Eleanor and Hillary: First Lady leadership in the contexts of history and contemporary culture

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Historians, sociologists, political scientists, journalists, and other students of leadership have often ignored the subject of first lady leadership. Even when the topic is addressed, it is often difficult to grasp. Beasley explains:

In any contest for the holder of the most ambiguous position in American political life, the winner might well be the first lady, who lacks any constitutional authority but wields an intangible amount of public influence. Through the unpredictable operations of fate—the accidents of marriage and the electoral process—presidents' spouses have found themselves in the public eye, whether or not they wished to be there. (Media 3)

In this paper, I will use a new model of leadership theory to better grasp the large and ambiguous topic of first lady leadership. The Wren and Swatez model was originally designed as a tool for use by leaders and followers in order to make sense of their world and its many contexts. I will use this model to examine the lives of two particular first ladies as leaders, Eleanor Roosevelt and Hillary Rodham Clinton¹, and how they managed their tasks in their own particular historical and contemporary contexts. I propose that I will find that the success or failure of their leadership efforts depended, at least in part, on their ability or failure to use the historical and cultural forces of their time effectively.

¹hereafter referred to as simply "ER" and "HRC."
Scholars have posed the question of whether what first ladies "do" is really leadership, or whether they serve only as role models. Historian Goodwin indicates that "one of the peculiarities of the role is that you make of it what you want of it" (qtd. in O'Brien 84). However, some scholars argue that the office of the first lady is not a leadership position. One noted first lady scholar, Lewis Gould, claims that the position is only valid for the private influence that a first lady can have on the President, and for her role as a celebrity and symbol to other women of womanhood ("First Ladies" 529). Feminist Germaine Greer argues that this symbolism is actually damaging to women. She says that the first lady lives in a kind of "decorative servitude," unable to conduct "legitimate business" (21). There is substantial evidence, however, that first ladies can be leaders, and that the office can be a leadership position. Mayo explains that the above perceptions stem from a lack of knowledge, and that first ladies since Abigail Adams have been wielding political influence as a matter of course. Betty Boyd Caroli, another leading scholar of first ladies, documents in detail the leadership efforts (and very rarely, the lack of leadership efforts) of each presidential wife in American history. Her work also emphasizes the ways in which each woman's leadership was shaped by the women who had come before her.

Therefore, the work of this paper is important to leadership studies for two reasons. First of all, such examination furthers the exploration of first lady leadership and interprets the lives and works of ER and HRC in a new way. Also, this paper will help test the validity of a new model of contingency theory. Wren and Swatez explain that leadership studies needs such a model, one "that identifies and affirms the various levels of historical and cultural forces that act upon the leadership process" (247).

Contingency theories of leadership examine the relationship between leaders, followers, and the situation, and often use models to describe or predict leadership effectiveness. These
theories and models share an assumption that "different behavior patterns (or trait patterns) will be effective in different situations, and that the same behavior pattern (or trait pattern) is not optimal in all situations" (Yuki 14). The current leadership scholarship offers many theories and models of contingency theory; including House's path-goal theory, Kerr and Jermier's leader substitutes theory, Fiedler's LPC contingency model, and Vroom and Yetton's normative decision model, to name a few. Despite the abundance (and quality) of writing and research on this subject, most theories and models are limited to a strictly organizational context.

In their 1995 work "The Historical and Contemporary Contexts of Leadership: A Conceptual Model," Thomas Wren and Marc Swatez of the Jepson School proposed a model of contingency "designed to expand the notion of leadership context to embrace the impact of long-term historical forces and the influence of cultural values upon leadership" (246). Their model explains leadership as an interaction between leaders and followers through a sequence of contextual categories, represented by three concentric circles. The circle begins at the outermost level with the historical context of leadership. Within that framework, the leader must consider the long-term social, economic, and political forces of her culture. The middle circle represents the contemporary context of leadership: its social values, cultural mores, and subcultural norms. The inner circle represents the immediate context of leadership on which the current leadership literature focuses. Within this context, the leader must consider his organization's structure and goals, its culture, and the characteristics of the task at hand.

Research methodology

I will approach this paper from two very different research perspectives, from both the humanities and the social sciences. At first, these two approaches seem to be incompatible. Further examination reveals that these two methods employed together form the kind of
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interdisciplinary work that is the heart of leadership studies (Klenke). I will first examine methods of history, then those of sociology, and then explain the way in which they coalesce to enhance this project.

Research in the humanities is often based on written texts and narratives. It is typically non-theoretical and qualitative (Klenke). This type of research is also subjective, but this is its strength, rather than its weakness. In their book, How to Study History, Cantor and Schneider emphasize that:

_The most important principle that the novice student of history must learn is that the business of an historian is to make judgments and to establish causal relationships between facts; he must place them in some significant pattern and order and not simply be a reporter._ (19, italics in original)

In other words, the historian's personal perspective is what makes her work valuable. With her own judgment, rather than statistical data or laboratory experiments, she establishes the "how" and "why" along with the "what" of history (Cantor and Schneider 20). While there is no step-by-step methodology of historical research, there are certain tools that the historian uses. Primary sources, work written contemporary or nearly contemporary to the period/event/person in question, are studied along with secondary sources, work that discusses the period/event/person but is written after the time contemporary with it (Cantor and Schneider 22-23). The historian also needs to be able to distinguish between facts, inferences, and opinions, to ensure the accuracy of their historical "what." An historian should then use facts and inferences in his own work to build the "how" and "why" (Cantor and Schneider 24-38).

"Real life" and scientific experimentation, theories, and objective, quantitative analysis are all characteristic of social science research. It is also true, however, that social scientists bring the
bias of personal experience to their work, and that they perform a great deal of qualitative research (Klenke). In the field of sociology, there are eight basic steps involved in research:

1. Selecting a topic
2. Defining the problem
3. Reviewing the literature
4. Formulating a hypothesis
5. Choosing a research method
6. Collecting the data (through survey, secondary analysis, documents, participant observation, experiment, unobtrusive measures)
7. Analyzing the results
8. Sharing the results (Henslin 35)

By following these eight steps, sociologists can meet their goal, which is to increase their deep understanding of human social behavior (Cole 1). A sociologist studying leadership, for example, would attempt to show how leaders were influenced by prevailing social conditions (Cole 24). The sociologist makes the assumption that "an individual leader's own goals are limited by the social structure that he or she faces" (Cole 19). This assumption is key to the construction of the Wren and Swatez model of contingency. This model is contained in Appendix A.

In this paper, I combine the sociological and historical approaches. Together they should prove to be effective; Wren is an historian by training and Swatez, a sociologist. I combine the approaches in two ways. First of all, the model lends itself to the two separate disciplines. The outer circle, that of the historical context of leadership, should be studied from a historical framework. The second circle, that of the contemporary context of leadership, is broken into sociological divisions of culture and should be studied from a sociological perspective. The
second way that I combine the two approaches deals with the structure of the paper. The paper is constructed as a social science paper, following the eight basic steps of sociological research listed above. My research method is documents, according to that list. However, my literature review was conducted through a historical research process.

The benefit of this combination is clear. Each method affords different ways of conceiving leadership context. This is important, because the field of context in contingency theory then expands from one potential context to an infinite amount--between the three newly defined contextual "circles," there is no territory left uncovered. John Brewer and Albert Hunter discuss multimethod research in their book Multimethod Research: A Synthesis of Styles. They define multimethod research as a combination of social research styles only; however, they make a point key to my combination of methods as well. They state simply: "the multimethod approach is a strategy for overcoming each method's weaknesses and limitations by deliberately combining different types of methods within the same investigations" (11). Multimethod research also makes sense when we consider that leadership studies is interdisciplinary. As a student of leadership studies, I am allowed, and even encouraged, to take an interdisciplinary approach to research, rather than simply picking one. In other words, two research methodologies are better than one when attempting to do research in an inherently interdisciplinary field.

Review of the Literature

Scholarly research into the roles and lives of women who have served as first lady to the President of the United States is a new and growing field, having developed largely within the last fifteen years. The laws of the United States offer no definition of the roles and duties of the presidential spouse. The Constitution does not mention such a position at all. However, with no constitutional amendments or additional legislation, the first lady "evolved a role of considerable
power" (Caroli xvii). The ways that different women have used her role has varied greatly, even within the same generation of women. Caroli describes first lady-hood as something that "each woman had to figure...out for herself" (xxii), but points out that "no member of a successful politician's family pushes too far beyond the accepted limits of the day" (xx). Caroli outlines three of the more common ways in which a first lady made her presence felt. Martha Washington began the first traditional role of first ladies, which is to serve as a surrogate in the necessary absence of her husband (xviii). The election process was another way in which the first lady became prominent, especially in the twentieth century (xix). Also, the media has paid considerable attention to the first lady, beginning with Abraham Lincoln's administration. This media attention often focused on the women's personal tastes and styles; this is true even today (xx). These three roles offer little in the way of leadership. The question remains, then, of how first ladies "do" leadership.

First of all, we must define leadership. Although there is no single definition of leadership, the common elements in most definitions indicate that leadership is a process through which leaders work with, offer vision to, motivate, and engage followers so that they can work together toward a common goal. Many sources, both primary and secondary, describe the work of first ladies (especially twentieth century first ladies) as leadership. Although the authors do not necessarily use the word "leadership," they explain the work of these women as providing vision, mobilizing constituencies, and communicating with followers about their needs and desires. For example, Smith and Ryan compiled some primary sources on the subject of first lady leadership; in their book, twentieth century first ladies offer their own perspectives on the subject and provide important historical perspective on the precedents for the leadership of both ER and HRC.
Eleanor Roosevelt's tenure as first lady was the longest that this country has ever known. Her role in the Roosevelt administration is a very good example of first lady leadership. Cook explains that ER actually had a leadership role from the very beginning—in her husband's first presidential election campaign and before—although she received very little credit for her work (Eleanor Roosevelt 448-76). Lash provides a very detailed account of ER's White House years and the projects she led there. He explains her projects as leadership efforts, both independent of and in relation to her husband's work, and how they succeeded or failed (Eleanor and Franklin). Hareven describes ER's reform efforts as mobilizing a constituency, implying leadership in those terms. Again, most of the literature on ER portrays her as a leader, although they do not necessarily use the words "leader" or "leadership" (McCarthy; Cook, "Loves").

Public expectations of the first lady were uncertain in the time of ER. Because of the constantly changing nature of the office, as well as women's changing role in society, it is difficult to say what was expected of her. In Eleanor Roosevelt, Cook discusses the lack of precedent that ER saw for the kind of action that she wanted to take as first lady (498-500). In Lash's detailed account, he notes how ER's work moved her role into and out of public approval (Eleanor and Franklin).

Public approval of the first lady stems from public opinion of women's proper roles in society. From a historical perspective, women's social roles were in flux because of the powerful women's movement and its ebbs and tides. Women's newfound political participation was key to ER's ability to speak on matters of importance from a political position. The backlash incurred by ER and the women in FDR's administration that she helped appoint is typical of social movements (Ware; Seeber). Scharf's work supports and expands on this, by examining the intersection between ER's life and the women's movement. She points out that while ER's work is considered
feminist by today's standards, it often diverged from the purposes of feminist organizations of the
day, like the National Women's Party.

Media was an important tool for ER. She used the new, wide-circulation magazines and
radio networks to her advantage and to the advantage of other women. It was a new piece of
culture, in a way, without precedent, and ER chose to define it and use it for herself. In Eleanor
Roosevelt and the Media, Beasley documents ER's successful usage of communications to achieve
her leadership goals. ER's use of the media was twofold: she used the media both to publicize
and gain support for her political goals, and as an end in itself, "as a medium for building greater
self-awareness within women" (Beasley, "Vision" 66). Winfield connects ER's journalistic
activities to her legacy to the role of First Lady.

Hillary Rodham Clinton has served as First Lady for three years now, and her leadership
efforts have been very different. We do not have the benefit of historical perspective when
analyzing HRC and her leadership, but some points come through very clearly. Even her
detractors recognize her power as a leader. For example, in his anti-HRC editorial, Barone
describes HRC's leadership: "Hillary Rodham Clinton is the lodestone of this administration,
magnetically attracting its core constituency and repelling its die-hard enemies" ("Political" 51).
HRC's leadership efforts and their successes and failures have been highly discussed in the popular
press, especially her work on health care reform. She has also been attacked personally,
particularly for her involvement with the failed Whitewater real estate deal, now under
Congressional investigation. O'Brien's interview of HRC provides an important source of primary
information on HRC's own perspectives on these issues.

The popular press has been at times both highly critical and highly supportive of HRC and
her leadership efforts. Ironically, through a popular magazine, US News and World Report, one
author describes the popular press as "fawning" over HRC (Barone, "Feminism" 38). Another author accuses the male media of first lady-bashing (Pollitt). Yet another article tracks her press coverage from the campaign through the fourth month of her term and found substantial differences and shifts in portrayal of HRC depending on who was writing and when (Diamond, Geller, and Ruiz). In the summer of 1995, HRC began writing a weekly column called "Talking It Over" in the precedent set by ER, in an effort to increase positive publicity about her and the issues she supports ("Hillary in Eleanor's Footsteps"; Purdum). At this point, HRC's press coverage is dominated by publicity of the Whitewater scandal.

HRC's relationship to the women's movement and feminism is key to her leadership, and is tied up in the issue of public expectations for her role. While her immediate precedent was a very motherly, passive first lady whose only leadership role was a little known literacy campaign, expectations for HRC were very different because she was a member of a new generation (Diamond, Gregg, and Ruiz). Although Barone thinks that women within and without pro­woman organizations have made a mistake in this, he points out that HRC "has become a hugely important symbol for feminists because many women and men were captivated by her pre-White House life as an attorney and by her White House work making policy on major issues" ("Feminism" 38). Perhaps the confusion over HRC's proper role in the eyes of the public lies in the fact that: "the best presidential wife is not one who symbolizes what American families are, but what they once were (or still dream of becoming)" ("Merry Wives").

Public approval of HRC is currently the lowest ever for any presidential wife, at 51%. Voters are concerned that by holding an unelected and unappointed policy-making role in the health care reform effort, HRC's power went unrestrained. They are also disappointed by her involvement with the Whitewater scandal (Walsh). Although the events of Whitewater happened
before the Clintons' rise to presidential power, they raise important questions about the moral and business integrity of a woman who has proven to be a powerful national figure.

This background information requires a deeper analysis, a search into the individual successes and failures of the leadership efforts of both ER and HRC. With the information gathered above, I will examine how specific change efforts were approached and why they did or did not work. I will link their effectiveness or failure to the historical and contemporary cultural contexts in which these women lived.

Framework for Analysis

Wren and Swatez offer seven questions that a leader should ask herself in order to "diagnose the historical and cultural factors which must be confronted and handled" (251). These questions are also useful in the examination of the leadership processes in which ER and HRC were involved. Analysis will focus mainly on what each woman has actually done and why it has worked or has not according to the model. However, it will also help diagnose what the two women could have done to be more effective. The first two questions focus on who is involved and what they are trying to accomplish. Questions three through six ask how the historical background, societal beliefs and values, and cultural or subcultural precedents influence the leadership situation. With answers to those questions, the players then determine how they can "maximize the potential for achieving" their goals (251). In other words, they could use this information to decide what leadership behaviors or traits are most appropriate for their particular organizational, social, and historical situation. Wren and Swatez stress the importance of asking these questions as they apply to "all interested parties" (251) because of the need for each party to consider the interests of their opposition. In both first lady leadership situations, there are many parties involved: the first lady, the president, Congress, state government, the federal
bureaucracy, interest groups... However, since I am not a participant in the leadership processes that I studied, I examined only the interests and aspirations of the two first ladies for the sake of brevity. Also, the model emphasizes difference across history and culture, and I have chosen two women who led in very different times in history, but within the same culture. However, I found important differences in the cultural precedents that influenced each woman's leadership precisely because of their different places in history. For a complete listing of the seven questions, see Appendix B.

Eleanor Roosevelt

*Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual persons; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.* (ER qtd in Hoff-Wilson and Lightman xix, italics mine)

In her work as first lady and afterwards, ER "exemplified the belief that human dignity, the democratic ethic, and civil rights were inseparable" (Zangrando and Zangrando 88). She tackled almost simultaneously the problems of racism, poverty, war, and sexism (Lash, Foreword vii). Her work on civil rights serves as a good example of her leadership efforts and the situational factors that influenced them.
Historical Challenges, Threats, and Support

There were important historical challenges and threats to ER's work for racial justice. ER and those of her generation had grown up in an environment of racial hierarchy that was difficult to move past. This hierarchy was based on turn-of-the-century theories of racism, in which "White Anglo-Saxon Protestants from northern and western Europe were assigned superior positions; people from southern and eastern Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa were deemed inferior" (Zangrando and Zangrando 91). The views generated and justified through these theories pervaded public policy and private business practices. Chadakoff explains the social manifestations of racism in the 1930s, when the Roosevelts came to the White House:

In the 1930s, the term was 'colored' or 'Negro,' the tone was usually patronizing, and the tactic was segregation. Most of the whites in polite society usually ignored the fact that the majority of blacks were forced to live in stultifying poverty. Instead, most whites cultivated an image of black people as quaint, entertaining, and eager to please. Although Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1852, George Gershwin composed Porgy and Bess in 1935, and Edna Ferber's novel Showboat became a musical in 1927, most Americans considered radio's blackfaced comedians 'Amos and Andy' the real thing.

Political life was also riddled with racism. Woodrow Wilson's administration not only tolerated segregation, but created segregation in Washington where there had been none. FDR and ER lived in the capital while FDR worked for Wilson, and ER was actually ordered by Josephus Daniels to fire her white servants and hire African-American servants. Daniels was an ardent racist, and wrote in his Raleigh newspaper that:
The subjection of the negro, politically, and the separation of the negro, socially, are paramount to all other considerations in the South short of the preservation of the Republic itself. And we shall recognize no emancipation, nor shall we proclaim any deliverer, that falls short of these essentials to the peace and the welfare of our part of the country. (Cook, Eleanor Roosevelt 204).

Southerners like Daniels (often called "Dixiecrats") continued to be important players in Democratic politics, and held enormous power over ER's ability to make change. If she wanted her husband to be able to pass other kinds of important legislation, and to be re-elected, she "had to move warily" (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 512-3).

In the beginning, ER was not a strong advocate of equal rights. As was explained above, she had a tradition of racism and unconscious prejudicial behavior to overcome. In the beginning of her work with African-American people, ER revealed her own prejudice through usage of expressions like "darky" and "pickaninny." She even repeated a racist joke in her "My Day" newspaper column dated March 12, 1937. Even though this seems appalling by today's standards, Chadakoff points out that in the environment of the 1930s, ER "was not doing anything out of the ordinary by repeating the joke in her column" (52). She also accepted patterns of segregation in housing and education and organized for the improvement of existing facilities rather than integration (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 513). Finally, even though ER believed in the equality of all people, black or white, manifestations of African-American power were often difficult for her to handle. For example, Marcus Garvey's black nationalism, economic separatism, racial pride, and back-to-Africa movement in the 1920s conflicted with ER's values of pluralism and moderation (Zangrando and Zangrando 91).
Even though history had placed obstacles in the way of racial change, there were also aspects of the historical background that supported it. In the decades before ER's arrival in the White House, many middle- and upper-class women began to apply and expand their private, domestic experiences to national and international affairs. They saw themselves as "housekeepers of the nation," an attitude that carried over into ER's work in the New Deal period (Hoff-Wilson and Lightman xii). Zangrando and Zangrando explain that:

Eleanor Roosevelt and the Progressive Era in which she came to her young adulthood 'discovered' political reform, the needs of workers, urban sanitation, women's suffrage, and civil rights. (89)

This meant that not only were there people willing to work with ER in her efforts for civil rights, but also (through their earlier work together) that she had the political network from which to draw.

At the same time, the civil rights movement was gaining momentum. After the end of World War I, the air was full of desire for freedom and revolution:

In every area, long-overdue accounts were to be redeemed, as sacred myths about authority and control met the wrecker...the wealth of the resource-rich world...was once again up for grabs (Cook, Eleanor Roosevelt 238).

This included myths about racial order, and economic distribution. After the Reconstruction, African-American people began moving in large numbers away from the rural South to the urban North, the Midwest, and the Pacific Coast (by World War II). Because these people were no longer isolated and because they were growing in concentration as residents and voters, they started to make their political voices heard. Along with white liberals, they founded the National
Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, and the National Urban League in 1911.

A mobilized civil-rights movement dedicated to working within the law and the established political system was emerging at just the time when Eleanor Roosevelt and her liberal peers had begun to formulate their vision of a comprehensive, pluralistic democracy (Zangrando and Zangrando, 90).

The combination of the two groups' skills and needs would be powerful.

The Effect of Societal Beliefs and Values

Social beliefs and values of the time built on the historical background to both hinder and help ER's work for civil rights. Her role as a woman and change agent was deeply imbedded in the society of the time. On the positive side, women of ER's generation were full of "hope, optimism, and unabashed patriotism which may seem naive in our more cynical times" (Hoff-Wilson and Lightman xix), but which motivated them to create a better world. They shared a strong vision that equality of opportunity would create a more equal society. They did not realize at the time, as Americans came to understand in the 1960s, that equal opportunity without compensatory action was not enough. This optimism worked in their favor.

On the other hand, society provided difficult restraints on these women's behavior. ER was forced to go to great lengths to conceal her influence in her husband's administration, because she knew that "in a man's world, which government and politics were at the time, the charge of 'petticoat rule' could be fatal to the cause or person she was promoting" (Lash, Foreword vii). ER confessed that, because of political considerations, "I frequently was more careful than I might otherwise have been" (Zangrando and Zangrando 99). This need for subterfuge was not unique to ER. Hoff-Wilson and Lightman point out that:
Like most women professionals and political activists in the first half of the twentieth century, Eleanor Roosevelt had to face unequal constraints in her private and public life. Such women had a good deal of freedom in their private lives, but in their public lives they adopted traditional female propriety in order to be effective when operating in male political circles. Thus, ER's public actions gained a heightened respectability when pursued in the name of her disabled husband. (xiii)

Since her advocacy of African-American people was often at odds with her husband's political needs, she could not always take this form of shelter. One advantage of ER's approach to change was that she never surrendered the conventional image of femininity. She emphasized that her work was on behalf of family and community, and that it stemmed from empathy and compassion for others. In this way, she "shielded herself with the Victorian ideal of womanhood while she pushed forward to claim a place in the modern world" (Beasley, Media 190).

Although she proceeded with caution, ER:

made...friends of black political colleagues...traveled often to black areas and institutions, and fought for civil rights in New Deal days when the term was not even known, one of the few in Washington ready to do so. (Lash, World of Love 493)

Whites in the society of the 1930s and 1940s were largely unwilling to face the consequences of efforts to change the racial order. For some, there was physical danger. In one of her letters to Joseph Lash, ER expressed concern for that the life of Lillian Smith, a Southern journalist who had "done some wonderful things in race relations," might be in danger (World of Love 99, 110).

All of this helps us to better understand the social values under which ER operated. Each specific effort for civil rights that ER made was tied into social values and beliefs, because they
were precisely what she was trying to change. When ER first came to the White House, she had no specific plan of action. She explained:

  somebody asked me 'come and let us show you what is happening here,' and being interested, I went. Then another invitation came, and I went. And each thing I saw proved so fascinating I found myself going more and more, farther and farther. (Hareven 206)

In this way, she became involved in the civil rights movement of the time--through personal stories of racism or discrimination, through personal contact with those who had a passion for change in this area. At each step of the way, ER and others fought against a society whose beliefs and values conflicted: freedom, democracy, and equality, but not for African-American people.

ER's efforts to secure civil rights for African-American people were many, and included:

• serving as a liaison between the president and black leaders, which meant strategy sessions and correspondence with African-American leaders coupled with inquiries to high-ranking officials (like Cabinet members and other advisers) about civil rights (Zangrando and Zangrando 92)

• appointment of Mary McLeod Bethune to the National Youth Administration in 1936 (Zangrando and Zangrando 92; Beasley, Media 101; Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 523)

• failed attempts to include a black reporter in her weekly press conferences

• work with African-American sharecroppers

• inviting organizations like the National Council of Negro Women to hold meetings in the White House (Zangrando and Zangrando 92)

• efforts to pass an anti-lynching bill through Congress (Zangrando and Zangrando 93-5, Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 515-7)
• addresses to the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (SCHW) and refusal to comply with segregated seating laws at those gatherings (Zangrando and Zangrando 95; Hareven 210)

• other work to end segregation (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 532)

• resignation from the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) when they would not allow Marian Anderson, an African-American star contralto, to sing at Constitution Hall, which they owned (Zangrando and Zangrando 95-6; Beasley, Media 122-3; Chadakoff 112-3)

• work to eliminate employment discrimination in the defense industries and in the military (Zangrando and Zangrando 96-7; Beasley, Media 146; Lash, World of Love 139; Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 514-31, 670-1)

• hosting party at White House for the inmates of the National Training School for Girls, a dangerously run-down reformatory for mostly African-American girls (Beasley, Media 101-2; Chadakoff 16-7)

• continuation of Ellen Wilson's crusade against inferior housing for African-Americans (Cook, Eleanor Roosevelt 205) and other improvement work on African-American housing (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 513)

• improvements in education for African-American children (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 513)

Much of ER's reform work involved setting a personal example, and this was true for her civil rights work as well (Hareven 210). For example, "unlike her predecessors, [she] allowed herself to be photographed regularly with black Americans" (Zangrando and Zangrando 92). She also invited African-Americans into the White House, her home (Chadakoff 11). These gestures may
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seem small, but at that time, it was a large step forward. "Blacks in the thirties found them impressive because there had been nothing like them in anyone's memory" (Weiss qtd. in Goodwin 163).

ER's civil rights reform work warrants closer attention because of the way that she used a keen understanding of social norms to determine when to push for change and when to back down. Although she received criticism from conservative whites for being too radical, and from African-Americans for being too conservative, she generally understood how to get the most out of a situation with the least amount of negative response. For example, I mentioned above that she resigned from the DAR because they refused to let Marian Anderson sing in Constitution Hall. This was a complex situation, and ER understood it as such. Marian Anderson was a singer of rare voice, refined by seventeen years of training in the U.S., ten years of training in Europe, and status as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic. In 1936, Ms. Anderson performed at the White House, which was significant not only because of her professional prowess, but because she was one of the first African-Americans to perform for the president. ER made a point of recounting the visit in her "My Day" column of February 21, 1936, and emphasized the quality of Ms. Anderson's performance (Chadakoff, 11). Three years later, when Howard University planned to present Marian Anderson in concert, she was banned from the city's largest concert hall, then owned by the DAR. Because of her previous support of Ms. Anderson, and ER's work for civil rights, ER felt that she could no longer support the DAR's "No Negroes" policy. She resigned, and justified her resignation through her "My Day" column. In her February 27, 1939 column, she raised the question: "if you belong to an organization and disapprove of an action which is typical of a policy, should you resign or is it better to work for a changed point of view within the organization?" (Chadakoff, 113). Because she was only an honorary member of the
DAR, she determined it wiser to resign. According to a Gallup poll, about sixty-seven percent of Americans agreed with her decision, and her action spurred national debate about the issue of segregation. ER understood that although society condoned segregation, there was a time to stand up in the face of potential controversy. Lash explains how ER understood the subtleties of the situation:

...the DAR's ban on Negroes was a public matter from the very beginning; its openly proclaimed lily-white policy, if not challenged, was likely to set back the evolution of a more decent attitude in white America and further deepen the sense of estrangement of Negro America. (Eleanor and Franklin 525)

Despite the general public’s support, Time magazine described her as "increasingly vocal these days" (Caroli 194). The potential for conflict remained, which ER understood well. The Department of the Interior staged a concert starring Ms. Anderson on Easter Sunday at the Lincoln Memorial instead. 75,000 people attended, but ER did not. Walter White of the NAACP wrote to ER that "I understand thoroughly the reason you could not come" (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 527). There was a new controversy, because young NAACP members were threatening to picket the DAR, and there was renewed criticism in the press. ER and Mr. White together convinced the young people not to picket, and rode out the storm in the press. Their work paid off. In 1943, Marian Anderson was allowed as the first African-American performer in Constitution Hall. African-Americans were also allowed to attend her performance, another first. ER wrote in her "My Day" column of January 9, 1943: "Miss Anderson's program was beautiful and she was certainly most enthusiastically received. It was a significant evening not only from the artistic point of view but from the social point of view" (Chadakoff 276). ER's involvement in the Marian Anderson/DAR incident showed a keen sense of how society worked and also the
values of both the African-American community and the white community. Also, her involvement showed that her politics were further to the left than those of her husband. He was bound the Dixiecrats, and she was free to "uphold liberalism" (Beasley, Media 123), which created a strange combination of racist and African-American votes that helped the Roosevelts win four consecutive presidential campaigns.

Just as ER pushed forward for civil rights in some ways, she also remained cautious. For example, although she actively campaigned for an anti-lynching bill, she did not attend the Art Commentary on Lynching staged to help push the legislation in order to maintain distance (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 516). The bill was passed on April 27, 1937 (Chadakoff 54). Also, she encouraged A. Philip Randolph to stop the planned March on Washington because she feared rioting in the capital city (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 533-5). The March was canceled after FDR agreed to write Executive Order 8802, which called for "the full and equitable participation of all workers in defense industries, without discrimination because of race, creed, color or national origin" (Goodwin 252). Randolph's dream of the March was not fulfilled until August 28, 1963, when Martin Luther King and others gathered at the Lincoln Memorial. Despite ER's caution, the conservative press characterized her as a "Negro-lover," and there were rumors of "Eleanor clubs" throughout the South, where African-American men and women took over white people's jobs and jostled them on the street (Lash, Eleanor and Franklin 672-3).

Cultural Precedents

The cultural precedents set for ER were especially important, and the historical background discussed earlier explains this. There were many women before her who had done work similar to her own. She was not the first white woman of the twentieth century to work for civil rights. Settlement-house workers like Jane Addams, Mary White Ovington, Lillian Wald,
and Florence Kelly, who were all members of the NAACP's board of directors, had set that precedent (Zangrando and Zangrando 91). First lady Ellen Wilson crusaded against the substandard housing conditions in which Washington's black population lived; her deathbed request in 1914 was that Congress pass legislation to prohibit back-alley slum housing by 1918 (Cook, Eleanor Roosevelt 204-5).

As a first lady, however, her public career was largely without precedent, and she was left searching for a model of behavior through which she could effect change. Hoff-Wilson and Lightman explain that:

she inherited from turn-of-the-century women reformers the belief that political change was achieved through nonpartisan efforts of education. Her behavior, however, became that of a skillful professional politician within the inner circles of the Democratic party. (xiii)

ER was the first president's wife to fully engage in public affairs, and the first to openly advocate civil rights (Zangrando and Zangrando 92). The three first ladies immediately preceding ER were all examples of a "new woman" emerging independently from the Victorian era into the twentieth century. Florence Harding was a determined organizer, who some sources credit with much of Warren Harding's political success (Caroli 159). Grace Coolidge, although well-educated and fun-loving, spent her White House years following her husband's rules "in the manner of an obedient child" (Caroli 170). Lou Henry Hoover, ER's immediate precedent in the White House, had been a surprisingly active first lady and dedicated to social work, and therefore served as a good example of first lady-hood that was more than parties and correspondence. However, her social work was not focused on social change, and she never tried to influence policy decisions or create controversy (Mayer 49-56). Lou Henry Hoover and Florence Harding, especially,
contributed to the idea that the first lady could be a person in her own right, or be involved in political affairs, and in that way set the stage for the changes that ER would make in her time. None of these three women, however had "developed the power inherent in the position of first lady into a unique instrument for furthering social reform" in the way that ER did (Hareven 206). ER aroused controversy through her apparent split with first lady tradition. For example, she engaged in:

unorthodox activities such as driving her own car and mingling easily with trade unionists and destitute miners...But by 1940, through her own example, Mrs. Roosevelt had transformed the image of proper conduct for a presidents wife from regard for social form to a concern for social ills. It was an image well suited to an era when people needed inspiration (Beasley, Media 134-5).

This shows that although ER did not follow the examples set before her, she understood the needs of her society and how the changes she made were more important for the greater good.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

*I don't see how I could change who I am because of the position I'm in. I actually think that in the long run if people have some better idea about you, it may be controversial, but at least they know where you stand.* (HRC qtd. in Carney, italics mine)

From the first day of her job as first lady, this has been the unrepentant, characteristic stance of HRC. Shortly after her husband's inauguration in 1993, he named her head of his administration's Task Force on Health Care. When this failed in the winter of 1994-5, she began working on children's rights issues, which had been the focus of her service work before her arrival in Washington. She also worked for women's rights, both on the national level (e.g., trying to get women appointed to high-ranking government positions), and on the international level
(e.g., traveling to Beijing to address the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in the fall of 1995). Her work on health care reform is her largest and most controversial project to date, and serves as a good example of the situational factors that influenced her first lady leadership.

HRC's work on health care was enormous. She led a task force with over five hundred people on staff. She traveled across the country, holding town hall forums to discuss issues. She met with nurses, doctors, and Native American spiritual healers. She met with Congress members on approximately fifty different occasions (Carlson 30). Not only was she working extremely hard on these tasks, but she was "doing it while the whole world is watching to see if Bill Clinton blew it by giving her that much responsibility" (Clift, "Hillary's" 20). Journalist Cooper wrote that her appointment to such responsibility meant that she was "virtually a co-president with her own style and influence" ("Co-President" 30). When the plan was unveiled in the September of 1993, it carried three key points: universal access to health services, strict cost controls, and the requirement that employees insure their workers (Lowther 39).

Historical Threats, Challenges, and Support

In HRC's own words, she and Bill Clinton are "transition figures" in the White House:
We don't fit easily into a lot of pre-existing categories...And I think that having been independent, having made decisions, it's a little difficult for us as a country, maybe, to make the transition of having a woman like many of the women in this room, sitting in this house. So I think the standards and to some extent the expectations and the demands have changed, and I'm trying to find my way through it and trying to figure out how best to be true to myself and how to fulfill my responsibilities to my husband and my daughter and the country. (Duffy 65)
From a historical perspective, it is no surprise that HRC came into power as first lady when she did. She came of age in a time when women were making rapid strides forward. HRC came from the activist tradition of the 1960s, and served as first lady of Arkansas during a time when business and the economy were booming. She benefitted from both. By 1991, white female high school graduates had better chances of going on to college than their male counterparts. There were no longer quotas restricting the number of women admitted to graduate and professional schools. By the time HRC was a working mother, so were more than half the nation's mothers with children Chelsea's age. Women had also made gains in government: Sandra Day O'Connor was named as the first woman Supreme Court justice in 1981, Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman to be nominated as a major party's vice-presidential candidate in 1984, and in the 103rd Congress (1993), there were six women senators and 48 women representatives; women also held twenty percent of state elected posts (Caroli 289-290). In other words, Americans were growing accustomed to seeing women in places of power and influence. HRC emphasized that she was not unique in her status as wife, mother, and lawyer. "What I represent is generational change. It's not about me" (Caroli 308).

The health-care industry has a reputation for being incomprehensible, profiteering, and inflexible. HRC told Margaret Carlson, "I have never seen an issue that is as complicated as this. I can see why for 50 years people have tiptoed toward this problem and turned around and run away" (37). Indeed, her health-care reform act would have been the largest piece of legislation since Social Security, one that would have affected one-seventh of the American economy. From a historical perspective, that would not be easy legislation to pass. In fact, the Economist for September 24, 1994 argued that the health-care reform effort was possibly doomed from the start, because of its difficult history: "successfully overhauling a system this big (one-seventh of the
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economy) and sensitive (tending to the sick) was always going to be a long, contentious process" ("Requiescat" 23).

The Effects of Societal Beliefs and Values

Society impacted very differently on the career of HRC than it did on that of ER. During the campaign, she sold herself as part of a "two for one" presidency: vote for one Clinton, get two. She made no effort to conceal the power she planned to use as first lady. Then she toned down her planned impact and emphasized her motherly side, participating in a cookie-recipe contest with Barbara Bush in a popular magazine. Once named head of the health care reform effort, she again publicized her work and its importance to the administration. This back-and-forth pattern showed her struggle in trying to fit into a social role appropriate for her (Caroli 302-3). Her recent plunge in popularity polls reflects her inability to find that role.

It's a fascinating commentary on social attitudes in this country that Hillary has become the most controversial First Lady in American history. Clearly the American public doesn't trust strong women any more than it trusts lawyers, and Hillary is a strong woman lawyer who tends to respond to questions in a circumlocutory, lawyerly way. (Bart 5)

It had not always been so for HRC. In May of 1993, a Time/CNN poll showed that fifty-five of Americans viewed her favorably (v. sixty-one percent for her husband), ninety-one percent described her as intelligent, and sixty-three percent as a good influence on her husband on matters of public policy (Carlson 30). For a detailed look at the fluctuations in HRC's popularity according to the polls from March 1992 to April 1994, see Appendix C.

In the area of health care reform, HRC used her femininity to "soften" the impact of her testimony before Congress. "More important than her presence as the chief architect of the health plan, she said, were her roles 'as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman' concerned about
health care" (Cooper, "A Mother" 10). Cooper describes this as political strategy. He claims that by attaching HRC's creation of policy to "nurturing issues" like health care, the public will view her more favorably ("A Mother" 11). Carlson, on the other hand, thinks that the public will see instead a "bait-and-switch tactic," as if HRC were misrepresenting herself when she showed her domestic side (35).

Some argue that HRC's failure to pass health-care reform legislation stems directly from the inability of Congress and the general public to accept policy formulated by a first lady. They blame HRC's social status as a woman for her difficulty. Carlson defends this point of view:

As the icon of American womanhood, she is the medium through which the remaining anxieties over feminism are being played out. She is on a cultural seesaw held to a schizophrenic standard: everything she does that is soft is a calculated coverup of the careerist inside; everything that isn't is a put-down of women who stay home and bake cookies. (36)

Carlson emphasized HRC's skill on Capitol Hill, where HRC "earned grudging respect" (32) through her willingness to talk and explain. Senator Lawrence O'Donnell, who did not support HRC's policy, said, "I'll come to my senses, but for the moment she was in the room, I believed she could do it" (qtd. in Carlson 32). Her skill as "a tireless, high-profile sales representative" was one reason for her appointment to the leadership position (Cooper, "Co-President" 31). HRC herself made the argument against society after the failure of her health-care initiative:

The criticism is clearly meant to try to demean and divide men and women. You know, 'Know your place, know where you are supposed to be,' and that is something I wish we could overcome. I mean, judge people on their merits. You don't like my health-care
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plan, criticize my health plan. But don't turn it into some huge attack on the role. (qtd. in Dowd A25)

Greenfield claimed that even the praise HRC received from members of Congress was tainted:
"there was a whiff of that artificial, condescending little-ladyism" that the author says will always be a part of Washington politics (72). After an interview with HRC, one journalist wrote that through the personal attacks and the failure of health care, HRC "is learning what many women have already discovered: that being extremely competent and professional isn't enough" (43), again implying that her role as a woman in our society led to the failure of her health-care reform efforts. Finally, Mayo posits that the controversy over health care is "about America's continuing, deep-seated ambivalence, even hostility, toward power in the hands of women" (A52).

Others cited very different sources of trouble. Some, for example, saw the main problem as her role as first lady. Carney emphasizes that the main lesson of the "health-care debacle" is that "it is not wise to link the First Lady's prestige so directly to controversial policy issues. It shouldn't happen again" (41). He cites as evidence the fact that a "senior White House official" stated that HRC will not "be a point person on a given policy" in the future (41). Maureen Dowd agrees, and argues that "everyone tiptoes around any President's wife. But when the boss's wife is also a boss, aides are even more afraid to say, 'I don't think this works'" (A25). Journalist Clift points to the other key players in the health-care debate: doctors, hospitals, drug companies, and insurance companies, as sources of HRC's trouble ("Hillary's" 20-21). One Democratic aide said, "They say they support ninety-five percent of what we're for. But how many millions will they spend to defeat the other five percent?" (Clift, "Hillary's" 20). Indeed, according to Newsweek estimates, these interest groups spent "at least $300 million—more than the Democratic and
Republican 1988 and 1992 presidential nominees combined—to defeat health care" (Waldman and Cohn 28).

However, there are many who would argue that her failures were rooted instead in a lack of skill. In other words, health-care reform did not pass simply because HRC did not know how to pass it. Barnes points out that HRC's partner in health-care reform, Ira Magaziner, was a bad politician. Although he had good ideas, he did not know how to sell them. For example, when Magaziner went to Representative Jim Cooper, who was formulating his own, different health-care reform policy, to try to convince him to change his plan, Magaziner created disaster. According to Barnes, "The meetings were not friendly. After voices were raised in angry disagreement, a final meeting was canceled. Cooper came away appalled at Magaziner's political clumsiness" (13). Carney points out that Leon Panetta's (White House chief of staff) decision to take HRC off the job "was less about Hillary than Ira" (Panetta qtd. 41), who alienated potential allies. Not only was Magaziner a bad negotiator in this sense, but both he and HRC were completely unwilling to compromise during a critical stage in the evolution of the policy. While the duo refused to make deals with individuals or groups of Congress members, the Democratic and Republican centrists, along with Representative Cooper, were busy formulating policy and recruiting key supporters away from the Clinton plan (Barnes 12). HRC also made unnecessary enemies of members of the health care industry, whom she needed as her allies. While Carlson praises HRC for injecting drama into a boring topic by "picking fights with her designated bullies of the system" (31), Barnes points out that this approach worked against her in the long run (13). Feminist Barbara Ehrenreich argues that HRC "came up with what was, from almost any ideological perspective, the health-care plan from hell" (95), calling attention to the plan's inherent flaws, like the fact that it was 1,342 pages in length (Waldman and Cohn 30). In December of
1994, a federal judge ruled that HRC's "sprawling, arcane, and often secretive group...was guilty of 'misconduct' by withholding documents from the public (Carney 40). This implies that HRC did not know the rules of the game: what to keep secret, what to reveal, who to have on her side. The Economist supported all of these reasons (except for the gender argument), and added that "the voters...are sick of hearing about it" ("Requiescat" 23).

Cultural Precedents

Scholars agree that HRC broke all precedent as a first lady in two ways. First of all, she had personal power before becoming a presidential wife. She was the first to have a career in her own right, and the first to admit to managing the family's money. In this sense, she was unique to the first lady-hood but not to her generation. Caroli compared HRC with her immediate predecessor, Barbara Bush:

It was not just that the two women had taken such remarkably different paths--in education, work, and domestic arrangements--but that so many of their contemporaries had made the same choices they had. Barbara Bush and Hillary Clinton were quintessential examples of women of their time and class. As the older woman, Barbara Bush may have had some friends whose careers resembled Clinton's but such a path would have been as much an anomaly as a Barbara-Bush-type among Hillary's contemporaries. (289)

Because of this generational difference, HRC could follow no first lady as a role model from the past (Caroli 302). Greenfield proposed that HRC's relationship to the president resembled more the relationship between Bobby Kennedy and JFK, because both Bobby Kennedy and HRC were related to the president, and both served as visible and vocal advisors to the president (72). She also cautioned that Bobby Kennedy's work earned him "variously admiration, adoration, respect,
fear, and detestation throughout the administration as well as in Congress" (72) and that HRC could probably expect the same treatment. This leads into the second way that HRC broke precedent: candid, open involvement in policy-making (Caroli 307). Carlson predicted that "Hillary is the first First Lady to have a major assignment by which she can--and will--be judged" (30). Although presidential wives had generally worked on their own projects, they had done so as volunteers rather than as administration officials (Caroli 299). For example, Lady Bird Johnson had championed the beautification of America and Rosalynn Carter reformed mental health care, but neither of their efforts were as far-reaching as HRC's health care reform would have been. Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign and Barbara Bush's literacy campaign did not compare at all to the potential effect of health-care reform. However, it would also be inaccurate to claim that the job of first lady had been changed forever by HRC. "Never defined in the first place, the role had constantly undergone experimentation" (Caroli 307). Otherwise, the active, public feminist Betty Ford could never have followed the reclusive, private conservative Pat Nixon.

Conclusions: Leadership of HRC and ER

Discussion of the leadership of HRC and ER cannot begin without pointing out one limitation of the model: it offers no space for the exploration of the role of the media in the first ladies' careers. Although media shapes social values and beliefs in important ways, I felt that to argue that the media shaped society which shaped leadership would stretch both the credibility of the argument and discount the real impact that the media had on ER and HRC and their leadership efforts. The two women's skill, or lack of skill, at using the media to their advantage was central to their successes and failures. Lewis Gould elaborated:

The absence of any clearly defined role for presidential wives, the possibility that they exercised some private influence on their husbands, and their place as symbols of how
women should behave made them the object of the same kind of media attention that surrounded actresses, sports figures, and society women. ("First Ladies" 529)

A first lady could either use that media attention to her advantage, as a means to their ends of publicizing a cause, as ER did, or she could shun the media as an invasive, unnecessary part of her work, as HRC did.

ER has been called the "nation's first media first lady" (Winfield, "Public First Lady" 331). She not only gave interviews, but held regular press conferences, hosted a radio show, and wrote a syndicated newspaper column. Gould wrote that: "she had an instinct for the limelight and an innate sense of how to foster attention in ways that served her own ends" ("First Ladies" 531). She envisioned journalism as a medium of communication with women across the country, and made this communication two-way, by eliciting and acknowledging responses to her public addresses in all their forms (Beasley, "Vision" 66). The most important thing about ER and the media is her press conferences. By holding women-only press conferences, she gave women journalists something they needed, hard news, and she got something she wanted, positive press coverage (Chafe 10). One woman in that group later confirmed: "There was a great deal of hinting and prompting at those press conferences. 'Are you sure you want to say that, Mrs. Roosevelt?' 'Wouldn't you like to say this, Mrs. Roosevelt?' It wasn't exactly objective journalism (McCarthy 222). Her relationship with the media was so rich and complex that Beasley went on to write an entire book about it. It is significant that this force in her career does not fit into the Wren-Swatez model.

The media was also central to HRC's work, but rather than using the press to her advantage, she avoided it whenever possible. Media coverage of HRC actually became a topic in and of itself; a topic widely discussed in the popular media. In the New Republic article called
"The Case for Hysteria," the author mentioned "the anti-anti-press-backlash-backlash" (8), in part using humor to address the press and its obsession with itself where HRC is concerned. This was due in part to the bias of journalists, who often incorporated their own very positive or negative opinions into their work. Margaret Carlson, a journalist quoted in this paper, admitted:

as much as we try to think otherwise, when you're covering someone like yourself, and your position in life is insecure, she's your mascot. I try to get that bias out, but for many of us it's there. (qtd. in Barone, "Feminism" 38)

There were many other journalists with the opposite bias. Bart points out that "the remarkable thing about Hillary-bashing is that it emanates from the very heart of the so-called 'media elite'' (73). He cites William Safire, Maureen Dowd (also quoted in this paper) and A.M. Rosenthal, all columnists for the New York Times, as three examples. HRC contributed to the negative press through her open distaste for the media. She tried to keep the meetings of the health care task force secret to avoid negative publicity or leaks to interest groups, and thus aroused suspicion (Carlson 32). Carney portrayed HRC as "unrepentantly suspicious of the press" (40). HRC explained to him that she had more pressing things to do, and that she was tired of having to explain herself (40). When she so chose, she could use media tools like the press conference very effectively, as she did when the Whitewater scandal forced her into publicly stating her position in the spring of 1994 (Duffy 65). It was rather her lack of understanding that her every act would be scrutinized regardless of her efforts for privacy that hurt her; she ended by seeming as if she had something to hide. This contributed to her difficulty with health care reform.

Martha Gellhorn raised an important issue in her article "Cry Shame." She explained that the Roosevelts had been "viciously attacked" (14) in the press, especially ER. However, "none of
the press snooped in the private affairs of the president and his wife" (14). She criticized the media and defended HRC's desire for privacy:

Nine presidents have come and gone since Franklin Roosevelt died. None was subjected to public scrutiny of his personal life...They were not nine saints. In our long, imperfect political story, no acting president has ever been beset by a rat pack chewing on his private life. Repeat: never before. (14)

Gellhorn articulates the media struggle in the midst of which HRC found herself trying to effect change. In light of this information, the media moves from a social issue to one of history. Is this voracity on the part of the press a part of historical evolution? Is it a social reaction to the power of the first lady? The media in the case of HRC defies categorization. However, Gellhorn's argument clarifies the impact of the media on HRC's service as first lady.

After careful examination of the leadership efforts of ER and HRC according to the Wren-Swatez model, the real impact of history and society on individuals' leadership reveals itself. At earlier times in history, neither woman would have been able to express herself in the ways she chose--either before, during, or after her service as first lady. Without the Progressive movement behind ER, or the multiple movements of the 1960s for HRC, neither would have received the same political education. For both women, social norms allowed them to both push ahead, and forced them to hold back.

Goodwin explains: "you choose what constituencies to represent. She [HRC] could maybe have chosen civil rights or something like that. She chose policy analysis, very important and valuable--good for her--but not the kind of choice that develops constituencies that stick with you" (qtd in O'Brien 95). Although the careers of both women were very complex, Goodwin summarizes very neatly the difference between the two leadership efforts that I described here.
ER's work with civil rights is widely regarded as successful because of the support she received from those whose lives she was trying to change for the better. HRC's work with health care is viewed largely as a failure because of the lack of sustained support she received from her constituencies. The perceived success or failure of those two examples deceives, however. After all, ER did not succeed at creating racial justice. Americans in 1996 are still working towards that goal. In the same way, HRC did not fail to reform health care. She will continue to work on changing the system, even though she will not lead the effort. Health care continues as part of the agenda for both major parties. Success or failure in both cases is a matter of perception, and of support. The issue of perception returns us to the question of the media and its use.

Conclusions: Weaknesses and Strengths of the Model

During the course of the semester's work with the Wren-Swatez model, I found some weaknesses. As explained above, the most significant flaw of the model is that it does offer space for analysis of an individual's skills and resources, for example the first ladies' skill with media. This flaw is inherent in contingency theory, which addresses how leaders should act rather than whether they know how to execute the proper behaviors. Secondly, while information on our current first lady abounded, I had difficulty finding scholarly writings on HRC. Another problem is that analysis of her leadership does not benefit from historical perspective in the same way that similar analysis on ER does. Because a leader using this model as a guideline for behavior would not need either scholarly discourse or historical perspective to make good decisions (indeed, existence of these things would indicate that decisions had already been made), this is not a flaw of the model, but rather a flaw of the model as used in this paper. I also had difficulty with overlap between categories: a cultural precedent is obviously also a supportive historical factor; society is imbedded in history. Finally, the sheer scope of the model makes its nuances difficult to
grasp for anyone but the most informed participant in the leadership situation. As an outside observer, I was amazed at the amount of information that I needed to process. A participant would need to consciously weigh his place in history, his society, and his organization in detail to understand the appropriate behavior in the situation.

There are several strengths to the model as well, which I think make it a valuable contribution to leadership theory. The most obvious strength of the Wren-Swatez model is that by incorporating the spheres of history and contemporary society, it creates a picture of a leadership situation in its entirety for the first time. Most importantly, it helps contingency theory transcend the dichotomy of gentle/tough leadership for which it has been criticized. According to traditional contingency theory, the leadership situation in an organization helped a leader decide whether to be a facilitating, supportive leader, or whether to be a dictatorial, directive leader. O'Toole criticized contingency theory as ineffective because it prevented values-based leadership. He argued that the contingency of chaos calls for toughness, and that this toughness created mistrust in followers who needed their leaders to have a consistent (and moral) approach (7-8).

An argument that ER and HRC practiced values-based leadership is a topic for someone else's senior project. The point is that this model transcends the false dilemma of supportive v. directive leadership behavior. Instead, it accounts for the nuances of behavior called for by history, society, the organization, and the leader and followers, and adds them to create highly nuanced leadership behavior. Within this complex behavior, there is room for values-based leadership. The combination of the Wren-Swatez model and values-based leadership is a topic that requires further study. Finally, the model is invaluable for someone whose leadership situation has national or global implications, because not only would that person need to understand history and society, she would also need to understand how her action could affect history and society.
This paper obviously does not test the model completely, further research would need to be done to determine its effectiveness. This paper does not even present a complete picture of the careers of Eleanor Roosevelt and Hillary Rodham Clinton. However, I believe that it is an important start to a new branch of leadership research.
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FIGURE 1
A Model of Leadership Contexts
Appendix B

1. Who are the important players in this leadership situation?

2. What are their interests/aspirations?

3. What aspects of the historical background threaten or challenge these interests/aspirations?

4. What aspects of the historical background support these interests/aspirations?

5. How do societal beliefs and values impinge, favorably or unfavorably, upon these interests/aspirations?

6. What cultural or subcultural precedents have been established that might influence these interests/aspirations?

7. How can my followers and I use this knowledge to maximize the potential for achieving our mutual goals?
LARY RODHAM CLINTON

Since she entered the public eye, Hillary Rodham Clinton's favorable ratings have almost always exceeded unfavorable ratings. In recent months, however, her unfavorable marks have risen. Women are much more likely to express favorable opinions of her. Opinions also vary significantly by party and education level.

Like your overall opinion of some people in the news. In general, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Hillary Clinton?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion of Hillary Clinton</th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>Unfavorable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1992</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1992</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 1992</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1992</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1993</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1994</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1994</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 1994</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 1994</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1994</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 1994</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>58%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
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<td>57%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1995</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This consisted of registered voters from March–November 1992 and adults thereafter.

By the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, latest that of March 7–8, 1994 (bottom chart), and April 22–24, 1994 (top chart).

"Public opinion & demographic report."
Influence

Six in ten Americans think Hillary Rodham Clinton's influence with the president on policy and political matters is greater than that of her predecessors, and a majority say her greater prominence is appropriate. There may be more to the story, however, because the proportion saying she has too much influence has risen recently.

Question: In your opinion, does Hillary Clinton have too much, too little, or the right amount of Influence in the Clinton Administration?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Too much influence</th>
<th>Too little influence</th>
<th>Right amount influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1993</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1994</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1994</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 1994</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1995</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<td>42%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: As in ABC News/Washington Post polls taken last year and in 1992, 1993, 1994, respondents were asked whether they thought Hillary Clinton was too much influence, too little, or the right amount of influence in the Clinton Administration. Percentages are based on 1223, 1227, 1228, 1224, 1225, and 1226 interviews conducted Jan. 9, 1993, Apr. 15, 1994, Aug. 17, 1994, Sep. 24, 1994, Jan. 9, 1995, and Mar. 1, 1995.

Question: Compared to other first ladies, do you think Hillary Rodham Clinton has more influence with the president on matters of policy and politics, does she have less influence, or does she have the same influence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compared to other first ladies</th>
<th>Hillary Rodham Clinton has...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More influence</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same amount</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less influence</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</table>

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, Sept. 9-10, 1994

Influence continues to be a source of concern for some Americans, despite the fact that a majority now believe her influence is appropriate.

Question: As First Lady, do you think Hillary Rodham Clinton has too much power, about the right amount of power, or too little power?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hillary Rodham Clinton has...</th>
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<td>Too much power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too little</td>
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Source: Survey by Gallup Partnership for TIME and CNN, Sept. 9-10, 1994

Image

Solid majorities remain impressed with Hillary Rodham Clinton's intelligence and consider her a good role model for young women. The proportion saying she puts the country's interests ahead of politics has slipped. A majority feel she is more liberal than her husband.

Question: Which of the following apply and which do not apply to Hillary Rodham Clinton?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hillary Rodham Clinton is a warm and likeable person</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applies to Hillary Clinton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na</td>
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Source: Survey by Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, Apr. 27-29, 1994

Next, please tell me whether you strongly agree, moderately agree, moderately disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements about Hillary Clinton.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hillary Rodham Clinton is more liberal than her husband</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Moderate disagree</td>
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Source: Survey by Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, Mar. 8-10, 1994

Note: In an ABC News/Washington Post poll taken March 9-10, 1994, respondents were asked whether they strongly agree, moderately agree, moderately disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements about Hillary Clinton.

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