

The Evolutionary Influence of the First Ladies in the Modern and Postmodern American History

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to accurately analyze the evolution and influence of First Ladies through American modern and postmodern history, from Eleanor Roosevelt to Melania Trump. These two periods had strongly marked the touch of feminine political activities. The influence of the First Lady as an institution grew immensely with the development of industrial and technological eras. The power and influence of the First Lady significantly increased at various times in history when they felt that they must step in and intervene in their husbands' political activities in difficult times. The First Ladies took the lead and responsibly solved their husbands' political agendas with great importance towards domestic and international issues that concerned the United States of America.

The age of digitization dictates First Ladies the need for a daily dose of populism in various structures of the social networks and direct communication with her and her husband's supporters. The symbiosis of emotional intelligence, calmness and elegance is the most important for the silhouette status she represents. In short, always and everywhere is necessary to reconcile given abilities with the protocols that become an integrated part of their lives.

KEYWORDS: United States, First Ladies, influence, role

POVZETEK

Namen te raziskave je natančno analizirati evolucijo in vpliv prvih dam skozi ameriško moderno in postmoderno zgodovino od Eleanor Roosevelt do Melanie Trump. Ti dve obdobji sta močno zaznamovali ženski pridih v političnem udejstvovanju, na kar pa sta vplivala tudi industrijski in tehnološki razvoj. Povečal se je vpliv in moč prve dame, ki je v nekem trenutku posegla tudi v moževovo politično delovanje ter se v težkih časih odgovorno spopadala z razmerami, ki so bile predvidene za reševanje njenemu možu. Prve dame so prevzele vodstvo in odgovorno reševanje politične agende svojih mož z velikim pomenom na področju domačih in mednarodnih vprašanj, ki zadevajo Združene države Amerike. Doba digitalizacije prvim damam narekuje dnevno dozo populizma v različnih strukturah družbenih omrežij ter vzpostavitev neposredne komunikacije z moževimi podporniki. Simbioza čustvene inteligence, umirjenosti in elegance, je izjemno pomembna za status silhete, ki jo predstavlja. Skratka, vedno in povsod je potrebno dane sposobnosti uskladiti s protokoli, ki postanejo sestavni del njihovega življenja.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Združene države Amerike, prve dame, vpliv, vloga

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INTRODUCTION

The modern era in the American political history is the period after the World War II. Modernism as the political concept is defined by worshipping the newly created state that embodies the people and the nation, or it can be defined as the Hegelian idea of the state as a spiritual force that alone gives a meaning to an individual's life or in Hegel's words: "the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth" (D'Amato, 2015).

Modernism was characterized with a high industrial progress, the progress in science and the ideas after asserting the progress of all social structures in the system. The military industry grew rapidly.

Modernism in the institution of the First Lady however mainly referred to the struggle for the social equality (Aronowitz, 1988, pp. 99-115). Eleanor Roosevelt can definitely be singled out as a prominent representative of the modernism.

In politics and diplomacy, the end of the modern era is considered to be the end of the Cold War, i. e. it lasts until approximately 1991. The key representative of the Institution of the First Lady in the beginning of postmodern era is Hillary Clinton.

Both the modern and the postmodern eras mark the turning point of the reign of the First Ladies, as these two eras dictated many changes in the way the Institution operated.

The power of the First Lady as an independent institution in the White House has been greatly ignored and underestimated throughout history. Over the last hundred years, we have witnessed how far the tentacles of this institution can reach and what impact they can have on American and global society. The role of the First Lady as an institution and how it operates has changed through industrialization, technological progress, and digitalization.

The strategies of the First Ladies on how they would perform in front of the media and provide them with the information were very varied. Some organized tea parties for journalists; others invited journalists on a yacht sailing. Some organized and sponsored trips; others held press conferences and enjoyed being in the media spotlight; some would withdraw from the media life.

With the development of the industry, women began to secure a better position in society. They have become more educated and maintained more permanent jobs. Their mass involvement in the modern-day age and the ever-changing society provided turbulent changes. The role of the First Lady was no exception.

From a static iconic figure, a faithful companion, an implementer of her ideas to active political participation. The activities of the First Lady intensified through the development of the Institution of the First Lady and the general society itself.

Each of the First Ladies had their specific characteristics that shaped her in a unique form and became a role model to women over the globe. However, how the media decided to portray her uniqueness does not always depend entirely on her. A huge bearing has a group of her employees that shape her qualifications and interests into the Institutional needs. Each one of them chooses her strategy form of a public appearance.

There were several demands for different abilities of First Ladies that were increasing in time with the everchanging and demanding development of society, such as high communication skills, the ability to build relationships, clarifying certain unclear situations, speculations or scandals, the ability to calm down, inspire, invigorate, encourage, and express trust and confidence. The main thing expected as the main trait from the First Lady was her reasonableness, intelligence, the ability to find the communication contact, and path to attention.

When women gained their right to vote, Eleanor Roosevelt fought for human rights and was first First Lady that became a member of the UN. She published her articles in a daily newspaper and was a guest on radio shows several times. Hillary Clinton championed the agendas of her husband. During his tenure as president of the United States of America, she was more involved with his administration than her own. She rejected traditionalism within the institution and secured a senatorial position on the American political scene. Hillary fought and pushed strongly to establish new and meet traditional milestones for the First Lady as an institution. Laura Bush took reigns over her husband's agenda at the most difficult times in recent American history when America was experiencing the worst terrorist attack on its soil. She connected with the citizens, performed in public, and prayed with

them. Laura took it upon herself and decided to travel to Afghanistan, where she advocated and fought for women's rights. For her struggles, her fight for women's rights, and her activism, she was awarded the title of UN Ambassador.

Michelle Obama took advantage of media attention and acted in a populist manner. She wanted to get closer to voters, so she was a regular guest on television and connected to social networks where she communicated with Americans in a new and modern way. On the other hand, Melania Trump charmed every voter with her charm and elegance, no matter which political option they belonged. Melania did not receive classic attention from the mainstream media as they were at war with the agendas of her husband. Melania took great advantage of modern communication methods and communicated with voters of her husband through a social networking platform.

Today the administration office has become strength of the institution of the First Lady as a component as it has its staff and budget. The First Lady today is an institution that is always in the eye of the public. She is constantly being monitored by the media, the political establishment, and journalists as she has become the central figure of the presidency. The former traditional role of presidential women has made room for what many see as a partnership function with the presidency.

Every single one of the First Ladies throughout American history left her own mark on the functioning of her administration, moving barriers and milestones for the jurisdiction of her institution to her successor.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT – WOMAN WHO SHAPED THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Eleanor Roosevelt has marked her life since her childhood as she lost both of her parents at the very young age, being only 10 years old. Her grandmother took care of her upbringing and soon sent her to school in the United Kingdom. Eleanor marries distant cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt. She developed into a woman with a great deal of empathy for the disadvantaged people of all social structures, genders, religions, races, and nations. Her constant work to improve the unjust situation of disadvantaged people, on one hand, marked her as most popular, and, on the other, as the most hated woman of her generation.

In 1905 Eleanor married her fifth cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Her uncle Theodore Roosevelt accompanied her as a bride to the altar; at that time was the president of the United States. During the first eleven years of her marriage, Eleanor gave birth to six children, one of whom passed away in infancy. By the time Franklin began serving in the State Senate, Eleanor was building her career as a political aide. Eleanor diligently acquired in-depth knowledge of political activities in Washington during the time of her husband's service as an Assistant Secretary in the Navy. In 1921, her husband contracted poliomyelitis and placed her in the role of a devoted guardian. He was active in the woman's department of the National Democratic Committee and maintained interests in politics. From his successful campaign for governor in 1928 until his passing away, she dedicated her life to his purposes. Eleanor became his second violin, performing in public on his behalf, traveling the world and America, garnering the votes of potential voters (Loizeau, 2015).

She attended 348 press conferences during twelve years of her husband's presidency (1933-1945) which attracted more than a hundred journalists. However, after the outbreak of the Second World War, the number of press conferences decreased enormously due to security measures. All administrative matters from the Early The office were managed and handled by female journalists who organized an association for Mrs. Roosevelt's press conference. Due to the segregation the African American reporters did not receive accreditations as they did not represent any daily newspapers. The press conference project proved to be a success, as it provided details of the everyday life of the Roosevelts' which was very interesting to the public. They also published soft messages to female audiences; the approach taken intended to act as a counterbalance to serious war themes. The exclusion of male journalists from the press conferences encouraged press organizations to hire female journalists, thus stepping into the fight for gender equality in the journalistic profession (Beasley, 2020, p.34).

A couple of years later, some male journalists asked Mrs. Roosevelt some confronting questions about her assessment of administrative ability and critically pointed out the thesis of nepotism that she hired personal friends in well-paid positions. As far as the media is concerned, her efforts have gone far beyond her press conferences. In her daily column, "My day is a diary", Eleanor describes her daily activities in great detail. She first began writing her column at the

end of 1935. Her column was published by 62 newspapers, with a total circulation of more than 4 million readers. She has consistently appeared in newspapers with photographs of various trips, paid and unpaid lectures, as warnings of federal projects to help the unfortunate, advocating for human rights activists, and supporting World War II efforts by visiting American troops around the globe. In 1941, she began a popular column in *Ladies Home Journal* in which she was answering questions to female audiences. She also wrote an autobiography entitled "This Is My Story". She was a frequent guest on live radio broadcasts, where she established direct communication with the listeners.²

Eleanor often expressed herself in platitudes, probably because she often disagreed with Franklin in public and clung to the fiction that he had little influence in his administration. However, her words resonated among the average American citizen who responded to her sincere concern for people in need and her abilities to help.³

Eleanor was financially independent as she was earning her own money. From 1941-1944 her average wage was \$ 76,000 after a 50% tax deduction and 17% donation and payment of her agent fees; she did not have much left. Some of her opponents complained that she was commercializing her position. The wives of US presidents in postmodern time can make millions by writing books, but only after they leave the White House. In Roosevelt's case, this was not the case, as she continued to make money by writing, lecturing, and appearing on the radio and later television even after Franklin's expected passing on April 12, 1945 (Beasley, 2020, p.36).

In summary, Roosevelt proved to be her own press secretary and communications strategist. She drew her strength from the roles she built as a role model for women, and her husband's political partner in terms of involvement in the media through a variety of channels, including press conferences and personal contacts with women journalists. Eleanor recognized that the First Lady is a public figure and used her as an opportunity to advance both her political agenda and her career as a writer, lecturer, and media representative. She improved the appetite of journalists for news of the First Ladies during the presidency. Eleanor Roosevelt was appointed to delegate the United

2 First Ladies. First Lady Biography: Eleanor Roosevelt. National First Ladies' Library. Available at: <http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=33> (Accessed 10 February 2022).

3 *ibid.*

Nations General Assembly in 1946 by President Truman. Eleanor was the first chair of the Human Rights Commission where she played a key role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In times of growing tensions between the east and west, she used her prestige and the credibility of superpowers to steer the text preparation process towards its successful conclusion (Adami Routledge, 2018).

Eleanor Roosevelt liked to say, “A woman is like a tea bag. You never know how strong it is until it’s in a hot water.” (Weishan, 2018).

Eleanor Roosevelt as a respectable zealous human rights activist certainly overtook her time and amassed quite a few enemies in America. However, her work and efforts in this area bore fruit. Thanks to her hard work and dedication to her cause, as well as the whole team she worked with, the most of international community is committed to respecting human rights.

ELIZABETH TRUMAN – HIDDEN FROM THE PUBLIC EYE

As a senator’s wife, before her husband was elected the president, Bess Truman was able to keep her private life away from the public. She took over the function of the first lady from Eleanor after the death of President Roosevelt and served the United States from 1945 to 1953. She did not like to be in the center of media attention, and she interrupted her daily meetings with journalists, which started hosting while Eleanor’s’ mandate.

Bess Truman appreciated a quiet life. She has repeatedly stressed that she was not elected president but her husband and that the public spotlight should be directed to him. Mrs. Truman told the media that they should contact her in writing for all possible questions, which she will also answer in a letter. Together with her daughter, she moved from the White House several times to her second home in Independence Missouri where her daughter Margaret attended school.

She was also involved in the renovation of the White House, showing a great deal of interest in returning Korean veterans, and raised funds for the research in the fight against cancer (Beasley, 2020, pp.36-37).

Far from the public eye, Bess was seen as a valuable member of her husband’s administration, as he described her as a “chief advisor” and “full partner in all transactions, politically and otherwise” (ibid.).

But Mrs. Truman also had her opponents, one of whom was republican congresswoman Clare Booth Luce, a member of the American social elite, who described her as unrefined. Since 1939 when Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the Daughters of the American Revolution because the organization supported segregation and did not allow black musicians to perform in their concert hall, this organization did not have the First Lady as a member, up until Bess Truman accepted DAR's invitation to a tea party. A black congressman Adam Clayton Powell calls her "the last lady" afterwards. Because of these words, President Truman forbids Powell to enter the White House until further notice. Bess responds to these allegations with a letter to the New York Times in which she explains that she opposes racial prejudice but did not want to sever ties with DAR. Regardless of her withdrawal from the public eye, Bess was a respected First Lady by most Americans.⁴

She did not accept the role of her predecessor but rather updated the average American from the late '40s and early '50s. Bess accepted the role of a mother and a wife, she had a passion for playing bridge, and occasionally in the White House she guested friends from Independence Missouri. In short, Bess performed her duties as president's hostess and worked persistently on goals such as the renovation of the White House, but she had deep and long-standing reservations about her public role. Outside of the public eye, she served as her husband's political entourage and advisor (ibid.).

Her famous quote was: "A woman's place in public is to sit beside her husband, be silent, and be sure her hat is on straight." (Van der Heuvel, 1982).

Bess Truman was a reported kind First Lady who performed her function on her terms and to the best of her abilities and desires, which also testifies how strong her will and determination were.

MAMIE EISENHOWER – MAMIE PINK

Mary Geneva, as Mamie Eisenhower was officially called, took over a function as the First Lady in 1953 and enjoyed that term until 1961. Unlike her predecessor Bess Truman, Mamie enjoyed being the center of the media attention.

⁴ Miller Center. Bess Truman. Available at: <https://millercenter.org/president/truman/essays/truman-1945-firstlady> (Accessed 10 February 2022).

She often dressed in pink dresses, even her bedroom in the White House was also in pink. On numerous occasions, the newspapers chose her as the best-dressed public figure.⁵ Thus, in her time, she also became a fashion icon. During her tenure, most of her attention was devoted to supporting her husband and all ceremonial duties.⁶

Regardless of her expected duties, she found enough time to dedicate to certain charities. Thus in 1956, she launched a fundraising campaign for the American Heart Association and later gave her support to create benefits for retirees, military personnel, and widows. Mamie also contributed to the fight against segregation through symbolic actions as she invited African-American children to the Easter scroll at the White House, and accepted honorary membership in the National Council of Black Women (Beasley, 2020, pp.37-38).

Mamie supported her husband in good and bad, and one of the great challenges was the health problems both of them faced. Her husband suffered a heart attack in 1955, had abdominal surgery in 1956, and had a stroke in 1957. Mamie on the other hand was facing heart disease caused by a rheumatic case from childhood and also suffered an injury to her inner ear called Menier's disease, which affected her balance. Occasional scrutiny of the First Lady stumbling and losing balance, pointed out by the media, fueled ugly and baseless rumors that she has trouble drinking. (Caroli, 2010).

Mamie used to say: "Every woman over fifty should stay in bed until noon.." ⁷ She surely had a sense of humor.

In short, Mamie was extremely popular with the crowd and was accepted by important people. She successfully performed her duties as First Lady. She was known for her friendly parties and warm receptions, White House officials reported that she closely monitored them and always pointed out any mistakes. She did not like to speak at the press conferences, she rather listed upcoming events. Although she did not change the way the institution of the First Lady worked,

5 Mamie Eisenhower is instantly recognized by her hairstyle which was arranged in "bangs". The fashion of the day had changed to shorter, informal hairstyles which had led to a decline in the wearing of hats. The term "bangs" was a name applied to the short, curled fringe that sits high on the forehead.

6 White House History. The Eisenhower's Bedroom. Available at: <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/photos/the-eisenhowers-bedroom> (Accessed 10 February 2022).

7 National First Ladies Library. Quote Quiz. Available at: http://www.firstladies.org/quote_quiz.aspx (Accessed 4 February 2022).

Mamie Eisenhower was very popular with many American women who imitated her youthful style known as “Mamie Style”.

JACQUELINE KENNEDY- THE SAD STAR RADIATING THE HOLLYWOOD FAME

In addition to the most beloved First Lady, she was rightly called the saddest First Lady. Maybe that is just a part of what the media called the Kennedy’s Curse. Jackie met her future husband John F. Kennedy at a celebration sponsored by a mutual friend, a journalist by the name Charles Bartlett. Later that year John F. Kennedy became a senator and their relationship became quite intense. Although he proposed to her very quickly, Jackie did not immediately agree to his marriage proposal. Later on, she said “Yes”, and they engaged in the spring of 1953, shortly after they got married in September the same year.

Soon after the marriage, their problems began. At first, John was ill and suffered from Addison’s disease, which led to two spinal surgeries, and suffering followed in terms of posterity. Jackie had her first miscarriage a year later, in 1955, and then she gave birth to a stillborn child. Later on, when they talked about the girl they lost, Jackie sentimentally called her Arabella. They had their first child, daughter Caroline in 1957, and in 1960, they became parents of a boy named John F. Kennedy Jr. Despite the difficulties in her life and the splendor that was visible only at first glance, Jackie was already considered a fashion icon of her time and was very helpful when it came to the career of her husband, she was very elegant, educated, enlightened... However, this was not helpful for the happiness in their marriage. John was unfaithful and cheated on Jackie, this became known several decades afterward. It is well documented that she knew about all of John’s affairs. Jackie knew who his mistresses were, where and when he met them, she did not suffer too much because of it as long as she wasn’t experiencing public shame. John’s biggest affair and the one that she despised and feared the most of all was, of course, the one with Marilyn Monroe (Anthony, 2013, Jones, 2001, Quirk, 1996).

The controversial lifestyle chosen by the president has led to greater involvement of the First Lady in the media. Jackie shone with Hollywood fame; she organized her public relations administration, had her press secretary, and was very focused on exposing herself on television as much as possible, which was considered modern at the time. Some might even think she was competing with Marilyn for the

media and Mr. Kennedy's attention. Jackie Kennedy was the first to appoint a press secretary and establish press policy in the modern age of television. By the 1960s, the importance of image-making in politics increased in value as television focused on visual images and celebrities. Mrs. Kennedy seemed perfectly suited to the TV era, but her physical attractiveness and youth worked against her once the media realized it could profit from relentless public demand. The press hounded Jackie from the moment she married John F. Kennedy until the last day of her life when she was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. Kennedy's relationship with the press could rightly be called an oxymoron: she was "privately public" in all things concerning her role as the First Lady (Natalle 2020, pp. 43-44).

Before her term as the First Lady was over, Kennedy became the most photographed woman in the world and the paparazzi followed her everywhere she went.

As a good mother Jackie tried to shield the amount of public exposure her children received, so she made sure that all photographs or stories about her children leaving the White House had to meet with her approval first.

The role of the First Lady morphed into a movie star and Kennedy's picture along with bogus stories and rumors on the front page of the tabloids right alongside the real Hollywood stars. Unfortunately, the media devoted most of its content promoting her to the popular imagination rather than creating any kind of substantive political profile while she served as the First Lady. As the First Lady of the United States, she was constantly in the public eye and became known for her superior taste and impeccable style that is still admired today (Natalle, 2020, p. 60).

Mrs. Kennedy was known by these words: "We should all do something to right the wrongs that we see and not just complain about them."⁸

As it is written at JFK's Library "Jacqueline Kennedy captivated the nation and the rest of the world with her intelligence, beauty, and grace. With a deep sense of devotion to her family and country, she dedicated herself to raising her children and to making the world a better place through art, literature, and a respect for history and public service."

⁸ JFK Library. Role of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Available at: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/about-us/about-the-jfk-library/history/role-of-jacqueline-kennedy-onassis> (Accessed 4 February 2022).

CLAUDIA ALTA JOHNSON – LADY BIRD JOHNSON, ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

When Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson⁹ came to the presidency on November 22, 1963, after tragic circumstances as John F. Kennedy was shot and assassinated. Mrs. Johnson said that it was most appalling circumstances the way she came to the position of the First Lady, one for which she was not prepared to take on.

She was very active First Lady. Early on, she began to educate herself about presidential politics, as the wife of the Vice President; she often replaced J. Kennedy in her duties. And when L.B. Johnson became First Lady, invaluable experience worked in her favor (Eksterowicz, Watson, 2006).

Her marriage was strenuous due to her husband's dominant nature and illegitimate love relationships, but they managed to establish a professional partnership based on mutual political respect.

L. B. Johnson often advised her husband on speeches, appointments, and campaigns, serving as his trusted political adviser. She was very interested in illiteracy, poverty and civil rights, as well as the aesthetics of the White House and its surroundings. She had her own public relations representative as she was aware that good media relations are essential to the success of her efforts (Andersen Brower, 2016).

The highly professional relationship between the Johnson couple has contributed to the advancement of the First Lady and to the greater professionalization of the Office. Although L.B. Johnson can be attributed a patronizing position, traces of independence and autonomy can be observed in her work (ibid.).

When she was asked by the reporters, how she views her position in the White House, she repeatedly said, it would be shown by actions, not words. And cartoons showed the results. Johnson made very successful use of her abilities and revived renewed and updated the First Lady's' activist model, created by Eleanor Roosevelt. Johnson has been an active advocate for her projects, increasing the scope of the First Lady's work, engaging in legislative content if needed, and always

⁹ Lady Bird Johnson was born as Claudia Alta Taylor in Karnack, Texas. As a child a family nurse declared that Claudia was as "pretty as a ladybird". The nickname stuck.

using the media, accompanied by her spokeswoman, who advised her which news would have a ripple effect (Smith, Carlin, 2000, p.67).

At the Annual Convention of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association on October 1, 1965, Lady Bird Johnson said: "Where flowers bloom, so does hope- and hope is the precious, indispensable ingredient without which the war on poverty can never be won".

She quickly realized the effectiveness of the support she gave to her husband. In addition to her qualities, which she radiated, in the campaign, she helped to get her husband elected, and redefined the role of the First Lady.

PAT NIXON – STRENGTH OF A TENDER HEART

Originally known as Thelma Catherine, but commonly known as Pat Nixon met her husband during her students' years. After two years of courtship, they get married. During the Second World War she volunteered at the Red Cross, and later on in her political activities as the Second and the First Lady she encouraged volunteering around the country. She advocated for gender equality, human rights, and she also knew how to stand among the protesters, who protested against the war in Vietnam. Mrs. Nixon traveled extensively with her husband during the second lady's tenure, and was called as "ambassador" by President Eisenhower (Hobgood, 2000, pp. 93-109).

Pat was a direct, holistic-hearted woman who made contact with people without an intermediary. She was an extremely warm hearted, dull woman, so hugs, handshakes, words of encouragement, and personally signed letters to the wounded in battle and warm words were not foreign matter to her. She took the time to listen to student protesters and attended on campus rallies carrying food and clothes to the hungry and homeless (ibid.).

She was in the position of the First Lady from 1969 to 1974; she resigned two years after the water gates affair broke out.

Pat Nixon first learned about the criminal actions that came to be cumulatively known as the Watergate scandal and soon come to engulf the Administration only from the media. She and her daughter had been specifically left uninformed by the President and

his advisors of the details of their actions and decisions as they were in the midst of it all. When the First Lady first comprehended the potential damage that the secret tape recordings made by the President could create, she offered the unsolicited advice that he should destroy them while they were still legally considered private property - advice he did not follow. While she fully believed her husband was innocent and telling the truth to the American people, she became deeply disturbed by how isolated he became within a small circle of advisors.¹⁰

“Even when people don’t know how to speak your language, they can tell you if you have love in your heart.” this message is inscribed on her tombstone.

BETTY FORD – RISING AWARENESS OF THE HEALTH CARE ISSUES

Betty Ford, born Elisabeth, would have never imagined that one day she will become the first Lady of the United States. Already being elected to the Second Lady was very surprising to her, and she was beginning to get used to the new position. The ungrateful “Watergate” affair happened and put her in this position.

Betty first enjoyed the role of a dancer, then a wife, mother of four, and last but not least, a companion of a successful politician who came into presidential shoes. Betty served at the First Lady Institution from 1974 to 1977.

A couple of months after entering the White House, she is diagnosed with breast cancer and undergoes a successful mastectomy. After this event, she raises women’s awareness and teaches them the importance of early detection. She also works in other areas as a strong advocate for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and she was a leader of the Women’s Eight Movement. She defended the right to abortion, so she gained fame as one of the most outspoken First Ladies in American history, commenting on every topical issue of the time, from feminism, equal pay, the equal rights amendment, sex, drugs, abortion, and gun control. She has also raised a high-level o of awareness about addiction (Gutin, 2020, pp.115-116).

¹⁰ Miller Center. Thelma Nixon. Available at: <https://millercenter.org/president/nixon/essays/nixon-1969-firstlady> (Accessed 10 February 2022).

Ford and her staff were very successful in the communication with the press and media largely because of her candor. The way Ford shared its cancer state operation and recovery, its support for the Equal Rights Amendment, and an open approach to many controversial issues on television earned the respect of the media. In addition, the media protected the First Lady by not reporting on some of the developments they observed about her health and her behavior. Betty Ford's retirement was not something that she expected. Perhaps her extensive experience with the national press has made it easier to accept a title published in the Washington Post on April 22, 1978: "Betty Ford says she is addicted to alcohol" (Gutin, 2002, p.124).

The story told readers that the former First Lady had a double addiction to alcohol and prescription drugs. She entered Long Beach Rehabilitation Hospital and showed up a few weeks later clean and sober. Four years later, in 1982, this institution bore her name. She knew how to answer questions and provide the background that journalists had to tell. She was not afraid to share opinions, and unlike some of her predecessors and successors, she has seen in the media allies, not adversaries. This was quite important as the media told the story of a woman who became famous for a historical disaster and her revelations about her breast cancer and later her work with addiction. Admired and respected remains one of the most respected first ladies in American history (ibid.).

One of her quotes was: "I believe the equal rights amendment is a necessity of life for all citizens. The cabinet sometimes felt that I shouldn't be so outspoken."

ROSALYNN CARTER – THE RISE OF THE STEEL MANGOLIA

Rosalynn Carter served as the First Lady of the United States from 1977 to 1981 as the wife of President Jimmy Carter. In her essence, there is a synthesis of gentle femininity and unusual firmness for which she was known and described in many articles as "the Steel Magnolia".

After the Water Gate scandal, the American public was disgusted by anyone who had a connection with the White House. The scandal caused a very unwelcomed reputation for the representatives of her public relations team. The press secretary of the First Lady also had a very demanding task ahead of her; she needed to return the trust of the public. Both the public relations team and the press secretary were

assigned with a task to create a positive image of the First Lady that will help alleviate mistrust and give new hope to the American public in the First Lady as an institution, in which they succeeded (Davis, Simon et. al., 2020, pp.143-144).

At the beginning of her service as the First Lady, Rosalynn was an equal partner with her husband in areas of her private and professional life. She participated in internal and international political affairs and visited seven of the Caribbean and Latin American countries, where she met with their leaders to discuss substantive matters related to defense and trade. Although she was well prepared, and despite the reports that she performed well, critics questioned whether she should have assumed such a prominent role knowingly that Rosalynn was not elected in that position (Davis, Simon et al., 2020, p.131).

After her critics questioned her role, Rosalynn decided not to participate in such trips any longer connected with a political agenda. Although she traveled to various parts of the world, these trips were only for ceremonial occasions and humanitarian missions.

Rosalynn mainly focused her efforts on improving the quality of mental health care and promoting other projects that would benefit others. Her mission as a First Lady finished in 1981 when her husband lost the election to President Reagan.

One of her inspirational quote's states: "You have to have confidence in your ability, and then be tough enough to follow through." Rosalynn possessed these qualities as the First Lady of the United States.

NANCY REAGAN – THE BOSS'S WIFE

Nancy Reagan was originally a Broadway actress, and this is one of the reasons she has had many difficulties adjusting to the expectations of the White House and the operation of the institution of the First Lady and the protocols connected with it. Unlike her predecessors, Nancy was never in touch with the life of Washington DC (Bentley, Mack, 2020, pp.153-155).

She held the position from 1981-to 1989. In her first term, press portrayed her and described as an egocentric, shallow, self-centered spendthrift. In the second term, she made a controversial decision

to bring an astrologer to the White House during her husband's hospitalization and offered him a place to live. She wanted to make this astrologer a personal advisor to her husband and hers. Of course, after the president came back to the White House, the astrologer had to move out. During this period, she had numerous fights with his husbands' personnel (Bentley, Mack, 2020, pp.163-166).

She supported the Foster Grandparent Program and was very concentrated on the fight against drug and alcohol abuse among young people. She visited many prevention and rehabilitation centers and held an international conference for the First Ladies of 17 countries on this topic (ibid.).

In the last years of the presidency, the Reagan couple worked together out of necessity. The president resented her for lobbying against him in the slaughterhouse. She warned him that counselors were working against him, but he didn't listen to her. In 1986 a major scandal erupted in which the media reported that America was selling weapons to Iran in exchange for the release of hostages. The report claimed that part of the proceeds gained from weapon sales to Iran was used in funding the Ultras group that fought against the Nicaraguan government. The president made several statements to the media, which later proved inaccurate. The First Lady was well convinced that his staff is hiding vital information from the president and blamed the head of the cabinet for the affair that happened. The First Lady's response in public was not to make any public statements about the scandal because she didn't want to cause harm to her husband even more (Bentley, Mack, 2020, pp. 164-166).

As Bentley and Mack wrote Nancy Reagan was, indeed, "the boss's wife" in every sense. "Despite some missteps along the way, her relations with the media always led back to that core. Ironically, the former actress chose not to create a special role as the First Lady, but, rather, to play herself in a supporting role. She played that role her way and took it with her into history." (Bentley, Mack, 2020, p.168).

One of her most inspiring quotes was: "There's a big, wonderful world out there for you. It belongs to you. It's exciting and stimulating and rewarding. Don't cheat yourselves out of this promise."

BARBARA BUSH – SUPER GRANNY PROMOTING LITERACY

Barbara Bush was a representative of the traditional patriarchal pre-feminist era and accompanied her husband from the beginning of his political career and remained with him until his death. She lived by the principle “in good and in bad”. Barbara said that she never had any regrets about her decision to drop out of higher education, however, later on, in the seventh decade of her life; she admitted that if she was born in a different time, she could have become an executive director. Her main message was to be aware of her essence, to live life to the fullest, and to feel good about it (Marton, 2010, pp. 174-306).

She was the mother of six children. One of her daughters suffered from leukemia and died at the young age of three years old. Before she took on the role as the First Lady, she already had experience as the wife of a congressman, a diplomat, and as the wife of the Vice President of America. She spends eight years in the role of the Second Lady, which solidifies her name on the American political scene. When her son Neil was diagnosed with dyslexia, she became active in all matters connected to American literacy. She started working with various literacy organizations, and she spent a great deal of time researching the factors that contribute to illiteracy. She has traveled throughout America and the world, either with the president on business trips or alone.¹¹

In 1984 she wrote a children’s book *C. Fred’s Story*, in which she tells the story of the adventures of a cocker spaniel family named C. Fred. She donated the entire proceeds of the book to literacy charities (Johnson, 2018). By the year 1985, she felt free to talk in public, where she often used her sense of humor for which she was known. Mrs. Bush selected Anna Perez as her press secretary. At the time of her selection, this was a historic move as Anna Perez was the first African-American lady to be chosen to be in this position.¹²

In 1988 she supported her husband for the third time in the presidential campaign. Barbara was a speaker at the convention of the national party that nominated her husband for the presidency. During her speech, Barbara promised voters she would remain a traditional First Lady,

11 First Ladies. First Lady Biography: Barbara Bush. National First Ladies’ Library. Available at: <http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=42> (Accessed 10 February 2022).

12 *ibid.*

and no matter what, she will always fight for the ideology and political views of her husband. The campaign highlighted her interest in church, gardening, and spending time with her family, criticizing her fashion and style, drawing attention to her snow-white hair and disinterest in wearing designer clothes. In general, she avoided discussing political issues, especially those where her opinion was contrary to the ones of her husband. Bush was elected and sworn in as the president.¹³

As the First Lady, she devoted her activities primarily to the literacy of Americans. She has chaired several reading organizations, as well as literacy committees. She also founded the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, which supported programs where parents can learn together with their children. She was a regular guest on television programs like “Oprah Winfrey Show” and the national radio program “Mrs. Bush’s Storytime”, where she tried to raise literacy awareness.¹⁴ Barbara was also very active in other active issues such as access and decision-making on abortion, LGBT rights, civil rights, and AIDS awareness.¹⁵

When she died, President Trump made a statement: “Among Barbara Bush’s greatest achievements is recognizing the importance of literacy as a fundamental family value that requires nurturing and protection .” (Trump, 2018).

Barbara used to say: “To us, family means putting your arms around each other and being there.” White House staff recognized her as the kindest First Lady that entered the White House so far.

HILLARY CLINTON – FIRST LADY IN CHARGE

Hillary Clinton was a typical emancipated representative of the postmodern period. She knew how to reconcile a successful business life with a personal one, which was very useful for her when she stepped in the shoes of the First Lady in the White House. This helped Hillary to achieve her goals as she moved the milestones of the First Lady as an institution, one that formed into an active one in the field of the political agenda of her husband. Together with her husband, they worked as a team, and she was his equal partner in politics. That is why

13 *ibid.*

14 She would read bed time stories for children.

15 *ibid.*

in the media they were repeatedly referred to as “Billary” represented as an equal couple. Hillary served in the White House as the First Lady from 1993 to 2001 (Gutin, 2006, p.278).

Like many of her predecessors, Hillary faced many challenges. There were in the form of various scandals, scams, and cheating. One among those, the most resounding one, was the Lewinsky¹⁶ affair. In the face of these challenges, as a couple, the Clinton’s showed that if the couple is willing, they can overcome every challenge in life. In addition, to politically activate herself, she secured herself a seat in the Senate even before the end of Bill’s term. Hillary also worked with charities and provided help to families with young children and founded the Clinton Foundation. As a mother, she felt the need to connect with other mothers in need and help them in this way.

One of her famous quotes: “It is often when night looks darkest, it is often before the fever breaks that one senses the gathering momentum for change when one feels that resurrection of hope amid despair and apathy.” to the NAACP¹⁷ in 1995.

Hillary, like Eleanor, pushed the milestones of the operational institution of the First Lady and overtook the time in which we live. In any case, the return of Hillary on the American political scene can be expected, as she still hasn’t shown her hidden political attributes yet.

LAURA BUSH – THE POWER OF COMPASSION

Laura Bush has served as the First Lady from 2001-2009 as the wife of George W. Bush. As a child, Laura was extremely shy. She was raised in a religious family whose main value was literacy. Laura fell in love with books, so she completed her studies in literature and librarianship. In her late teens, she experienced a great tragedy that accompanies her entire life. In a car accident, she was the driver as she crashed into a car, and her friend died at the scene. She finds her consolation in books.¹⁸

At the age of 31, she meets George at a picnic organized by a common friend, and soon she marries him. She acquires knowledge about

16 Bill Clinton’s affair with his assistant Monica Lewinsky is generally known as the Lewinsky affair.

17 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), interracial American organization created to work for the abolition of segregation and discrimination in housing, education, employment, voting, and transportation; to oppose racism; and to ensure African Americans their constitutional rights.

18 Laura Bush. Available at: <https://www.history.com/topics/first-ladies/laura-bush> (Accessed 10 February 2022).

political campaigns and other activities connected with the presidential run from his parents. Throughout her husband's campaign for the governor, all that mattered to Laura was that she didn't have to speak in public as she wasn't the best speaker. She was fearful of performing.

In 2000, she was an indispensable part of her husband's campaign for President of America, where she travelled thousands of miles and conducted numerous interviews. Many of the interviews were broadcasted live on television. In her public statements, Laura acted confident, calm, sophisticated, and eloquent as it befits the First Lady. This was an enormous transformation, one that indicates the high expectations by the public and American society to the role of the wife of the President of the United States.

At the beginning of her stay in the White House, she did not want to get too involved in her husband's political agenda. She was reserved and made sure her projects matched her husband's ideology and reflected her interest. The safe tradition in which she appeared to the public would most likely have become her constant. The events of September 11, 2001 turbulently changed her role as a First Lady, America was wrapped in black. The terrorist attacks on the United States put Laura and her husband at the center of global media attention (Boyd Caroli, 2010, pp. 283-309).

It was at a time when her husband, obviously very shocked, could barely hold back tears and anger during the television appearances, and Laura took care of it with her concentration and calm. She visited the wounded in the Pentagon attack, shares her fears with the viewers on television appearances, connects with stunned and mourning Americans, and prays with them over a plane that crashed into the World Trade Center. She addressed an open letter to parents, teachers, and students, asking them to protect the youngest from the consequences of this terrorist action. These were some most difficult and tragic moments that America has ever faced (Watson, Eksterowicz, 2006, p.316).

Laura has proved to be the perfect First Lady, a lady who calms, gives hope and inspiration is a sensual, gentle, calm, and stable mother of the nation. The wider world public appreciates and welcomes her activities. With its symbolic function, she provided a great deal of social influence.

She became an American Ambassador in the UN for her fighting for equal education of Afghani Women. She travelled to Afghanistan several times.

One of her famous quotes is: "Leadership is not about popularity, it is about doing what is right." And while she served as the First Lady, she did the right thing.

MICHELLE OBAMA – THE MOM IN CHIEF

Michele Obama and her husband Barack wrote a turning point in American history as they became the first African-American presidential couple to take this position.

Firstly, public relations experts sharply criticized her speeches in the campaign, saying they were too sincere, especially those who also had a partial political connotation – about health, reform, etc., but her honest and open heartfelt speech reached the hearts of Americans, who gave their voice in the elections.

In 2009, she moved to the White House with her daughters and husband. She did not show much interest in taking the lead role in her husband's administration. She was more focused on choosing the right school for their daughter, the question of whether her mother should also move to Washington, and which dog to buy, that would help her daughters to adjust to the change by moving to the White House. Feminists criticized her passive style of the president's wife in a shadow. Despite her enviable education, she had no interest in taking over the leadership of a major task force, no interest in fashion, she self-proclaimed the title of "mom in chief" (Boyd Caroli, 2010, pp.335-360).

Her public image was candid, her interviews reflected her views on children, dogs, gardens, and healthy eating but the administration rejected requests for her position on important issues, as they wanted to portray a successful lawyer and businesswoman as impartial.

In the institution of the First lady, she supported and was active in projects related to the issue of youth obesity. She connected Americans to support the soldiers, war veterans, and their families in the recovery and integration into the education system and casual work. She was

also active in the African Girls Literacy Project.¹⁹

Her role was more traditional, not taking over the agendas of her husband but certainly supporting him in his conscientious work.

In the eyes of the American public, she was primarily a loving and caring mother, followed by her husband's support and life companion. While visiting abroad, she was sympathetic in her confusion when she didn't know what to do. At the G20 summit, her first external visit with her husband since being elected president, she talked to Queen Elisabeth about uncomfortable shoes, and unknowingly violating protocol, touched her arm to show her support. The photographer captured the gesture and announced it in the media the next day, commenting on Michelle's protocol violation. The Queen rescued her from the humiliation by touching Michelle's cross with her hand (Obama, 2019, pp. 380-384).

Given all the potentials and abilities that she possessed as the First Lady and one of the most educated, she did not take the opportunity to build a new milestone within the institution of the First Lady, broadened the spectrum of activities, in the more important political sphere than its predecessors. However, she opened a new updated way of communication and redirected the work of the First Lady to social networks. She popularized and presented the institution of the First Lady to the citizens and the role and the importance of the First Lady through direct contact, which was made possible by modern technology.

Michelle and her husband had undoubtedly opened a new chapter in American history, a chapter that is sprinkled by the possibility of success, regardless of origin, racial, religious, or gender identity. They ensured that possibilities are and will be for anyone brave enough to intervene in the fight to create them.

One of her famous quotes states: "Every day you have the power to choose." Her choice was made.

¹⁹ Obama White House Archives. First Lady Michelle Obama. Obama White House Archives. Available at: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/realitycheck/node/357156> (Accessed 10 February 2022).

MELANIA TRUMP – THE EYE OF A TIGER

Melania Trump also made history in America as the first foreigner to take the position of the First Lady. The media was not the most sympathetic to her. Even before she had a chance to represent her position, she was declared to be at war with the media, as they had a different view on the political agendas of her husband. Melania repeatedly pointed out in the media that she does not agree with everything her husband says or does, however, she supported him as she thought he fought for the right cause. Her words were “He will make America great again”. That was the slogan on which he won the presidential election. Melania performed the function of the First Lady from 2017 to 2021. The eldest daughter of Donald Trump, Ivanka, helped her with this function and took over on some of the duties of the First Lady.

As a former photo model, Melania represents a symbol of glamor, prestige, and elegance. She always made sure that she appeared in the most fashionable clothes of top brands, and according to that, she would choose the appropriate accessories such as a handbag, jewelry, hat, sunglasses, depending on the occasion. It is no coincidence that wherever Melania appeared, she took over and turned attention to herself.

She had a characteristic feline look, so the media gave her the nickname “The eye of a tiger”. Melania did not immediately move into the White House as she waited for her son Barron to finish the school year. She traveled to many countries with her husband and went on her solo trip to Africa and Asia. During her solo trip in Africa, she visited African children from Ghana, Malawi, Kenya, and Egypt, with whom she participated in one of her projects “Be best”.

In Asia, however, she took pictures along the Great Wall of China and thus supported her husband in building the American Wall.²⁰In her project “*Be best*” she fought against cyberbullying among children, as it is one of the biggest causes of suicide among young people, did not gain much popularity in the media, as they were more inclined to the political agenda of her husband.

She has repeatedly been criticized for unfairly obtaining an American visa, although she has pointed out that she has always acted “By the

20 Trump has built a wall on the border with Mexico, with the goal of preventing the illegal border crossings.

book”. At state receptions and visits, she appears glamorously. While she was visiting Queen Elisabeth, Melania acted in a very sophisticated manner, as if she was present in the royal environment every day. Melania was a lady in any sense of this word and accepted any criticism calmly and with a smile. She was never upset in front of the media. One of her quotes states: “Make America great again is not just a slogan. It is what has been in his heart since the day I met Donald Trump.” Voters believed them.

Probably, this was not their last attempt at a presidential race. Melania’s role as the First Lady of the United States can be best described as traditional.

SOME COMPERATIVE FINDINGS

Platts and Fritz (2017) have pointed out that: “A four-part typology has been developed to describe the expanding role of first ladies using historical and contemporary examples to illustrate. This typology includes the roles of hostess, teammate, champion, and policy advocate, keeping in mind that the roles have been simplified and the classifications are not mutually exclusive. Although the four role types roughly map onto chronology—with early first ladies fitting into the hostess category primarily and contemporary first ladies increasingly taking on the champion and advocate role - the typology is best viewed not as an evolutionary trajectory but rather a description of the distinct yet overlapping modalities through which first ladies exert their influence. Most first ladies today still balance these multiple overlapping and, at times, conflicting responsibilities.”

If we use this typology on the First Ladies of the modern and postmodern period, we can divide them into the following groups:

- Hostess: Mamie Eisenhower, Jacqueline Kennedy, Betty Ford, Nancy Reagan and Melania Trump.
- Teammate: Bess Truman, Pat Nixon, Barbara Bush, Michelle Obama.
- Champion: Eleanor Roosevelt, Lady Bird Johnson.
- Policy Advocate: Rosalynn Carter, Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush.

According to the typology of the First Ladies we can show their common characteristics in the tables below.

Table 1: Characteristics comparison of the First Ladies determined by the typology as a Hostess

CHARACTERISTICS	M. Eisenhower	J. Kennedy	B. Ford	N. Reagan	M. Trump
Appearance (tidiness, beauty)	√	√	√	√	√
Charm	√	√	√	√	√
Eloquence	x	√	x	√	x
Calmness	x	x	x	x	√
Elegance	√	√	√	√	√
Self-confidence	√	√	√	√	√
Sophistication	x	x	x	x	x
Readability	x	√	x	√	x
Higher education	x	√	x	√	x
Emphasizing traditional values	√	√	√	√	√
Innovation	x	√	x	x	x
Maternal sense	√	√	√	√	√
Tenderness	x	x	√	√	x
Expressing disagreement with the husband's ideology	x	x	x	√	√
Supporting her husband	√	√	√	x	√
Desire for political power	x	x	x	x	x
Influencing the husband's decisions	x	x	x	x	x
Realization of her ideas, projects activities	√	x	√	x	x
Involvement in scandals	x	√	x	√	√

Source: *Own elaboration.*

Table 1 shows that the First Ladies that were defined by the typology as Hostesses put a lot of effort into their appearance. They are recognized as traditional, charming, elegant and confident ladies. They have strong maternal sense but do not have much influence on their husband decisions, and they do not have any desire for the political power.

Table 2: Characteristics comparison of the First Ladies determined by the typology as a Teammate

CHARACTERISTICS	Truman B.	Nixon P.	B. Bush	Obama M.
Appearance (tidiness, beauty)	x	√	x	√
Charm	√	√	√	√
Eloquence	x	√	√	√
Calmness	x	√	√	x
Elegance	x	√	x	√
Self-confidence	x	x	√	√
Sophistication	x	√	x	√
Readability	√	x	√	√
Higher education	x	x	√	√
Emphasizing traditional values	√	√	√	√
Innovation	x	x	√	x
Maternal sense	x	x	√	√
Tenderness	√	√	√	√
Expressing disagreement with the husband's ideology	x	x	x	x
Supporting her husband	√	√	√	√

Desire for political power	x	x	x	x
Influencing the husband's decisions	√	x	√	√
Realization of her ideas, projects activities	x	x	√	x
Involvement in scandals	x	√	x	x

Source: *Own elaboration.*

Table 2 shows that the First Ladies that were defined by the typology as Teammates put a lot of effort into their charm. They are recognized as traditional, tender, supporters of their husbands. They have no desire for the political power.

Table 3: Characteristics comparison of the First Ladies determined by the typology as a Champion

CHARACTERISTICS	Eleanor Roosevelt	Lady Bird Johnson
Appearance (tidiness, beauty)	x	√
Charm	√	√
Eloquence	√	√
Calmness	√	√
Elegance	x	√
Self- confidence	√	√
Sophistication	√	√
Readability	√	√
Higher education	x	√
Emphasizing traditional values	x	√
Innovation	√	√
Maternal sense	√	√
Tenderness	√	√
Expressing disagreement with the husband's ideology	√	x
Supporting her husband	√	√
Desire for political power	√	x
Influencing the husband's decisions	√	√
Realization of her ideas, projects activities	√	√
Involvement in scandals	√	x

Source: *Own elaboration.*

Table 3 shows that the First Ladies that were defined by the typology as Champions put a lot of effort into their charm. They are recognized as eloquent, self-confident, sophisticated, innovative and tender First Ladies. They support their husband and have strong influence on their husband's decisions as well as they put their project activities and ideas to the realizations.

Table 4: Characteristics comparison of the First Ladies determined by the typology as a Policy Advocate

CHARTER	Carter R.	Clinton H.	Bush L.
Appearance (tidiness, beauty)	√	√	√
Charm	√	√	√
Eloquence	√	√	√
Calmness	√	x	√
Elegance	√	√	√
Self- confidence	√	√	√
Sophistication	√	√	√
Readability	√	√	√
Higher education	√	√	√
Emphasizing traditional values	√	x	√
Innovation	√	√	√
Maternal sense	√	√	√
Tenderness	√	x	√
Expressing disagreement with the husband's ideology	x	x	x
Supporting her husband	√	√	√
Desire for political power	√	√	√
Influencing the husband's decisions	√	√	√
Realization of her ideas, projects activities	√	√	√
Involvement in scandals	x	√	x

Source: *Own elaboration.*

Table 4 shows that the First Ladies that were defined by the typology as Policy Advocates put a lot of effort into their appearance and charm. They are recognized as eloquent, elegant, self-confident, sophisticated, high educated and innovative First Ladies. They support their husband and have strong influence on their husband's decisions as well as they put their project activities and ideas to the realizations and have a strong desire for the political power.

Several different typologies can be hidden in one First Lady, so they could be divided differently. In this case they are defined by the typology that prevails.

CONCLUSION

The wives of modern-day presidents, politicians, diplomats in today's postmodern time can be best described as complicated, mysterious, impenetrable, cold but glamorous, elegant, eloquent, and polished highly-sophisticated ladies. Their personalities, ideologies, ambitions, expectations are very different and can rarely be understood. Areas focused on finding and analyzing these patterns are political science combined with gender studies, sociology of culture, and diplomatic

studies, as First Ladies by definition manifest themselves in an international environment and by pursuing international political and diplomatic activities (Borelli, 2011, p.1).

As a public figure and a wife of the man holding the highest office in the United States, the First Lady was highly exposed in the eye of the public for a period in time lasting over a hundred years. She is often associated with prestige, fashion, and social chronicles, especially by the media. Thus, the First Lady is a mirror reflection and a means of comparison for women in the particular society.

With considerable media attention given to her as an Institution, she is in everyone's eyes, and every move taken by the First Lady is a subject of critical appraisal. For many women, she is an inspiration. Through her behavior and actions, she can draw attention to the social problems and the problems of the disadvantaged population she sees and wants others to see. At the same time, her courage is proof of female intelligence and its importance for every society.

The First Lady is a symbol that represents the homeland abroad and a message about the position of women in the home environment. It is a message that other cultures receive about their country, thus creating an image of women from different parts of the world.

The position of the First Lady from its inception to the present day is associated with (non)equality gender perception. In the past, being the First Lady was an indicator of women's subservience and their (in) importance in the public and political spheres compared to men.

However, the high desire, driven to achieve social equality, and the diverse abilities of the First Ladies as an Institution pushed milestones in the functioning in the United States, which at certain (postmodern) times placed themselves in a completely equal position with her husband. Thus, they showed America and the world that the First Lady can in certain situations be a completely equivalent substitute for her husband and that the First Lady institution has no limitations in its operation. Every one of the First Ladies sets the limits and boundaries for themselves.

Being a lady is a gift to humanity, but being the First Lady is a mission that broadens the horizon of a rusty society.

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