

**From Wife to Presidential Partner:
The Policy Agenda of the First Lady of the United States**

Master Thesis

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1. Introduction

Much is speculated about the first lady of the United States' role in policy formation: is she simply inspiring the president to get up in the morning, does she advise him on how to rule the nation, or does she have her own policy agenda? This research investigates the first lady's relationship with policy, as measured through her portrayal in the *New York Times*. When she is mentioned, is this in conjunction with policy issues? Can we see specific policies mentioned? Do these fit with their partisan background?

Although previous work – also based on content analysis – has examined the framing of the first lady as a public figure there has not been extensive research on longer time frames (for instance, Mueller (2010) criticizes Burns' (2008) for only focusing on election and inaugural years); many focus on specific first ladies, and the majority emphasize Clinton particularly. More importantly, the emphasis in these lines of research has been on the role of the first lady in terms of being viewed as housewife or political activist. Yet even when their role is described as political activism, previous work has not thoroughly explored *which* policies were ascribed to the first lady in the media, and potential changes to these policy fields over time. In contrast, prior research analyzing attention to policies and agenda-setting over longer periods of time (a literature indebted to Baumgartner and Jones 1993) has not yet focused on the first lady as a political actor.

This research answers the question: are first ladies associated with (specific) policy issues? This is explored using content analysis of articles published in the *New York Times* post-1945, as comparable agenda-setting research through the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) has been done primarily on this post-war era. There are 12 first ladies in this period (Michelle Obama is in office at the time of writing, so only her full first term is included) – their names and chronology are shown in Table 1. The research uses the *NYT* as a source for the first lady's activities and agenda, much like previous agenda-setting research (e.g.

Table 1. Chronology of first ladies and presidents of the United States post-1945.

First lady	President	Years served
Bess Truman	Harry S. Truman	1945-1953
Mamie Eisenhower	Dwight Eisenhower	1953-1961
Jacqueline Kennedy	John F. Kennedy	1961-1963
Lady Bird Nixon	Lyndon B. Johnson	1963-1969
Pat Nixon	Richard Nixon	1969-1974
Betty Ford	Gerald Ford	1974-1977
Rosalynn Carter	Jimmy Carter	1977-1981
Nancy Reagan	Ronald Reagan	1981-1989
Barbara Bush	George H. W. Bush	1989-1993
Hillary Rodham Clinton	Bill Clinton	1993-2001
Laura Bush	George W. Bush	2001-2009
Michelle Obama	Barack Obama	2009-2013 *

* Barack Obama was elected into office for a second term, but only his first term is covered here.

Baumgartner and Jones 2005). The *NYT* has been established as an agenda-setter in general and for other media (Dearing and Rogers 1996, 39), implying that this research can provide insights about the first lady's agenda as a whole.

This thesis starts by examining previous literature on agenda-setting and on the roles of first ladies in the press. I then outline the five hypotheses to be tested and explain the methods used to analyze these, concentrating on the process of content analysis. Finally, I present and discuss my results, concluding with some suggestions for future research.

First ladies are prominent public persons, increasingly politicized according to previous research (e.g. Watson 2000, Burns 2008) and arguably one of the most influential *non-elected* representatives of the American public. Although previous work focused on the relationship between first ladies and the press, no analysis has yet shown which policy fields are associated with first ladies, and whether these change over time. Being in the public eye, the first lady's policy agenda may shape US policy and it is thus worthwhile to determine the politicization of her role and which issue domains are on her agenda. First ladies are seen as representative of the role of women in US society (Watson 2000, 78; Wertheimer 2005, xi). Therefore, in a larger sense, if this research finds links between certain first ladies and policy fields, it may inform us about women and their associated policy areas in that time period.

2. Previous works on agenda-setting and the first lady

To ground this research, I look at the insights and methods of previous works on agenda-setting. A brief exploration of studies of first ladies and their relationship with the media can also inform this study and its hypotheses.

2.1. So many issues, so little time... Prioritizing through agenda-setting

In their seminal work on agenda-setting, McCombs and Shaw (1972, 177) sum up the core of agenda-setting – which is the allocation of attention to specific issues – when they describe the press as not being “successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but ... stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.” McCombs and Shaw emphasize agenda-setting is a complex process and need not be the result of a *conscious* effort to highlight some issues and bury others.

In another early work on agenda-setting, Cobb and Elder (1983, 82) provide a useful definition of an issue: “[a]n issue is a conflict between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of positions or resources.” Here, we see the echo of Schattsneider’s (1960, 71) dissatisfaction with American pluralism: not all issues, and not all conflicts, can be dealt with by politics. Since there is limited time and space both in our minds, but also in politics and in the media, prioritization must occur (Dearing and Rogers 1996, 2). Cobb and Elder’s work has been described as taking the public and media agenda theory towards politics and policy, creating the notion of the *policy agenda* (Soroka 2002, 7-8) the focus of my research.

Scholars have different theories that describe how and why issues make it onto an agenda. Kingdon (1984) highlights the importance of actors or visible participants, suggesting that agenda-setting occurs when those who are featured in the media speak out about the importance of an issue. The first lady’s depiction in the *NYT* and whether she is associated

with policy comprises such a form of agenda-setting: since there is a limited amount of reporting in the *NYT* on the first lady's activities, it is meaningful if she is linked to a specific policy. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) further establish this theoretical framework of limited attention resulting in a need for agenda-setting, then moving from previous theory and case study-based approaches to a more quantitative large-scale research (Baumgartner and Jones 2005).

My research method is inspired by their quantitative work, as well as recent longitudinal empirical work on agenda-setting such as Baumgartner, De Boef and Boydston (2011), who systematically analyze the framing of the death penalty through the *NYT* and other media sources' coverage over time. Similarly, Adler and Wilkerson (2012) look at the policy issues covered in the US Congress, utilizing *NYT* editorials as a form of external support for a policy issue. The Comparative Agendas Project comprises many more examples of analyzing existing sources empirically and longitudinally, including the media and other sources such as speeches or bills, to determine the evolution of policy agendas.

This thesis does not research the media's agenda, instead using the *NYT* as a source to study the policy agenda of the first lady; see e.g. Boydston (2013) for a thorough longitudinal study of the *NYT*'s own media agenda. The *NYT* is a renowned national newspaper that in turn has been shown to set the agenda for other news sources (Dearing and Rogers 1996, 39). Although sources such as tabloids or the *Washington Post* may also report on first ladies, those are more biased towards ceremonial or Washington affairs respectively, whereas if the *NYT* reports about a first lady's activities, these are more likely to be meaningful cues to the nation (Boydston 2013, 84). Using the *NYT* as a source results in extra coverage about Clinton's political career post-first lady, since she ran for a New York constituency. This is slightly unrepresentative, but my hypotheses are tested only using observations while incumbent, further disregarding specific observations to do with her senatorial campaign.

2.2. *From escort to advocate: first ladies and the press*

Previous research has explored the relationship first ladies have had with the press. Although my work goes beyond the framing of her office, this section highlights some of their insights to show the role of first ladies in the US media over time.

Winfield (1997) describes four ways in which the press has framed the first lady, going from “escort” (without independent function) to “protocol” (a ceremonial role) to “noblesse oblige” (supporting volunteerism and the community) to “policy.” She starts with the first presidential wives, only including the first year in office of Roosevelt, Kennedy and Clinton from the twentieth century first ladies in her sample. She finds that throughout history newspapers have been critical of any political or policy role, and that first ladies are expected to highlight the first three roles even in the twentieth century. Watson (2000) echoes this sentiment, mentioning Johnson, Ford, Carter, Reagan, B. Bush and Clinton as active ‘presidential partners’ engaging in “political activism” in his exhaustive compilation of analyses of all first ladies pre-2000, supporting the idea that first ladies are increasingly political.

Similarly, Burns (2008) refers to first ladies post-1964 as “political activists” and “political interlopers” and suggests that the traditional demands (e.g. hosting and homemaking) placed on first ladies in the modern age no longer fit with their representation of the American woman, who is increasingly involved in politics. Like Burns, Beasley (2005, xviii) thoroughly analyses each first lady’s image and framing in the media, finding that their roles can vary from celebrity to political helpmate. In all cases they represent US women and show the “changing gender roles in American life.”

Wertheimer (2005, x-xiii, xviii) describes the office of first lady as “critical” to the presidency, but also depicts the troubles each first lady has had when communicating her story – be it ceremonial, in support of her husband, or advocating policy. No first lady has

“received unanimous acclaim,” but most criticism seems to come to those who politically influence their husbands. Highlighting femininity is described as a safer way to profile oneself. The first lady both represents (female) US society to the president, as well as bringing the Administration to the public; Borelli (2011) argues that any policy role is constituted in one of these representative roles, also highlighting the difficulties each first lady has in finding her voice without too much criticism.

Gutin (1989, 176) solidifies this research’ use of the media as a source for the first lady’s agenda, writing that “the press plays a critical role in transmitting both the image and the substance of a First Lady.” She categorizes first ladies between 1920-1988 as “White Housekeepers” (ceremonial), “Emerging Spokeswomen” or “Political Surrogates and Independent Advocates” – the latter being more prevalent in later years. Truman (1995) describes first ladies in similar terms, suggesting that while first ladies may (increasingly) express themselves politically, their nonelected office may not be suited for a strong policy role.

In summary, previous works generally focus on the framing of the office of the first lady, not specifically on her involvement with policy. If policies are cited, they are mentioned in the sense of the first lady being framed as a political activist, without detailing *what* she is advocating. Prior research has also not systematically examined media coverage for a longer time period, in contrast to this thesis. Likewise, the agenda-setting literature has so far not thoroughly analyzed the potential agenda-setting role of the first lady.

3. Methods

To explore the association between first ladies and policy issues, this research uses content analysis to analyze articles printed in the *New York Times*. The procedure is explained below; first, I consider some hypotheses. Although the main question of this research is exploratory, asking whether first ladies are associated with specific policy issues over time, I entertain a few hypotheses based on earlier works on agenda-setting and the relationship between first ladies and the media.

3.1. Hypotheses: from celebrity to policy advocate

First, it appears as though first ladies have become, or have been framed to be, more politicized over the years (as reflected in abovementioned literature) reflecting their representation of the increasingly political identity of the American woman. Furthermore, Baumgartner and Jones (2015) describe a gradual expansion of the scope of government between the 1960s and 1980s, as the US government expands to cover more (varied) policy issues; starting with Reagan's administration the widened scope decreases. This expansion of government may also result in an increase in policy association, since the first ladies have more issues to discuss.

H1. The first lady is increasingly associated with policy and political issues.

This is measured through quantity: there should be a positive relationship between the first ladies and the relative frequency with which they are associated with policy over time.

Second, it may be the case that the first lady concentrates or is seen to concentrate on 'softer' policy issues, or what Huddy and Terkildsen (1993, 120) term 'compassion' issues. Indeed, e.g. Watson (2000, 86-87) suggests advocating "social causes" is often part of a first lady's official duties. Thus, it may be the case that these more feminine compassion issues are prevalent in the *NYT's* coverage of first ladies. It might be the case that these sorts of

compassion issues become less dominant over time, with the rise of the feminist movement, and women increasingly caring about economic opportunity, energy costs, war and peace, etc. (Hirshman 2008).

H2: The first lady is decreasingly associated with compassion policy issues.

To measure this, I separate the policy topics between ‘harder’ and ‘compassion’ issues as described by Huddy and Terkildsen. In effect, this results in three categories, as they do not categorize all policy categories (e.g. the environment or agriculture) in their work, so those are classified as neutral issues. Using Huddy and Terkildsen’s (1993, 129, 141) typology, compassion issues are: women’s issues, poverty, the elderly, childcare, abortion, education and healthcare. They describe hard issues as: things concerning the military or defense, economic policy, the budget deficit, business, loans, crime and the police.

Third, first ladies might choose specific issues around which they construct their political identity; e.g. Clinton seems to have been primarily associated with healthcare during her tenure (Burns 2009, 212). In this sense, first ladies have an agenda that can be diversified or concentrated, reflecting the degree to which they spread their attention amongst multiple issues or put one, or a few issues, in the spotlight. Throughout the years this may happen increasingly, as the first lady becomes a stronger political entity with a broader policy agenda. The abovementioned expansion of the scope of government may further allow for more varied policy topics.

H3: The first lady is increasingly associated with a diversified agenda.

For this hypothesis, I determine the degree of diversification in each first lady’s agenda through an attention diversity analysis using Shannon’s H (as suggested in Boydston, Bevan and Thomas 2013). I also analyze whether there are specific policy issues that are predominantly associated with specific first ladies.

Fourth, there may be some relationship between the policy agendas of first ladies (as observed here through the *NYT*) and their husbands. It seems likely that the first ladies choose, or are designated, some specific policy topics that are distinct from their husbands'; this would also fit with the hypothesis that the first lady increasingly has her own policy agenda. Alternatively, it may be the case that first ladies support their husbands through referring to similar issues, in which case this hypothesis will be rejected. Either way, determining the relationship over time between the first lady and the president's policy agenda is worthwhile.

H4. The first lady is increasingly associated with policy issues separate from their husbands' agenda.

Previous research within the Comparative Agendas Project has identified the agenda of presidents and their parties, through State of the Union speeches and Executive Orders. This data is compared and correlated with my original data to determine whether there are similarities or differences, and whether these change over time.

Since first ladies are connected to their husbands' Party (Borelli 2001, 412), the last hypothesis examines the first ladies' role in the partisan divide in the US and the corresponding issue ownership (Egan 2013). For instance, Republican first ladies may be less involved with policy, representing the traditional Republican "vision of U.S. womanhood" (Watson 2000, 130). If present, partisanship would indicate a strong form of political identity. However, any potential effects of partisanship could be mitigated by the lower prevalence of issue ownership in the United States (Sigelman and Buell 2004).

H5. A Republican first lady is associated with different policy issues than a Democratic first lady.

This should be observable through separating the first ladies between Republicans (6) and Democrats (6), comparing the relative frequency with which they are associated with policy

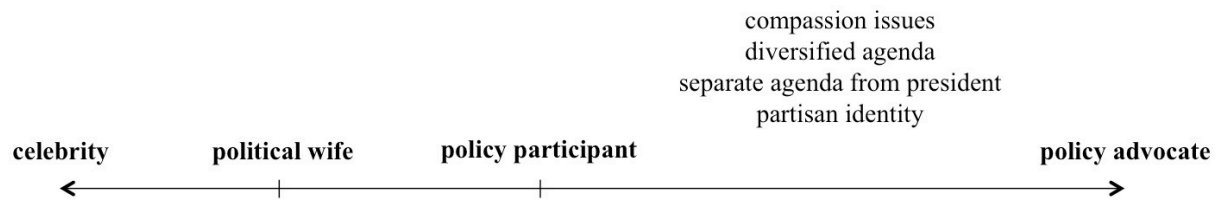


Figure 1. Continuum of first lady policy profile, from celebrity to policy advocate.

in general or with compassion issues specifically, whether their agenda is diversified, and whether they share the president's agenda – in other words, by looking at possible differences amongst the four previous hypotheses.

Drawing on these hypotheses and the abovementioned literature, I create a continuum of roles the first lady may take, visible in Figure 1. This continuum can guide this research, combining insights of the agenda-setting and of the first lady literature – strings of research that have barely touched each other in the past. The characteristics shown between policy participant and advocate are cumulative; each highlights relevant elements of advocacy contained in hypotheses 2-5.

3.2. Empirically analyzing the first lady's agenda through content analysis

This project uses a previously established codebook to code its source, *NYT* articles, into policy topics, resulting in comparability of the original dataset with other data. The codebook from the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) is utilized as it has been used for comparative work on policy agendas in many countries, is the result of multiple researchers and therefore contains well-established divisions in policy topics, and has been used before to classify and code *NYT* articles (e.g. by Boydston 2013). Specifically, I use the Policy Agendas codebook, which is developed and used for US policy; the codebook, containing 21 categories, or major

topics, and 209 subtopics, is shown in appendix A.¹ A possible criticism on the CAP is its lack of directional information – i.e. indicating whether one is in favor of or against a policy – yet, this information should not affect the agenda-setting role of the first lady, since this centers on issue consciousness and not the framing of an issue. Additionally, most subtopics are specific enough to determine one’s position regarding the policy, and the hand coding will provide insight for potentially unclear directions.

The Policy Agendas codebook suggests coding the primary policy topic, since it actively analyses the *NYT*’s agenda. Since I use the *NYT* as a source instead, I code every policy topic included in an article, resulting in multiple potential topics per article (and thus more observations than articles). A policy ‘observation’ also extends beyond direct policy-related statements: the first lady need not have her speech included in the *NYT* to become associated with an issue; her mere presence *associates* her with an issue, since she will receive many invitations and choose which events fit with her agenda. Johnson herself noted: “my role must emerge in deeds, not words” (*New York Times* 1963b). For instance, visiting a foster care home associates the first lady with the subtopic Family Issues (1208) or the major topic Law, Crime and Family Issues (12). However, such an ‘association’ can be risky: if issue proponents mention the first lady but she is not described to play an active role with regards to the policy topic (e.g. the *NYT* reports on a letter sent to Johnson about the war against poverty, but her position is not heard (Robertson 1964)), the association drawn may not actually be part of the first lady’s agenda. A separate coding category is therefore made for ‘non-active’ association with a policy topic. Furthermore, if an article does not just associate a first lady with a policy, but her husband as well, it will be coded as ‘together with the president.’ It is possible that there is no specific policy topic mentioned, but just ‘policy’

¹ One small adjustment was made: the issue of abortion was given a separate coding category since it is a ‘woman’s issue’ first ladies could potentially speak out on, while the CAP categorizes it as a ‘right

in general: this is also coded separately, since it cannot be used for analyses about policy content, but should be considered as association with policy overall. Dummies are also included for election campaigns, party affiliation (Democrat or Republican), and Hillary Clinton's political offices.

Since the literature suggests that first ladies are *increasingly* political, many articles in the sample do not contain policy references. These non-policy related observations are also categorized. Seeing as much of the first lady's daily activities – insofar as they are covered by the *NYT* – consist of formal receptions or balls where fashions are described, I differentiate between activities that are least political, and activities that are skirting some line between non-political and political (e.g. hosting receptions for members of Congress, State Dinners, or campaign rallies). The former category is coded as 'celebrity', while the latter category of articles is coded 'political wife.'

As for the coding material, the *NYT* source material is obtained through the ProQuest digital library for 1945-2011 (as the database ends in 2011); the material for 2012-January 2013 is obtained through the Factiva database. All articles (thereby foregoing obituaries, editorials, television guides, ads, etc.) generated from the database using the search term 'first lady' and each president's last name (since all women are known by their husbands' names) are included. Every relevant article should be included in that sample, since the women should be referred to as first lady for potential policy associations to matter to my research. Similarly to presidents, newspapers generally refer to potential and former first ladies using their title; therefore, articles will also be categorized between mentioning incumbent or pre- and post-incumbent first ladies. This research primarily looks at the present lady in power, though coding all observations of the first ladies in my sample ensures I do not miss any interesting agenda-setting initiatives pre- or post-incumbency. After all, the office of the first lady is an institution, thereby (politically) legitimizing the women who held the office. For the

period of 12 April 1945 (Bess Truman's first day in office) until 20 January 2013 (the last day of Michelle Obama's first term), the ProQuest and Factiva library yield 5,766 articles.

Since this project relies on hand-coded data, a Krippendorff α was obtained through a second independent coder, who used the coding system described above to code a random sample of the total sample (120 articles, 10 per first lady, resulting in 146 observations when separating for policy codes).² This α , suitable for small samples, can inform us about inter-coder reliability and validity of coded material (Krippendorff 2004). Since the α can only compare two columns directly, it was calculated for the coding of the CAP content: both coders' policy scores were compared, resulting in an α of .855, well above the suggested inter-coder reliability threshold of $\alpha > .8$ (Krippendorff 2004, 241).

² Although coding more observations would be preferable, this was not possible within the resource constraints of this project.

4. Results and discussion

The final dataset contains 5766 articles in total. 925 articles are ‘junk’, not mentioning a first lady in my sample (16% of the articles). 4841 articles mention at least one of the first ladies between Truman-Obama. Out of these, 2104 articles include a ‘celebrity’ observation for at least one first lady in my dataset (43%); 943 articles include a similar ‘political wife’ observation (19%); and 1794 articles contain policy for at least one mentioned first lady (37%). Once each article’s observations are extracted – separating them into one observation for each first lady contained (as one article can mention multiple first ladies) and for celebrity, political wife and policy associations – there are 7225 observations in total, of which 2704 observations are ‘celebrity’ (37%), 1082 observations are ‘political wife’ (15%), 35 observations are general policy observations (0.5%), and 3402 observations are CAP topics (47%).

4.1. Association with policy

The first hypothesis poses this research’s main question: do first ladies become more political, and are they thus increasingly associated with policy? For the purposes of this analysis, a policy ‘observation’ is any article including a policy topic; multiple policy topics mentioned in one article are only one observation. For the calculations for hypotheses 2-5 these observations are separated for each individual CAP topic, since those focus on the content of the policy discussed and not on the fact that *any* policy is discussed. Additionally, data outside of the first lady’s term in office, both pre- and post-incumbency, is excluded since I focus on the office of the first lady. Similarly, I exclude any observations having to do with Hillary Clinton’s (run for) other political offices. All calculations are done using *R*.

First, I look at the division per first lady; these are shown relatively in Figure 2, since this is most relevant to determining the *increase* of first ladies being associated with policy.

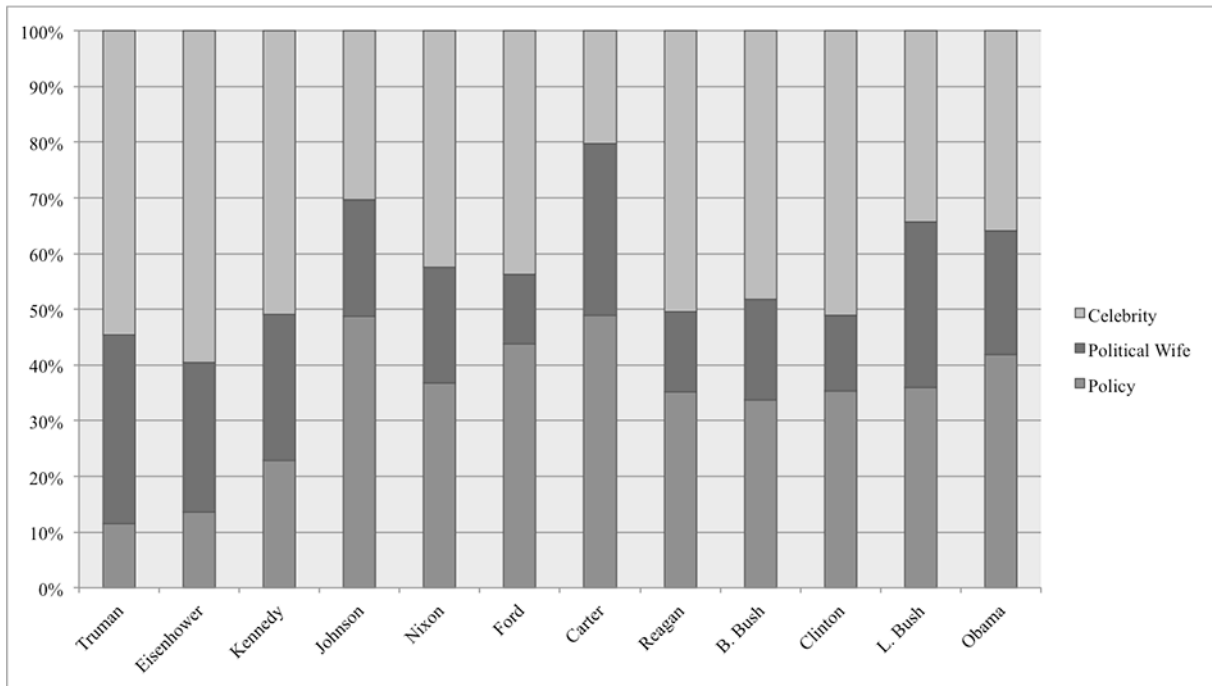


Figure 2. Relative division of the celebrity, political wife or policy observations per incumbent first lady (excluding observations connected to Clinton’s Senatorial office).

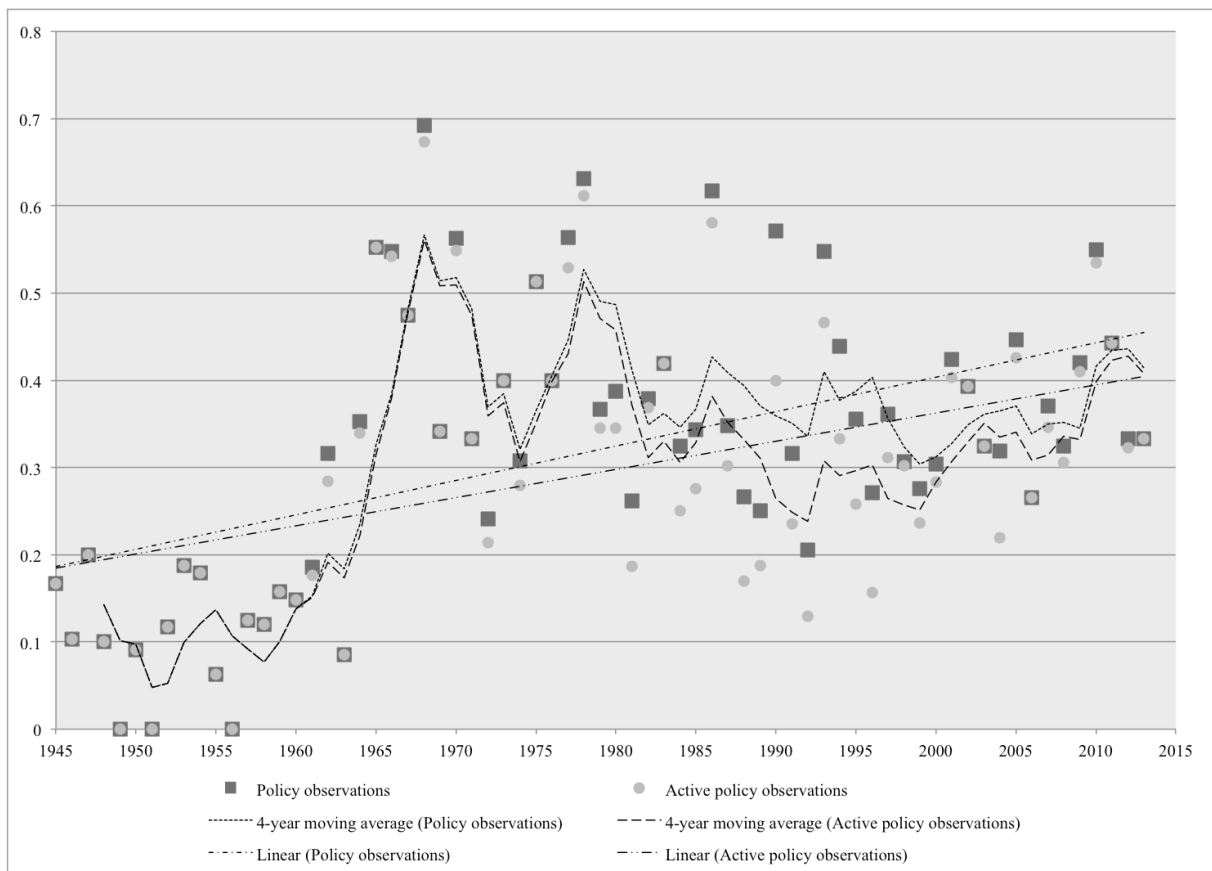


Figure 3. Relationship between yearly share of incumbent policy observations (relative to the total amount of observations) of the first lady, with trends of moving averages and linear regression.

This also controls for the varying amount of articles each first lady was mentioned in, i.e. how popular they were with the *NYT* reporters and the length of their tenure. There is quite some diversity in the absolute number of observations per incumbent first lady, ranging from Ford's 89 to Clinton's 830 observations (she is most prevalent in the *NYT*, even when excluding her Senate and post-incumbent observations).

This division can be analyzed both with and without non-active policy mentions, as displayed in Figure 3; in both cases there is indeed a significant increase of policy mentions over time. When non-active policy mentions are included, we see a linear regression coefficient of $B = 0.004$ ($SE = 0.001$, $p < 0.01$). When only active policy mentions are included, we see a coefficient of $B = 0.003$ ($SE = 0.001$, $p < 0.01$), a slightly smaller increase.

Rather than a strictly linear increase, however, the moving averages seem to show cycles, varying over time. In Figure 3, we also see the dispersion of observations within a first lady's incumbency. During the period of the 1960s till the 1980s the observations are more scattered: for Johnson and Nixon there is a 33% difference between the year with the least and most relative active policy observations and for Reagan this is 39%. In contrast, the associations with policy seem to stabilize somewhat after the 1980s, suggesting that the first lady becomes more secure in her policy advocacy role. This solidifies the narrative of the first lady's political emancipation: while she follows the initial increase of the scope of government, she contrasts the eventual decrease described by Baumgartner and Jones (2015): the first lady keeps speaking out on policy issues, refusing to let go of her policy agenda. Thus, policy advocacy seems to consolidate over time, both in times of a relative increase in policy associations – although this increase may be more cyclical than linear – as well as more stability in terms of that association per first lady's incumbency. This analysis confirms the first hypothesis: first ladies are increasingly associated with policy.

Even the least policy-oriented first lady had input on her husband's politics: Bess Truman edited all her husband's speeches to make sure they sound "homey" (*New York Times* 1949). However, earlier policy observations should not be overestimated: these were generally charity-oriented, e.g. Eisenhower's association with war operations (1619) was a clothing drive for Korea or as patroness for the Navy Relief Ball (*New York Times* 1953a, 1953b), – still policy-related, but not comparable to later ladies. Johnson broke this trend by being almost shockingly opinionated, the "most politically minded woman to enter the White House as First Lady since Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt" (*New York Times* 1963a). This more politicized role is seen to be indicative of a changing role for women in society: "Mrs. Carter said the fact that former First Ladies were organizing the event indicated that their roles had changed just as the role of women generally had changed in society. With Mrs. Johnson nodding in agreement, Mrs. Carter said, "There will never be another First Lady who goes to the White House to be a hostess'" (Smothers 1988).

Last, it should be noted that if (supporting) the fashion industry were considered a policy issue, these women would appear much more political. While the CAP codebook excludes fashion, the influence of the first lady's fashion on women's purchases – thereby supporting the American industry and economy – is well-described in modern days: the 'Michelle Obama effect' is supposedly good for a \$3 billion increase in the American economy (*The Week* 2010). Already in 1952, the *NYT* suggests that Eisenhower will give a boost to the fashion industry; Kennedy's love for fashion created a demand for anything from hats to sunglasses (*New York Times* 1961, 1962); and Reagan's "stylish image" compared to Carter's modest style was believed to push American women to stores (*New York Times* 1981).

4.2. Association with compassion issues

Now that we have established the first lady's increasing association with policy, the next step is to see whether she is decreasingly associated with so-called compassion issues, such as health, education, childcare and women's issues. This hypothesis – underscoring the idea that first ladies represent American women – is also suggested in *NYT* articles: in a conference on first ladies in 1982, “[a] member of the audience asked why First Ladies’ issues were traditional issues of women, such as mental health, beautification, White House restoration and foster grandparents; ... “As today’s well-educated young women come into the White House... more will be interested in things like budget and taxation”” responded the panel member (Klemesrud 1982).

For the following calculations (hypotheses 2-5), different data is used than for the first hypothesis, since these hypotheses focus on the content of the CAP topics specifically. Here, I include separate observations (meaning if an article mentions more than one CAP topic, it is separated into multiple observations, with one CAP topic per observation) about active associations with an incumbent first lady. Again, all observations relating to Clinton's political offices are excluded.

When all these separate active policy observations of incumbent first ladies are separated by their compassion, neutral or hard category (as explained above and in appendix B), we are left with 1078 compassion observations (64%); 424 neutral observations (25%); and 182 hard observations (11%). There are differences between first ladies, as can be seen in Figure 4. Johnson is associated with the fewest compassion issues and more with neutral policy topics; this is likely due to her focus on beautification of highways, which are respectively environmental and transportation issues. This highlights a potential weakness of the CAP division and Huddy and Terkildsen's dimensions, as planting flowers in parks and along roads could arguably be a compassion issue when framed as caring for the environment

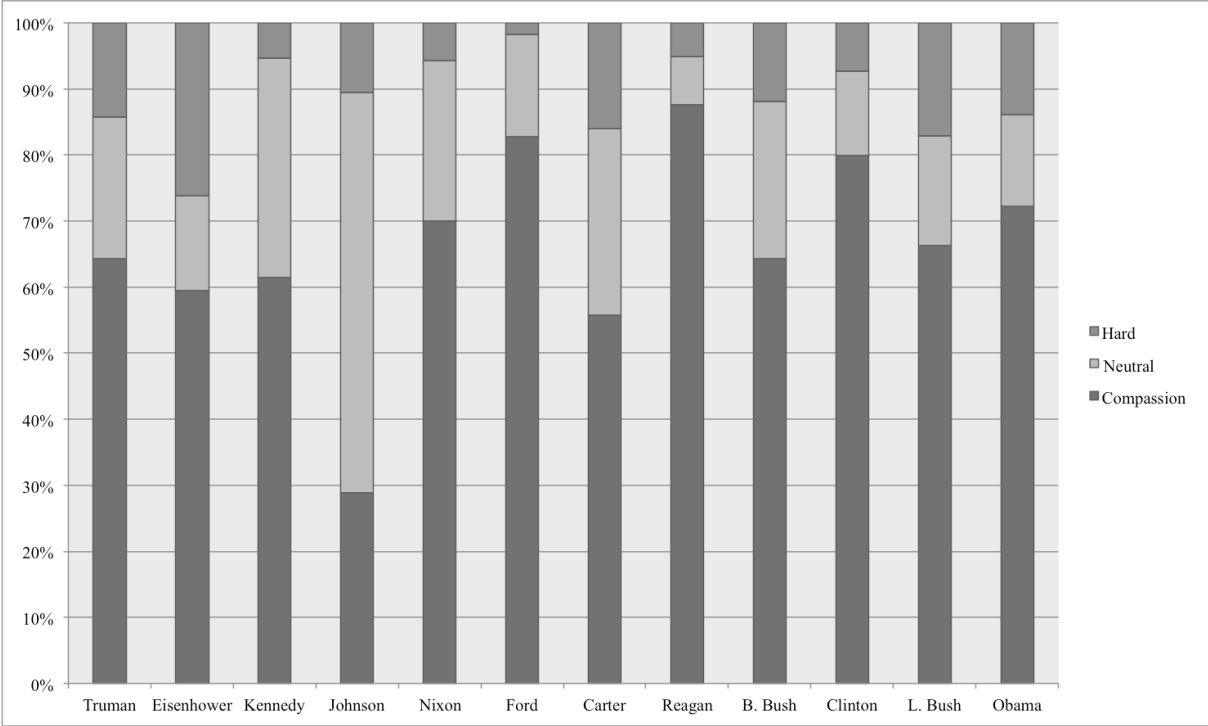


Figure 4. Relative distribution between compassion, hard and neutral issues in first lady policy observations (including active incumbent policy observations).

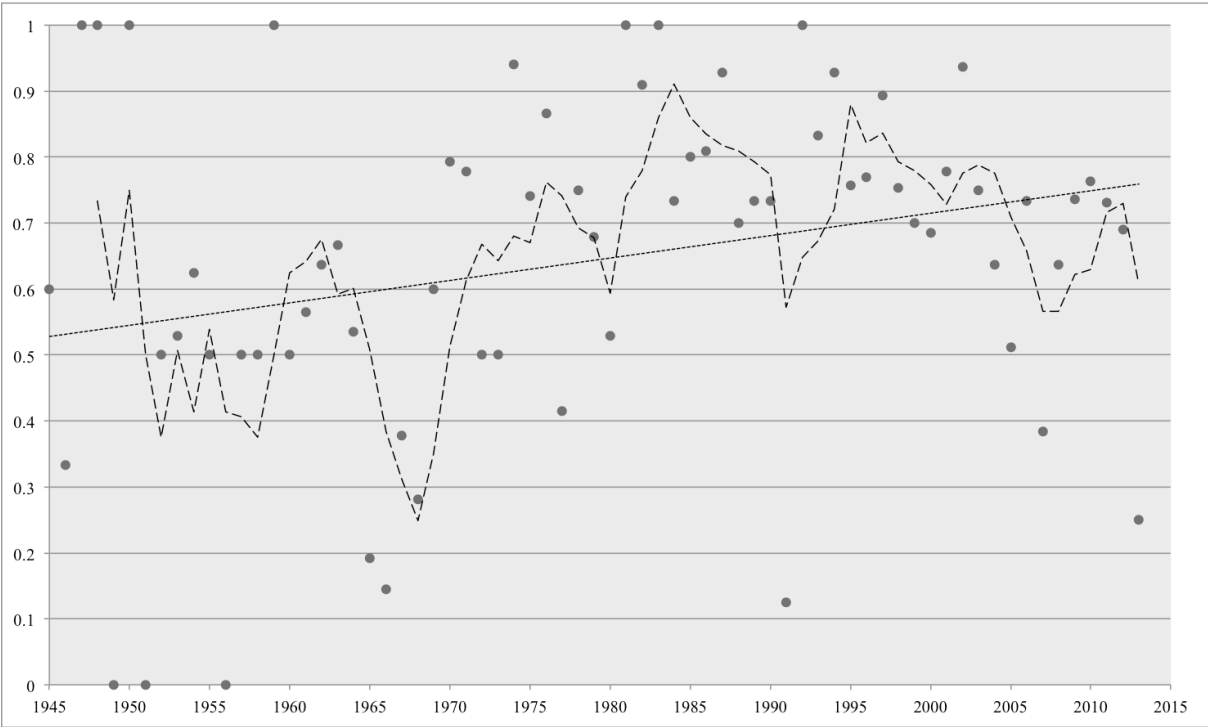


Figure 5. Relationship (including the linear regression and 4-year moving average trend) between first lady active incumbent policy observations and the relative share of compassion topics, per year.

and/or conservation. For all other first ladies however, the majority of observations are of compassion issues. From the overall frequencies one can conclude that compassion issues make up a majority of the policy issues first ladies are associated with.

As for the hypothesized decreasing association with compassion issues, Figure 5 shows that the trend seems to go in the other direction. Plotting the relative share of compassion, neutral, or hard policy issue per year and fitting a linear trend – which is not ideal for the data, but can give an indication of the direction of the trend – results in an increasing trend, with a regression coefficient of $B = 0.003$ ($SE = 0.002$, $p < 0.05$), which although small, is a significant effect. Again, there is a rather dispersed set of observations (especially between the 1960s and 1980s): there is quite some variation from year to year, as is also shown by the 4-year moving averages, with not all first ladies having a similar variation. It should be noted that some of this, especially in the earlier years and in 2013, is likely due to the low number of observations for those years. Due to those lower amounts of observations, e.g. Barbara Bush deviates between 13% (1991) to 100% (1992) of her policy agenda consisting of compassion issues – while with more observations, Clinton’s policy agenda is relatively steady between 93% (1993) and 69% (2000).

As can also be seen in Figure 4, some variation remains concerning the extent with which first ladies are associated with compassion issues between first ladies, and from year to year. Generally though, the feminist movement does not seem to have made an impact on the type of issues first ladies are associated with over time, even if the *NYT* (1987) reports stories such as: “Mrs. Reagan has earned her influence, and she has a right to her opinions, even on issues once chauvinistically thought of as *men’s concerns*.” While most first ladies identify with the women’s movement, they are primarily associated with compassion issues: there seem to (still) be certain policy domains that are (assumed to be) better suited for the first lady. Hypothesis 2 is therefore rejected. Nevertheless, compassion issues are no less political

policy fields than hard issues; they are merely *different* issues. It might be favorable for first ladies' political power: "one of the helpful stereotypes about women in politics is that they are particularly good on issues like health care" (Toner 1993), suggesting they may affect policy more easily in these domains.

4.3. Association with a diversified agenda

Next, I look at the level of concentration of the first lady's agenda, and whether this changes over time. My expectation is that the agenda becomes more diversified or fragmented, as the first lady becomes institutionalized as a political institution with her own varied policy agenda. Once again I start by looking at the first lady's actively pursued agenda while in office. This is shown in Figure 6 through the relative frequencies of each major CAP topic. There are some issue domains where first ladies are more active than others, but with the exception of Truman (who had only 14 CAP policy observations) and Reagan, none of those policy domains make up more than 40% of their policy agenda. Insofar as the first lady's agenda is concentrated, these potential spotlight policy domains do not make up a majority of their agenda.

From that variation in policy domains follows a similar, generally even larger, variation between each policy topic, which cannot be meaningfully graphed. There is some focus: 36% of Truman's (few) observations concern volunteerism (1305); 35% of Kennedy's agenda is focused on the arts and humanities (609), Ford spends 31% of her incumbent policy agenda on mental illness (333); Reagan's agenda consists of a 42% focus on alcohol and drug abuse (342); and 27% of Obama's policy agenda puts nutrition and food assistance (1301) in the spotlight (although that should probably be seen in conjunction with the 18% of her agenda that is spent on health promotion (331)). All other first ladies concentrate less than 25% of their agenda on one specific issue.

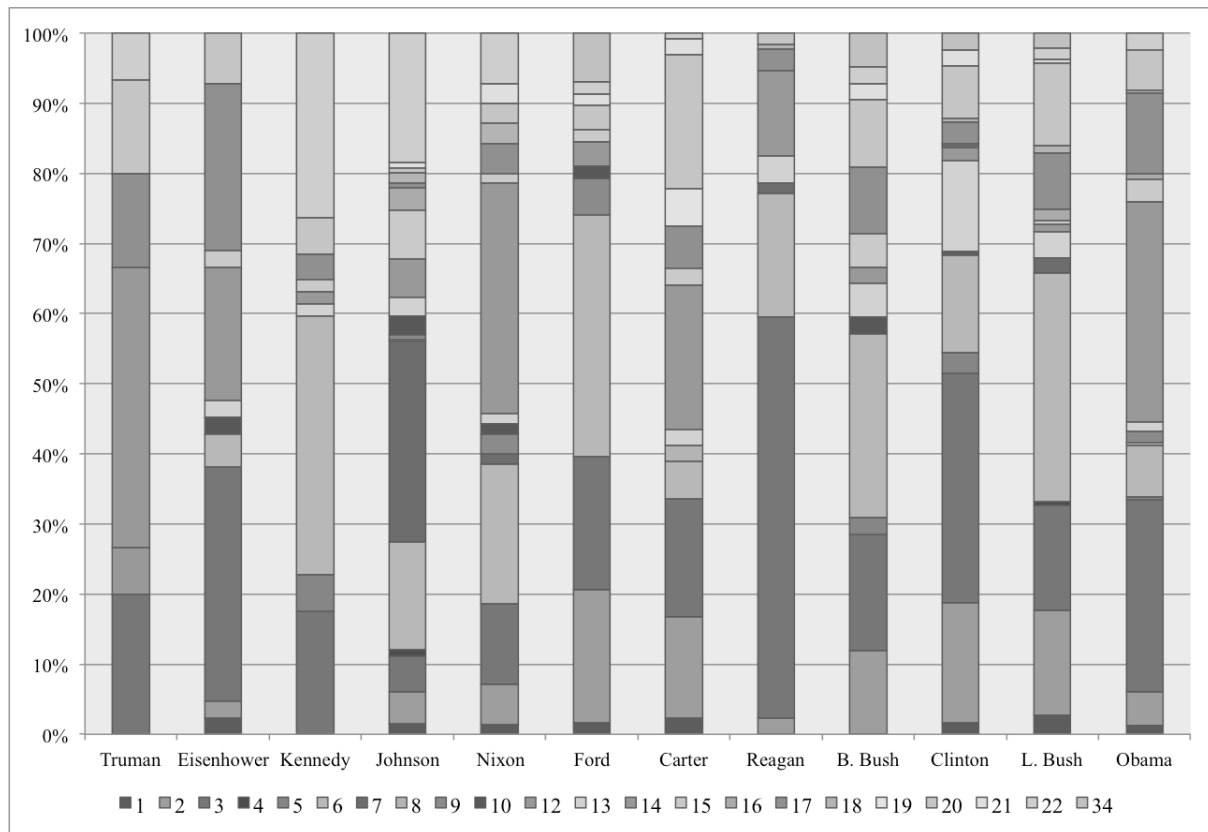


Figure 6. Relative frequency of policy domains per first lady, including active incumbent policy observations (see appendix A for numeric CAP topic list).

The *NYT*'s reporting suggests that first ladies (post-1960) choose specific issues to highlight, and there are quite some articles comparing these spotlight issues. Kennedy wanted to restore the White House's history for the benefit of the nation (*New York Times* 1961); Johnson's "two favored projects ... will be the beautification and antipoverty programs" (*NYT* 1965); Nixon hoped "to be very active in the environment field" (*NYT* 1971); Ford fought for women's rights and the Equal Rights Amendment; Carter "supported mental health" (Rosselini 1981); Reagan hoped to be remembered for her help to children's and drug abuse problems (Wines 1989); Barbara Bush campaigned against illiteracy (Weinraub 1989); Clinton attempted a healthcare overhaul (Seelye 1997); Laura Bush focused on "literacy, education and health" (Meyers 2007); and Obama highlighted "healthy living..., supporting working families and military spouses" (Swarns 2009). While most of these suggested agenda

concentrations are indeed reflected in the data, it is apparent that many first ladies (are invited to) speak out about many different policy topics so that these ‘spotlight’ issues are sometimes weakened.

Already in 1978, the *NYT* writes that “[t]he First Lady customarily stakes out a noncontroversial cause, such as beautification, and gains the resulting publicity” (Tolchin). Indeed, all spotlighted issues are noncontroversial; they are valence issues, not disputed position issues (Stokes 1963). While almost all first ladies enjoyed a rather positive approval rating³ – generally better than their husbands – Reagan and Clinton’s strong personalities seem to have made them less popular (Berke 1996), despite sticking to similar noncontroversial policy issues (as noted by Carter, Clinton’s approval ratings skyrocketed again “as soon as she stood by her man” instead of “working on policy” (Bumiller 1999)).

These observations should be seen together with entropy levels, as those show how diversified or concentrated a first lady’s agenda is beyond these spotlight issues. These entropy levels are expressed in normalized Shannon’s H in Table 2. Shannon’s H calculates the level of concentration over all possible major or subtopics – not just those that a first lady has included in her agenda – and the normalized Shannon’s H allows comparisons of the scores per first lady. There is a pattern of increased diversification post-Kennedy, following that broadening scope of government between the 1960s and 1980s; and there is also Reagan’s relatively low score indicating a higher level of concentration, fitting with her focus on alcohol and drug abuse. Figure 7 shows there is in fact an increase of diversified agendas; on a major CAP level, the linear regression coefficient is $B = 0.003$ ($SE = 0.008$, $p = 0.663$) and on a subtopic level, the coefficient is $B = 0.013$ ($SE = 0.007$, $p = 0.087$); these trends are non-significant, so we cannot be sure of the relationship. Although the third hypothesis that

³ Approval ratings were introduced for Nixon (Watson 2000), but before then the first ladies were included in the list of ‘most admired women’, which can be interpreted as a high approval rating.

Table 2. Agenda diversification of each first lady as calculated using normalized Shannon's H, on a major CAP topic level and on subtopic level; higher scores indicate greater diversification.

First lady	Agenda diversification	
	Major CAP topic	CAP topic
Truman	0.480	0.342
Eisenhower	0.711	0.506
Kennedy	0.556	0.342
Johnson	0.741	0.577
Nixon	0.712	0.555
Ford	0.590	0.415
Carter	0.726	0.577
Reagan	0.489	0.406
B. Bush	0.602	0.549
Clinton	0.650	0.565
L. Bush	0.675	0.603
Obama	0.652	0.510

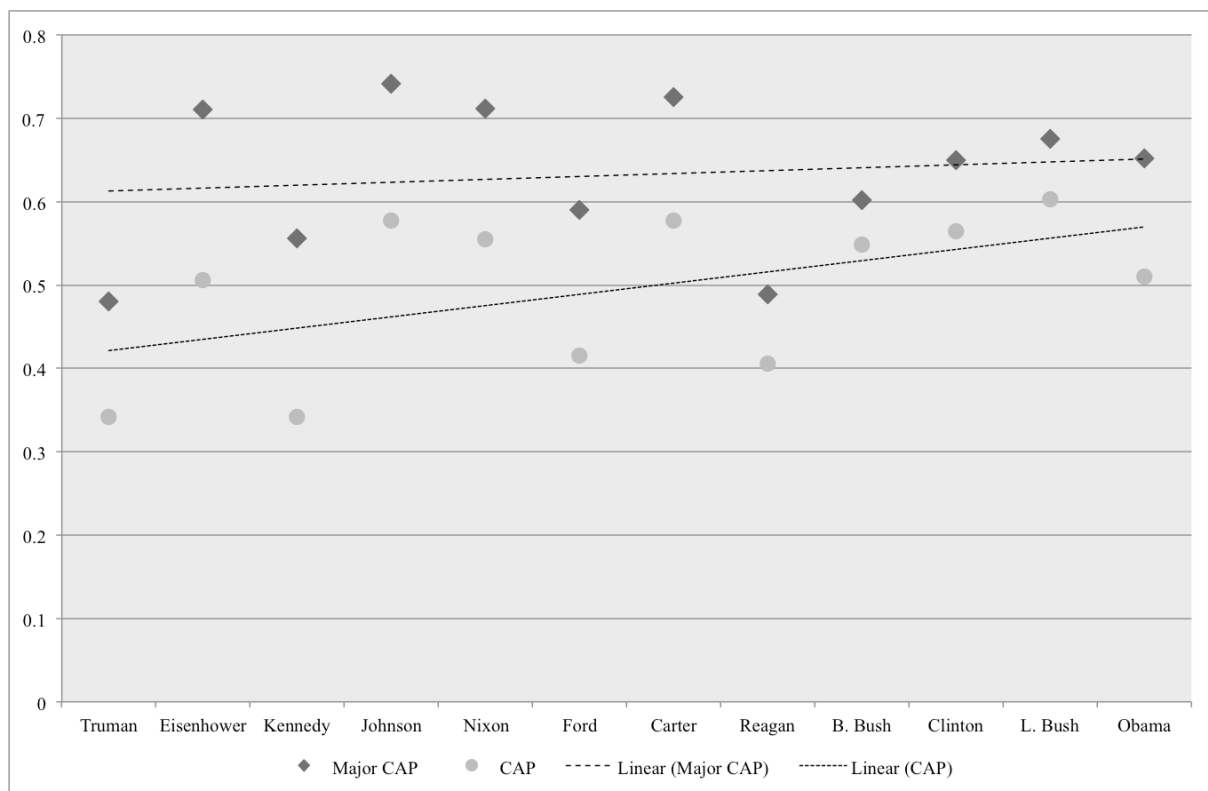


Figure 7. Agenda concentration of each first lady, as expressed in normalized Shannon's H levels (lower scores indicate greater concentration).

first ladies' agendas are increasingly diversified can be rejected, there seem to be patterns over time – potentially cycles – which can be further analyzed in future research.

The analysis is also executed for active policy observations pre- and post-incumbency of first ladies, since many remain politically active, and are sometimes even politically active before they are elected (e.g. during the campaign). There are few changes except for Ford, who became associated with alcohol and drug abuse (342) and health promotion (331) due to her discussing her alcohol addiction and breast cancer after leaving the White House. Including observations post-incumbency also shows the effects of Clinton's own political career: a much more dispersed agenda (0.767 on major topic level compared to 0.650 during incumbency; 0.685 compared to 0.565 on a subtopic level), since as a politician she needs to speak out on various issues. She keeps healthcare reform as her most associated policy topic (comprising 13% of her agenda) – although this is largely because many articles mention her memorable stint on the healthcare reform committee in 1993, not due to new policy initiatives; this confirms Burns' (2009) writings described above.

4.4. Agenda in relation to the president's agenda

Fourth, I determine the extent to which the first lady has a separate policy agenda from the president. Besides directly comparing these agendas, we should also establish how often the first lady's policy associations are together with the president, since this information is included in the dataset. These make up a minority of the total policy observations (ranging from 5% to 25%), as can be seen in Table 3. The frequency with which a first lady is associated with policy together with the president does not seem to follow any trend or logic. Although there seem to be large differences between the early first ladies – with Truman's 21% and Eisenhower's 2% – this seems due to small numbers of observations rather than any intentional differentiation in profiling; according to previous literature and as visible in Figure

Table 3. Share of first lady's active incumbent policy observations that also involve the president.

First lady	Policy observations together with president	
	Percentage	Observations
Truman	21%	3 out of 14
Eisenhower	2%	1 out of 43
Kennedy	14%	9 out of 63
Johnson	9%	30 out of 350
Nixon	6%	5 out of 81
Ford	5%	3 out of 62
Carter	13%	19 out of 142
Reagan	14%	25 out of 178
B. Bush	20%	15 out of 75
Clinton	25%	120 out of 483
L. Bush	11%	23 out of 201
Obama	14%	36 out of 262

2, Truman and Eisenhower were comparable portrayers of the supportive 'political wife' role.

Table 3 shows first ladies have many 'independent' policy associations; yet, it does not establish whether her agenda mirrors or deviates from her husband's. To determine the president's agenda, I use previously created datasets from the Policy Agendas project, which identifies CAP codes for State of the Union (SOTU) speeches and Executive Orders. For the purposes of this research, the president's agenda is best measured with the agenda as portrayed in the SOTU rather than the Executive Orders, since the latter are indicative of management of the executive branch, not just his policy and/or legislative agenda. Additionally, the SOTU is a policy speech and thereby a similar venue to the *NYT* for the first lady's policy speeches or (unspoken) statements such as visits. For completeness and since the data is available, both agenda measures are shown.

Using the data from the Policy Agendas project I had to make some small adjustments to both datasets: in the first ladies' dataset I include abortion as 208 (right to privacy), as suggested by the CAP instead of 3400. From the SOTU the 0/-555 observations were removed (since the SOTU is coded on sentence-level, and not all sentences contain policy content, many observations in that dataset are 'junk').

Overall, the correlation coefficient between the president and first lady's agendas is 0.122 on a major topic level, and 0.130 on a subtopic level for the SOTU. For the agenda as measured through the Executive Orders, the correlation coefficient is -0.050 on a major topic level, and 0.025 on a subtopic level – as mentioned above, the Executive Orders are less representative of a president's agenda. These low coefficients show that overall, the first lady has a different agenda than the president, at least when measured through these observations. This may very well be on purpose; even in 1956 the *NYT* remarked that “[s]he has taken from the President's shoulders much of the load of making personal appearances and being photographed for worthy causes” (Furman 1956).

To determine the relationship over time, Table 4 lists various correlations between the first lady and the president's agenda; both for the president's agenda as measured through the SOTU and his Executive Orders, as well as at major CAP topic level and at individual topic level. Some results are remarkable and difficult to explain: while Carter has a negative correlation on a major topic level, this becomes strongly positive on the individual level. Since there may be small (but important) differences when the first ladies' 'supportive' policy observations – those with the president – are included, Table 4 shows correlations between the first lady and the president's agenda with these observations excluded as well. These are largely negligible differences, the largest being the Trumans (as a result of 3 of her 14 incumbent policy observations being together with the president), but still shown for completion.

The development of this relationship, graphed in Figure 8 with linear estimations of each trend line, shows no statistically significant evidence for a trend either way. When comparing the first lady's agenda to the president's as measured through the SOTU, the linear regression coefficient is $B = 0.009$ ($SE = 0.019$, $p = 0.634$) for the major topics, and $B = 0.018$ ($SE = 0.011$, $p = 0.144$) for the subtopics; when measuring the president's agenda

Table 4. Correlation between the first lady's agenda, as measured through active incumbent policy observations, and the president's agenda, as measured through State of the Union speeches and Executive Orders.

First lady	Correlation							
	State of the Union				Executive Orders			
	Major CAP topic		CAP topic		Major CAP topic		CAP topic	
	Without president		Without president		Without president		Without president	
Truman	0.093	0.167	-0.002	-0.007	0.112	0.205	0.012	0.011
Eisenhower	0.145	0.167	0.041	0.022	0.032	0.060	0.019	0.007
Kennedy	0.399	0.380	-0.004	-0.003	-0.046	-0.045	0.032	0.037
Johnson	0.038	0.050	0.001	-0.008	-0.153	-0.133	0.039	0.042
Nixon	0.090	0.086	-0.014	-0.011	-0.035	-0.051	-0.016	-0.010
Ford	-0.236	-0.237	-0.022	-0.021	-0.183	-0.176	-0.043	-0.045
Carter	-0.275	-0.279	0.369	0.363	-0.231	-0.230	0.105	0.097
Reagan	-0.136	-0.153	-0.012	-0.010	-0.119	-0.122	0.046	0.048
B. Bush	0.050	0.058	0.112	0.142	-0.037	-0.030	0.143	0.180
Clinton	0.412	0.405	0.281	0.254	-0.062	-0.048	0.007	0.019
L. Bush	0.170	0.178	0.287	0.312	-0.011	-0.007	0.037	0.052
Obama	-0.119	-0.086	-0.009	-0.005	0.163	0.135	0.011	0.010
All	0.195	0.167	0.130	0.118	-0.011	-0.008	0.025	0.029

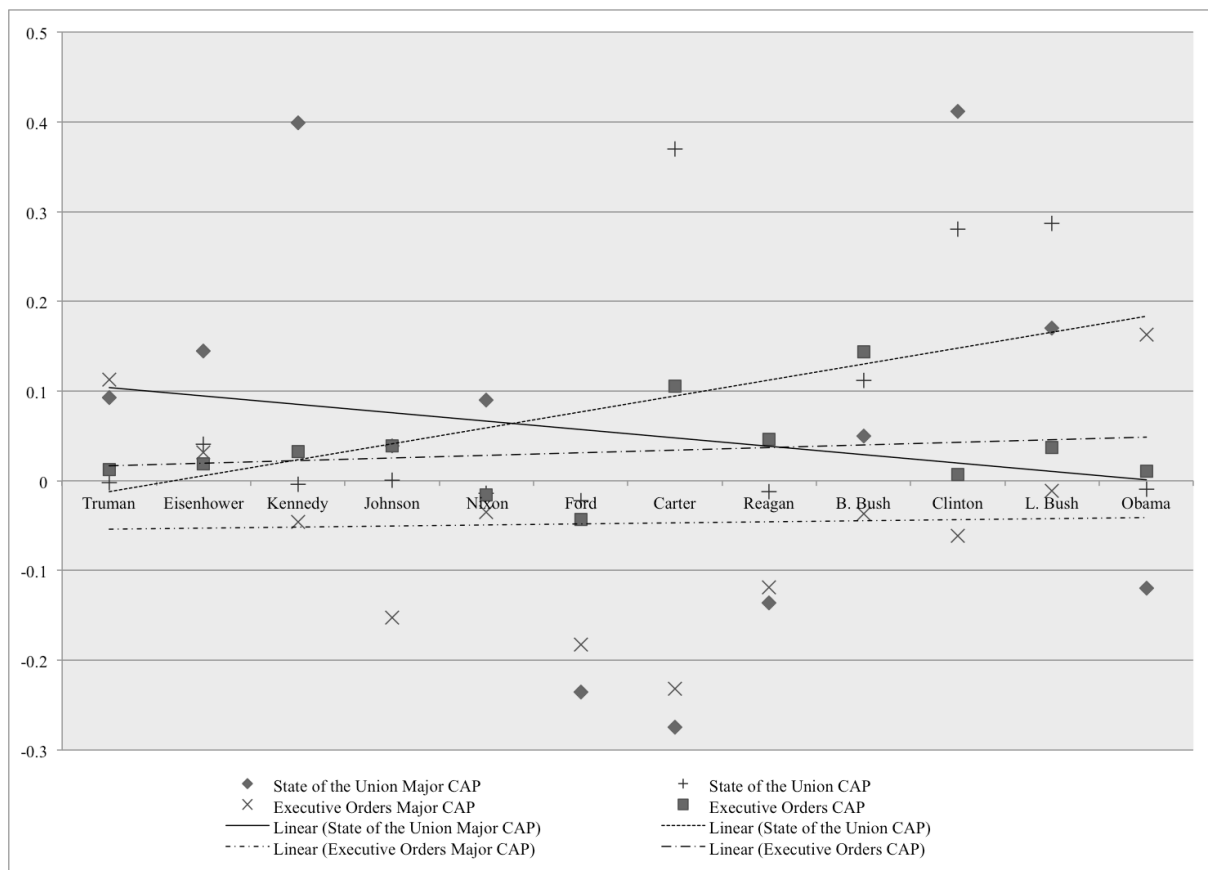


Figure 8. Relationship between each first lady's agenda, as measured through her active incumbent policy observations, and each respective president's agenda, as measured through State of the Union speeches and Executive Orders, in major and sub CAP topics.

through his Executive Orders, the coefficient is $B = 0.001$ ($SE = 0.010$, $p = 0.910$) for the major topics, and $B = 0.003$ ($SE = 0.004$, $p = 0.515$) for the subtopics. Thus, the data shows no support for hypothesis 4: the first lady's policy agenda has not meaningfully become more or less similar to the president's policy agenda; it seems to vary per presidential couple.

There are some other qualifications that can be made. Clinton has the most active incumbent observations together with her husband (25%), and as can be seen in Table 4, she shares her agenda with her husband: even if he is not with her she (relatively) often still profiles herself on similar topics, perhaps revealing her political ambitions. The Clintons sharing such a share of their policy agenda seems a sign of political empowerment, since Bill Clinton actively campaigned with the 'two for the price of one' slogan (Winfield 1997, 166). The Carters had a similar relationship: Rosalynn Carter has the largest correlation coefficient on the subtopic level with the SOTU. She called herself 'more political' than Jimmy Carter (Klemesrud 1979) and was described at the time of their election as "the most influential First Lady since Eleanor Roosevelt" (Shannon 1976). She noted that instead of having her own agenda like Roosevelt, she would rather compliment her husband's (Drummond Ayres 1979). By contrast, Truman felt "superfluous" when not considered concerning the dropping of the atomic bomb, and was originally against her husband becoming president (*New York Times* 1986); insofar as the earlier first ladies had their own agendas, they were less powerful political actors than the 'presidential partners' who share their husband's agendas. First ladies, writes Barringer (1992), need the support of the president and the West Wing because otherwise "the bureaucracy treats it as 'the ladies issue,' and no one takes it seriously."

Although integrating hypotheses can be sensible, visual inspection of the variables from hypotheses 1-4 does not show any trend suggesting quantifying interaction variables to be worthwhile. Relatively, Johnson and Carter have high shares of policy observations, low shares of compassion issues, and diversified agendas, cementing their role as policy

advocates; however, Clinton's many policy observations in absolute terms do not seem to show a similar trend, nor do other first ladies. Hypothesis 4 contains such varying results between its major and subtopic levels that using these to determine interaction effects would be unreliable. Again, the role each first lady takes seems to be particular to her alone, dependent on her personality and agenda choices. Potential combined effects of the hypotheses are worth further analysis and remain an avenue for future research.

4.5. Differences between Republicans and Democrats

The last hypothesis looks at potential differences in policy associations amongst Democrats and Republicans. First, it may be worthwhile to see whether there is a difference in terms of the division of celebrity, political wife, and policy observations, relative to the total amount of Democratic/Republican observations. In fact, this division is fairly equal, with incumbent Democrat first ladies associated with policy only 5% more than their Republican counterparts. This difference is larger when including post-incumbent observations (as Republicans are portrayed as celebrity or political wife 10% more), which is a result of Hillary Clinton's political career. This contradicts the idea that "Republican First Ladies... don't have to take an interest. Unless they want a book contract" (Gould 1977); Reagan, Barbara and Laura Bush followed through with political interests they had before becoming first lady.

In terms of the second hypothesis, Republicans are more associated with compassion issues than Democrats (71% instead of 58% of total observations). However, the Democrats are not much more associated with hard issues (this is 14% for both groups); instead, Democrats are associated more with neutral issues (28% instead of the Republican 15%) – and this is mostly due to Johnson's focus on highway beautification (environment and transportation) as mentioned above.

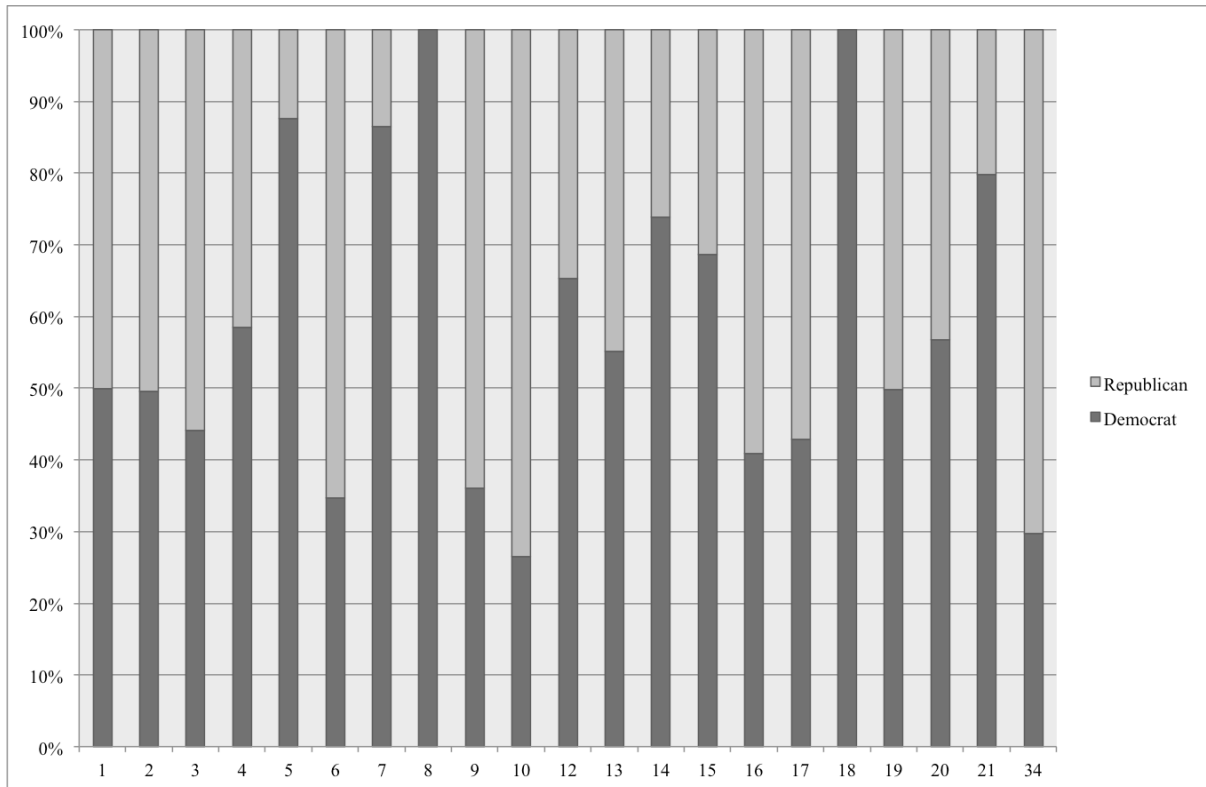


Figure 9. Division between active major CAP policy topics associated with incumbent Democratic and Republican first ladies (see appendix A for numeric CAP topic list).

As for the third hypothesis and potential diversification of the agenda – perhaps one party is more politically active through diversifying agendas – there is no noteworthy difference in average entropy scores between Republicans and Democrats; both are around 0.630 for the major topic level, and around 0.500 for the subtopic level. It seems Reagan was a special case with her relatively strong concentration on one issue.

Figure 9 depicts the relative associations per issue domain (dividing the total tally of Democrats associated with a major topic by the total tally of issues associated with Democrats). There are some issue areas that can be considered Republican (with 10% more associations with the topics), such as education (6) and abortion (34); Democrats ‘own’ more policy domains, namely environment (7), crime and family issues (12), community and housing (14), and public lands and water management (21). Although energy (8), immigration (9), transport (10), banking, finance and domestic commerce (15) and foreign trade (18) also

have Republican or Democratic associations in Figure 9, the dataset contains fewer than 25 observations for these domains (out of 1687, or 1% of the observations). Reflecting on issue ownership research by Egan (2013), these findings are quite surprising for the Republicans, as education is a Democratic issue, and abortion is a position issue that Republicans are generally against – not something one would expect a first lady to speak out on. In contrast, environment and public lands and water management are seen as Democratic issues, fitting with Democratic first ladies; CAP's typology of combining family issues (more Democratic) with crime (typically more Republican) might account for that issue domain being primarily associated with Democrats.

In terms of subtopics, healthcare reform (301), other environmental issues, namely beautification (799), and nutrition and food assistance (1301) are Democratic issues (associated at least 5% more, relatively speaking). By contrast, alcohol and illegal drug abuse (342) is the only issue that is overwhelmingly (by 10%) Republican. These are also spotlight issues for respectively Clinton, Johnson, Obama and Reagan. Thus, when looking at the subtopic level, it seems as though first ladies highlight issues that fit with their partisan affiliation, cementing their political identity in a partisan manner. When including pre- and post-incumbency observations the issue of arts and humanities (609) also becomes partisan, associated 5% more with Republicans than with Democrats. This finding is not easily explained, as arts and humanities are not generally a partisan issue; perhaps this has to do with Ford's artistic background.

When comparing the president's agenda with the first lady's agenda overall, we see the following: on major policy topics, the Democrats' correlation coefficient is -0.241 for the SOTU and -0.007 for Executive Orders; the Republicans' correlation coefficient is 0.182 for the SOTU and -0.034 for Executive Orders. On subtopics, the Democrats' correlation coefficient is 0.145 for the SOTU and 0.033 for Executive Orders; the Republicans have a

correlation coefficient of 0.134 for the SOTU and 0.034 for Executive Orders. These are not overwhelmingly different – although the Republican first ladies may appear to have a more different agenda from their presidents when looking at the major topics, this relationship is tempered at the subtopic level.

Overall, it seems there are differences, but not very large ones, and clear partisanship is not observed. First ladies – being unelected – might need to be a first lady of the *nation*, not of their party. These results may also be due to the first lady's personality or the fact that she is a woman, representing 'womanhood' to the US public (as suggested in Wertheimer 2005, xviii).

Contrary to a traditionally more passive approach to womanhood (as suggested by Watson 2000), *NYT* commentators suggest that Republicans used the Bush ladies politically: "helping co-opt the issues of interest mostly to women" (Dowd 1990); Barbara Bush was the "secret weapon" in the 1992 presidential elections (Stanley 1992). E.g. on women's rights, which have been a Democratic issue since 1980 (Wolbrecht 2000), Republican first ladies are relatively quite active – perhaps the *NYT* does not write about Democratic first ladies' positions since their allegiance to women's issues is considered natural. My data shows that Ford fought for women's rights, particularly the Equal Rights Amendment; Barbara and Laura Bush spoke up about their positions concerning abortion and feminism as well; and as described above, abortion is primarily associated with Republican first ladies.

5. Conclusion

This thesis analyzed whether first ladies are increasingly political, and associated with policy. Many have argued that an unelected official should not be so influential – Jacqueline Kennedy herself hated her title because it was “anti-democratic” (Honan 1994). However, polls have shown that while the electorate does not want a first lady to have direct political power, they still “expect her to perform a great deal of unpaid labor” (Bennetts 1980). Using *New York Times* articles, I found that the first lady indeed is increasingly associated with policy over time. Furthermore, the dispersion in associations between the 1960s and 1980s (for each first lady’s term in office) decreases, showing consolidation of this tendency to be increasingly associated with policy. These findings connect with recent agenda-setting research, e.g. fitting with the development of the scope of government as described by Baumgartner and Jones (2015).

When first ladies are associated with policy, they are primarily associated with so-called compassion issues, but this does not decrease over time to fit with a feminist policy advocacy-narrative. The first lady also does not seem to have an increasingly diversified agenda; rather than fixing a spotlight on a limited amount of issues, she lights up quite a bit of the room, with only Reagan having a clear ‘pet’ issue of drug and alcohol abuse. There seem to be cycles of diversification (and differences per first lady), not a clear linear increase. Additionally, there is no real correlation between the president and first lady’s agenda overall, indicating they focus on different issues. In fact, two first ladies with higher correlations, Carter and Clinton, were strong presidential partners rather than subordinates taking on their husband’s agenda because they could or would not develop their own. Last, I found no clear partisan divisions, although a few of the spotlighted issues that first ladies have chosen might have been selected because they fit with their party’s identity. This was to be expected, since it is an extreme manifestation of the ‘policy’ role. Some Republican first ladies associate

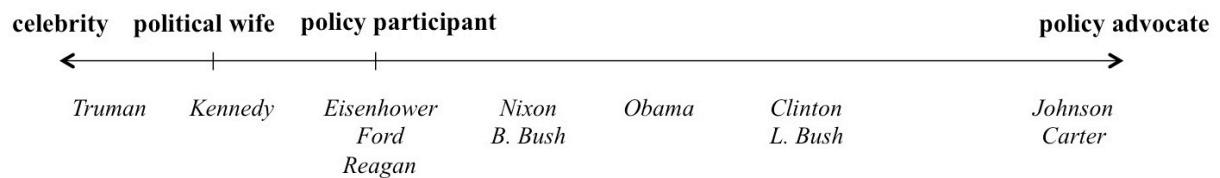


Figure 10. Continuum of incumbent first lady policy profiles, from celebrity to policy advocate, locating first ladies post-1945.

themselves with non-traditional Republican issues such as women's rights or abortion, which may be due to them identifying more as first *lady* than first *Republican* lady. In general, we see that every first lady maintains her own (policy) identity, often reflecting the zeitgeist, as suggested in earlier literature; instead of linear trends, cycles appear more prevalent.

These analyses allow us to locate first ladies on the continuum from Figure 1, between celebrity and policy advocate. I create the index shown in Figure 10 by allocating points (0-2) for each hypothesis, with high values representing the strongest policy association, lowest compassion share, highest agenda diversification, least sharing of the president's agenda, and most partisan observations. On the left we see first ladies such as Truman, who did not become involved in policy; on the right we see Johnson and Carter, who spent much of their time in the press building their policy agenda. Other first ladies fall in between these categories, with many of their positions nevertheless showing distinct and meaningful policy identities as mentioned above.

Future research can use the dataset this thesis has yielded for further analyses concerning the (policy) role of the first lady, its potential cycles and interaction effects between the variables, thereby testing the existing conventions of her office; for one, this data could be compared to other observations of the US' policy agenda. The CAP lacks directional information, and it would be interesting to study the tone with which first ladies discuss certain policy issues – as we saw that Republican first ladies are likely to discuss abortion and women's issues, future work could compare their tone to their husbands'. Furthermore, a

division could be made between direct involvement with policymaking versus pure advocacy roles: when Clinton attempted to overhaul the healthcare system, “[s]he realized she overstepped” (Purdum 1995) and receded to the more passive policy ‘advocate.’ These questions can provide more clarity on where to place the first ladies on the continuum, and advance existent longitudinal agenda-setting research, like the CAP, regarding the activities of (non-)elected officials.

Perhaps future research can also identify how the office changes when it sees its first First Lad. After all, while denying that she would ever run for president, Clinton said in 1997: “I do think we will have a serious candidate in 20 years...” (Wadler 1997) this prophecy might culminate in Clinton as the first female president in 2016. The Clintons may well continue the observed trend of politically active presidential partners that they displayed during their first term in office.

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APPENDIX A. COMPARATIVE AGENDAS PROJECT TOPIC LIST**1. Macroeconomics**

- 100: General Domestic Macroeconomic Issues
- 101: Inflation, Prices, and Interest Rates
- 103: Unemployment Rate
- 104: Monetary Supply, Federal Reserve Board, and the Treasury
- 105: National Budget and Debt
- 107: Taxation, Tax policy, and Tax Reform
- 108: Industrial Policy
- 110: Price Control and Stabilization
- 199: Other

2. Civil Rights, Minority Issues, and Civil Liberties

- 200: General
- 201: Ethnic Minority and Racial Group Discrimination
- 202: Gender and Sexual Orientation Discrimination
- 204: Age Discrimination
- 205: Handicap or Disease Discrimination
- 206: Voting Rights, Participation, and Related Issues
- 207: Freedom of Speech & Religion
- 208: Right to Privacy and Access to Government Information
- 209: Anti-Government Activities
- 299: Other

3. Health

- 300: General
- 301: Comprehensive healthcare reform
- 302: Insurance reform, availability, and cost
- 321: Regulation of drug industry, medical devices, and clinical labs
- 322: Facilities construction, regulation, and payments
- 323: Provider and insurer payment and regulation
- 324: Medical liability, fraud and abuse
- 325: Health Manpower & Training
- 331: Prevention, communicable diseases and health promotion
- 332: Infants and children
- 333: Mental illness and mental retardation
- 334: Long-term care, home health, terminally ill, and rehabilitation services
- 335: Prescription drug coverage and costs
- 336: Other or multiple benefits and procedures
- 341: Tobacco Abuse, Treatment, and Education
- 342: Alcohol/Controlled and Illegal Drug Abuse, Treatment, and Education
- 398: Research and development
- 399: Other

4. Agriculture

- 400: General
- 401: Agricultural Trade
- 402: Government Subsidies to Farmers and Ranchers, Agricultural Disaster Insurance
- 403: Food Inspection and Safety (including seafood)

- 404: Agricultural Marketing, Research, and Promotion
- 405: Animal and Crop Disease, Pest Control, and Domesticated Animal Welfare
- 408: Fisheries and Fishing
- 498: Agricultural Research and Development
- 499: Other

5. Labor, Employment, and Immigration

- 500: General
- 501: Worker Safety and Protection, Occupational and Safety Health Administration (OSHA)
- 502: Employment Training and Workforce Development
- 503: Employee Benefits
- 504: Employee Relations and Labor Unions
- 505: Fair Labor Standards
- 506: Youth Employment, Youth Job Corps Programs, and Child Labor
- 508: Parental Leave and Child Care
- 529: Migrant and Seasonal workers, Farm Labor Issues
- 599: Other

6. Education

- 600: General
- 601: Higher Education
- 602: Elementary and Secondary Education
- 603: Education of Underprivileged Students
- 604: Vocational Education
- 606: Special Education
- 607: Educational Excellence
- 609: Arts and Humanities
- 698: Research and Development
- 699: Other

7. Environment

- 700: General
- 701: Drinking Water Safety
- 703: Waste Disposal
- 704: Hazardous Waste and Toxic Chemical Regulation, Treatment, and Disposal
- 705: Air pollution, Global Warming, and Noise Pollution
- 707: Recycling
- 708: Indoor Environmental Hazards
- 709: Species and Forest Protection
- 710: Pollution and Conservation in Coastal & Other Navigable Waterways
- 711: Land and Water Conservation
- 798: Research and Development
- 799: Other

8. Energy

- 800: General
- 801: Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Regulatory Commission Issues
- 802: Electricity and Hydroelectricity
- 803: Natural Gas and Oil (Including Offshore Oil and Gas)
- 805: Coal

- 806: Alternative and Renewable Energy
- 807: Energy Conservation
- 898: Research and Development:
- 899: Other

9. Immigration

- 900: Immigration and Refugee Issues

10. Transportation

- 1000: General
- 1001: Mass Transportation and Safety
- 1002: Highway Construction, Maintenance, and Safety
- 1003: Airports, Airlines, Air Traffic Control and Safety
- 1005: Railroad Transportation and Safety
- 1006: Truck and Automobile Transportation and Safety
- 1007: Maritime Issues, Including Safety and Security
- 1010: Public Works (Infrastructure Development)
- 1098: Research and Development
- 1099: Other

12. Law, Crime, and Family Issues

- 1200: General
- 1201: Executive Branch Agencies Dealing With Law and Crime
- 1202: White Collar Crime and Organized Crime
- 1203: Illegal Drug Production, Trafficking, and Control
- 1204: Court Administration
- 1205: Prisons
- 1206: Juvenile Crime and the Juvenile Justice System
- 1207: Child Abuse and Child Pornography
- 1208: Family Issues
- 1209: Police, Fire, and Weapons Control
- 1210: Criminal and Civil Code
- 1211: Riots, Crime Prevention, and Crime Control
- 1299: Other

13. Social Welfare

- 1300: General
- 1301: Food Stamps, Food Assistance, and Nutrition Monitoring Programs
- 1302: Poverty and Assistance for Low-Income Families and Individuals
- 1303: Elderly Issues and Elderly Assistance Programs (Including Social Security Administration)
- 1304: Assistance to the Disabled and Handicapped
- 1305: Social Services and Volunteer Associations
- 1399: Other

14. Community Development and Housing Issues

- 1400: General
- 1401: Housing and Community Development
- 1403: Urban Economic Development and General Urban Issues
- 1404: Rural Housing and FmHA Housing Assistance Programs

- 1405: Rural Economic Development
- 1406: Low and Middle Income Housing Programs and Needs
- 1407: Veterans Housing Assistance and Military Housing Programs
- 1408: Elderly and Handicapped Housing
- 1409: Housing Assistance for Homeless and Homeless Issues
- 1410: Secondary Mortgage Market
- 1499: Other

15. Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce

- 1500: General
- 1501: U.S. Banking System and Financial Institution Regulation
- 1502: Securities and Commodities Regulation
- 1504: Consumer Finance, Mortgages, and Credit Cards
- 1505: Insurance Regulation
- 1507: Bankruptcy
- 1520: Corporate Mergers, Antitrust Regulation, and Corporate Management Issues
- 1521: Small Business Issues and the Small Business Administration
- 1522: Copyrights and Patents
- 1523: Domestic Disaster Relief
- 1524: Tourism
- 1525: Consumer Safety and Consumer Fraud
- 1526: Sports and Gambling Regulation
- 1599: Other

16. Defense

- 1600: General
- 1602: U.S. and Other Defense Alliances, U.S Security Assistance
- 1603: Military Intelligence, CIA, Espionage
- 1604: Military Readiness, Coordination of Armed Services Air Support and Sealift Capabilities, and National Stockpiles of Strategic Materials
- 1605: Arms Control and Nuclear Nonproliferation
- 1606: Military Aid and Weapons Sales to other Countries
- 1608: Manpower, Military Personnel and Dependents (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines), Military Courts
- 1609: Veteran Affairs and Other Issues
- 1610: Military Procurement and Weapons System Acquisitions and Evaluation
- 1611: Military Installations, Construction, and Land Transfers
- 1612: National Guard and Reserve Affairs
- 1614: Military Nuclear and Hazardous Waste Disposal, Military Environmental Compliance
- 1615: Civil Defense & Homeland Security
- 1616: DOD Civilian Personnel, Civilian Employment by the Defense Industry, Military Base Closings
- 1617: Oversight of Defense Contracts and Contractors
- 1619: Direct War Related Issues and Foreign Operations
- 1620: Relief of Claims Against U.S. Military:
- 1698: Research and Development
- 1699: Other

17. Space, Science, Technology and Communications

- 1700: General

- 1701: NASA, U.S. Government Use of Space, Space Exploration Agreements
- 1704: Commercial Use of Space, Satellites
- 1705: Science Technology Transfer, International Scientific Cooperation
- 1706: Telephone and Telecommunication Regulation
- 1707: Broadcast Industry Regulation (TV, Cable, Radio)
- 1708: Weather Forecasting and Related Issues, NOAA, Oceanography
- 1709: Computer Industry, Computer Security, and General Issues related to the Internet
- 1798: Research and Development
- 1799: Other

18. Foreign Trade

- 1800: General
- 1802: Trade Negotiations, Disputes, and Agreements
- 1803: Export Promotion and Regulation, Export-Import Bank
- 1804: International Private Business Investments, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)
- 1806: Productivity and Competitiveness of U.S. Business, U.S. Balance of Payments
- 1807: Tariff and Import Restrictions, Import Regulation
- 1808: Exchange Rates and Related Issues
- 1899: Other

19. International Affairs and Foreign Aid

- 1900: General (Department of State and U.S. Information Agency appropriations)
- 1901: U.S. Foreign Aid
- 1902: International Resources Exploitation and Resources Agreement
- 1905: Developing Countries Issues
- 1906: International Finance and Economic Development
- 1910: Western Europe and Common Market/European Union Issues
- 1915: Panama Canal Issues and Other International Canal Issues
- 1921: Other Country/Region Specific Issues
- 1925: Human Rights
- 1926: International Organizations other than Finance: United Nations (UN), UNESCO, International Red Cross
- 1927: Terrorism, Hijacking
- 1929: U.S. Diplomats, U.S. Embassies, U.S. Citizens Abroad, Foreign Diplomats in the U.S., Passports
- 1999: Other

20. Government Operations

- 2000: General (includes budget requests and appropriations for multiple departments and agencies)
- 2001: Intergovernmental Relations
- 2002: Government Efficiency and Bureaucratic Oversight
- 2003: Postal Service Issues (Including Mail Fraud)
- 2004: Government Employee Benefits, Civil Service Issues
- 2005: Nominations and Appointments
- 2006: Currency, Commemorative Coins, Medals, U.S. Mint
- 2007: Government Procurement, Procurement Fraud and Contractor Management
- 2008: Government Property Management
- 2009: IRS Administration

2010: Presidential Impeachment & Scandal

2011: Federal Government Branch Relations and Administrative Issues, Congressional Operations

2012: Regulation of Political Campaigns, Political Advertising, PAC regulation, Government Ethics

2013: Census

2014: District of Columbia Affairs

2015: Relief of Claims against the U.S. Government

2030: Federal Holidays

2099: Other

21. Public Lands and Water Management

2100: General

2101: National Parks, Memorials, Historic Sites, and Recreation

2102: Native American Affairs

2103: Natural Resources, Public Lands, and Forest Management

2104: Water Resources Development and Research

2105: U.S. Dependencies and Territorial Issues

2199: Other

34: Abortion

3400: Abortion

APPENDIX B. DIVISION BETWEEN COMPASSION, HARD AND NEUTRAL ISSUES

This division is based on Huddy and Terkildsen (1993).

Compassion issues

- Gender and Sexual Orientation Discrimination (202)
- Health (3) – all subtopics
- Youth Employment, Youth Job Corps Programs, and Child Labor (506) and Parental Leave and Child Care (508)
- Education (6) – all subtopics
- Family Issues (1208)
- Social Welfare (13) – all subtopics
- Community Development and Housing Issues (14) – Low and Middle Income Housing Programs and Needs (1406), Veterans Housing Assistance and Military Housing Programs (1407), Elderly and Handicapped Housing (1408), Housing Assistance for Homeless and Homeless Issues (1409)
- Abortion (34)

Hard issues

- Macroeconomics (1) – all subtopics
- Labor, Employment, and Immigration (5) – all subtopics, minus Youth Employment, Youth Job Corps Programs, and Child Labor (506) and Parental Leave and Child Care (508)
- Law, Crime and Family Issues (12) – all subtopics, minus Family Issues (1208)
- Community Development and Housing Issues (14) – Urban Economic Development and General Urban Issues (1403), Rural Housing and FmHA Housing Assistance Programs (1404), Rural Economic Development (1405), and Secondary Mortgage Market (1410)
- Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce (15) – all subtopics
- Defense (16) – all subtopics
- Foreign Trade (18) – all subtopics

Neutral issues

- Civil Rights, Minority Issues, and Civil Liberties (2) – all subtopics, minus Gender and Sexual Orientation Discrimination (202)
- Agriculture (4) – all subtopics
- Environment (7) – all subtopics
- Energy (8) – all subtopics
- Immigration (9) – all subtopics
- Transportation (10) – all subtopics
- Community Development and Housing Issues (14) – General (1400), Housing and Community Development (1401) and Other (1499)
- Space, Science, Technology and Communications (17) – all subtopics
- International Affairs and Foreign Aid (19) – all subtopics, minus Terrorism, Hijacking (1927)
- Government Operations (20) – all subtopics
- Public Lands and Water Management (21) – all subtopics