section. The topic of articles relating to Clinton was mainly political activity (50.00%) and her physical image and attire (27.50%). Of all of the first ladies' coverage, she has the least relating to style or image. This is not surprising since she became immediately involved with President Clinton's healthcare initiatives. During his campaign, she was described by her husband as an asset to his presidency, getting the proverbial "two for the price of one," giving media a "heads up" that she would be a first lady who challenged the typical subservient role.

There were 29 articles evaluated from the first 100 days of First Lady Laura Bush. Of those articles, close to half of them could be found in the Style Section of *The Washington Post* while 31.03% was found in the Main Section. Like Clinton, most coverage was found in these two sections. In over half of her articles, the subject pertained to her and special events compared to Clinton, who has much less coverage relating to this subject. Also, 20.69% related to her and her personal platform, while 7.24% related to her attire and physical qualities. Only 10.34% of coverage was about her involvement with political activity.

Thirty-five articles were examined regarding First Lady Michelle Obama. Of these, the almost half could be found in the Style section, while 37.14% of the articles could be found in the Main Section, the same sections in which the majority of Hillary

Clinton's articles were found. The topic of most of the articles related to her participation in a special event (60.00%) and her physical image (25.71%). Her reportage on special events significantly exceeded the amount of that of Laura Bush. Her personal platform was the topic of 14.29% of the articles. None of them related to partaking in political activity, which is different from the other two first ladies. Clinton had a significant amount of coverage related to political activity, while Bush had a minimal amount.

Aside from Hillary Clinton who had the majority of articles in the Main Section, the majority of the other first ladies' articles were found in the Style section. This is likely due to Clinton's heavy involvement in politics; however, one-fourth of her articles were found in the Style section. Also, the majority of both Obama and Bush's articles had the topic of them dealing with a special event (being a hostess, speaker, etc). The least amount of articles about Hillary Clinton deals with special events. This indicates that when the first lady delves outside of her "role," it will receive more coverage, and shows consistently that the physical is of importance for the media to cover.

During the first 100 days of their husband's presidency, first ladies were framed more frequently as traditional in *The Washington Post*. Of the 40 articles examined while Hillary Clinton held the position of first lady, 52.50% of them framed her traditionally. Likewise, 93.10% of the 29 articles referring to Laura Bush and 94.29% of the 35 articles referencing Michelle Obama framed them both traditionally. Previous scholars have determined that deviation from the traditional role of a first lady can lead to backlash from the media. The first lady has the role of serving as the paragon for female role in the traditional American family. During the first 100 days, however, most of the articles relating to each of the first ladies portrayed them traditionally.

Of the 40 articles evaluated for Hillary Clinton, 52.50% of them referred to her performing the conventional role of the first lady, while 47.50% of them referred to her performing a professional role. She received mainly positive coverage with only 20.00% of the articles having a negative tone. Of the eight articles that portrayed her negatively, four of them related to her participating in political activity. The other four articles related to her attire, hair, or her physical image. This likely shows the two areas first ladies are most criticized. Of the same eight negative articles, half of them she was performing a traditional role and the other half, she was performing a professional role. Hillary Clinton had such a high number of articles relating to her performing a non-traditional first lady role because of her involvement with politics during her husband's term, as she was heavily involved in health care initiatives under the Clinton Administration. She became involved quickly after becoming first lady.

Of the 29 articles evaluated for Laura Bush, 93.10% captured her in a traditional role, while only 6.90% of them considered her professionally. This could likely be attributed to Bush maintaining the traditional role throughout her tenure. Only three of the articles portrayed her negatively, one related to attire or other physical features while the other two covered her along with political activity. This is consistent with Hillary Clinton, with the negative coverage being of the first lady's attire and her involvement with politics. This demonstrates the media's consistency with judging the physical attributes of these women, as well as involvement in politics.

Of the 35 articles evaluated that refer to Michelle Obama, only 8.57% portrayed her negatively while 91.43% portrayed her positively. Out of the 35 articles, the three that contained a negative portrayal of the most recent first lady, two were related to attire

and/or physical image while the other referred to a special event, confirming that all three first ladies were negatively judged on their physical appearance. Two of the articles portrayed her role as professional and the other portrayed her as traditional. The negativity related to attire remains consistent through each first lady. She had no articles in the selected 35 that the coders related to political activity.

Very surprisingly, these three first ladies' coverage was mainly positive during this short period of time. However, realistically the women had not had much time to mess up her subservient act as traditional homemaker. This limits the potential of young, American girls, keeping them at a standard that women have far exceeded. The media have a great impact on the consumer: "Forms of media culture... provide role and gender models, fashion hints, lifestyle images, and icons of personality. The narratives of media culture offer patterns of proper and improper behavior, moral messages and ideological conditioning..." (Durham & Kellner, p. ix).

As the results of this study reveal, the first lady is held to traditional standards, but it is quite obvious that sex roles have evolved over the years, and the gap between female and male gender roles is closing. Since the years of women's suffrage, women have long abandoned the requirement to remain inside the home and have established themselves in their own right. Although society has advanced from these traditional gender roles, the media lag in catching up on the notions of the woman of today. It is unfortunate that the first lady is shunned for promoting women by emphasizing her success, serving as a role-model in this way instead of a fashion icon or a role model by way of the man she decided to marry. "Women struggling to maintain fierce commitment to radical feminist womanhood in the face of a culture that rewards betrayal want to have a feminist icon

who stands against the patriarchy, who "fights the power" (Hooks, p. 11). The challenge today is that although women as a group have ventured outside of the home and into professional lives and careers, the media hold, still, that the traditional mold must be conformed to. They cling to notions that no longer exist in our society. Women are regarded superficially by *The Washington Post*, with them focusing on looks instead of what she can contribute to America.

The years that the traditions that the media strictly hold the first ladies to were created pre-women's rights. The women's suffrage ended with the passage of the 19th amendment, constitutionally giving women the right to vote. Now the success of women, in terms of first ladies, is undervalued in the position. She is expected not to further her career while fulfilling her role as first lady, which has yet to be formally recognized in any official us document.

Long gone are the times when women were to be seen but not heard. Women in society, today, have more of a "voice," but she is muffled when she is uprooted from her professional, self-attained career, and placed where she acts in a role of the past. In a time when their struggle is underrepresentation in many male-dominated fields, these first ladies were "asked" to represent herself as something she is not. Women are degraded to being insuperior beings, and the position of the first lady, who is "the female ideal," the representative of womanhood in America devalues the progress of the New Age Woman. The lives of women who are not public figures are not shunned for being professional women, but under the media microscope, first ladies sacrifice years of education and establishing themselves professionally to not bring negative exposure to her, her husband or her family.

Media consumers must regard it critically, taking the meat and leaving the bones, so to speak. Media professionals must remember that American culture consistently evolves, and they must adjust to these changes. They can have a potentially negative impact on the growth of our society.

Appendices

Appendix A

Articles: Hillary Clinton

	TITLE	DATE
A1-HC	Hillary Clinton's Meetings of the Minds; On Hill and in Town Gyms, First Lady Seeks Health Care Consensus	4/30/93
A2-HC	Administration Plans Tax On Some Health Benefits; Hillary Clinton Meets Finance Committee	4/21/93
A3-HC	Health Care Reform	4/20/93
A4-HC	1 st Part of Work Done, Health Task Force Told; Decisions From Clintons Needed, Aide Says	4/9/93
A5-HC	Health Benefits Tax Still Possible, Hillary Clinton Says	3/18/93
A6-HC	'Til Taxes Do Us Part; In Clinton's Tax Plan, Dumping That Dull Spouse Pays	3/14/93
A7-HC	First Lady Hears Stories of Medical Frustration; Tampa Session Opens Health Care Forums	3/13/93
A8-HC	...Her Guard	3/13/93
A9-HC	Senators Pose Family Issues To First Lady; Six Female Members Lobby on Health Care	3/12/93
A10-HC	First Lady Is a Government 'Outsider,' Judge Rules; White House Is Told Some Meetings of Hillary Clinton's Health Panel Must Be Held in Public	3/11/93
A11-HC	Originator Calls Tax Cap 'Essential' to Health Plan	3/10/93
A12-HC	Judge Considers Request to Open Clinton Task Force	3/6/93
A13-HC	In All Seriousness	3/6/93
A14-HC	Hillary Clinton, in the Heart of Health Care; In Louisiana, First Lady Listens to Workers' Problems	3/5/93
A15-HC	Justice Department Calls Open-Meeting Law Invalid	3/4/93
A16-HC	Hillary Clinton Visits Minority Caucuses; Black, Hispanic Groups Share Views on Health Care With First Lady	3/3/93
A17-HC	Eleanor Roosevelt, In Bronze; Hillary Clinton Joins in Benefit for N.Y. Statue	2/22/93
A18-HC	An Open Letter to Hillary Clinton; Tethering the Medicare-Medicaid monster	2/18/93
A19-HC	Anonymity Is Buzzword For Health 'Worker Bees'	2/17/93
A20-HC	Riding High on Hillary's Hair	2/17/93
A21-HC	First Lady Holds Health Teach-In; Hillary Clinton Begins Effort to Humanize Issue With Citizens' Input	2/12/93
A22-HC	Hillary Clinton's Stealth Communicator; Chief of Staff Maggie Williams, Navigating the Corridors of Power	2/11/93
A23-HC	GOP Congressman Questions Hillary Clinton's Closed-Door Meetings	2/10/93
A24-HC	The Game of the Name; What the Brave Lucy Stone Bequeathed to Hillary Rodham	2/7/93
A25-HC	First Lady Presses Hill on Health Care; Hillary Clinton Consults Democratic, GOP Senators on Reform	2/5/93
A26-HC	Hillary Clinton Takes The Hill; First Lady Is All Business In Her Health Care Hat	2/5/93
A27-HC	VIZ., Two Faces of Hillary	1/31/93
A28-HC	A Rodham By Any Other Name	1/29/93
A29-HC	First Lady's First Task Breaks New Ground; Health Care Panel Chairwoman Introduces Herself to Congress in 6 Hours of Phone Calls	1/27/93
A30-HC	...And Hillary Clinton's Job	1/27/93
A31-HC	The Health Czar, At Her Other Job; For Hillary Clinton, Kids and an Award On a Traditional First-Lady Day	1/27/93

A32-HC	Approaching Critical Mass	1/24/93
A33-HC	Clinton Officials Jockeying to Seize Health Care Issue	1/22/93
A34-HC	The 'Crats In the Hats Come Back	1/21/93
A35-HC	First Lady Says She'll Pay for Clothes	1/21/93
A36-HC	Young Crowds Hail New Chief; At Kennedy Center, Clinton Wins Mister Rogers' Neighborhood	1/20/93
A37-HC	We've Hear That...	1/20/93
A38-HC	Clothes of the Hour; Last Minute Wardrobe Changes for Hillary	1/20/93
A39-HC	Ervin Litkei, In Sousa's Footsteps; His Marches Honor Both Bill & Hillary	1/20/93
A40-HC	NOW, 'A DIFFERENT KIND OF FIRST LADY'; Hillary Clinton's role is likely to be activist	1/20/93

Appendix B

Articles: Laura Bush

	TITLE	DATE
A1-LB	A First Lady's Lasting Look; Jacqueline Kennedy Brought Elegance to Politics	4/25/01
A2-LB	For Bush and Quebec Summit, a Light News Weekend	4/23/01
A3-LB	Seniors Troupe Puts First Ladies at Center Stage	4/19/01
A4-LB	Budget Is Democrats' Blueprint for Attacks on Bush	4/15/01
A5-LB	For First Chefs, Holiday's Annual Boil and Dye Job	4/15/01
A6-LB	Laura Bush, Smelling The Roses; First Lady Takes Her Garden Club on Tour	4/10/01
A7-LB	The Reliable Source	4/5/01
A8-LB	Rite Kicks Off Bloomin' Good Time; Formal Opening Of Blossom Festival A Herald of Spring	3/26/01
A9-LB	Festivities, Flora May Finally Align; Cherry Parade's Planners Hope Adjusted Date Nips Complaints in the Bud	3/25/01
A10-LB	Learning To Read Laura Bush; The First Lady's Quietude Masks A Passionate Interest in Ideas	3/22/01
A11-LB	D.C. Mayor Front, but No Center, at Bush Address	2/28/01
A12-LB	Bush Calls Tax Cut Affordable; In 1 st Speech to Congress, President Vows Less Debt, More Education Spending	2/28/01
A13-LB	Designing History; White House Committee Will Help Bushes Create Their Home's Style	2/27/01
A14-LB	Election 2000 Is a Boon for Democracy Tank	2/27/01
A15-LB	The First Lady's School Cheer; Mrs. Bush Stresses Need for Teachers	2/27/01
A16-LB	D.C. Seeks Different Sort of Teacher; Recruitment Drive Targets Instructors From Other Professions	2/23/01
A17-LB	The Reliable Source	2/16/01
A18-LB	The Reliable Source	2/1/01
A19-LB	Faith-Based Successes	1/28/01
A20-LB	School, Archbishop Get Presidential Visit; Bush Praises D.C. Elementary for Practicing What He's Preaching	1/26/01
A21-LB	Upholding the Dignity of the Office --With Starch	1/26/01
A22-LB	The President Pays a Visit To D.C. School, Archbishop	1/26/01
A23-LB	Roe v. Wade Protesters Fired Up by President	1/23/01
A24-LB	Abortion Foes Gather For 27 th Annual Rally; Activists Hope to Build on Bush Victory	1/22/01
A25-LB	The First Lady, Hot and Cool In Basic Red	1/21/01
A26-LB	Bush and Wife Appear to Differ On Roe v. Wade	1/20/01
A27-LB	Nation's Big Fete, Texas Style; Weather Remains Threat to Events	1/20/01
A28-LB	Living 'a Librarian's Dream'; Laura Bush Spends Day Extolling Writers, Touting Reading	1/20/01
A29-LB	First Lady Puts Privacy First; Reluctant Star Likely to Set Own Terms	1/20/01

Appendix C

Articles: Michelle Obama

	TITLE	DATE
A1-MO	Bruised by Stimulus Battle, Obama Changes His Approach to Washington	4/29/09
A2-MO	Federal City Digest	4/28/09
A3-MO	First Lady's Designers Want A Change	4/26/09
A4-MO	What to Watch	4/23/09
A5-MO	Famous Frocks That We Can All See Ourselves In	4/19/09
A6-MO	To Michelle: Don't Say We Didn't Warn Your About Gardening in D.C.	4/16/09
A7-MO	Egg Roll Served With A Side of Exercise; Yoga, Dancing, Soccer Part of the Day's Fun	4/14/09
A8-MO	Journalists Give The First Lady Full Marks at G-20	4/3/09
A9-MO	Today's News	3/31/09
A10-MO	Planting the Seeds of Life Skills; Washington Area Schools Use Natural Classrooms As 'No Child Left Inside' Movement Gains Traction	3/30/09
A11-MO	Names & Faces	3/28/09
A12-MO	Youth Group Is at Home on the Mall	3/26/09
A13-MO	An Invitation to the Obamas	3/24/09
A14-MO	The White House South 40 th ; Michelle, Michelle, how does your garden grow?	3/22/09
A15-MO	White House Preps for Veggies, but Aims to Raise Awareness	3/21/09
A16-MO	The First Lady's Ambassadors of Success	3/20/09
A17-MO	Shovel-Ready Project: A White House Garden	3/20/09
A18-MO	Federal City Digest	3/19/09
A19-MO	Rebuilding Young Lives and Communities; 100 People Join in Constructing 'Green' Home for Family That Lost Trailer in Hurricane	3/18/09
A20-MO	Fashion Loves an It Girl But Still Doesn't Get It	3/15/09
A21-MO	44	3/13/09
A22-MO	Women's Courage Takes State Dept. Center Stage	3/12/09
A23-MO	State Dept.'s Honors Put Women's Issues at Fore	3/12/09
A24-MO	For a Day, First Lady Becomes a Lunch Lady; Obama Brightens Day Of Homeless Clients At Miriam's Kitchen	3/6/09
A25-MO	Top Officials Expand The Dialogue on Race; Month's Celebrations Evoke a Mix of Views	2/28/09
A26-MO	D.C. Students Among Guests in Obama Box	2/25/09
A27-MO	You Gotta Love the First Lady. No, Really, You Have No Choice	2/15/09
A28-MO	Ms. Obama's Outreach; Bureaucrats deserve a little love, too.	2/15/09
A29-MO	Names & Faces	2/14/09
A30-MO	Not Only in Vogue, but on It; Fashion Bellwether Paints a Glowing Portrait of the First Lady	2/11/09
A31-MO	Covering Michelle Obama	2/7/09
A32-MO	44	2/3/09
A33-MO	First Lady Assails Use of Daughters' Images for Dolls	1/25/09
A34-MO	First Ladies and Gowns in the Limelight	1/24/09
A35-MO	As First Lady, Michelle Obama Can Blaze Her Own Trail	1/20/09

Appendix D

FIGURE 1:

<p>Codes:</p> <p>Section: Denotes the section in which the article was found</p> <p>Format: 1= News Story, 2=Letter to Editor, 3=Editorial 4= neither/other</p> <p>References: Frequency of reference to First Lady in the article (Number of times the first ladies were referenced)</p> <p>Relevance to the Story: How relevant is the First Lady to the story? 1= Only subject, 2= Main subject, 3= Secondary subject</p> <p>Role (of the First Lady): 1= Traditional, 2=Professional, 3=neither/other</p> <p><i>*Traditional: when the First Lady is referred to as a hostess or reported doing wifely/motherly duties; personal platform; seen as a part of a unit with her husband</i></p> <p><i>*Professional: regarding to involvement in political activity, deviating from the traditional role of the first lady; seen as more of an individual than as a unit with her husband</i></p> <p>Topic: 1=Political Activity, 2= Special Event, 3=Attire/Physical Image, 4= Personal Platform</p> <p>Portrayal: 1= Positive, 2= Negative</p> <p><i>*Positive: The stance of the article is in favor of the role being played by the First Lady</i></p> <p><i>*Negative: The stance of the article opposes the role being played by the First Lady</i></p>
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Figures 2, 3, and 4 show sample coding sheets for each first lady, respectively.

Figure 2: Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton							
Coder: _____				Date: _____			
Articles	Section	Format	References	Relevance	Role	Topic	Portrayal
A1-HC							
A2-HC							
A3-HC							
A4-HC							
A5-HC							
A6-HC							
A7-HC							
A8-HC							
A9-HC							
A10-HC							
A11-HC							
A12-HC							
A13-HC							
A14-HC							
A15-HC							
A16-HC							
A17-HC							
A18-HC							
A19-HC							
A20-HC							
A21-HC							
A22-HC							
A23-HC							
A24-HC							
A25-HC							
A26-HC							
A27-HC							
A28-HC							
A29-HC							
A30-HC							
A31-HC							
A32-HC							
A33-HC							
A34-HC							
A35-HC							
A36-HC							
A37-HC							
A38-HC							
A39-HC							
A40-HC							

Figure 3: Laura Bush

Laura Bush

Coder: _____ Date: _____

Articles	Section	Format	References	Relevance	Role	Topic	Portrayal
A1-LB							
A2-LB							
A3-LB							
A4-LB							
A5-LB							
A6-LB							
A7-LB							
A8-LB							
A9-LB							
A10-LB							
A11-LB							
A12-LB							
A13-LB							
A14-LB							
A15-LB							
A16-LB							
A17-LB							
A18-LB							
A19-LB							
A20-LB							
A21-LB							
A22-LB							
A23-LB							
A24-LB							
A25-LB							
A26-LB							
A27-LB							
A28-LB							
A29-LB							

Figure 4: Michelle Obama

Michelle Obama							
Coder: _____				Date: _____			
Articles	Section	Format	References	Relevance	Role	Topic	Portrayal
A1-MO							
A2-MO							
A3-MO							
A4-MO							
A5-MO							
A6-MO							
A7-MO							
A8-MO							
A9-MO							
A10-MO							
A11-MO							
A12-MO							
A13-MO							
A14-MO							
A15-MO							
A16-MO							
A17-MO							
A18-MO							
A19-MO							
A20-MO							
A21-MO							
A22-MO							
A23-MO							
A24-MO							
A25-MO							
A26-MO							
A27-MO							
A28-MO							
A29-MO							
A30-MO							
A31-MO							
A32-MO							
A33-MO							
A34-MO							
A35-MO							

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