

*Women's Empowerment in the American Society:  
The Case of Eleanor Roosevelt.*

**Chapter 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Al - Quds University**

**Deanship of Graduate Studies**



**Women's Empowerment in the American  
Society:  
The Case of Eleanor Roosevelt.**

**Eliana Zeidan**

# Master Thesis

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عمادة الدراسات العليا

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تمكين المرأة في المجتمع الأمريكي :

حالة دراسية "اليانور روزفلت"

اليانا زيدان

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**Thesis Approval**

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The Case of Eleanor Roosevelt.**

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- 3. Dr. Anthony David, External Examiner                      Signature**

**Jerusalem – Palestine  
2007-2008  
Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis for my parents and family whom were a precious and constant support for me during my studies.

## **Declaration**

I certify that this thesis submitted for the degree of Master in Arts is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

**Signature**

**Eliana Zeidan**

**Date: July 2008**

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## ملخص

هذه الدراسة تبحث مفهوم التمكين من خلال منظور نسائي للقوة وعلاقات القوة والنفوذ في المجتمع الأمريكي من خلال التركيز على دراسة حالة اليانور روزفلت.

تفحص الدراسة مفهوم التمكين بهدف تحليل كيفية تطبيق المفهوم والإطار النظري للبحث على دراسة الحالة. الدراسة تحلل البيانات النظرية لمعرفة كيف تنطبق على البيانات التجريبية في دراسة حالة اليانور روزفلت كنموذج لتمكين المرأة في المجتمع الأمريكي. إضافة إلى ذلك، الدراسة تحلل المفهوم النظري بهدف فهم كيف يعمل نظرا لطبيعته المتعددة الأوجه. إنها توضح وتجادل المفهوم كعملية مجتمعية ذات أبعاد متعددة. من خلال فهم هذا المفهوم، يمكننا أن نجد طرقا مبتكرة لتمكين المرأة وتعزيز مكانتها في المجتمع.

الدراسة تلقي الضوء على قضايا النوع الاجتماعي والحركات النسائية. إنها توضح نضال المرأة الأمريكية لتحقيق مطالبها ولنيل حقوقها ودورها في حركات الإصلاح السياسي والاجتماعي.

تطمح الدراسة إلى فهم طبيعة العلاقة بين مشاركة المرأة في المجالات الاجتماعية، السياسية والاقتصادية... وبين تمكينها. تقدم الدراسة وتحلل موضوع البحث بطريقة مبتكرة حيث تنطرق إلى مفهوم التمكين والإطار النظري المرتبط به، لأنه مفهوم حديث نسبيا من حيث تطبيقه على دراسة حالة اليانور روزفلت. الدراسة تثير جدلا وه و أن مشاركة المرأة في هذه المجالات تساهم في تعزيز ورفع مكانة المرأة.

علاوة على ذلك، فإن الدراسة تبين أن تمكين الأفراد من النساء يستطيع أن يساهم في تمكين النساء الأخريات في المجتمع. علاقة التمكين على المستوى الفردي مقابل المستوى الجماعي علاقة جدلية. في حالة اليانور روزفلت كسيدة أولى غير تقليدية، كانت مساهمتها الفردية واضحة بسبب مكانتها.

جادل الباحث خمس مجالات رئيسية حاسمة لتمكين المرأة وإزالة الفجوة بين الجنسين وتحقيق الإنصاف والعدالة للمرأة. هذه المجالات هي التعليم، والتمكين الاقتصادي، المشاركة السياسية، الصحة والسلامة، العدل وقضايا حقوق الإنسان.

هذه الدراسة تطمح إلى الإجابة على الأسئلة الرئيسية التي أثيرت في مقدمة البحث. بتحليل دراسة الحالة وبتطبيق الإطار النظري، تم فحص الفرضيات وإثباتها. نتائج البحث هي إجابات للأسئلة المطروحة في البحث. علاوة على ذلك، تهدف الدراسة إلى تزويدنا بفهم أفضل لتأثير مشاركة المرأة ومساهمتها في الإصلاح والتغيير في مكانة المرأة في المجتمع الأمريكي و إلى تمكينها لنيل حقوقها.

وننتج عن هذه الدراسة أجوبة للفرضيات التي تم اختبارها في هذا البحث وأهمها أن اليانور روزفلت تمثل نموذجاً ملهماً لتمكين المرأة الأمريكية. لقد تمكنت من إصلاح دور المرأة في المجتمع بشكل عام وفي البيت الأبيض بشكل خاص. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، إن تمكين اليانور روزفلت أثر على مكانة المرأة الأمريكية.

تمكين المرأة أمر أساسي لتحقيق العدالة الاجتماعية، حيث أن إنصاف المرأة لم يتحقق بعد. إن التغيير المجتمعي والإصلاح وتمكين المرأة يحصل بطرق مختلفة. أهم التوصيات التي خلص إليها الباحث من خلال هذه الدراسة تمثلت في إن الباحثين يجب ألا يكونوا محددين في مراقبة وشرح التغيير بإتباع طرق ومعالجات عادية، بل يجب أن يكونوا مبتكرين في تحليلاتهم. ولهذا يدعو الباحث للمزيد من الدراسات حول موضوع تمكين المرأة وكيفية الارتقاء بمكانتها بشكل خلاق مع الانتباه لخصوصيات ومرجعية كل حالة. تختلف وجهات النظر وطرق تغيير مكانة المرأة وكيفية حدوثها ولذلك توجد معالجات مختلفة لمتابعة هذا الموضوع الأساسي والحيوي لخلق مستقبل واعد وعادل للجميع حيث تعمل

المرأة والرجل كشركاء متساوين في كل مجالات الحياة باستخدام كامل قوتهم من اجل فائدة وازدهار  
الإنسانية وتطورها.

## **Abstract**

This research examines the concept of empowerment through a feminist perspective of power and power relations by concentrating on the case study of Eleanor Roosevelt (ER).

It examines the concept of empowerment aiming to analyze how the theoretical framework of the research applies to the context and case study of ER. It analyzes the theoretical data to see how it applies to the empirical data the case of ER as a role model for empowering American women. Furthermore, it analyzes the concept aiming to understand how it works due to its multi faceted nature. It perceives empowerment as a multi-dimensional social process. By understanding the concept, we can find creative ways to empower women and enhance their status in society.

The study sheds light on gender issues and feminism. It illuminates the struggle of American women for their rights and their role in political and social reform movements.

The study attempts to understand the nature of the relation between women's participation in the social, political, economical...spheres and their empowerment. The research introduces and analyses the subject of study in a novel way, in which a relatively new concept - the concept of empowerment and the theoretical framework - is applied to the case study of ER. It argues that the participation of women in those spheres contribute to the enhancement of the status of women.

Moreover, the study argues that empowered individual women can better contribute to the empowerment of other women in society. The relation of empowerment on the individual versus the collective basis is dialectical. In the case of ER as an unconventional First Lady, her individual contribution was evident, especially because of her status as a First Lady.

The researcher argued that five main areas are crucial for women's empowerment, eliminating the gender gap and achieving equity for women. These are education, economic empowerment, political participation, safety and health, justice and human rights issues.

This study attempts to provide answers to the main questions raised in the introduction. By analysis of the case study and the application of the theoretical framework, the hypothesis was tested and approved. The outcomes and conclusions of this study are mainly answers to the research questions that were raised.

Furthermore, the research aims to provide a better understanding of the impact of women's participation and contribution to transformation and change

in the status of women in the American society and to their empowerment to achieve their equal rights.

Throughout the study, it was possible to answer the research questions. ER is an inspiring role model for the empowerment of American women because she was able to transform their role in society in general, and in the White House in particular. Furthermore, the empowerment of ER affected the American women's status.

Women's equity has not been achieved yet; therefore, women's empowerment is fundamental for social justice. Social change, reform and women's empowerment happen in different ways. Therefore, one main recommendation is that researchers should not be limited in observing and explaining change by following habitual ways and approaches. They should be more creative and analytical. The researcher invites further studies on how change in women's status and their empowerment happens creatively, keeping in mind the characteristics and context of each case. Different perspectives and ways of change in women's status happen and therefore have different approaches to pursue this primary vital subject for creating a better future and a more just world for all, where women and men, function as equal partners in every sphere of life, using their full power for the benefit, prosperity and development of humanity.

## Table of Contents

<b>Thesis Approval</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Abstract (In Arabic)</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Abstract (In English)</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>Definition of Terms</b> .....	<b>xiv</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>xviii</b>
Chapter One: Introduction .....	p.1
A. Research Statement .....	
B. Research Objective .....	
C. Research Significance .....	
D. Research Problem .....	
E. Research Hypothesis .....	
F. The Life of Eleanor Roosevelt .....	
G. Research Boundary .....	
H. Research Limitation .....	
Chapter Two: Review of Literature .....	p. 28

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework .....	p. 42
Chapter Four: The Struggle of American Women for Women’s Rights	p.66
Historical Background of American Women	
American Women and American Democracy	
a. Political Inequality	
b. Social Inequality	
Women’s Role	
a. Political Reform Movements	
b. Social Reform Movements	
Chapter Five: Eleanor Roosevelt and Women’s Empowerment .....	p. 83
a. Eleanor Roosevelt’s Early Life	
b. Eleanor Roosevelt’s Marriage and Motherhood	
c. Eleanor Roosevelt’s Transformation from Powerlessness to Powerfulness: Her Self-Empowerment	
1. Eleanor Roosevelt’s Formal Education	
2. Eleanor Roosevelt’s Growing Independence	
d. Eleanor Roosevelt and the Women's Movement	
e. Eleanor Roosevelt’s Commitment to Empowering Women	
1. Education	
2. Economic Empowerment	
3. Political Empowerment	
4. Safety and Health	
5. Justice and Human Rights Issues	
Chapter Six: Eleanor Roosevelt and the United Nations .....	p. 110
Chapter Seven: Conclusions .....	p. 114
Bibliography .....	p. 122
Books .....	
Articles .....	

Internet .....

Appendices ..... p. 129

## Definition of Terms

**Equality:** It means that males and females have equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development. It means society values males and females equally for their similarities and differences and the diverse roles they play. It signifies the long-term outcomes that result from gender equity strategies and processes.<sup>1</sup>

**Equal Rights Amendment (ERA):** A constitutional amendment which was not ratified by a majority of the states. It was first presented to Congress by the National Women’s Party in 1923, declaring that “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex”. In 1972 Congress passed the ERA but it was not ratified by the states.

**Equity strategies:** The processes used to achieve gender equality. Equity involves fairness in representation, participation, and benefits

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Co-operation*. Paris: OECD, 1998. This glossary was developed for USAID’s Office of Women in Development by the EQUATE Project. Online at: [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/pubs/Glossary\\_Handout.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/Glossary_Handout.pdf) accessed in November 2007, *Glossary of Gender Terms and Concepts*.

afforded to males and females. The goal is that both groups have a fair chance of having their needs met and that they have equal access to opportunities for realizing their full potential as human beings.<sup>2</sup>

**Gender:** The differences between men and women. Encyclopedia Britannica notes that gender identity is "an individual's self-conception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex."<sup>3</sup> Gender refers to a set of qualities and behaviors expected from males and females by society. Gender roles are socially determined and can be affected by factors such as education or economics. Gender roles may vary widely within and between cultures, and often evolve over time.<sup>4</sup>

**Gender dynamics:** The relationships and interactions between and among boys, girls, women, and men. Gender dynamics are informed by socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Depending upon how they are manifested, gender dynamics can reinforce or challenge existing norms.<sup>5</sup>

**Gender gap:** A distinctive pattern of male and female voting decisions. A disparity between genders involving quality or quantity. A classic example of a gender gap is the supposed difference in pay between men and women for the same job responsibilities.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from OECD Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica.

Online at: [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com), accessed in November, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from OECD Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from OECD Ibid.

**Gender equality:** The stage of human social development at which “the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not be determined by the fact of being born male or female”<sup>6</sup> in other words, a stage when both men and women realize their full potential.<sup>7</sup>

**Marginalization:** Iris Marion Young<sup>8</sup> defines Marginalization as exclusion from meaningful participation in society, partly because the labor market does not or cannot accommodate them, proving to be one of the most dangerous forms of oppression. Marginalization has the ability to cause severe material deprivation, as well in its extreme form can exterminate groups. Minority groups such as women, racial minorities, and others face marginalization due to dominant discourse within the structures of society according to B.Mullaly.<sup>9</sup> Material deprivation is the most common result of marginalization when looking at how unfairly material resources (such as food and shelter) are dispersed in society. Along with material deprivation, marginalized individuals are also excluded from services, programs, and policies<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> See, United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues.

<sup>7</sup> Augusto Lopez-Claros and Saadia Zahidi, “Women’s Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap”, *World Economic Forum*, (Geneva, Switzerland: 2005), p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> I. M. Young, *Five Faces of Oppression*, edited by M. Adams, *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 35-49.

<sup>9</sup> B. Mullaly, *Oppression: The Focus of Structural Social Work*. In B. Mullaly, *The New Structural Social Work* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2007). pp. 252-286.

<sup>10</sup> I. M. Young, Op. Cit. pp.35-49.

**Nineteenth Amendment:** The amendment to the Constitution, adopted in 1920, that assures women of the right to vote.

**Patriarchy:** A social system in which men dominate within the family and society.

**Sexism:** Discrimination against persons based on their sex.

## Abbreviations

- **DNC** : Democratic National Committee
- **ER** : Eleanor Roosevelt
- **ERA** : Equal Rights Amendment
- **FDR** : Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- **FF** : Founding Fathers
- **HRC** : Human Rights Commission
- **IBHR** : International Bill of Human Rights
- **NAACP** : National Association for the Advancement of  
Colored People
- **NAWSA** : National American Woman Suffrage Association
- **NWSA** : National Woman Suffrage Association
- **RD** : Representative Democracy
- **SDR** : Sara Delano Roosevelt
- **UDHR** : Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- **UN** : United Nations
- **US** : United States
- **WCTU** : Woman's Christian Temperance Union
- **WILPF** : Women's International League of Peace and Freedom

**“Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision-making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.”**

**Beijing Declaration** (para 13) (United Nations, 1996)

The research will tackle the subject of study within a number of chapters. It will shed light on gender issues and feminism and will examine the concept of empowerment by concentrating on the case study of Eleanor Roosevelt. It sheds light on the struggle of American women for women’s rights and their role in political and social reform movements. Moreover, it examines Eleanor Roosevelt’s role in the empowerment of American women.

This chapter presents the background of the research, which includes the research statement, objectives, significance, problem, hypothesis, the life of Eleanor Roosevelt (ER), methodology, boundaries, and limitations.

Chapter two introduces a literature review of books dealing with the subject of the research aiming to examine it academically by reviewing a diversity of opinions on the subject from different perspectives. Chapter three is going to address the theoretical framework of the research dealing with feminism and the concept of empowerment. It aims to understand the theoretical framework in an attempt to analyze how it applies to the context and case study of ER. This is done by analyzing the theoretical data and see how it applies to the empirical data. Chapter four addresses the struggle of American women for their rights aiming to understand how it fits into the theoretical framework. Chapter five

examined ER's activism, her involvement in women's movement and organizations. Furthermore, it addressed and analyzed ER's relation to women's empowerment. Chapter six shed light on ER and the United Nations. Finally, chapter seven presents the conclusions.

#### **a. Research Statement**

In the early years of independence, American women were regarded inferior to men. They had no control over their own lives. Power and authority was vested in men in society in general and as heads of households. The society was patriarchal and women suffered of a great range of injustices and inequalities that hindered their development and participation in society.

Women were regarded as second-class citizens in the American social structure. Men dominated women's lives. Women were not supposed to have an independent position. Their men represented them. The social inequalities were obvious in many domains of life. These inequalities hindered women and acted as barriers in the way of their desires and achievements.

This inferior status of women was obvious in women's political inequality. Women had no political rights. Since then, they were denied their full civil rights. Despite the fact, that it was not stated in the U.S. constitution that voting was restricted only to men, the legislatures denied women's right to vote by their voting qualifications. These qualifications excluded women because they were considered to be represented by their family males—fathers, husbands brothers and thereof.

Despite that women played an important economic role in the family, law did not recognize them as economically independent individuals. Besides, when a woman got married, if she was among the few working women at that time, she would lose the limited economic freedom of a single working adult. Women had no economic identity. Most of them could neither buy nor sell property.

Women's status has gone through dramatic changes along the years. Their lives began to change after the American Revolution. After the American War of Independence (1775–1783), talks of rights raised issues of women's rights. The ideals of the Declaration of Independence were to ensure the Americans equal rights regardless of gender and race. However, when the new U.S. Constitution was finally approved in 1787 women lost the legal ground to be equal to men.<sup>11</sup> Women in the United States had no legal rights and were not politically recognized until the Nineteenth amendment to the U. S. constitution in 1920 was ratified<sup>12</sup> assuring women's right to vote.

This thesis sheds light on the changing status of women in the United States through the passage of time. It attempts to study the role of Eleanor Roosevelt in particular in promoting women's empowerment. Moreover, it discusses how women shaped and changed their status in society. It examines women's long road to change and transformation of the past injustices that they had suffered from for so long. Many notable women were behind this change and transformation. They struggled to remove the barriers that faced them and

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<sup>11</sup> Nancy F. Cott, Editor, *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Authored the original chapter in *American Women: A Library of Congress Guide for the Study of Women's History and Culture in the United States* (Library of Congress, 2001), from which this online version is derived. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awlaw3/index.html>

worked hard to advance their status. Their achievements changed the lives' of women. They refused to remain silent. They wanted their voice to be heard. They worked hard to change their inferior status in a society of unequal power between the two genders that was dominated by males. A good example for a woman's voice rejecting inferiority of status is the empowering and inspiring quote of Eleanor Roosevelt "**No-one can make you feel inferior without your consent.**"<sup>13</sup>

This research examines American women's empowerment. The concept of empowerment is shared by many disciplines. Among these are development studies, and studies of social movements. Therefore, how empowerment is understood varies among these disciplines' perspectives. There is no single definition for the concept of empowerment. Therefore, the test is how American women as individuals or as groups feel and respond toward empowerment. The test is also to examine Eleanor Roosevelt's empowerment as an individual and her contribution to American women's empowerment. It gives insight to the contribution of women in the American life and the developments, changes and reforms that took place with the passage of time through focusing on a number of issues to change the status of women.

Furthermore, it examines how American women changed from being powerless to being powerful. It will argue the effect of women's empowerment in general and Eleanor Roosevelt's in particular on society. It focuses on the contribution of Eleanor Roosevelt in American society concerning different issues related to women and human rights. It will examine the extent to which

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<sup>13</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *This Is My Story*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937).

the contribution of Eleanor Roosevelt affected the empowerment of women in the American society.

The thesis studies the ways in which Eleanor Roosevelt changed the lives of women in the American society. It discusses ER's struggle and contribution to humanitarian and democratic issues, such as human rights and equal rights by which she gained the admiration of millions.

### **b. Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research are: (a) To explore the origin of women's inferior status in the American society; (b) To survey the role of American women to achieve their equal rights; (c) To shed light on the major reform movements to change the status of American women in the American society; (d) To explore women's empowerment in the American society by examining their struggle for social and political equality; (e) To explore the role of Eleanor Roosevelt in the American public life. (f) To examine the role of Eleanor Roosevelt on the empowerment of American women.

### **c. Research Significance**

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to public knowledge. It will furnish readers with the outcome of the study in an attempt to expand their knowledge in the field of study. It will examine the necessary changes and

transformations in society on the individual level, group level and societal level to empower women. It will provide readers with knowledge about the experience of American women, and their struggles to change their status, to become empowered, and gain their equal rights. It describes this change and transformation of American women.

The thesis will furnish readers with the inferences of the research about the experience and struggle of the American women to achieve their equal rights. It will explain the forces that lead to women's empowerment and the importance of their empowerment on their communities and how much they can contribute to its betterment and advancement.

Women's empowerment has much significance in women's life. It enables women to have control over their own lives and to be independent. Besides, it enables them to have the freedom of choice and to have the power to speak loud their aspirations as full independent human beings.

The significance of this research lies in the great contribution of an individual, an American woman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the achievements she has made to enrich the ideals of liberty, human rights and in particular women's rights.

The subject of empowering women has much significance in women's life everywhere. Research on the struggle of women in any part of the world can be beneficiary to women in another part of the world. Women around the world have concerns and struggle for equal rights and for a just society, which guarantees women's equity. Despite the fact that women's equity differs from

one part of the world to another to the extent that women have achieved their equal rights, it is important to understand the experience on the behalf of women's empowerment. Therefore, this research has much significance to women around the world and in Palestine in particular. The research highlights issues related to women's equal rights and the empowerment of women. Moreover, "The empowerment of women is one of the central issues currently facing the Palestinian society." ....<sup>14</sup>

"Through the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and our efforts to highlight the struggle to attain these rights for women, we are actively pursuing these goals. However, change must come from multiple fronts and a degree of social reconditioning about the role and fundamental importance of women within Palestinian society must take place. It is our vision that through the empowerment of Palestinian women, sustainable and equitable development will follow."<sup>15</sup>

The Palestinian National *Millennium Development Goals* (MDG) Steering Committee, led by the Ministry of Planning and the Palestinian Authority, prepared the 2005 Palestinian MDG Progress Report in which it states its goal number three which is: "Promoting gender equality and empowering women".<sup>16</sup> (MDGs by 2015)

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<sup>14</sup>Zahira Kamal, *Empowering Women: Key to Equitable and Sustainable Development*, Focus, UNDP/PAPP Vol. 4, 2005 p.4-5

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>16</sup> Palestinian MDG Progress Report, *Millennium Development Goals*, This report has been prepared under the umbrella of the Palestinian National MDG Steering Committee, led by the Ministry of Planning, Palestinian Authority, in cooperation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and UNDP. The sectoral analysis was undertaken by line ministries in partnership with United Nations resident agencies, and coordinated overall by the Ministry of Planning, December, 2005.

These are some of the reasons, which make this research important and have profound significance for Palestinian women and Palestinian society.

#### **d. Research Problem**

Women's empowerment proved to be essential for reform and development in any society. The importance to understand women's empowerment has raised several questions: How can women become empowered? What is the way for them to become empowered? What exactly constitutes women's empowerment? How does women empowerment affect women's lives? How does empowering women affect society? How much does women participation in public life empower them? What are the challenges for a person to become empowered? What are the challenges for a person to empower others? What was the role of Eleanor Roosevelt to women's empowerment? How did Eleanor Roosevelt affect women's lives? What were the forces that forged Eleanor Roosevelt's equal rights personality? How did she transform from a weak woman to an empowered woman?

The research will also address the key questions: How did women get integrated into the American public life? What were the driving forces behind their mobilization and participation in public life? Did they make a difference? If so, how, why and under what circumstances? How Eleanor Roosevelt was? How she became? What was the role of her childhood in forging her equal rights personality? What was the role of the misery of her childhood to seek wanting a cause to fulfill? What was the contribution of Eleanor Roosevelt to American society? Under what conditions did it evolve? Did the empowerment of women necessitate fundamental social and political change?

This research focuses on finding answers to the following central and subsidiary related questions: Does the awareness of women of their rights leads to their participation to women's empowerment in their society? What is the way for women to become empowered? Why is women's empowerment important? Did the empowerment of Eleanor Roosevelt affect and change society? Can a woman (Eleanor Roosevelt) transform the role of women in society in general and in the White House in particular? The subsidiary questions are: Is women's empowerment related to social, cultural, or political forces? Is the empowerment of women essential to achieve justice and equality?

#### **e. Research Hypothesis**

This research examines the hypothesis<sup>17</sup> that, "The more American women participate in the American society, economic, political, cultural spheres, the more change happens in the status of women in the American society; however, the more these changes take place and laws support them the more women get empowered; furthermore the more American women are empowered the more they can affect their status in the American society." This hypothesis states that there is a specific relationship between two variables: (1) American women's participation, and (2) changes in women's status in the American society. In

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<sup>17</sup> Gregory M. Scott and Stephen M. Garrison, *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998), p. 19.

The origin of the term hypothesis is from Latin, meaning "subject for a speech", from Greek hupothesis, "proposal, supposition", from hupotithenai, hupothe-, to suppose. A hypothesis "is a declarative sentence that states that a specific relationship exists between two or more phenomena." It is a "tentative explanation for an observation, phenomenon, or scientific problem that can be tested by further investigation; something taken to be true for the purpose of argument or investigation; an assumption; an antecedent of a conditional statement. In general, a hypothesis is "a tentative supposition with regard to an unknown state of affairs, the truth of which is thereupon subject to investigation by any available method, either by logical deduction of consequences which may be checked against what is known, or by direct experimental investigation or discovery of facts not hitherto known and suggested by the hypothesis".

addition, the hypothesis describes the nature of this relationship: an increase in the second variable is associated with an increase in the first. Furthermore, this hypothesis states that there is a specific relationship between the other two variables: (1) women's empowerment in the American society, and (2) changes in the status of women that take place. The hypothesis describes the nature of that relationship as such: an increase in the second variable is associated with an increase in the first. This hypothesis will be tested by collecting and examining data to see if indeed such a relationship exists. Moreover, this hypothesis states that there is a specific relationship between the other two variables: (1) empowered women (2) their effect on changing the status of women in the American society. Furthermore, this hypothesis states that there is a specific relationship between the variables: (1) empowered women (2) their effect on empowering women in the American society. The hypothesis describes the nature of that relationship as such: an increase in the second variable is associated with an increase in the first. This hypothesis will be tested by collecting and examining data on Eleanor Roosevelt's case to see if indeed such a relationship exists.

Two types of hypotheses are commonly used in social sciences: causal and relational hypotheses. Causal hypotheses attempt to show that one phenomenon causes another. Relational hypotheses are statements that indicate whether two phenomena are related in a specific way, without demonstrating that one causes the other.<sup>18</sup> Testing the above hypothesis about American women's participation, women's empowerment and changes in the status of women in the American society will only indicate if a relationship exists between the two

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<sup>18</sup> Scott and Garrison, *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*, (University of Central Oklahoma: Prentice Hall, 2006) p.9.

factors, not that a rise in women's participation causes societal change. Relations between hypotheses may be either positive or negative. A positive relation exists when an increase in one variable is associated with an increase in another. A negative relation exists when the existence of one variable coincides with the decrease of another. Thus, also a positive relationship exists between the other two pairs of variables: on one hand (1) women's participation in the American society, and (2) changes in the status of American women; on the other hand (1) empowered American women (2) their effect American women's empowerment in the American society. An increase in changes that take place that are enforced by law may result in an increase in women's empowerment in the American society; furthermore, an increase of women's contribution and participation in society may be a result of their empowerment. In other words, empowered American women affect, contribute and cause change in women's status in the American society. Moreover, the study will examine in particular the case study of Eleanor Roosevelt. It will examine her contribution to the empowerment of American women by testing the hypothesis: Eleanor Roosevelt empowered American women in the American society in the twentieth century; Eleanor Roosevelt affected the status of women in the American society. This will indicate that there is a positive relation between American women's participation in their society, economic, political, cultural spheres and changes in their status in the American society. This will be studied by examining ER's contribution to the empowerment of American women.

Because hypotheses are constructed to find out what relationship, if any, exists between the two variables, we need in order to test the hypotheses to examine the change that occurs and its effect on American women's

empowerment when women themselves contribute to their society over a certain period of time.

Therefore, if change in the status of women in the American society is related to women's participation, then high women's participation and women empowerment will result in and cause higher changes in their status in the American society. Besides, if there is a relation between women's participation and women's status in society, then there is a relation between women's participation and women's empowerment and societal change.

The hypotheses will be tested by collecting and examining data on women's empowerment over time and on the case of Eleanor Roosevelt to see if indeed such a relationship exists.

#### **f. The Life of Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)**

**“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face..You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”**

(You Learn by Living, 1960, pp.29-30)

### The Empowering Quote of Eleanor Roosevelt

Eleanor Roosevelt (ER) was one of the most prominent leaders of the twentieth century. She gained the admiration of millions. She was a woman of strong will, determination and a vision. She challenged stereotype. She struggled to adapt to an ever-changing world. She worked hard and was able to make a difference. She changed American politics. She had a sustained impact on American national policy towards women, youth, blacks, the poor, the underprivileged and the United Nations. She transformed the role of the first lady. She redefined her life. She was a humanitarian who worked hard to make life a better place for all. Furthermore, she presented the world with a new vision of justice and peace.

#### **Biographical Information:**

ER was the first child of Elliott Roosevelt and Anna Hall Roosevelt. She was born on October 11, 1884 in New York City. Despite being born into a family of wealth and lineage, her childhood was not a happy one.

In 1892, ER's mother, Anna, died of diphtheria when she was only eight years old. Nineteen months later in 1894, her father Elliott died of depression and alcoholism.

Orphaned at the age of ten, ER and her two younger brothers, Elliott Jr. (born 1889) and Hall (called Josh - born 1891) moved to live in with their maternal grandmother Mary Hall according to the will of their mother Anna Hall.

In 1899, ER was sent to Allenswood School, a boarding school in London under the tutelage of Marie Souvestre.

In 1902, when ER turned eighteen her grandmother insisted that she leaves Allenswood and return to New York. Reluctantly, ER returned to New York to make her first appearance in social life.

ER met her fifth-cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) while traveling from New York City to Grandmother Hall's home in Tivoli. FDR proposed to marry Eleanor in 1903, but due to pressure from his mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt, they agreed to keep the engagement secret. The couple got married two years later in March 17, 1905 in New York City. ER's uncle, President Theodore Roosevelt, escorted his niece down the aisle. The newly wed made New York City their home.

ER used to work as a teacher at the Rivington Street Settlement House. Soon after she got married, she became pregnant with her first child Anna. She stopped teaching in response to the wish of her mother in law Sara who thought that ER had to stop working in unhygienic neighborhoods.

In a year's time their first daughter Anna was born, followed by James, Franklin (who died in less than eight months after his birth), Elliott, Franklin, and John. ER's life was centered, during a period of ten years, on motherhood. She wrote, "For ten years, I was always just getting over having a baby or about to have one, and so my occupations were considerably restricted during this time."

In 1908 ER's mother in law, Sara Roosevelt, gave the couple a townhouse in New York City, which was the least independent that could be than hers. It was not only adjoining her own house, but also it had connecting doors on every floor.

The year 1911 carried much change to ER and FDR's life. Dutchess County elected ER's husband to the New York state senate. FDR became the first Democrat to win in thirty-two years. He asked ER to leave Hyde Park and to set up a home for the family in Albany. Eleanor's life started to change in Albany. She became interested in politics and public service. In the early 1910s, she began to represent her husband locally. She became more active socially and politically during the 1910s and 1920s. She made new friends and watched her husband shape government policies. Moreover, she was finally able to manage her own household.

In 1913, ER and FDR moved to Washington DC where he served as assistant secretary to the Navy. During World War I (WWI), in 1918, ER spent months working in the Red Cross and the Navy Department to help American Servicemen. In 1919, when ER turned thirty-five, she felt having an empty space in her life. She volunteered at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital. Being horrified by the treatment WWI veterans received at the hospital, she forced the Interior Department to change its standards.

A year after, in 1920 the Democratic National Convention chose FDR as a candidate for Vice President of the US on the Cox-Roosevelt ticket headed by

Governor James Cox, but it was defeated by Republican Warren Harding in the presidential election. ER joined her husband's campaign after his defeat.

During the 1920s, ER helped lead several women organizations including the *Women's City Club*, the *National Consumers League*, and the New York divisions of the *League of Women Voters*. Furthermore, in 1922, she joined the *Women's Trade Union League* and the *Women's Division of the Democratic State Committee* and got to know Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook who were activists in the Democratic Party. In 1924, she chaired the women's delegation to the platform committee of the *Democratic National Convention*.

FDR was stricken with polio in 1921. Though ER was once very shy, at that time, she began delivering public speeches on her husband's behalf and started to appear publicly representing the Democratic Party. ER gradually became a political force. FDR, ER, and their close friend Louis Howe arranged a strategy to protect FDR's political capability and to uplift his morale, and at the same time to give ER the support she needed in order to be able to survive the pressures she faced after FDR became sick.

In 1924, she chaired the Bok Peace Prize Committee with Professor Esther Lape and others to judge the contest;<sup>19</sup> they evaluated submissions as the Jury of the Award. The individual with the best plan that showed how the U S could

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<sup>19</sup> Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume One, 1884-1933*, (New York: Viking Press, 1992), pp.342-346.

contribute to international peace and be remote from another war in Europe, was to be awarded the prize of \$50,000 worth that Edward Bok, a retired multi millionaire publisher and editor of the Ladies' Home Journal has created. Bok wanted to use his money in promoting peace. The Committee decided on a plan presented by an academic named Charles Levermore who called for cooperation with the League of Nations and membership in the World Court. The Bok Peace Prize extended the sphere of U.S. foreign relations where isolationism was a popular approach during the 1920s. The prize, got large attention in the press, and many members of Congress were suspicious of the result. Congressional hearings were held. ER appeared with Lape in defense of the jury's decision and both did so well that the investigation ended soon after their testimony. This was Eleanor's first experience of being scrutinized by the public for adopting an unpopular point of view; a paradigm that continued to be repeated throughout the rest of her life.

In the same year, 1924, Eleanor also served as Alfred E. Smith's liaison to women voters who was a dominant Democratic politician in New York State who worked for the passage of progressive legislation during the time when FDR and ER emerged as political leaders. After the disastrous Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire in 1911, he defended legislation to protect laborers working in dangerous and unhealthy factories. He was known as a progressive leader when he became New York's governor. He supported social needs for the people. The government supported laws governing women's pensions, child and women's labor, and workmen's compensation, under Al Smith's leadership, issues that ER's also passionately supported.

Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook frequently visited the Roosevelt's Hyde Park estate. Both women shared political and social friendships with ER. In 1924, FDR suggested to build a cottage on the property that could be used as a year round retreat that ER would enjoy Val-Kill around the year with her friends. He helped design and build a stone cottage beside a brook where they often went to picnic during the first years after he was paralyzed.<sup>20</sup> In 1925, the three friends, together with FDR's support, built Stone Cottage at Val-Kill,<sup>21</sup> two miles from Springwood, the Roosevelt family home. Cook, "known for her carpentry skills and love for detail"<sup>22</sup>, decided to make the furniture for the cottage. Another building was built on the Roosevelt property, a short period after the cottage was built. It was the Val-Kill Furniture Shop. Cook and Dickerman lived in the cottage until 1947, while ER spent her weekends and vacations there. The three of them were seriously involved in the state democratic party and as social activists, and Val-Kill became the center for their political activism.

ER wrote in her autobiography "the cottage was an adjunct to our lives at Hyde Park but it was mine and I felt freer there than in the big house."<sup>23</sup> She considered Val-Kill to be her first real home where she felt herself grow and the place where she "emerged as an individual". For the first time in her life she felt she had an independent place for her; as she had spent much of her childhood in her grandmother's homes and much of her adulthood in homes offered and controlled by her mother-in-law SDR. The cottage endowed her with a place of

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<sup>20</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *The autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt*, (US: First Da Capo Press, 1992), p.143.

<sup>21</sup> Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume Two, 1933-1938*. (New York: Viking Press, 1993), p p. 2, 134, 360-361.

<sup>22</sup> Cook, *Ibid*, p. 32.

<sup>23</sup> Roosevelt, *Op. Cit.* p. 284.

her own to which she could invite her friends and acquaintances where she could exercise her growing independence from SDR and from FDR. In addition, Val-Kill offered a peaceful place where ER could write. She wrote many of her books and columns at Val-Kill. In Val-Kill, she used to meet with family and friends in a relaxing atmosphere. As she later told friends, "Val-Kill is something of my own." Val-Kill expressed the way ER's private and public lives were closely related. This was obvious in her relation with Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook who were her friends, business partners and political partners. Val-Kill was also her base of operations. It often functioned as an informal, ongoing conference center where ER's friends, political associates, children and guests debated current and political issues. She was characterized to have warm hospitality. She even invited her students from Todhunter School for picnics and her graduate students from Brandeis University for weekend retreats.

Distinguished History Professor Allida Black is editor of the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at George Washington University. She says of Val-Kill: "It was a place vibrant with commitment to social justice and spirited debate. It was the place reflective of Eleanor Roosevelt's spirit and democratic vision."<sup>24</sup> Val-Kill has become the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Column on Save America's Treasures: Val-Kill Cottage*, (New York: June 21, 2000). Available at: [http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/EOP/First\\_Lady/html/columns/2000/column0621.html](http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/EOP/First_Lady/html/columns/2000/column0621.html)

<sup>25</sup> In 1977 President Jimmy Carter signed a bill creating of Val-Kill the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, "in order to commemorate for the education, inspiration, and benefit of present and future generations the life and work of an outstanding woman in American History". See, Ryan Dougherty, First Lady of the world: the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park, New York, tells the story of an extraordinary woman who dedicated her life to helping others, *National Parks, Hyde Park*, March 2003. Article available at: [http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi\\_0199-2549076/First-Lady-of-the-world.html](http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-2549076/First-Lady-of-the-world.html)

In 1926, ER bought Todhunter School, in New York City with both her friends Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook. Eleanor taught government and history in the school. The next year ER became friends with Mary McLeod Bethune, a school president of Bethune-Cookman College.

Writing was a very successful method of communication for ER. It was a way of communication that she mastered in which she expressed her opinion, communicated with others, and addressed different issues of concern to public especially women. ER's "emotions were stirred by correspondence. Beginning with her father, letters were the way in which she was best able to communicate her dreams intimacies, desires"<sup>26</sup>. She had a talent in writing. She started communicating with people through her writings in which she showed a great talent, enthusiasm and pragmatism. She addressed a wide range of subjects that concerned the readers of the *League's Weekly News*, *Women's Democratic News*, *Redbook*, *Current History*, and *North American Review*. Her writing attracted attention within the party and women's political organizations. Soon the media treated her as a woman of influence, the "woman who speaks her political mind".

In 1932, at the age of forty-eight, ER became the first lady when her husband FDR was elected president of the US. "After the elections...ER worried that her talents would not be used; that she would become a shut-in, a congenial hostess in the political shadows sidelined...In that bitter climate<sup>27</sup>, ER faced her return to Washington with a burst of activity that defied her sense of dread.

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<sup>26</sup> Cook, Op. Cit. p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> In the months before FDR's inauguration on 4 March 1933, newspaper headlines broadcast the victories of fascism and tyranny in Europe and Asia as well as the intensifying agonies of America's worst economic depression.

Officially limited to social tasks, she felt at first burdened and defiant.”<sup>28</sup> They moved to the White House.

This transition was not an easy one for ER. She asked advice from her friends Howe and Lorena Hickok. Howe, advised her to continue to speak out. Howe advocated ER’s positions to FDR. He supported her rejection to the limits of the White House and reach out to American public devastated by the Great Depression. In addition, Hickok suggested that she could benefit from her good relations with women journalists that she developed during the 1932’s campaign by holding her own press conferences. ER went back to writing. She responded to the 300,000 letters she received. She started a monthly column for *Pictorial Review*.

During 1933, ER held weekly press conferences with women reporters; she was the first wife of a president to do so. In the same year, she also initiated a project for coal miners.

During 1934, she helped forming the National Youth Administration. In addition, ER’s involvement with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) started and lasted through her lifetime. She was strongly committed to civil rights. It was the most powerful civil rights’ organization. It had the largest number of members and was at the forefront of protests for equal rights for African Americans during the twentieth century. It had a huge contribution in ending the segregation in the US. ER arranged the infamous 1934 meeting between FDR and the NAACP for discussing anti-lynching legislation. She believed that Walter White, the executive secretary of

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<sup>28</sup> Cook, Op. Cit. p. 9.

the NAACP could lobby FDR for the issues of concern of African Americans. Moreover, she joined the organizations' unsuccessful efforts to lobby FDR and Congressmen for a legislation to prohibit lynching. She urged to resist Jim Crow relief practices; and spoke out strongly against racial violence. ER's 1938 challenge of Birmingham segregation laws at the Southern Conference for Human Welfare drew attention to Jim Crow's laws. She disregarded the segregation laws at the conference for Human Welfare in Alabama when she sat in the aisle between white and black people. During the 1936 and 1940, she supported the American Youth Congress and worked with the head of the Democratic National Committee James Farley, and head of the Women's Division Molly Dewson, to discuss the role of women in elections.

ER's popularity expanded and her public audience became larger during the years 1941-1949. ER began publishing her daily syndicated column *My Day* in 1935.<sup>29</sup> She wrote more than one hundred articles for magazines, newsletters and policy journals. She appeared on the radio. She released her first autobiography *This Is My Story* and other two books on foreign policy *This Troubled World* and on democratic values *The Moral Basis of Democracy*. ER became recognized as a political force herself.

In 1943, ER toured South Pacific to help the soldiers and raise their morale during WWII, which in turn strengthened her commitment to social justice. During the war, she visited troops in South Pacific, the Caribbean, England, and on U.S. military bases.

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<sup>29</sup> See appendix 6.

After the death of her husband in 1945, she told the press “the story is over”. ER refused many requests from different party leaders, labor leaders, and university boards. Yet she carried on writing her column, wrote ten books, expanded her tour delivering speeches, and joined the NAACP board of directors. Moreover, she was appointed by President Harry Truman, as member to the American delegation of the United Nations General Assembly. She helped found the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Working as a member of the American delegation to the United Nation, she chaired the Human Rights Commission and steered the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She resigned from the Assembly in 1952, and volunteered to the American Association for the United Nations and became the chairperson of its board of directors.

ER remained active in Democratic politics. In 1961, President Kennedy reappointed ER to the United Nations General Assembly. He appointed her as a member of the National Advisory Committee of the Peace Corps and as a Chairman of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women. She chaired the first Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. She assisted creating Americans for Democratic Action (ADA).

After retiring from the UN, She continues her tours and speeches in different places of the world meeting with poor people as well as world leaders. Even in the last two years of her life, when she was struggling sickness, she carried on her speeches on issues of concern of so many such as women’s rights, racial justice and world peace. ER lived at Val-Kill in Hyde Park and had an apartment NYC. She returned to her home in Hyde Park where she struggled to complete her last book, *Tomorrow is Now*. At the age of seventy-eight, ER died November 7, 1962 in a NYC.

## **g. Research Methodology**

The methodology used is supported by theories of gender relations. In general, the case study methodology will be used in this research to study the contribution of Eleanor Roosevelt to women's empowerment in the American society, particularly in addressing women's issues to achieve their equal rights. My choice of methodology is to use the historical chronology approach moving successfully from landmark cases to the present. This case study is an attempt to find out what contribution Eleanor Roosevelt played in the past and will attempt to reveal reasons for why and how things happened. The value of historical research is that it enables researchers to seek solutions to contemporary problems in the past. As well as analyzing data to examine the impact of women's participation and contribution to transformation and change in the status of women in the American society and to women's empowerment to achieve their equal rights. Besides, the theoretical frames of reference add to the value of these approaches and offer a unique methodological incites for data collection and analysis.

This is a qualitative research. In which the researcher argues that there is a specific relation between the variables, the more women participate in the American society, the more change happens in the status of women in the American society. Furthermore, the hypothesis states that there is a specific relationship between other variables, women's empowerment in the American society and changes in the status of women that take place. Moreover, there is a specific relation between the variables, empowered women, their effect on empowering women in the American society. The hypothesis will be tested by

collecting and examining data about the concept of empowerment, women's empowerment and the case of ER to see if indeed such a relationship exists.

#### **h. Research Boundaries**

This study is restricted by two boundaries: the first the geographic boundary, which covers the United States; and the second is the time frame. However, the discussion about American women's struggle to achieve their rights, and the women's contribution to change their status, over time in the U.S., covers a longer historical period -beginning from the days of the American Independence and the United States constitution in 1787-1789. Yet the Eleanor Roosevelt research covers the lifetime of Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962), particularly in the period between 1920 and 1962. The research period in this study gives a glance about the status of women before Eleanor Roosevelt. At the same time, it applies the theoretical framework and the concept of empowerment by studying how it applies to the case study knowingly that it is a relatively new concept in relation to the period of time in which ER lived. Furthermore, it revises this concept in a novel way by going back in time to see how it applies to the case study of ER and her role in a novel way.

#### **i. Research Limitations**

Objectivity is an essential characteristic of academic research. Researchers should carefully analyze their conclusions.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Sherman Kent, *Writing History*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1941)p.9.

There are, however, two nearly unavoidable limits to objectivity: documentation and the diversity of the writer's personal experiences. Documentation limits objectivity since a paper is only as unbiased as the documents used to produce it. The writer's personal experiences can affect objectivity through the books that he or she has studied or the places the writer has traveled. Such things can unconsciously cause one to think differently and pursue a different path in writing and research.<sup>31</sup>

A major limitation to this research is the fact of residing in Palestine without access to the raw data, primary resources, research material and information needed to tackle the problem of the research; also the limitation of not being able to meet people with whom I can conduct discussions, ask questions and seek answers relevant to the topic of study. This research would have covered the topic more deeply if there have been more resources available for me during my research.

Another limitation is growing up and living in a society that to a certain degree does not understand the American culture, experience and norms.

One more limitation is the lack of an agreement on a common definition of empowerment. The definitions of empowerment in writings that indicate a focus on the term, across several scholarly disciplines, provide no clear definition of

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<sup>31</sup> Paul Veyne, *Writing History*, Trans. Mina Moore-Rivoluceri, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1984). Pp.157-59.

the concept across disciplinary lines. Many using the term cope with its lack of clear, shared meaning by employing the concept very narrowly, using only their specific scholarly discipline to inform them. Others do not define the term at all. As a result, many have come to view "empowerment" as nothing more than the most recently popular ringing word. Others maintain that empowerment is much more than that and that there is a need to understand the concept of empowerment broadly in order to clarify it. The concept of empowerment is shared by many disciplines such as development, economics, psychology, education, and studies of social movements, among others. How empowerment is understood varies among these disciplines' perspectives .Defining the concept is subject to debate. This factor makes it more difficult to discuss empowerment in general and women's empowerment in particular. In my research, I have tried to overcome these limitations, though my efforts at times may not have been totally successful.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**“When Women Thrive, the World Thrives.”**

**Anonymous**

This chapter provides a thorough literature review of books dealing with the topic of research. It undertakes a full critical appraisal of relevant scholarly publication, literature and books to outline what has been done in this field of research. This literature review will have twofold purpose: the first is to study which major books dealt with feminism and the struggle of women to become empowered and gain their equal rights, focusing on American women; the second deals with the major works on the role of Eleanor Roosevelt, focusing on her role to empower American women.

This literature review provides a diversity of opinions from different perspectives on the subject of study to examine it academically. I will study and research the subject of study in an attempt to contribute with my work being a person from outside the US.

Tiffany K. Wayne, in her book *Women's Roles in Nineteenth-Century America* (2006), describes the nineteenth century being a period of amazing change and advancement for American women therefore it was named the "Woman's Century." There were great moves forward in women's legal status, their entering into higher education and the job market, and taking roles in the public life. Furthermore, two million African American female slaves were emancipated. The writer examines how the political, economic, and social factors in the United States affected the roles of women. Moreover, how women themselves helped to shape history. Each chapter talks about women's roles and experiences while living in the nineteenth century. As the dominant ideas about suitable gender roles stem from the white Protestant and primarily middle-class culture, each chapter compares those ideas with the reality of different women's daily lives, integrating information on European American, African American,

Native American, and immigrant women, and women of different socioeconomic and religious backgrounds and regions.

The writer furnishes the readers with the understanding of several issues and topics. One of them is ‘marriage and family life’, it looks at women's roles and women’s relationships in the role of daughters, wives, and mothers, also roles of women who choose to remain unmarried , or circumstances made them remain single. Another topic discussed is ‘work’. It acknowledges women's unpaid work at home besides their entrance into the paid labor force starting in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, on ‘religion’ the writer examines women’s roles as missionaries, preachers, reformers and churchgoers. On ‘education’ she observes a century that began with nearly no women having access to formal education and it was worse for black women, most of them were denied any education at all, and it ended with women making up almost half of all college graduates and in leading roles such as teachers, college administrators, and even college heads. Women had also advanced greatly in filling several positions for the first time, entering into professions demanding advanced educations, such as the ministry, the law and medicine. Concerning ‘politics and reform’, the book explains how women were active in public life throughout the century. On ‘slavery and Civil War’, it observes the experience of enslaved women, their survival, resistance, and their first experiences of freedom while and following the Civil War. It also explores how black and white women participated in the Civil War and how the war affected them. The writer also discusses ‘the West’ looking at the westward expansion in the nineteenth century through the women’s eyes. Like thousands of women pioneers, who either traveled and led the way and settled into the west, or the native women who were confronted with and challenged by those settlements.

The writer provides to the readers valuable information on several topics related to women such as marriage and family life, the boundaries between home and public life, unpaid and paid women's work, the complications of social and political reform, and new directions in literary and religious roles and the multicultural histories of the American West.<sup>32</sup>

In her book *New Paths to Power: American Women 1890-1920* (1998), Karen Manners Smith analyses the 30 years from 1890 to 1920, a period known as the Progressive Era in which an enthusiastic and purposeful generation of American women came out of their homes and marched towards a new phase of responsibility and freedom. Many of them tried to improve their world. They did so either by seeking work to better provide for their families and themselves, or by addressing social problems and causes that affected the country as a whole. Females were proud of the growing status of wage earners and students. Even in the racially divided South, African American women increasingly became small businesses owners or teachers. This increase of women in the work force was also accompanied by the voluntary activity of both white and black women in social reform associations. Working-class women felt that the Progressive Era was a chance to concentrate their efforts on the labor movement, the campaign for workers' protection, and child labor laws. The women in this period following leaders such as suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger, black journalist Ida B. Wells, and social worker Jane Addams, made significant personal and social gains. In 1920, they won the right to vote. However, the Progressive Era did not bring women full social and political equality. Yet, it was an era merit to be named so, for it was a

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<sup>32</sup> Tiffany K. Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Greenwood Press, 2006).

time when an unprecedented number of women began to find New Paths to power and fulfillment and women's equality.<sup>33</sup>

Maurianne Adams, in her book *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice: An Anthology on Racism, Sexism ...* (2000) offers a reader that covers the scope of oppressions in America. The book covers six thematic issues such as racism and sexism. It contains a mix of short personal and theoretical essays. It include over 90 essays for different scholars such as “Five faces of oppression” for Iris Marion Young.<sup>34</sup>

Minority groups such as women faced marginalization due to male dominant structures in society. Iris Marion Young defines Marginalization as exclusion from meaningful participation in society, partly because the labor market does not or cannot accommodate them, proving to be one of the most dangerous forms of oppression. Marginalization has the ability to cause severe material deprivation.<sup>35</sup> Material deprivation is the most common result of marginalization when looking at how unfairly material resources (such as food and shelter) are dispersed in society. The writer also explains how, along with material deprivation, marginalized individuals are also excluded from services, programs, and policies<sup>36</sup>.

In her book *The Empowerment Tradition in American Social Work: A History* (1994), Barbara Levy Simon explores the social movements, ideas and beliefs that have been most influential in shaping the development of the

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<sup>33</sup> Karen Manners Smith, *New Paths to Power: American Women, 1890-1920*, (Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> Maurianne Adams, (Ed.) *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice: An Anthology on Racism, Sexism ...* ( New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> I. M. Young, *Five Faces of Oppression*, edited by M. Adams, *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 35-49.

<sup>36</sup> I. M. Young, *ibid.*

empowerment tradition in US social work practice. An explanation of empowerment is given, and the basic processes of the empowerment approach are described.<sup>37</sup>

The book *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (1991), is an anthology of the work of Weber in the fields of science and politics, power, religion, and social structure. Each section contains either the original essays or excerpts from Weber's work. The editors H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills have contributed to this classic collection of Weber by adding to it bibliographical information, notes and appendix. Max Weber (1864-1920) is a social scientist that had a leading influence on American and European thought. Max Weber was one of the most prolific and influential sociologists of the twentieth century. This classic collection draws together his key papers.<sup>38</sup>

Steven Lukes' book *Power: A Radical View*, (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2005) is an influential book still widely used some 30 years after publication. The second edition published in 2005 includes the complete original text alongside two major new essays. One assesses the main debates about how to conceptualize and study power. The other reconsiders Steven Lukes' own views in light of these debates of his original argument. With a new introduction and bibliographical essay, this book will strengthen its reputation as a classic work and a major reference within social and political theory.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Barbara Levy Simon, *The Empowerment Tradition in American Social Work: A History*, (Columbia University Press, 1994).

<sup>38</sup> Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946). ; H.H. Gerth & C.W. Mills, Eds., Trans., (Routledge: Routledge Sociology Classics, 1991).

<sup>39</sup> Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

In *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States* (2000), Nancy Cott charts American women's lives and experiences from the pre-colonial era to the present and illuminates the history of the domestic, professional, and political efforts of American women to overcome the harsh realities of political inequality.

The writer offers a chronicle of the American experience and women's history. She charts women's gradual struggle for social and political independence. The book includes individual stories and primary sources such as letters, diaries, and news reports. The book informs readers on the story of America, looking at women in many roles: as wives, housekeepers, mothers, wage earners, community builders, policy makers, intellectual innovators, voluntary organization leaders as being the women of no small courage, as the title suggests. The author relates the struggle of these women with the newfound opportunities for professional and personal self-determination available for them as a result of decades of protest. In 'No Small Courage', the writer describes the variety and significance of American women's experience, which without focusing on the changes in women's lives, the history of America cannot be fully understood.<sup>40</sup>

In her book *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (1999), Flora Davis informs the reader with the story of the struggles and triumphs of thousands of American women activists who achieved "half a revolution" between the 1960 and 1990. Her book is a thorough account of the second wave feminism of women's movement in America. In the book, Flora Davis presents a grass roots view of the small steps and huge leaps that

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<sup>40</sup> Nancy F. Cott, (Editor) *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

have changed the laws as well as the prejudices, assumptions, and assumed rules governing a woman's status in American society. Focusing on every major feminist issue from the perspective of the participants in the struggle, *Moving the Mountain* puts into words the enthusiasm, the exasperation of the second wave feminism.<sup>41</sup>

In *American Feminism: A Contemporary History* (1990), Ginette Castro tells the story of the contemporary women's movement in the United States. Castro offers an account of the many different ideological currents within the movement, from the liberal feminists to the radical.<sup>42</sup>

Joni Lovenduski, in her book *Feminizing Politics* (2005), provides her readers with a feminism and political representation; ideas, struggles, obstacles to feminizing politics and equality strategies. She seeks to explore the changes in the political representation of women since the 1960s. Lovenduski takes into account how institutions, procedures and processes are affected by the changing number of women in politics. She examines what is affected, when equality of women and men is achieved in public office. Her book makes a crucial contribution to disputes about the role of women in politics nowadays.<sup>43</sup>

Robin Gerber's book *Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way : Timeless Strategies from the First Lady of Courage* (2002) writes about Eleanor's leading life providing readers with a motivating book filled with empowering leadership advice. Gerber was able to use Eleanor's life story to provide

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<sup>41</sup> Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960*, (University of Illinois Press, 1999).

<sup>42</sup> Ginette Castro, *American Feminism: A Contemporary History*, (New York: New York University Press, 1990).

<sup>43</sup> Joni Lovenduski, *Feminizing Politics*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

motivation to women living today as ER stands as a courageous woman leader, who was internally motivated to bring reform in her society in the areas of justice and women's equity. In the book, the writer examines how ER's conditions and the lessons she learned from life had transformed and shaped her personal growth. She gives insight on ER's struggles and determination to address the causes she believed in.

Gerber also provides information about choosing mentors, facing criticism, developing one's style, and the parallels between mothering and leadership. Besides Eleanor Roosevelt throughout her life took risks and took leadership roles that she had never held before. Her remarkable ability to overcome obstacles made her one of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century.

In the book, Gerber observes the values and beliefs that allowed ER to bring about great change and transformation to her own self and to the world.

Examining the path of Eleanor's life, from childhood to being a First Lady in the White House and as a UN delegate and beyond, Gerber offers women an inspiring life and an unmatched model for personal achievement and a guide to leadership which motivates and empowers women in search for a powerful role model to develop their individual leadership skills.<sup>44</sup>

Maurine H. Beasley, Holly C. Shulman, and Henry R. Beasley (editors) in their book *The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia* (2001), offer an immense data about Eleanor Roosevelt. It is a guide to the life and works of perhaps the most distinguished American woman of the century.

This encyclopedia brings together basic information illuminating her complex career and the interaction between her private and public lives. Written

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<sup>44</sup>Robin Gerber, *Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way: Timeless Strategies from the First Lady of Courage*, (Prentice Hall, 2002).

by scholars, journalists, and those who knew Eleanor Roosevelt, the 200 plus entries in this book, provide material showing how Eleanor Roosevelt widened opportunities for women, changed the First Lady's role in politics, became a liberal leader during the Cold War era, and served as a guiding spirit at the United Nations. This book provides an introduction to American history through a woman who both represented her times and moved beyond them. *The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia* illuminates ER's multifaceted career, life, and relationships.<sup>45</sup>

In her book, *Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume 2, The Defining Years, 1933-1938* (2000) Blanche Wiesen Cook provides a biography of Eleanor Roosevelt that unfolds many details of Eleanor Roosevelt's life as a public figure and as a person. It is a definitive portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt, a towering figure of the twentieth century. Cook takes readers through the troubled era of the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the World War II, the years of the Roosevelts' biggest challenges and finest achievements.

This volume, which covers the years 1933 to 1938, is mainly an account of the extraordinary political activities in which Eleanor became more and more exclusively involved as her confidence in her convictions grew and as she learned that her position gave her the opportunity to improve the lives of millions of people. The writer portrays Eleanor Roosevelt as a romantic woman, a devoted wife and mother, a visionary policymaker and a social activist who took unfamiliar stands, opposing to her husband's policies, especially on issues such as women's rights and racial justice. She battled for many issues including

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<sup>45</sup> Maurine H. Beasley, Holly C. Shulman., and Henry R. Beasley, editors, *The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia*, (Westport: Conn. Greenwood Press, 2001).

racism. With Franklin dependent on Southern senators for re-election, her pain grew at her husband's inaction, especially concerning the anti-lynching bill.<sup>46</sup>

In *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (2001), Mary Ann Glendon, an award-winning professor of law at Harvard University, gives an account of Eleanor Roosevelt after FDR's death. A time when she was asked by President Truman to lead the commission, under the auspices of the newly formed United Nations, to forge the world's first international bill of rights. Eleanor Roosevelt was the guiding force on the UN committee that created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration is a foundation to a body of international human-rights law, a foundation that has steadily grown in importance over the second half of the 20th Century.

Glendon's book provides a detailed narrative of the places, people, and events that conspired to deliver the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at a moment in history when it was so desperately needed. *A World Made New* is the dramatic and inspiring story of the remarkable group of men and women from around the world who participated in this historic achievement. Spurred on by the horrors of the Second World War, they struggled together to articulate a new vision of the rights that every man and woman in every country around the world should share. *A World Made New* is about this crucial turning point in Eleanor Roosevelt's life, and in world history.<sup>47</sup>

In *You Learn by Living* (1983), Eleanor Roosevelt stresses that individuality is something to be prized, yet people want to remain safe, surrounded by a

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<sup>46</sup> Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume 2, The Defining Years, 1933-1938*, (Penguin Press, 2000).

<sup>47</sup> Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, (New York: Random House, 2001).

group. She stresses that we should strive against this and always be true to ourselves. This is a simple, yet well-spoken philosophy. The entire book is full of wit, wisdom and some profound bits of advice. In this book, Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the twentieth century's most famous and beloved first ladies, offers advice on how to create a satisfying life by offering her own philosophy on living, Eleanor leads readers on a path to confidence, education, maturity, and more.<sup>48</sup> She expresses her philosophy of life by her experiences which have enabled her to deal with both her private and public responsibilities. I quote Eleanor Roosevelt's empowering and encouraging sentence when she said:

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop and look fear in the face .... You must do the thing you think you cannot do.” (*You Learn by Living*, 1960, pp. 29-30).

In her book, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (1995), Doris Kearns Goodwin comprehensively narrates the history of the American nation under Roosevelt. The book brings the reader through events in the White House during the end of the Great Depression and through WWII.

Goodwin describes how the isolationist and divided United States of 1940 was unified under the extraordinary leadership of Franklin Roosevelt to become, the top economic and military power in the world.

Using diaries, interviews, and White House records of the president's and first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Goodwin gives detailed information not only of the daily conduct of the presidency during wartime but of the Roosevelts themselves and their extraordinary company of friends advisers and family in

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<sup>48</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *You Learn by Living*, (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1983).

the White House. The book relates the unique story of how Franklin D. Roosevelt led the Americans to victory with how Eleanor's crucial help, forever changed the construction of American society. The book shows that the evolution of the American Civil Rights movement and the feminist movement owe a great deal to Eleanor.<sup>49</sup>

In *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt* (2000), Eleanor Roosevelt covers many historical events as well as personal incidents in her life. The early years give us a glimpse into the thinking of an awkward and self-conscious girl. She guides us through her growing involvement in New York politics and the presidential years and the post presidential years, particularly her role as a UN Delegate and as Chairman of the Human Rights Commission. The book sheds light on a long period of American history in which she fought tirelessly against poverty, racism, sexism, and injustices of all kinds. Eleanor did not hide away from society not being conventionally attractive. She got involved in political affairs despite that women were not supposed to get involved. She told FDR what she thought about everything, urging him to pass anti-lynching legislation, include more women in his cabinet, and earning his profound respect if not always his compliance.<sup>50</sup>

In their book *Grandmère: A Personal History of Eleanor Roosevelt* David B. Roosevelt and Manuela Dunn-Mascetti present dozens of unusual family photographs in an unusual biography of Eleanor Roosevelt. In the book Eleanor's grandson shares personal family stories of his grandmother "Grandmère", a remarkable and extraordinary woman and provides an intimate

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<sup>49</sup> Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

<sup>50</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt*, (Da Capo Press, 2000).

look into her life and accomplishments that changed the sequence of history in the twentieth-century.<sup>51</sup>

In *Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression* (2002), Eleanor Roosevelt appears as a champion that young Americans had no one greater than her, during the Great Depression. As a First Lady, she used her newspaper columns and radio broadcasts to battle for expanded federal aid to poor children and teenagers without discrimination so that it reached blacks and whites, girls and boys. The book shows that this activism made Mrs. Roosevelt a beloved figure among poor and needy children and teenagers who were the youngest victims of the Great Depression and who wrote her thousands of letters between 1933 and 1941 asking her for help.<sup>52</sup>

In her book *Courage In A Dangerous World: The Political Writings of Eleanor Roosevelt* (1999), prominent Eleanor Roosevelt's scholar Allida M. Black allows Eleanor Roosevelt's own voice again to be heard. She has gathered more than two hundred columns, articles, essays, and speeches selected from archives whose pages number within millions, tracing Roosevelt's development from apprehensive columnist to one of liberalism's most explicit leaders. This book, of Eleanor's selected writings, provides readers with the needed information to understand the politics of Eleanor who redefined American liberalism and democratic reform.

The book covers many topics such as the New Deal years, the White House years, World War II, the United Nations and human rights, the Cold War, the

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<sup>51</sup> David B. Roosevelt and Manuela Dunn-Mascetti, *Grandmère: A Personal History of Eleanor Roosevelt*, (United States: Warner Books, 2002).

<sup>52</sup> Robert Cohen, (Editor), *Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression*, (The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

civil rights movement, the revival of feminism, and it is arranged by topic and in chronological order.<sup>53</sup>

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the research. It examines feminism and the concept of empowerment aiming to understand and analyze how the theoretical framework applies to the context and the case study of ER. This is done by studying and analyzing the theoretical data to see how it applies to the empirical data.

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<sup>53</sup> Allida M. Black, (Editor), *Courage in a Dangerous World: The Political Writings of Eleanor Roosevelt*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

## Defining “Feminism”

Feminism comprises a number of political, social, and cultural movements, theories and moral philosophies concerned with gender inequalities and discrimination against women. Feminism is also described as an ideology focusing on equality of the sexes.<sup>54</sup> Feminists have divided feminism's history into three 'waves.' The first-wave refers to the feminism movement of the nineteenth through early twentieth centuries, which dealt mainly with the Suffrage movement. The second-wave (1960s-1980s) dealt with the inequality of laws, as well as cultural inequalities. The third-wave of Feminism (1990s-present) is seen as both a continuation and a response to the perceived failures of the second-wave.<sup>55</sup> More about the three waves of feminism will be discussed later in chapter four.

“One of the principal objects of theoretical research in my department of knowledge is to find the point of view from which the subject appears in its greatest simplicity,” wrote Willard Gibbs (1839-1903). The thesis employs a theoretical framework based on feminism theories for understanding present research and for guiding future research.<sup>56</sup>

Feminist theory is the expansion of feminism into theoretical, or philosophical, base. It includes and covers work done in a large variety of disciplines, significantly including the approaches to women's roles and lives

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<sup>54</sup> Webster Dictionary, 1976.

<sup>55</sup> Charlotte Krolokke and Anne Scott Sorensen, 'From Suffragettes to Grrls' in *Gender Communication Theories and Analyses: From Silence to Performance*, (USA: Sage Publications, 2005), pp.1-10.

<sup>56</sup> See: Miriam Schneir, *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings* (New York: Random House, 1971).

and feminist politics in anthropology and sociology, economics, women's and gender studies, feminist literary criticism, and philosophy.

Feminist theory seeks to understand the nature of inequality. It focuses on power relations, gender politics, and sexuality. While generally providing a critique of social relations, much of feminist theory also focuses on analyzing gender inequality and the promotion of women's rights, interests, and issues. Themes explored in feminism include discrimination, stereotyping, oppression, and patriarchy.<sup>57</sup>

Feminism can be seen as ways of thinking and ways of acting and being in the world. Feminist theory is the thought that lies behind much of feminist politics. It forms the basis for social policies and actions that have guided change throughout the years. The feminist theory is not separable from the women's movement, but linked together.

Feminist theory has been tied to broad intellectual and social changes in society. Some influential European thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries influenced and laid the base for contemporary liberal feminism. Of these were Mary Wollstonecraft,<sup>58</sup> John Stuart Mill, and Harriet Taylor Mill. Also Karl Marx's writings influenced the development of feminist thought. Social movements including abolition, temperance, and the women's suffrage movement have also influenced the development of feminist theory in the US. In addition, social changes that took place in the American society had a great impact on the growth of social reform movements over time. Such changes were

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<sup>57</sup> Nancy J. Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>58</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, edited by C. Poston, (New York: Norton, 1792 [1975]).

industrialization, westward expansion, extending educational opportunities for women, and the growth of social reform movements.

Feminist theory attempts to situate the events of women and men's lives in an analysis that links the personal experience to an understanding of the structure of gender relationships in society and culture. According to feminists, what we know, both intellectually and practically, is deeply filled with gender assumptions about the character and meaning of the social world.

Several subtypes of feminist ideology have developed over the years. Each has its different feminist perspectives based on different intellectual roots. Furthermore, they have different programs for social change. The three theoretical perspectives that have emerged in feminist theory are **liberal feminism**, **socialist feminism**, and **radical feminism**.<sup>59</sup>

**Liberal feminism** is one of the major subtypes of feminist ideology. Liberal feminists emphasize social and legal reform through policies designed to create equal opportunities for all. It asserts the equality of men and women through legal and political reform. It is an individualistic form of feminism and theory, which focuses on women's ability to show and maintain their equality through their own actions and choices.

The origins of contemporary liberal feminism are in the Age of Enlightenment, which valued critical query and the ability of men's rationality to achieve social justice. Feminists criticized the Enlightenment intellectuals for

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<sup>59</sup> Susan M. Hartman, *The other Feminists: Activists in the Liberal Establishment*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

excluding women from their philosophies. During that period, only man's rational power counted. As one of the earliest feminists, Wollstonecraft argued that gender roles were the basis for women's experience and thinking. She rejected arguments that emphasized natural differences between the sexes. John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill's liberal philosophy is a basis for modern liberal feminism. Their work provides the basis for arguments for equal opportunity for women and the removal of barriers that hinder women's achievements.

Liberal feminism looks at the personal interactions of men and women as the starting ground from where to change and transform society into a more gender-equitable place. According to liberal feminists, women are capable of asserting their ability to achieve equality; therefore, it is possible for change to happen without altering the structure of society.

Issues important to liberal feminists include education, equal pay for equal work, reproductive rights, abortion rights, sexual harassment, voting, affordable childcare and health care, and highlighting the frequency of sexual and domestic violence against women.<sup>60</sup>

**Socialist feminism** is a more radical perspective that interprets the origins of women's oppression in the systems of capitalism and patriarchy. Classical Marxists see that the oppression of women stem basically from capitalism, in which women are defined as the property of men and the exploitation of women's labor where the accumulation of profit necessitates. Socialist feminists see capitalism as interacting with patriarchy to create women's oppression.

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<sup>60</sup> Bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1984).

The third perspective of feminist theory is **radical feminism**. It analyzes patriarchy as the primary cause of women's oppression. Radical feminists look to women's devaluation as evidence of the centrality of patriarchy in determining women's status. In the American culture, women's oppression was related to patriarchal control of females, and to males' dominance in social institutions.

The three theories suggest different possibilities for change and social reform. No one of these theories is considered complete. Each of them guides the possible direction for the liberating and establishing social changes for women.

Feminism is an ideology concerned with equality of the sexes. The human social behavior of empowerment, often addresses members of marginalized groups that suffer social discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or gender - as in this case study- who are deprived from enjoying their equal rights. Therefore, this is one of the reasons that makes empowerment as a concept and as a methodology to be widely associated with feminism, gender inequality, and discrimination against women in society.<sup>61</sup>

**“No society can prosper when half of its population is not allowed to contribute to its progress. Educated and**

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<sup>61</sup> <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/empowerment>, accessed in November, 2007, Empowerment – encyclopedia article about empowerment.

**empowered women are vital to democracy and important for the development of all countries.”**

U.S. First Lady Laura Bush

### **Defining “Empowerment”**

Empowerment is the noun to the verb empower<sup>62</sup> which is defined: 1. to give authority to somebody: to give somebody power or authority. 2. to make more confident or assertive: to give somebody a greater sense of confidence or self-esteem.

Another definition of empowerment indicates that it is the noun to the verb empower<sup>63</sup> which is defined: 1. to invest with power, especially legal power or official authority. 2. to equip or supply with an ability; enable.

Empowerment also refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered to developing confidence in their own capacities.<sup>64</sup>

The definitions of empowerment in writings across several scholarly disciplines provide no clear definition of the concept. Many using the term cope with its lack of clear, shared meaning by employing the concept very narrowly, using only their specific scholarly discipline to inform them. Others do not define the term at all. As a result, many have come to view "empowerment" as nothing more than the most recently popular buzzword. Others maintain that

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<sup>62</sup> [http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary\\_1861608212/empower.html](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861608212/empower.html), material is with the researcher.

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/empowerment>, material is with the researcher.

<sup>64</sup> <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/empowerment>, material is with the researcher.

empowerment is much more than that and that there is a need to understand the concept of empowerment broadly in order to clarify it.

Many agree that at the heart of the concept of empowerment is the notion of power. Furthermore, the possibility of empowerment depends on two things. First, empowerment requires that power can change. If power cannot change, then empowerment is not possible. In other words, if power can change, then empowerment is possible. Second, the concept of empowerment depends upon the idea that power can expand. To clarify these points, we first discuss what they mean by power.

Power is often related to people's ability to make others do what they want, regardless of their own wishes or interests<sup>65</sup>. This gives us a recognition that power exists within the context of a relationship between people or things. It does not exist in isolation nor is it inherent in individuals. This implies that since power is created in relationships, power and power relationships can change. Empowerment as a process of change, then, becomes a meaningful concept according to their first requirement.

The concept of empowerment also depends upon power that can expand, according to their second stated requirement. Understanding power as zero-sum, something that someone gets at someone else's expense, cuts most of the others off from power. A zero-sum conception of power means that power will remain in the hands of the powerful unless they give it up. Although this is one way that power is experienced, it neglects the way power is experienced in most other

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<sup>65</sup> See: M. Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946); , H.H. Gerth & C.W. Mills (Eds., Trans.), (Routledge: Routledge Sociology Classics, 1991).

interactions. The importance of a definition of power that includes expansion lays in giving an answer to a question that asks if you had ever felt powerful, if it was at someone's expense, or if it was with someone else.

Based on understanding that people in different positions in the power constructions see power differently<sup>66</sup>, contemporary research on power has opened new point of views that reflect aspects of power that are not zero-sum, but are shared and mutual; e.g. between the two genders.

Defining the concept of empowerment is subject to debate. According to Zimmerman<sup>67</sup>, to assert a single definition of empowerment may attempt to achieve it as a formula or prescription-like, the thing that contradicts the concept of empowerment. Bailey argues that how we precisely define empowerment depends upon the specific people and the context involved.<sup>68</sup> In our research it will depend on the case of Eleanor Roosevelt, American women's movement and the American context.

Others provide a general definition of empowerment suggesting that it is a multi-dimensional social process, which helps people gain control over their own lives. They also suggest that the three components of their definition of empowerment are essential to any understanding of empowerment. These components are **multi-dimensional**, **social**, and **a process**. It is multi-dimensional because it occurs within certain dimensions: sociological, psychological, economic, educational and other. Empowerment also occurs at

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<sup>66</sup> Steven Lukes, *Power: A radical view*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>67</sup> M.A. Zimmerman, *Taking aim on empowerment research: On the distinction between individual and psychological conceptions*, (American Journal of Community Psychology, 18 (1), 169-177 (1984).

<sup>68</sup> D.Bailey, *Using participatory research in community consortia development and evaluation: lessons from the beginning of a story*, (American Sociologist, 23 (4), 71-82, 1992).

various levels. It occurs on the individual level, group level, and community level. The other components of their definition, is that empowerment is a social process, since it occurs in relationship to others. It is a process, which is similar to a route that develops as we work through it. This definition of empowerment implies that the individual and community are deeply related; e.g. women social activists and community are deeply related.

According to Wilson<sup>69</sup>, it is more recognized lately among researchers and others that individual change is a requirement for society change and for empowerment. To create change in society, individuals must change and become partners in solving issues of concern to them. The connection between the individual and collective change provides the understanding of the processes of empowerment. When people are empowered by gaining the skills and knowledge, they will have the capacity to improve their own lives and their communities.

Sociological empowerment, or in other words, the human social behavior of empowerment, often addresses members of groups that social discrimination have excluded from decision-making processes through discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or gender - as in our case study. These groups are deprived from enjoying equal rights, suffer discrimination and are marginalized.

Empowering marginalized people and minority groups – American women in our research – will help them gain control over their own lives. Empowerment is a process that promotes power in people to use in their own

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<sup>69</sup> P.A. Wilson, *Empowerment: Community Economic Development from the Inside Out*, (Urban Studies, 33 (4-5), 617-630, 1996).

lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on their important issues.

Based on that, it is not surprising that empowerment, as a methodology is widely associated with feminism, gender inequality, and discrimination against women in society.<sup>70</sup>

The platform for action adopted at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995 provides ‘an agenda for women’s empowerment. It aims at removing all obstacles ‘to women’s active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making’. The platform sets out agreed objectives and strategies for their achievement in areas of critical concern for women.<sup>71</sup>

The Report of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women called its Platform for Action ‘an agenda for women’s empowerment’ meaning that ‘the principle of **shared power and responsibility** should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities’<sup>72</sup>

The notion of power is at the core of the word ‘empowerment’. Power can be perceived to work in different ways. These are crucial to the understanding of women’s empowerment and to how this process works either on the individual,

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<sup>70</sup> <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/empowerment>, accessed in November, 2007, Empowerment – encyclopedia article about empowerment.

<sup>71</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted by the *Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace*, 15 September 1995, para. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. UN, 1995a, no.1.

group or society level. They are intertwined and overlapping, in a sense that the empowerment of one of them affects the other.

The notion of ‘power’ is at the root of the word empowerment. Power can be comprehended as working in a number of different ways: *power over*, *power to*, *power with* and *power within*<sup>73</sup>.

The first, *‘power over’* relates to the relationship of unequal power associated with the subordination of one and the domination of the other and it arouses conflict or resistance between the two. The gradual change in women’s status and their empowerment process demanded challenging the power structures, which existed and subordinated their existence. Women’s empowerment corresponds to their challenging existing power structures that subordinate their status as human beings.

The second, *power to*, is about having the authority and decision making power, and to deal with problems and this can be enabling. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was adopted. It guaranteed women the right to vote, thus they had a voice in decision-making.

The third, *power with*, is obvious in people that have common goals to achieve and collective demands and concerns. This was obvious in the struggles and concerns of women’s movements in the past and their organizations in demanding and promoting reform and change. It emphasizes the collective dimension of power and therefore empowerment.

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<sup>73</sup> Zoe Oxaal and Sally Baden, *Gender and Empowerment: Definitions, Approaches and Implications for Policy*, (UK: Bridge, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, University of Sussex, Report No 40, October 1997), p.1.

The fourth, *power within*, this is related to the individual and his self-esteem, awareness and determination.

The feminist movement relied on collective organization ‘power with’ and they developed ideas about ‘power within’. This makes us derive that power works at different levels, on the individual level, ‘power within’ and at the collective level ‘power with’ such as the family, the institution and the community. Also, the individual, the family, the institution, the group and the community are related and affect each other, the fact that also American women either individually or collectively affect their communities, therefore their empowerment or disempowerment affect their community and how it develops.

Based on the multidimensional definition of power, women’s empowerment has various inter-related aspects.

Empowerment is a process. It is essentially a bottom-up process. This means that women must empower themselves and that development agencies cannot assume to ‘empower women’. These agencies can take a facilitating role providing programs to support women’s empowerment individually and collectively. Development agencies and organizations can have an enabling role as an external intervention to support the process of empowerment in women’s individual empowerment and women’s collective empowerment. It does this by ensuring that their agendas support women’s individual empowerment by encouraging their participation, skills acquisition, decision-making capacity and control over resources. In addition, they support women’s collective

empowerment by funding women's organizations that deal with causes of gender subordination by promoting the participation of women in the political systems and advancing dialogue between the authorities and the organizations that are concerned with women's empowerment objectives.

The empowerment of individuals, groups, organizations or movements have essential requirements. For example, the empowerment of individuals requires self-reliance, determination, awareness, knowledge, entrepreneurship; the empowerment of organizations, movements or any group collectively requires co-operation, knowledge, awareness on one hand and democratic processes, dialogue, participation in policy and decision making on the other.

**“....there is no tool for development more effective  
than the empowerment of women.”**

**Kofi Annan**

### **Defining “Women's empowerment”**

Women's empowerment is defined as a state of being that reflects a certain level of women's consciousness about external realities and an awareness of their internal thought construction and belief systems that have a bearing on their well-being in terms of gender and social equity. It also refers to a state of determination to use one's physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual

resources to protect, nurture and sustain values that guarantee gender equity at personal, household, social, political and other institutional levels.<sup>74</sup>

Others define women's empowerment as enabling women to realize their power and to be able to do things that they could not do before. This definition implies transformation as a core characteristic. Transformation encases change in behavior at multiple levels and situations - in personal behavior, which includes valuing the self; in behavior in the realm of sexuality and reproduction; in behavior in the institution of marriage and in the family; and in behavior in social and political arenas.

It is not static but a dynamic state of being and a “transformational process”. This induces that empowerment is a relative state, which can be compared to a previous state and probable future state.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the definition contains the two dimensions “process” and “outcome” that are integrated and inseparable elements of empowerment.<sup>76</sup> It is described as people completely participating in the processes and decisions that shape their lives.

## **Empowering Women**

Theodore Zeldine argues that most important changes in human history did not occur through the evolution of new political institutions or laws but rather through individuals developing deeper understanding of the perspectives and the experiences of others. For example, western governments began introducing

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<sup>74</sup> A. K. Pandey, editor, *Gender Equality, Development and Women Empowerment*, (New Delhi: Anmol Publications PVT., 2003). p. 201.

<sup>75</sup> A. K. Pandey, *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> E. Stephen, *Gender Equality: Strategies for Transformative Change*, (SEARCH Bulletin, XII (4): 8-19, 1997).

legislation to guarantee greater equality between men and women over a century ago. Yet new laws have not eradicated discrimination against women in the workplace or domestic violence. The real changes, according to Zeldin, have come through men and women learning to talk with each other, and with men learning how to empathize with the experiences of women. He adds that social change requires understanding and learning about the others, such as the other gender.<sup>77</sup>

Many people think that social equity for women has been achieved. They are more visible in positions of power. Then why think about women? The answer is that although some obstacles to women's equity have been removed, gender inequality can still be easily observed.

It is obvious that the world has a long way to go to achieve equality between the two genders. This requires concentrated efforts. Gender gap and inequalities can still be seen in the U.S. as well as around the world. Due to the important successes in issues of particular concern to women that were achieved during history. It is therefore important to know how change in the status of women happens. This makes us figure out and understand the main driving forces behind this change. There is a need for analyzing how change happens so that we can be more creative in finding strategies to face challenges that face societies in this area of change and development.

Despite of international awareness of gender issues, it is a fact that no country has succeeded to eliminate the gender gap. According to a study by the World Economic Forum, aiming to evaluate the current size of the gender gap through measuring the extent to which women in 58 countries – including the US -

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<sup>77</sup> Theodore Zeldine, *An Intimate History of Humanity*, (London: Minerva, 1995), p. 326.

have achieved equality with men through five important dimensions of female empowerment based mainly on findings of the UNIFEM concerning patterns of inequality between men and women. These dimensions are:

- 1- Economic participation
- 2- Economic opportunity
- 3- Political empowerment
- 4- Educational attainment
- 5- Health and well-being<sup>78</sup>

These important five dimensions provide guidance to policy-makers as to where efforts must be made to eliminate the gender gap in a specific country.<sup>79</sup>

The above mentioned study concludes by deriving that true models of gender equality do not exist and that no one who studies the gender gap can doubt that no country in the world has managed to achieve it. Disparity between countries are present in all five dimensions making some societies ahead than others in leading the way to other societies in providing women with a quality of life almost equal to that of men. Yet as the study indicates, other countries are still lagging behind. The study also states that when identifying the gender gap, policy-makers are provided with a tool offering direction and focus for the work to improving the economic, political and social potential of all their citizens and hopefully to strengthen their commitment to the idea of women's empowerment, and to concentrate the political will, energy and resources with the help of aid agencies and civil society organizations, to make gender equality a reality.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Augusto Lopez-Claros and Saadia Zahidi, "Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap", *World Economic Forum*, (Geneva, Switzerland: 2005), pp. 1-2.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p.7.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

Oxfam states four major questions of change that repeatedly occur. These are about who or what was involved in the change (e.g. individuals or state institutions), what strategies were used to bring about the change (e.g. reformism, mass mobilization); what were the contexts that affected how change happened (e.g. urbanization, power relationships), and what was the process of change demonstration effects, cumulative progress).<sup>81</sup>

To sum up the above mentioned there are no general application models to how social change happens. Every context has its own characteristics and particularities in history. Besides, each context has its own human motivation, behavior, role of institutions and views. Nevertheless, we can explain how change happens by addressing at least one of the four major questions stated in the previous paragraph by identifying first the change that we want to explain. Here the change is American women's empowerment in general and the case of Eleanor Roosevelt's in particular.

Embracing empowerment as a policy goal embodies the need for tools and processes, which can translate the goal of women's empowerment into practice by a range of development activities. One trial to do this can be by using the 'Women's Empowerment Framework'<sup>82</sup> adopted by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as an appropriate approach to be used in mainstreaming gender.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>82</sup> Oxaal and Baden, Op. Cit., p.9.

<sup>83</sup> See, *UNICEF*, 'Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls: A Policy Review', (*UNICEF Programme Committee, Session 1994*).

*UNICEF 1994*, 'Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls: A Policy Review', endorsed the use of the Women's Empowerment Framework as a conceptual and operational tool in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes. Training in gender analysis and in the application of the Women's Empowerment Framework for 80 percent of all UNICEF's professional staff was proposed to aid the mainstreaming of gender concerns in UNICEF programmes. A summary of this framework is given in Appendix 4.

To sum up, the empowerment of women has become one of the main goals of development and it requires that women have the ability to make strategic life choices where this ability was previously denied; these can be through the access to resources and participating in decision-making.<sup>84</sup> These ideas of women's rights have been increasing since the second half of the twentieth century as a result to the first wave of feminism, which dealt mainly with the suffrage movement, and paved the way to the second wave mainly dealing with inequality of laws and cultural inequalities, a period of the lifetime of ER.

In development strategies, an underlying approach to how change happens is by the empowerment of women. It reflects the rise of gendered approaches in history, sociology, and other disciplines, which themselves draw on recognition of women's social and political struggles.<sup>85</sup>

Indicators of women's empowerment and gender equality can be developed but they cannot be considered as complete measures due to the nature of the multi-faceted nature of the concept of empowerment which means that it is not easily measurable.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has developed both quantitative and qualitative range of indicators<sup>86</sup> of women's empowerment.<sup>87</sup> They state that projects with empowerment objectives should

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<sup>84</sup> N. Kabeer, 'Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment', *Development and Change* 30(3): 435-64, 1999.

<sup>85</sup> Krznaric, Op. Cit. pp. 43,44.

<sup>86</sup> See, CIDA, *Guide to Gender-Sensitive Indicators*, (Canada: CIDA, 1996). Further details of these indicators is given in Appendix 5.

<sup>87</sup> Oxaal and Baden, Op. Cit., p.23.

specify the type of empowerment (e.g. individual change- personal change in consciousness, collective change - in social and economic order), the proximate time range for the project objectives to be achieved, the numbers of people to be affected, and the degree to which they will be affected.

Due to the complex nature of measuring empowerment, CIDA argues that, qualitative and quantitative indicators need to be supported by qualitative analysis. This can be done by giving answers to some crucial questions such as: How changes in legislation have empowered or disempowered women?; Does a person as an individual play a major role in decision making or is this role hindered by his gender as being male or female? ; How are women organizing themselves to be more empowered - against injustices and discrimination? ; If education for women is increasing, is it leading to more empowerment for women?

Five main factors are crucial for women's empowerment and for eliminating the gender gap and achieving equity for women. These factors are:

- 1- **Education:** Women's lives change through the opportunity and access to education. Women's access to education is one of the main factors of women's empowerment.<sup>88</sup> It is certain that education can empower women. Besides, Literacy emancipates people from ignorance and gives them access

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<sup>88</sup> Vathsala Aithal. "*Empowerment and Global Action of Women - Theory and Practice*", (1999), p. 1.

Available at: [http://www.skk.uit.no/WW99/papers/Aithal\\_Vathsala.pdf](http://www.skk.uit.no/WW99/papers/Aithal_Vathsala.pdf)

This essay discusses, at length, the origins and diverse uses of the concept of empowerment, and its misuses. An emphasis is placed on the concept in relation to women's rights and feminism.

to written knowledge, and knowledge is power. By educating women and girls, every aspect of society benefits and fosters economic development. “Only through literacy, knowledge, access to the best information, and opportunities to gain competency skills can women truly escape lives of poverty, raise healthier and better-educated children, and begin to take part in decision-making processes that can better their lives”.<sup>89</sup> Education is the most critical matter to the empowerment and advancement of women. Moreover, the advancement of women is critical to the progress of every society.

**2- Economic Empowerment:** Statistics show universally that the empowerment of women economically changes all other equations for them within their family, their community, and society.<sup>90</sup> Besides, women’s economic participation and access to job opportunities based on equality in regard to salaries, working hours and promotion are important to their empowerment. In addition, economic opportunities such as women’s access to resources and their right to have an economic identity and not being represented by male heads of households is another empowering factor, e. g. women’s access to land, housing and other assets and resources such as equal inheritance rights on equal basis with men. Such economic opportunities empower women in having financial independence and autonomy.

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<sup>89</sup> Ambassador Ellen R. Sauerbrey, U.S. Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, WORKING FOR WOMEN, WORLDWIDE , USINFO Publications. Introduction, p. 2.  
Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/women/intro.htm>

<sup>90</sup> Ambassador Kheli’s interview on women’s empowerment. Op. Cit.

3- **Political participation:** Women's political participation is very important. Half a democracy is not a democracy.<sup>91</sup> Women's representation and participation in decision-making processes is fundamental for promoting women's issues and giving women's perspectives. This leads to promoting and advancing women's issues and concerns. "True democracy does not exist where half the population is excluded from policymaking, political processes, and power structures. Without their political voice, women cannot share their perspective, or draw attention to their hardships, or recommend preventive actions or means of redress."<sup>92</sup>

4- **Safety and health:** Access to health facilities and health care can be empowering for women and gives them greater control over factors that influence their health and their lives.<sup>93</sup> Women's health is important for their well-being.

Women's protection from domestic or other forms of violence is vital for their health and well-being physically and emotionally. Raising awareness about violence against women, being a serious human rights' violation, is essential to reform and development. The disempowering effects of violence against women and their impact on children are huge. "Education and political opportunities mean little, however, if women and their children are not safe and free. Women cannot participate in the economy, in the political process, or in the social life of a country if they face domestic abuse"<sup>94</sup> or at a larger level if they face societal abuse.

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<sup>91</sup> Ambassador Kheli's interview on women's empowerment. Op. Cit.

<sup>92</sup> Ambassador Sauerbrey, Op. Cit. p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> Aithal, Op. Cit. p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> Ambassador Sauerbrey, Op. Cit. p. 6.

5- **Justice and human rights issues:** Women’s protection by the power of “rule of law” against gender injustices and discriminations is of enormous importance to women’s empowerment. It gives women protection and security against abuses and protects their human rights by law. Otherwise, women are left vulnerable to all sorts of abuses either domestic or societal. Furthermore, their well-being will be exposed to the injustices that can be directed to them by any dominant male and be left powerless to face the reality of being under the mercy and the good will of the other gender.

Women’s individual awareness and personal empowerment is crucial. Moreover, when it is accompanied with women organizing themselves in a way that gives them the needed collective strength to put pressure on the executives and the power structures to demand and promote issues of their concern to pass laws and achieve justice and equity in society and to pressure them to make the needed reform. Besides, networking between various organizations keeps a better understanding to achieve women’s rights and their equality goals in different areas where injustices persist.

The study of the American women’s struggle against inequality in general and the case study of Eleanor Roosevelt in particular will shed light on how and why change and development in the status of women happened. “The study of history is a study of causes”.<sup>95</sup> Inequality has been identified as a main cause of political movements and social outbreak.<sup>96</sup> Activists have always faced difficulties when willing to bring about social change. The

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<sup>95</sup> E. H. Carr, **What is History?**, (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1987) p. 87.

<sup>96</sup> Roman Krznaric, **How change Happens: Interdisciplinary Perspectives for Human Development**, (London, UK : Oxfam GB Research Report, 2007), p. 12.

relationship between them and societal change in the status of women explains why and how things happened in an attempt to understand and see how the previously explained theoretical framework applies to the subject of study. What caused women's empowerment; how the change from being powerless to being powerful occurred; and how women became active partners in society are some of the questions that the later chapters will address in order to analyze and explain how the theoretical framework applies to the case study. How these interact can explain how change in women status and women's empowerment happened. The study examines the role of Eleanor Roosevelt as an individual and as a member in the American society in the empowerment of women. Firstly, in the sense of how she changed from a powerless individual to a powerful person and secondly, how she changed the role of women in the U.S. and how she contributed to the empowerment of women in the American society. Her empowerment as an individual and her public role to enhance the status of women can be better understood by focusing on her personal story, her motivations to get involved in social action and the forging of her equal rights personality.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE STRUGGLE OF AMERICAN WOMEN FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

**“There never will be complete equality until women themselves  
help to make laws and elect lawmakers.”**

**Susan B. Anthony**

#### **Introduction**

Historically, American women suffered from discrimination. They were regarded inferior to American men both physically and intellectually. During the

early history of the United States, a man was considered the head of a household. He dominated and owned his wife and children as he owned his material possessions. Women had no control over their own lives.

Women suffered many injustices. Colonial societies were patriarchal in nature. Authority was vested in male heads of households. Males were responsible of their dependents such as wives, children and servants. Most colonial women were accustomed to playing the role of a helpmate than head of the family.

### **Historical Background on the Status of American Women**

Agriculture was the main occupation in the 1700s. Gender usually determined the tasks the person performed. Men tilled the soil, mowed the hay, cared for livestock, cut wood and made fences. Women cared for children, milked the cows, made butter and cheese, butchered meat, made soap and candled, gardened and manufactured clothes.

Children as members of the family were considered a work force so they were trained by the parent of their own gender. Fathers trained sons in agriculture or in the family trade, while mothers taught housewifery to

daughters. Very few colonial children received formal education in the early years.

Historically, a female grew up learning from her mother's image that housework including childrearing was the expected role for her future. Therefore, her prospect was marriage and motherhood.

In the era of the American Revolution (1775-1783), most families lived on farms. They had to produce most of their food, besides some crops to trade with goods and services. For women, life on an isolated farm was very difficult because of the nature of their work roles and health care needs. Men's work was characterized with some sort of social interaction, which was obvious when they went to sell crops in large towns and cities. In addition, they got goods to sell in rural areas. Such opportunity for social interaction was not available for women who were generally tied close to homes, restricted by pregnancy, taking care of infants and children and their daily routine works.

Women's lives began to change after the American Revolution. After the war, talks of rights raised issues of women's rights and education. The ideals of the Declaration of Independence were to ensure the Americans equal rights regardless of gender and race. It does state in the Declaration of Independence "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> U. S., *The Declaration Of Independence - The constitution Of The United States Of America*, (In Congress, July 4, 1776: United States Department Of State), p.5.

Women who contributed to the American Revolution such as Abigail Smith Adams was known as an advocate of women's rights. She coined the phrase "Remember the Ladies". Besides her primary concern of women's rights, she addressed the need for women's education and the immorality of slavery. When the US Constitution was finally approved in 1787 women lost the legal ground to be equal to men. <sup>98</sup>

### **American Women and American Democracy**

The American type of Democracy is Representative. Representative Democracy (RD) is a form of government in which people govern through certain institutional mechanisms. Citizens elect representatives to govern for them. RD is also known as Indirect Democracy, in which people rule indirectly through their elected representatives.

When the government in a RD is elected mostly in accordance with the principles of universal participation, political equality, majority rule and responsiveness to public opinion it is qualified as a democracy. <sup>99</sup> Citizens in a RD make political decisions by majority rule but it must be coupled with guarantees of individual human rights that in turn serve to protect the rights of minorities whether ethnic, religious or political. These minority rights cannot be eliminated by majority vote nor depend upon the good will of the majority.

Democratic law in accordance with a constitution, limits the powers of the government, guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens, and protects the rights

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<sup>98</sup> Nancy F. Cott, Editor, *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>99</sup> Kenneth Janda and others, *The Challenge of Democracy*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992), pp.53-58.

of the minorities. Therefore, constitutional limits are imposed on the government to allow the voice of the people to be heard through free and fair elections.

The vital principle of American Democracy is that a just government should derive its powers from the consent of the people, which must be regularly renewed by free and fair elections. This popular sovereignty leads that the people have the right to create, alter, or abolish the form of government. In a phrase of Abraham Lincoln,<sup>100</sup> democracy is a government “of the people, by the people and for the people”, “The role of the people is to participate in selecting leaders who are given the power by the people to make political decisions for the people.”<sup>101</sup>

In spirit of the American Revolution, a democratic impulse was at work in Philadelphia in 1787. The Founding Fathers created a framework capable of adapting to the increasing demands of popular participation but they were suspicious of too much democracy. However, it was not a perfect document. The word democracy did not appear neither in the Declaration of Independence, nor in the U.S. Constitution. It was not a term used by the FF because the word had undesirable connotations related to mob rule and demagogue. The deliberations and decisions of the FF at Constitutional Convention reflect an open distrust of direct democracy. Therefore, the Constitution provides for Representative Democracy. The FF were not representative of the general

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<sup>100</sup> The sixteenth President of the United States.

<sup>101</sup> The Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln, November 19, 1863.

population. They were all white males. **No women**, no blacks, nor Indians attended. They were elitists, landowners who distrusted the common person.

Therefore, women suffered from inequalities that were obvious in their political inequality as well as social inequality:

### **a. Political Inequality**

The inferior woman status in American history was obvious in women's political inequality. Two minority groups in American history were suffering discrimination: Women and Blacks. Colonial Americans did not support the idea of equality between the two genders. Traditionally they held personal beliefs that they have brought with them from Europe that women were inferior and subordinate.

In the early years of Independence, women had no political rights. Since then, women were denied their full civil and political rights. This was the case until the nineteenth century. Despite the fact that it was not stated in the American constitution that voting, for example, was restricted only to men, the legislatures denied women's right in voting by their voting qualifications. These qualifications excluded women because they were considered to be represented by their family males—fathers, husbands brothers.

In many cases, patriotic women felt they had obligations to express their political beliefs and translate them into action, despite the fact that American men made no effort in sharing women in political participation. The Daughters of Liberty called for boycotting British goods. Their role was very important in the American Revolution. Patriotic women were engaged in fund raising money

for the troops. A group of elite women in Philadelphia led by Esther De Berdt Reed formed a committee and asked women's contribution in raising money for the soldiers. Reed wrote an article titled "Sentiments of American Women", to prepare the inhabitants for the collection of money. This effort was an unprecedented activity for women. When the money was collected, Reed wrote to General Washington informing him of the women's gift. He replied gratefully asking that the money should be used to make shirts. Although Reed proposed that money should be the gift, which was their intention for raising money as an untraditional patriotic participation, yet ultimately they were forced back into a traditional female role. Women's sentiments were ignored when they were asked to make the clothing. A few women rejected their traditional roles during the war and took on men's jobs. Mary Hays McCauley, who earned the nickname Molly Pitcher because she carried water for the thirsty soldiers on front lines, was known for her bravery.<sup>102</sup>

#### **b. Social Inequality-Social Barriers Hindering Women's Equality**

Historically, women were regarded as second-class citizens in the American social structure. Men dominated female's lives. They were not supposed to have an independent position. Their men represented them. Women got their social status through their husbands. Gender discrimination was also viewed in the American family by preferring male children to female children.

The social inequalities were obvious in many domains of life. They were hindering women and acting as barriers in the way of women's desires and

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<sup>102</sup> Cott, Op.Cit., pp. 145-148.

achievements. These social inequalities were visible in several domains such as education, work and marriage. When a woman got married, if she was among the few working women at that time, she would lose the limited economic freedom of a single working adult. Women had no economic identity. Most of them could neither buy nor sell property. These inequalities have been changing along the years.

American women had a great impact on American society and in fostering the development of democracy. Women activists' struggles have made and achieved triumphs during the twentieth century. When we look at the role that women have played in the United States, we can realize their considerable achievements in reform, transforming the status of women and women's empowerment. Women's mobilization in the twentieth century synchronized with the unprecedented rise of women's movements, provided role models of women's leadership, innovative strategies that comply with women's demands, as well as reform and social change.

### **Women's Role**

The social and political oppression of women was gradually diminished over the years. The role of women changed dramatically after the liberal feminist activism began and women's rights movements took place. The feminist movements were the most significant and influential movements in the twentieth century.

Women's organizations and movements at several levels provided proof of the existence of a vital civil society. They reinforced the Tocqueville view that

problems could be addressed by organized groups of citizens and not only by the state. He wrote “The government of democracy brings the notion of political rights to the level of the humblest citizens....”<sup>103</sup>

The expanding of women’s representation and sustaining political focus on women’s issues has varied widely and developed. However, there is less attention than there should be to the importance and usefulness of gender in decision-making, politics and society.

Women’s participation in elections and achieving an alternation of parties in power does not necessarily achieve democracy and the empowerment of women. To do so, women need to be organized in ways that could put pressure on parties and the executive to pass laws, and able to follow through monitoring the effects of that legislation and ensure that the executive and the courts implement the laws that were passed.

By having more women as national legislators, the content of legislation will change, especially in issues of particular concern to women. There were important successes when women’s movements were able to change some of the discriminatory legislation, but there are issues in which women did not achieve their policy goals.

Things have changed largely over the years. Important successes in issues of particular concern to women were achieved. Women’s movements were able to

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<sup>103</sup> George Clack and Mildred Sola Neely and Alonzo L. Hamby, (Editors), *Outline of U.S. History*, (United States, US Department of State: Nova Publishers, 2006), p. 98.  
See, Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Translated by Henry Reeve, Edited by Francis Bowen, (Cambridge: Server & Francis, 1863), p.313.

change some of the discriminatory legislation, but there are still many issues in which women did not achieve their goals. Even in a democratic, liberal country such as America, gender inequality can still be easily observed. Gender equality and women's rights are related to law. Laws can help respect and protect women's human rights despite the fact that a law may exist on paper but may not be supported into practice. Laws change through legislation and constitutional amendments. American women may stop suffering inequality when the equal rights amendment is ratified. In addition, it is important to know that besides knowing that gender equality and women's rights are related to law, they are also related to values, beliefs and social acceptance.

The inferior status of American women and the injustices from which they suffered were diminished by the efforts of women activists and women movements. These efforts brought gradual change to American women's lives through their determination and hard work against the barriers and obstacles that faced them. Therefore, gradual changes in the status of women from being inferior, powerless, subordinate, and dependent changed to a different status in which they had a say, a voice and a vote. Women had struggled to empower themselves on the individual level, group level and as women movements and feminists. These reform movements are political as well as social reform movements.

#### **a. Political Reform Movements**

For a long period, women suffered from the denial of their civil and political rights. This was the case since Independence and continued to the nineteenth century.

In the past, American liberals advocated for women's equality. They were affected by the eighteenth and nineteenth century European philosophers who called for equality between men and women. Besides, in the US, many of the early feminists were women who advocated equal rights for women's education in the 1920s. Among them were Emma Willard and Frances Wright.

The political origins of feminism – **the first wave of feminism**- lied in the abolitionist movement of the 1830s in which African American and White women and men struggled for the abolition of slavery and women's rights. Women's exclusion from participating in the proceedings of the World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London in 1840 generated an increased awareness among women of the need for a women's movement.

Two of the women, who attended the convention, when they came back to the US, continued to discuss matters for establishing women's rights. These women were Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. On July 14, 1848, they called for a Woman's Rights Convention to be held in Seneca Falls- New York, five days later. The audience approved the Declaration of Sentiments modeled on the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Sentiments declared, "All men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness".<sup>104</sup> The attendants also passed twelve resolutions one resolved to grant women the right to vote.

The Seneca Falls Convention was the official beginning of the women's suffrage movement in the US. Feminists and women's movements saw the issue of

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<sup>104</sup> J. Hole and E. Levine, *Rebirth of Feminism*, (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p.6.

suffrage as one aspect of women's rights. They advocated for full equality for women. In the time of the Civil War, the movement was almost paused, but after the war, it resumed its activity. The Fifteenth Amendment declared that the right to vote cannot be denied or abridged by race, color or previous condition of servitude, but it did not extend to women-either black or white. Despite the feminists, effort to add the word sex to the Amendment to extend the voting right to women it did not succeed.<sup>105</sup>

In 1869, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Furthermore, in the late nineteenth century, the temperance movement was organized by women with high feminist consciousness. This movement was called the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Francis Willard organized departments in the WCTU; each had its programs of activity. Activities included work in prisons, kinder garten suffrage etc. The movement pressed for laws to restrict the consumption of alcohol, which was an issue that effected married women's lives, as they had no legal protection of drunken husband's abuse.<sup>106</sup>

In 1890, the American and National Woman's Suffrage Association merged and became the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The movement became a single-issue movement. It was devoted for women's right to vote.

A new generation of feminists appeared by the turn of the century. Among them were Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul who formed a small radical group,

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<sup>105</sup> Margaret L. Anderson, *Thinking About Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), p.306.

<sup>106</sup> Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

the Congressional Union. Its aim was to work on federal suffrage for women. This Union used several tactics, such as parades, mass demonstrations and hunger strikes to further their cause.

Both efforts of the NAWSA and the Congressional Union combined with efforts of local suffrage activists groups proved to be successful. On August 26, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was adopted. It guaranteed women the right to vote.

Between the 1920s and 1960s, feminism did not totally disappear. Many women continued to pursue feminist goals. Among these feminist movements were the birth control and family planning movements, the settlement house movement, in addition to organizations working to improve women's working conditions.

The National Women's Party, organized by Alice Paul, continued to fight for improving the status of women. They had one major issue on their agenda- the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). "Equality of Rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex". The ERA was written in 1921.<sup>107</sup> Since 1923 when ERA was first introduced to congress, Paul and others worked on getting support of other women's organizations. The different point of views about ERA was obvious in most other women's organizations who opposed the passage of the ERA. Despite of their different objectives, all of the organizations provided the needed support. The ERA has been introduced in congress every session since 1923. It passed Congress in 1972, but failed to be ratified by the necessary thirty-eight states by the July 1982 deadline. It was ratified by thirty-five states. Supporters contend that the ERA is needed because the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment does not

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<sup>107</sup>Anderson, *Thinking about Women: Sociological Perspective on Sex and Gender*, op. cit., p.307.

provide adequate protection against sex discrimination. Opponents claim that the ERA would provide no benefits, and may hurt women.<sup>108</sup>

The many changes and transformations that happened in the 1950s and the 1960s influenced feminism. Among these changes were labor-force participation of women, increased women's educational level and new women's ideologies.

The decades of the 1950s and the 1960s made women conscious of the contradictions of the society. In one way, their roles were idealized and gratified, while on the other way it denied them self-expression and underestimated their labor.

In the year 1963 Betty Friedman's best-seller, *The Feminine Mystique*,<sup>109</sup> identified "the problem that has no name"-the isolation of the family as the source of women's discontent- about the fact that women's work at home will bring them fulfillment and gratification, but the fact that many of them found the experience to be depressing, isolating, and even boring.<sup>110</sup>

In the same year of 1963, the commission report, *American Women*, was released. This report made a number of recommendations involving employment and labor discrimination. It led to the Equal Pay Act of 1963,<sup>111</sup> which required that men and women would be equally paid for equal work under the same conditions. This law faced some problems in enforcing it and exemptions that were later connected to it, which made its effect minimal.

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<sup>108</sup> Mary Frances Berry, *Why the ERA Failed: Politics, Women's Rights and the Amending Process*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

<sup>109</sup> Cott, *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*, op.cit. p.528.

<sup>110</sup> S. Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, (New York: Knopf, 1979).

<sup>111</sup> Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America since 1960*, op.cit. p.208-212.

The **second wave of feminism** in 1960s and 1970s had diverse philosophies and strategies for change and reform. Two major branches of feminist movements appeared – the *women’s rights* branch and the *women’s liberation* branch.<sup>112</sup>

The first branch worked to extend equal rights to women through legal reform and antidiscrimination policies. While the second branch considered transformation of women’s status requires not just legal and political reform but radical transformation of basic social institutions such as family, religion, and education. The two branches are not separate movements but they have different political and social theories concerning feminism.

Over time, the distinctions between the women’s equal rights and women’s liberation branches of feminism have blurred although diverse political beliefs continued to exist among feminists throughout the nineties.

During the nineties race, class and gender became more central to feminist politics and feminist analyses and more white women challenge their own racism, while women of color feminism became more elaborate. Feminists faced two new challenges in the nineties. These challenges were the identification of post feminist generation and the backlash against feminism.

On one hand, media played an important role in which generated the image that feminism is no longer necessary and stigmatized a stereotype of feminism that was seen unapproachable especially to younger women.<sup>113</sup> On the other hand, the rise of the new religious and political right promoted values that opposed feminism.

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<sup>112</sup>Anderson, *Thinking about women: Sociological Perspective on Sex and Gender*, op.cit. p. 311.

<sup>113</sup> Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War on American Women*, (New York: Crown, 1991).

Such values were “traditional family values” which supported antifeminist agenda and promotes strong connections of women to home with less tolerance of family form diversity. These conservative thought movements meant that certain important feminine issues lost their state and federal support. These affected family, life styles, abortion rights and issues related to women and their children. Furthermore, it generated a thinking atmosphere that is far of the feminist modes of thinking.

Due to these challenges, young women were at that time confused by feminism. Media portrayed the young women and men of that generation as “post feminist”. The fact was that even if that generation were reluctant of calling themselves feminists, they were most likely supportive of feminist values but they were cautious to be called feminist at a time were the media was so abusive to the feminist movement.

Women of the eighties had different experiences of their mother’s generation of the sixties who where considered the second wave of feminism. They did not have to worry so much about their rights to education, employment, birth control, and women exclusions of gender-segregated occupations, which were some of the concerns of the second wave of feminism. Still other issues such as women’s safety from violence, work and family roles need to be resolved. In addition, politics of personal and gender identity, racial and sexual identity have not been translated into practice within the political world. Therefore, this led the third generation of feminism to define the shape of the **third wave of feminism**

and its feminist politics in the context of their own experiences and needs that will be determined by political action.<sup>114</sup>

During the late nineties, there was not a single national organization that was identified to represent feminism. This did not mean that women's movements diminished; on the contrary, it remained one of the most influential sources of social change. Women's struggle continued in different domains such as poverty, violence, exploitation, harassment, health, welfare and thereof.

### **b. Social Reform Movements**

Feminism, as social movement has brought many changes to society. One of which is the change of intellectual life. Intellectual thought guides many of the changes and reforms in various aspects and institutions of social life. These vary from the smaller institution -the family- to the larger institution in society.

Usually policy makers draw on the knowledge of experts to guide them as agents of change. These experts have a variety of intellectual perspectives. The presence of the feminist theory is essential for these changes to reflect and understand women's perspectives and their reform needs.

There are different feminist perspectives based on different intellectual roots. They have different programs for social change. Three theoretical perspectives

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<sup>114</sup> Nancy Whittier, *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women's Movement*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995)

have emerged in feminist theory: **liberal feminism**, **socialist feminism**, and **radical feminism**,<sup>115</sup> as mentioned and explained earlier in chapter three.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ELEANOR ROOSEVELT & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

#### **“You learn by living”**

**Eleanor Roosevelt**

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<sup>115</sup> Susan M. Hartman, *The other Feminists: Activists in the Liberal Establishment*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

By looking deeply on ER's life, we find a true example of a woman who championed and promoted women's empowerment. The concept of empowerment is a *multi-dimensional social process* in which the individual and community are deeply related, as discussed earlier in chapter three. The process of empowerment in ER as a person is also a true *transformational process* from powerlessness to powerfulness in her own right. Furthermore, she made all the efforts needed to empower American women by promoting women's social, political, economic and legal rights and she succeeded to make change. Her empowerment as an individual affected the empowerment of American women.

ER is an inspiring model of strong will and determination. Her life story is a motivating example to women living today. She was internally motivated by her own desire to bring transformation and reform in her society in areas of justice and equity for women. Her inner motivation helped her overcome the obstacles she faced in life. She is a true model of women's empowerment. She faced many difficulties during her childhood, marriage, motherhood and in life in general. She carved to be an individual. She worked hard to empower herself, empower women in the American society, and promote women's equality. She freed herself from her fears. She is a courageous woman that defied stereotype.

### **Her Early Life:**

ER had a "difficult childhood and had great inner doubts"<sup>116</sup>. As a child, she was unhappy, powerless, shy, quiet and awkward.

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<sup>116</sup> Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De hart, Editors, *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, Third Edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 410.

She experienced deep feelings of sadness, early in life. On one hand, her relationship with her mother was not an intimate one. She used to call her "Granny" due to her plain looks. On the other hand, ER's relationship with her father was more intimate. She greatly adored her father. Yet, his struggle with depression and alcoholism made him spend much time away from his home, the thing that made ER long for seeing him. When still a child, she was deeply saddened by her mother's death. ER's brothers both got sick with scarlet fever, Josh recovered, but Elliot, Jr., died. She was sad again for losing her brother.

Moreover, she lived a sad life with her grandmother Hall who was very strict in raising ER and her brother Josh. A year later, at the age of ten ER's sadness and suffering increased due to her father's death.

ER was taught to read only when she became seven when two of her great aunts noticed that ER's mother had ignored to teach her to read before.

Sadness never abandoned ER until she turned fifteen when she was sent to school in England.

### **ER's Marriage and Motherhood:**

ER spent the early years of her marriage adjusting to life as a wife and mother. She was devoted to her children but it was not a happy period.

She lived in a household dominated by her mother-in-law, Sara D. Roosevelt (SDR). She felt dominated, dependent, inadequate about her

abilities as a wife and mother. ER, as she began to sign her letters, was miserable, recalling that she was simply absorbing the personalities of those around her and letting their tastes and interests dominate her life.

After the film *Sunrise at Campobello* have captured the American imagination, its writer Dore Schary's characterization stereotyped Sara as the domineering mother-in-law. She not only spoiled her son and grandchildren, but also took every opportunity to undercut ER's confidence and authority. Despite of that ER turned to SDR for guidance and support, the thing that she would have turned to get from her mother if she was alive.

After ER's children were born, the relationship grew tense as the women sometimes clashed over parenting issues. When ER settled into her own model as the wife of a senior official in Washington, her independence grew and SDR as a continuous source of pressure had decreased. FDR refusal to take sides or discuss a truce made worse the tensions.

By the time ER had become first lady, she clearly felt SDR was more a critic than was a friend. Blanch Wiesen Cook wrote: "In a moment of self-reflection, ER admitted that SDR's taunts wore her down: "My zest in life is rather gone for the time being. If anyone looks at me, I want to weep....and my mind goes like a squirrel in the cage"."<sup>117</sup>

Furthermore, the death of Franklin Jr., ER's second son when ill with flu at the age of eight months reinforced ER's pain and unhappiness.

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<sup>117</sup> Cook, Op. Cit., pp. 94-96,191-192.

ER and FDR's social interests began to shift. However, they decided to mend their differences in periods of tension. Moreover, even in times of crisis in their relationship, they decided to move forward and continue their relationship as a political marriage and as public figures.

**"I do not wish women to have power over men;  
but over themselves."**

**Mary Wollstonecraft**

**ER's Transformation from Powerlessness to Powerfulness:  
Her Self-Empowerment.**

**ER's Formal Education:**

Education was a major component in ER's personal growth and self-empowerment. Her education made her blossom intellectually and socially. The only formal education she received was in 1899, at the age of fifteen, when she attended Allenswood Academy, a boarding school in England that was run by

Mademoiselle Marie Souvestre. Souvestre provided ER with the deeply needed emotional tie. During that time, ER felt totally without fear for the first time in her life. ER remembered that the three years she spent at Allenswood were the “happiest years” of her life saying: “Whatever I have become since had its seeds in those three years of contact with a liberal mind and strong personality”.<sup>118</sup> Souvestre’s impression spurred on ER’s profound interest in social service, reform and serious world concerns when she returned to NYC. Her political life can be traced back to her early involvement with social reform at the age of eighteen. During her stay at Allenswood, Mlle. Souvestre took her with her around Europe, the thing that spurred ER’s love for traveling which continued through her lifetime. Later, she travelled to check on people’s conditions, meet with the poor as well as with the leaders of the world.

### **ER’s Growing Independence:**

ER had built herself a public life and got involved in a wide network of women’s organizations at her own right. Her activism and her interest in social reform as indicated also in the previous paragraph can be traced to her early involvement in social activity at the age of eighteen. She gradually gained her growing activism and worked hard, the thing that made her transform herself and redefine her role. She moved gradually from dependency to influence and power, from anonymity to known status and leadership, from dependency on a

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<sup>118</sup> Kerber, *Ibid.* p. 412.

male-dominated society to public activity, female organizations and networks and to positions of influence. She became a political power by her own efforts.<sup>119</sup>

As ER was involved in many organizations and worked to build a network, she showed to be an excellent communicator. She communicated with women through print and speeches. She wanted women to stay informed. She was aware of the importance of knowledge and awareness for women. She spoke in all-women conferences, on the radio, and wrote her *MY Day*<sup>120</sup> column. She was everywhere. She wrote various books about her experiences that led her to become the role model she unconsciously became. Her works include *This Is My Story* (1937), *This I Remember* (1949), *On My Own* (1958), and *You Learn by Living* (1960).

Eleanor's communication with the public through print and speeches was a means that she mastered and successfully served the causes that she believed were essential for enhancing the status of women. She was able to affect women's public awareness and consciousness, will and determination on the individual level "**power within**" as well as on the collective level "**power with**" about external realities and the importance of their participation at various levels – family, group, organization- to demand and promote reform and change.

With her strong will, determination, and inner motivation she changed the role of the American First Lady. She took a non-traditional role and defended

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<sup>119</sup> Kerber, Op. cit.. p.411.

<sup>120</sup> See appendix 6.

the causes she believed in. She addressed issues of concern to women among others such as the poor, underprivileged, and minorities.

When ER moved to the White House, she was asked by FDR to stop her political activities. Furthermore, he refused her offers to assist with his mail, play as his informal ambassador or to be his administrative assistant. She felt trapped by tradition and recognized that her work was hindered and that she “was one of those who served his purposes”. This transition was not an easy one.

Distinguished Historian Professor Cook wrote in her second volume of ER’s Biography: “She was expected to give up her own life and stand by her man, affirming and silent. She could not do it. Unlike her predecessors, ER claimed her right to a public role.”<sup>121</sup> Even when her social interests began to shift from those of FDR’s she followed her own advice to promote the causes she believed in.

ER’s activism, as mentioned earlier, can be traced to her early involvement in social activity at the age of eighteen. With her own efforts, she had built herself a public life and she got involved in a wide network of women’s organizations and women’s movements.

**“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”**

Eleanor Roosevelt, *This Is My Story*, 1937

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<sup>121</sup> Cook, Op. Cit. p. 12.

## **Eleanor Roosevelt and the Women's Movement**

ER's emergence as a feminist corresponds to the development of the woman's movement in the twentieth century. By looking at how both ER and other leaders supported women's inclusion in American society as full political and economic partners until the early sixties when ER died in 1962, we can highly praise their activism when observing the actions and strategies that supporters of women's rights used before the modern feminist movement took place in America.

ER was no exception than other women who became leaders of the women's movement to notice the obstacles that faced women. She worked with other women on a wide range of social justice issues.

ER's lifelong friendships with women from different women's organizations helped form her understanding of feminism and had a large effect on her life and actions. As she wrote in her autobiography, being "drawn together through the work . . . is . . . one of the most satisfying ways of making and keeping friends."

ER was highly commitment to women's full inclusion and recognition in American life; therefore, she worked on building women's political base in the US, together with various women's groups and organizations.

Here applies the theoretical framework of the feminist notion of power as "*power with*" that indicates collective power and therefore acting as a group to

achieve collective demands and common goals. ER wanted women to build networks of women's support and action. She also represented a formula for leadership: "Women should come up from the bottom and learn their jobs in public life, step by step, and above all, they must learn to take other women with them ...."<sup>122</sup>

When ER was only eighteen years old, in 1902 she worked in a settlement house. Being interested in social life and social conditions, she joined several women's movements and organizations such as the *National Consumers League* organization in 1903, which aimed to promote decent working conditions for laborers.

After World War I, ER worked with a wide network of women's organizations such as the *International Congress of Working Women (ICWW)*. Its founder Margaret Robins was a progressive Republican committed to women's labor issues. ER volunteered to provide translation, as she was impressed by the organization's goals and supported their efforts and the issues they promoted. Many of the activists became lifelong associates of ER. Among these, were Rose Schneiderman, Mary Anderson, and Julia O'Connor.

Another organization that ER got involved with was the *Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF)* that stemmed from the Congress of Women. About thirteen hundred women gathered in 1915 to protest against World War I and promote peace. **WILPF** continued its work to support peace after 1919. ER publicly supported the organization with many activities

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<sup>122</sup> Blanche Wiesen Cook. *Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume Two, The Defining Years 1933-1938*. (New York: Viking Press, 1999). P. 277.

that she carried on. She spoke at the organization's conferences promoting peace. Working with its Nobel Peace Prize- winning president, Jane Addams, during 1932, the organization's members gathered six million signatures for the World Disarmament Petition.<sup>123</sup>

Besides, in the years 1920, 1922, and 1923 ER joined the *League of Women Voters*, the *Woman's Trade Union League*, and the *Women's Division of the New York Democratic Party* respectively. She wrote “through my interest in the *League of Women Voters*, the *Women's Trade Union League (WTUL)*, and the *Democratic State Committee*, where now I had become finance chairman, I was beginning to find the political contacts....”<sup>124</sup>

Besides ER's support for women's participation in decision-making and leadership positions, she worked hard to support working women. The **WTUL**, founded by Jane Addams and other unionists aimed to advance better professional conditions for women.

Even after the years of the White House, ER continued to advance women status and pressed both Presidents Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy (JFK) to appoint more women in high-level executive appointments and to address women's issues with more effort and concern. Furthermore, her pressing to (JFK) to appoint more women made him establish the first Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. He appointed ER as its chairperson.

ER's commitment to promote women's equality did not end after the White House years (1945). ER continued her commitment and “struggle for women's

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<sup>123</sup> Blanche Wiesen Cook. *Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume Two, The Defining Years 1933-1938*. (New York: Viking Press, 1999). 5, 49,122, 259.

<sup>124</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt*, ( Da Capo Press, 1992), p.122.

rights and women's empowerment"<sup>125</sup> through various organizations, the *UN*, the *NAACP*, the *ADA*, the *NCNW*, *My Day* column. She argued that women must "become more conscious of themselves as women and of their ability to function as a group. At the same time they must try to wipe from men's consciousness the need to consider them as a group or as women in their everyday activities, especially as workers in industry or the professions."<sup>126</sup> ER wrote her famous empowering quote addressing women in her book, *This Is My Story* when she told them "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."<sup>127</sup> In addition, she wrote, "Considering women as persons must begin with women themselves."

ER's belief in women's rights and the efforts that she made to address women's causes proved her commitment to gender equality. Moreover, she believed that women were natural peacemakers, contributors, mothers and consultants that made them superb politicians, advocates, professionals and reformers.

ER wrote "To me it seems that those who have borne the brunt of the fight thus far are rather shining examples of what women can do in the political arena if they really work, and I think it will be interesting to watch not individual women, but the accomplishment of women as a whole....."<sup>128</sup>

The theoretical framework discussed earlier in chapter three about the concept of empowerment, the notion of "*power with*" that the feminist

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<sup>125</sup> Cook, Op. Cit. p.54.

<sup>126</sup> See, Eleanor Roosevelt, Women in Politics, *Good Housekeeping*, 1940. Originally published in *Good Housekeeping* 110 (January 1940): 8-9, 150; (March 1940): 45, 68; (April 1940):201-203.

<sup>127</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *This Is My Story*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937).

<sup>128</sup> See, Roosevelt, Women in Politics, Op. Cit.

movement relied on collective organization and developed ideas about “*power within*” is obvious in the previous paragraphs. Furthermore, it is a *multi-dimensional social process*, as discussed earlier in the same chapter. It also implies that the individual and community are deeply related. ER’s activism, and her involvement in numerous women’s organizations and movements to advance the status of women, is a real example and commitment to women’s empowerment.

**In numbers, there is strength, and we  
in America must help the women of the world.**

"My Day," October 22, 1946

**“Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it,  
and there will be an end to blind obedience.”**

Mary Wollstonecraft

### **ER’s commitment to empowering women:**

As the years passed, ER continued to make public appearances and her popularity increased vastly, especially among American women seeking to gain equality.

As explained in chapter three, five main factors are crucial to women’s empowerment, eliminating the gender gap and achieving equity. These factors are:

**1-Education**

**2-Economic empowerment**

### **3-Political participation**

### **4-Safety and health**

### **5-Justice and human rights issues**

While studying ER's life we find the huge efforts she has made to achieve women's equality by empowering women in these main areas:

#### **1-Education**

ER had a strong commitment to education that she believed was central to achieve true democratic reform.<sup>129</sup> She believed that educational attainment for women is key element to their empowerment. This belief of ER was obvious in her self-empowerment and in promoting empowerment of other women. She was herself a teacher. In 1927, she became a part owner of Todhunter School in NYC where she served as vice-principal and taught history and government. Education brought enlightenment to her and she wanted to enlighten and empower other women with knowledge too. She was a long life learner and never stopped learning. She learned a lot from women mentors, women in the Roosevelt administration and from life itself. She promoted women's education and wanted women to be informed. She communicated with women and raised their awareness using all means of communication, in print and speeches. She

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<sup>129</sup>Allida M. Black, Editor, *Courage in a Dangerous World: The Political Writings of Eleanor Roosevelt*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p.5.

traveled around the country lecturing and furthering causes. ER knew that education is the most critical matter to the empowerment and advancement of women and in return, their advancement is critical to the progress of their society.

ER wrote the article ‘What Ten Million Women Want’ in *The Home Magazine* saying:

“Women to whom, after all, the education of the child is largely entrusted by the men, understand far better than the average man the need of education and improvement in teaching”.... “There is much research work that a Department of Education might be doing. What actual education possibilities does each state offer? Are all children furnished with standard textbooks? Are libraries accessible for all children? Do we need, for a great majority of children more specialized and vocational training?”...“All these questions should be made the subject of research on a national scale, but there is a great division of opinion as to what authority should be vested in a national department of education.”....“The women who travel over this country realize that standards of education are woefully low in certain places, and there is no doubt it would be most useful for the public at large to know that the actual standards vary greatly in different parts of the United States. But this is a very different thing from placing absolute control over the various state

departments of education in a "Department of National Education," such as has been proposed by some."<sup>130</sup>

ER promoted education for all and through her leadership and persistence, a National Teacher Day came into being in 1953, she persuaded the 81st Congress to proclaim May 7 that year as National Teacher Day.

ER wrote "What is the purpose of education? This question agitates ....every group, ..of thoughtful men and women. The conventional answer is the acquisition of knowledge,...and to teach them how to use their minds. Even more all-embracing than this is the statement made not long ago, ..by the Archbishop of York, that "the true purpose of education is to produce citizens."

She championed teachers rewarding with better salaries, respect and consideration as she said that "these men and women teachers, mold the future citizens of our country".<sup>131</sup> Education for women is for the betterment of society and not for women alone.

As mentioned earlier, ER addressed different issues in her speeches including women's education. She spoke on behalf of women in her press conferences, and on the radio. She used her intellectual talent and skill to write articles discussing a wide range of women's issues that had a didactic and conscious raising role besides promoting women's perspective on a wide range of injustices.

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<sup>130</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, What Ten Million Women Want, *The Home Magazine*, 5 no.3 (March , 1932),p. 19—21, 86.

<sup>131</sup> The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, Good Citizenship: The Purpose of Education, *Pictorial Review* 31 (April 1930), pp. 4, 94, 97.

Online at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/documents/articles/goodcitizenship.cfm>, material is with the researcher.

## **2-Economic empowerment**

ER supported women's inclusion in American society as full economic partners. She championed women's economic participation and economic opportunity based on equality. Equal women's economic participation in jobs in regards to equal pay, the number of working hours and promotion are important issues to women's empowerment. In addition, equal economic opportunities, such as women's access to resources, their right to have an economic identity and not being represented by male heads of households is another empowering factor.

ER worked hard to support working women. She worked hard to limit the number of women's working hours, opposed child labor, and championed reforming women's working conditions related to unsafe workplaces. Together with women labor activists, ER supported women's full inclusion in labor unions to demand and protect their rights, living wage, birth control, maternity rights and to have a voice in reform by striking collectively.

ER promoted women's employment, and defended women's will in pursuing jobs other than the traditional ones such as secretarial, cleaning, or domestic jobs. Moreover, she supported legislation to establish on-site day care for the children of mother workers.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, ER joined the *National Consumers League* in 1903 that aimed to promote decent working conditions for laborers. She was a major force in the organization's accomplishments as she investigated and saw the poor class unsafe working conditions and worked hard for reform. The League raised awareness about the sweatshops' negative effects on

workers. Therefore, when the public became aware of the situation, they refused to buy the products that did not carry the white label as an indication that they were not inspected by the organization, the thing that made the producers reform their employment practices. Successes of the League included legislation enacted that protected laborers including wages, child labor and working conditions. ER was elected vice-president of the organization. She held this position prior and after her years as First Lady.<sup>132</sup>

Furthermore, ER got involved with several women's organizations such as the *International Congress of Working Women (ICWW)* which was committed to women's labor issues. In 1919, ER volunteered to provide translation and in the same year, she chaired the ICWW meeting in support for fair labor standards for women and called for legal maternity leave for working women and a universal eight-hour workday. She was, as she later recalled, “*becoming independent.*” Her commitment to the organizations' ideas about the right to economic security and universal employment had a huge and lasting impact on ER. She organized women voters throughout New York and the US. She lobbied FDR as he debated various New Deal economic measures. She worked to defend the rights of organized labor.

Besides, when ER joined the *Woman's Trade Union League (WTUL)* in 1922, she became an active member and advanced the Leagues' goals by achieving them access to powerful politicians and making their voices to be

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<sup>132</sup> Maurine H. Beasley , Holly C. Shulman and Henry R. Beasley, (eds.), *The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), pp. 363-366.

heard in forming the labor policy in Washington. The **WTUL** focused its work on reform, advancement of better professional conditions for women, and encouraged women to join the labor movement. It ensured vocational training and protective legislation for women. It achieved numerous legislative goals such as minimum wage, eight-hour workday, established safety regulations in industry, helped women get leadership roles within labor unions.<sup>133</sup>

ER, with her friends, business and political partners, Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook launched a furniture shop to help the local economy and provide economic opportunity for locals. The furniture shop grew and began making pewter and weaving under the name Val-Kill Industries. They hoped it would provide jobs for rural unemployed workers and training for the youth in the area. One year later, the women built a larger building and Val-Kill Industries and began selling furniture. ER marketed the furniture and soon the press praised Val-Kill Industries as a "Feminine Industrial Success".

ER reached out to American public devastated by the Great Depression. She traveled widely, 40,000 miles checking economic and social conditions. Doing so, she served as her husband's eyes and ears becoming a major voice in his administration. She addressed issues of concern to aid the poor, underprivileged and minorities. When back to Washington she knew that relief programs alone could not stop the Depression and that there is a necessity for basic economic reforms.

ER made speeches and public appearances in which she showed great energy. In Both her speeches and her writings she defended women workers at

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<sup>133</sup> Beasley , Op. Cit., pp. 578-580.

all times especially when women were criticized by Americans for taking jobs that might be occupied by jobless men during America's depression. Her audience gradually became bigger and the subjects she presented widened greatly.

ER began to advance her own edition of the New Deal. She believed that the New Deal should be reform as well as relief. She pressed to address the persons most marginalized by her husband's policies. ER criticized the Economy Act due to its penalizing married women who were federally employed. She urged the Civil Works Administration to hire unemployed women. She facilitated the creation of the National Youth Administration. ER also strengthened her call for a living wage, the right to organize, and safe working conditions knowingly that Social Security did not cover the majority of Americans.

When FDR signed the *Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)* into law which was one of the most popular New Deal programs and employed a quarter of a million young men each year in projects throughout America. ER was impressed by the idea of employment of male youth in outdoors projects that included education and environmental betterment though she was unsatisfied by CCC's male-only focus.

She campaigned for a similar organization to the CCC for young unemployed women. Therefore, she worked hard to create the *She-She-She Camps* to assure the inclusion of women in the National Youth Administration and the Federal Arts programs knowing that the New Deal did not find solution of unemployment for women as fairly as to men. ER's efforts were despised by the Roosevelt administration and most New Dealers. It was not until after ER

held the White House Conference for Unemployed Women in April 1934 that her idea for a jobless women's camp was achieved in the US. Nevertheless, its size was not as big as the CCC men's camps. Within two years, a number of ninety residential camps served 5,000 women yearly.

ER's achievements and commitments in this domain were also obvious in her drafting and supporting the parts of the enduring universal document of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that dealt with social and labor issues.<sup>134</sup>

### **3-Political participation**

ER gradually became a political force in her own right. She supported women's inclusion in American society as full political partners. She believed that women's political participation in decision-making is fundamental for promoting women's issues and concerns.

Women's political participation is fundamental for true democracy, as Ambassador Ellen R. Sauerbrey, U.S. Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women wrote, "true democracy does not exist where half the population is excluded from policymaking, political processes, and power structures. Without their political voice, women cannot share their perspective, or draw attention to their hardships, or recommend preventive actions or means of redress."<sup>135</sup> ER was aware of this notion of true democracy

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<sup>134</sup> Beasley ,Op. Cit , pp. 570-580.

<sup>135</sup> Ambassador Sauerbrey, Op. Cit. p. 5.

and deeply committed to promoting American women's political participation. She reminded Americans that they were on trial to show what democracy meant and called them to action.

In 1920, ER joined the *League of Women Voters* and advocated for women's political rights. Louis Howe, FDR's advisor, taught ER speech techniques and she delivered her first public speech to the *League of Women Voters*.

Furthermore, in 1924, she agreed to chair the platform committee on women's issues for the *Democratic National Committee* after being requested to do so. She urged recommendations for "all women's organizations in the country" on what the platform should state. The male committee refused to adopt any of the women's recommendations. Moreover, they forced ER to sit outside the room while they negotiated; she and other women leaders forced the convention to let women appoint women delegates. ER did not give up. She was determined to have her voice heard. Therefore, she worked hard to achieve her goals. Furthermore, in 1928, ER became director of the *Bureau of Women's Activities of the Democratic National Committee*. Elections within the same year presented a new challenge to ER and FDR. Their marriage had begun to move away from a traditional one towards a professional partnership between peers. When FDR became governor, they had individual personal and political support systems and agendas. ER struggled to balance her commitment to political reform with her husband's political agenda. Her personal fidelity was to the *Democratic Women's Committee* whose newsletter she continued to edit secretly. ER began to apply political skill to resolve differences within FDR's internal circle.

In 1928, ER organized *get- out-the-vote* campaigns, which were a great success. She addressed women to become “political bosses”... She wrote the article “*Women Must Learn to Play the Game as Men Do*” for *Redbook* magazine. ER has constantly repeated a theme since her 1928 article “Women Bosses,” when she wrote that men go into politics to win elections and women go into politics to change the world. I quote: “The vast majority of women, I believe, turn to politics as the only means through which to accomplish the ends they seek.”<sup>136</sup> ER’s views on women in politics had changed little since her 1928 Red-book article “*Women Bosses*”, which argued, “Women must play the game as men do.” Therefore not until the existence of a strong aware united women’s movement would it be possible for a woman to succeed in a vicious and hard world of politics. However, as soon as women organized and achieved leadership positions ER believed “the advance of the human race toward the new goal of human happiness will be more rapid than it has ever been in the past.”<sup>137</sup>

ER believed and was highly committed to women’s right in decision-making and leadership positions. She believed that women representing women on issues of concern for women would affect power structures and policies to make change and reform. During her first year as First Lady, she worked hard promote women’s participation in establishing and assessing the New Deal. She gathered qualified women for executive positions and urged the Roosevelt administration to hire them to fulfill these high-level positions. When their proposals did not get the needed attention, they took their ideas to FDR.

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<sup>136</sup> Cook, Op.Cit., p.222.

<sup>137</sup> Cook, Op.Cit., p.277.

Moreover, ER held women press conferences to inform women voters and to urge women to “*speak their minds*” on different issues that deeply concerned them. ER helped lead several women organizations. She addressed different issues of concern to public especially women. Her writing attracted attention within the party and women's political organizations. Soon the media treated her as a woman of influence, the “*woman who speaks her political mind*”.

*It's Up To The Women* is ER's first book, she published while First Lady. In the book, ER aimed to rouse women to social and political activity. As the book shows her activist character had introduced her as an unprecedented First Lady with a new role model for other First Ladies to follow in politics and she gave a role model to other women urged them to have a role of in politics. ER believed so strongly that women had always a “*tremendous power*” that she titled the book *It's Up To The Women*.<sup>138</sup> As First Lady ER meant to reach every woman in America, she wrote, “It was up to them to take charge, to organize and agitate on behalf of social progress. She challenged women to think for themselves; to consider their own lives; to take the battle for modernity into their own homes.”<sup>139</sup>

#### **4-Safety and health**

Access to health facilities and health care can be empowering for women. Furthermore, it gives them greater control over factors that influence their health, well being and their lives.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> See, Eleanor Roosevelt. *It's Up To The Women*. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1933).

<sup>139</sup> Cook, Op.Cit., p. 75.

<sup>140</sup> Aithal, Op. Cit. p. 2.

ER believed that every American citizen should have access to health care without exception. Furthermore, she worked hard with President Harry Truman to pass the universal health in the late forties.

ER chaired the *Civic League's City Planning Department* and its legislation committee and she organized responses on housing and transportation issues. She settled disputes over child labor laws, promoted workmen's compensation and strongly urged adoption of an amendment to the Penal Law legalizing the distribution of birth control information among married couples.

### **5-Justice and human rights issues**

Women's protection by the power of law "rule of law" against gender injustices and discriminations is of enormous importance to women's empowerment. It gives women protection and security against abuses and protects their human rights by law.

ER's belief in women's rights and the efforts that she made to advance women politically, economically, and socially proved her commitment to gender equality. Her popularity among women, besides her political organizing skill helped draw support to FDR. Her close knowledge of the real conditions due to her repeated observation travels around the country helped her shape some of the policies of the Roosevelt administration. Despite that, her independent point of views on some issues may have been a hamper to FDR, but also meant that

women felt they had someone with power and influence that defended their rights.<sup>141</sup>

ER urged women to speak their minds and to contribute to the advancement of their status. She encouraged women and made them aware of their power to bring change and be active factors in shaping the future and promoting wise legislation. ER wrote in her article “*What Ten Million Women Want*” in *The Home Magazine* saying:

“If ten million women really want security, real representation, honesty, wise and just legislation, happier and more comfortable conditions of living, and a future with the horrors of war removed from the horizon, then these ten million women must bestir themselves....They can be active factors in the life of their communities and shape the future, or they can drift along and hide behind the men. Today is a challenge to women. Tomorrow will see how they answer the challenge!”<sup>142</sup>

ER urged women’s lobbying for legislation to protect women workers from abuse and unsafe conditions.

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<sup>141</sup> See: The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers. "Franklin D. Roosevelt." Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt, ed. by Allida Black, June Hopkins, et. al. (Hyde Park, New York: Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, 2003).  
<http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/glossary/roosevelt-franklin.htm>

<sup>142</sup> See, Eleanor Roosevelt, What Ten Million Women Want, *The Home Magazine*, 5 no.3 (March , 1932),p. 19—21, 86.

The *Commission on the Status of Women* in 1961, was led by Eleanor Roosevelt to "review the progress of women toward full partnership with men in the national life of the country and to make recommendations for constructive action." It can press for immediate action to prevent violations of women's rights. The commission develops recommendations in state policy, serves as an information center on women's education and employment needs, gives consultative assistance to organizations, and informs the Legislature on women's issues.<sup>143</sup>

ER was an active worker in social causes before she got married. She retained these interests after marriage and while rearing her five children. After World War I, ER got to work with a wide network of women's organizations. Furthermore, after FDR got sick in 1921, she became more active in public issues in order to renew her husband's political links. ER as a governor's wife and then as the US president's wife, played a leading part in women's organizations.

In addition to ER's great contribution to the promotion of women's rights and social justice in the American society, she advanced human rights around the world in one of her greatest accomplishments, which presented the world with the most important human rights document ever drafted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

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<sup>143</sup> International Women's Day: Ending Discrimination Against Women.  
Online at: <http://www.kimweichel.org/intwomensday.htm>

## CHAPTER SIX

**“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 person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works...”**

Eleanor Roosevelt, 1958

### ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND THE UNITED NATIONS

ER had a great contribution to the promotion of women’s rights and social justice in the American society. Furthermore, she advanced human rights around the world. As stated in article two of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property,

birth or other status.”<sup>144</sup> Moreover, it affirmed life, liberty, and equality internationally for all people regardless of sex, race, creed, and color, giving the world a new vision against war and prejudice.

During World War II President Franklin D. Roosevelt, ER’s husband, named the “United Nations” to the twenty-six nations that made a commitment in 1942 to fight unanimously to defeat the Axis powers, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to see its birth. Longing for peace after seeing the atrocities of war, they planned for a permanent international organization to keep peace. A plan was made by the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and China in Washington, D.C. in 1944. Fifty nations negotiated and signed the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in 1945, and it went into effect on October 24, 1945, the United Nations Day. President Harry Truman appointed ER to the first American delegation to the UN. In addition, ER became chairperson of the UN Human Rights Commission and guided the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>145</sup>.

ER thought the UN was people’s best hope of lasting peace. She believed, that its effectiveness was related to the effectiveness of its member nations and world's citizens. During her long time working with the UN in different positions she held, she spent much of her time struggling to make the UN an effective international organization.

**“To deny any person their human rights is**

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<sup>144</sup> Glendon, Op. Cit., p. 311.

<sup>145</sup> Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, (New York: Random House, 2001), Pp. 310-314.  
See appendix I.

**to challenge their very humanity.”**

**Nelson Mandela**

### **ER and the UN’s Human Rights Commission**

With the horrors of two world wars, millions of people greeted the founding of the UN’s Human Rights Commission (HRC) in 1946 after World War II. It was established to function as the UN's main body for human rights policy formation. The commission drafted an International Bill of Human Rights (IBHR) and started this task by writing a document that would be agreed upon by everybody. The member nations sent prominent representatives. The commission members decided unanimously at their first meeting to assign ER as their chairperson. This document developed into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that was adopted on December 10, 1948. ER regarded its formation and enactment as her greatest accomplishment. In 1951, ER resigned from her position as the HRC's chairperson while she continued to act as the official representative of the United States.<sup>146</sup>

**“Women’s empowerment is intertwined**

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<sup>146</sup>Glendon, *Ibid.*, pp. 29-50.

**with respect for human rights.”**

Mahnaz Afkhami

**The Contribution of ER to Equal Rights:  
Her Role in the Drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

**“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”**

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ER chaired the subcommittee of the HRC responsible for drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for two years.

As the HRC chairperson, she avoided to be provoked into irrelevant disputes and tried to lessen disagreements between the member nations’ representatives. Furthermore, she urged the prompt adoption of the UDHR in order that they would not depart from its main path due to any individual differences that any delays might allow to cause.

With her efforts and tactfulness, ER made the task a success. It was one of her greatest accomplishment, which presented the world with the most important human rights document ever drafted.

ER wrote, "I think it a necessity to be doing something which you feel is helpful in order to grow old gracefully and contentedly." She lived caring not only for herself, but also for all people. She would be remembered by the enormous amount of good she accomplished. Her good deeds made her gain the admiration of millions.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

**“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”**

**Eleanor Roosevelt**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This research examined the subject under study through a number of chapters. It shed light on gender issues and feminism and examined the concept of empowerment by concentrating on the case study of Eleanor Roosevelt. The first chapter presented the background of the research, which includes the research statement, objectives, significance, problem, hypothesis, the life of Eleanor Roosevelt (ER), methodology, boundaries, and limitations.

Chapter two introduced a literature review of books dealing with the subject of the research aiming to examine it academically by reviewing a diversity of opinions on the subject from different perspectives. Chapter three addressed the theoretical framework of the research dealing with feminism and the concept of empowerment aiming to understand the theoretical framework in an attempt to analyze how it applies to the context and case study of ER. This was done by

analyzing the theoretical data to see how it applies to the empirical data. Chapter four addressed the struggle of American women for their rights aiming to understand how it fit into the theoretical framework. Chapter five examined ER's activism, her involvement in women's movement and organizations. Furthermore, it addressed and analyzed ER's relation to women's empowerment. Chapter six shed light on ER and the United Nations. Finally, chapter seven presents the conclusions.

In the conclusion, the researcher is going to revisit the hypothesis, check its validity and make sure that the research questions in the introduction have been answered.

In the research hypothesis "The more American women participate in the American society, the more change happens in the American society.", the researcher argued that there is a specific relationship between two variables: (1) American women's participation, and (2) changes in women's status in the American society. In addition, the hypothesis described the nature of this relationship: an increase in the second variable is associated with an increase in the first. Furthermore, the hypothesis states that there is a specific relationship between the other two variables: (1) women's empowerment in the American society, and (2) changes in the status of women that take place. The hypothesis describes the nature of that relationship as such: an increase in the second variable is associated with an increase in the first. Moreover, the hypothesis states that there is a specific relationship between the other two variables: (1) empowered women (2) their effect on changing the status of women in the American society. Furthermore, this hypothesis states that there is a specific relationship between the variables: (1) empowered women (2) their effect on empowering women in the American society. The hypothesis describes the

nature of that relationship as such: an increase in the second variable is associated with an increase in the first. This hypothesis was tested by collecting and examining data on Eleanor Roosevelt's case to see if indeed such a relationship exists.

Relational hypotheses are statements that indicate whether two phenomena are related in a specific way. Testing the above hypothesis about American women's participation, women's empowerment; American women's participation and changes in the status of women in the American society indicate if a relationship exists between the two factors. Thus, also a positive relationship exists between the other two pairs of variables: on one hand (1) women's participation in the American society, and (2) changes in the status of American women; on the other hand (1) empowered American women (2) their effect on American women's empowerment in the American society; furthermore, an increase in women's contribution and participation in society may be a result of their empowerment. In other words, empowered American women affect, contribute and promote change in women's status in the American society. Moreover, the study will examine in particular the case study of Eleanor Roosevelt. It examined her contribution to the empowerment of American women by testing the hypothesis: Eleanor Roosevelt empowered American women in the American society in the twentieth century; Eleanor Roosevelt affected the status of women in the American society. This will indicate that there is a positive relation between American women's participation in their society, economic, political, cultural spheres and changes in their status in the American society. This was studied by examining and analyzing the case study of Eleanor Roosevelt and her contribution to the empowerment of American women.

The hypotheses was tested by collecting and examining data the concept of empowerment, women's empowerment and the case of Eleanor Roosevelt to see if indeed such a relationship exists. By analysis of the case study and the application of the theoretical framework the hypothesis have been approved.

Throughout the research, it was possible to answer the main and subsidiary questions for example: What was the role of Eleanor Roosevelt to American women's empowerment? How Eleanor Roosevelt was? How she became? How did she transform from a weak woman to an empowered woman? Does the awareness of women of their rights leads to their empowerment in their society? Why should we think of women's empowerment? Can a woman (Eleanor Roosevelt) transform the role of women in society in general and in the White House in particular? Does the empowerment of Eleanor Roosevelt affected the status of American women?

Eleanor Roosevelt was an inspiring role model for women's empowerment. She empowered American women. ER transformed from being a weak woman to an empowered woman when she moved gradually from dependency to influence and power; from anonymity to known status and leadership; from dependency on a male-dominated society to public activity, female organizations and networks and to positions of influence. She became a political power by her own efforts.<sup>147</sup> The awareness of women to their rights leads to their empowerment in their society by contributing as active agents to further their causes at various levels and affect the existing power structures that

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<sup>147</sup> Kerber, Op. cit.. p.411.

subordinate their existence as equal partners in their society. Equity for women has not been achieved yet; therefore, women's empowerment is fundamental for achieving social justice. Eleanor Roosevelt was able to transform the role of American women in society in general and in the White House in particular. Furthermore, the empowerment of ER affected the status of American women.

Eleanor Roosevelt is a great inspiration to women and men everywhere. It is important to take lessons from great people's lives. She was a person that believed in a better future. She had hope, determination, commitment and a sincere vision.

No country can truly progress socially, politically, or economically unless women are full partners in their societies; this was the belief that ER profoundly valued. She worked hard to achieve equity for women. She transformed the practices and meaning of American public life. She promoted the presence of women in politics that has provided a means of articulating women's perspectives and issues. She changed the traditional role of the American First Lady. She gave a new meaning to American democracy by mobilizing women and urging them to be active citizens and "to speak their minds". ER's belief in women's equal rights motivated her to make enormous efforts to advance women politically, economically, and socially. Her commitment to gender equality motivated her in two directions firstly to empower herself and secondly to empower other women to achieve equality.

Five main factors are essential to women's empowerment and achieving equity for women. These factors are **Education, Economic empowerment, Political participation, Safety and health, Justice and human rights issues.**

ER succeeded to empower women in these five main factors. She made huge impact and contribution to advancing women in these areas. She empowered women and transformed their lives. She empowered herself and empowered other women. This reminds me of the quote “Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.”<sup>148</sup> She affected the status of women and championed women’s rights in the five main factors that are essential to women’s empowerment. She was a humanitarian that worked hard to change the injustices in society. ER believed that sometimes “silence is the greatest sin”. Her dedication to human welfare won her affection and honor throughout the world.

Many people think that equity for women has been fully achieved. They are more visible in positions of power more than any other time in American history. Their position in the U.S. society has changed dramatically. Despite that many discrimination barriers have been removed and women have achieved many of their goals by becoming more independent, moving to top professional positions and being now a majority of college graduates yet they did not achieve equity in society. Some obstacles to women’s equity have been removed, but women still suffer discrimination.

A society that marginalizes women, due to gender discrimination, wastes half of its power and energy and therefore cannot fully develop. Furthermore, a society that makes half of its population invisible cannot progress. Encouraging policy changes to remove barriers to advance the status of women is fundamental for women’s empowerment in every society.

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<sup>148</sup> Quote: James Matthew Barrie.

The political, social and economic empowerment of women is necessary for the development and prosperity of any society. Women constitute almost fifty percent of any population. Their contribution to the advancement of their country is fundamental. Development cannot be achieved without including the women.<sup>149</sup> It can be achieved only when women are regarded full citizens and enjoy their rights on equal basis with men and by being protected by the rule of law enjoying equal opportunities and living in a just society.

Women's awareness that they can pressure power structures in societies to demand reforms in policies, norms and legislations is very important. Besides, it is important to find ways to encourage further women's participation in reform movements. Gender is an important and necessary variable to social reform and democratic ideals. Women's voices and votes often make a crucial difference. It is necessary that more analysis and understanding about the political dynamics of gender be put into practice to understand how political options will evolve. The experiences of women groups and women's movements provide an important view of the society/state relations. Women's political attitudes and participation are of central importance to the future of women and democracy. "Half a democracy is not a democracy".

Women proved the importance of their participation in politics and in decision-making positions. Women's perspective and contributions made a difference even when many obstacles intervened to hinder their participation.

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<sup>149</sup>Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State for Women's Empowerment, Contemporary interview on Women's Empowerment, Washington, DC, July 2, 2007. Interview text and interview video online at: <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/86492.htm> , accessed Nov. 2007.

Social change, reform and women's empowerment happen in different ways. Therefore, one main recommendation is that researchers should not be limited in observing and explaining change by following habitual ways and approaches. They should be more creative and analytical. I invite further studies on how change in women's status and their empowerment happens creatively, keeping in mind the characteristics and context of each case. Different perspectives and ways of change in women's status happen and therefore have different approaches to pursue this primary vital subject for creating a better future and a more just world for all, where women and men, function as full and equal partners in every sphere of life, using their full power for the benefit, prosperity and development of humanity. Humanity prospers when it uses its full power to fly high with both its wings, women and men.

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### **III. INTERNET**

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1**

#### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

December 10, 1948

Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

#### **Preamble**

*Whereas* recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

*Whereas* disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent

of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

*Whereas* it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

*Whereas* it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

*Whereas* the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

*Whereas* Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Whereas* a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore,

**The General Assembly**

## *Proclaims*

**This Universal Declaration of Human Rights** as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

### *Article 1*

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

### *Article 2*

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person

belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-selfgoverning or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

*Article 3*

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

*Article 4*

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

*Article 5*

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

*Article 6*

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

*Article 7*

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any

discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

*Article 8*

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

*Article 9*

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

*Article 10*

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

*Article 11*

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or

international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

*Article 12*

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

*Article 13*

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

*Article 14*

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

*Article 15*

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

*Article 16*

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

*Article 17*

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

### *Article 18*

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

### *Article 19*

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

### *Article 20*

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

### *Article 21*

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

### *Article 22*

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

### *Article 23*

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

#### *Article 24*

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

#### *Article 25*

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

#### *Article 26*

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

#### *Article 27*

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

#### *Article 28*

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

*Article 29*

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

*Article 30*

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

## **APPENDIX II**

**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

**Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 2263(XXII) of 7 November 1967**

*The General Assembly,*

Considering that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women, Considering that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the principle of non-discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein without distinction of any kind, including any distinction as to sex,

*Taking into account* the resolutions, declarations, conventions and recommendations of the United Nations and the specialized agencies designed to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to promote equal rights for men and women,

*Concerned* that, despite the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other instruments of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and despite the progress made in the matter of equality of rights, there continues to exist considerable discrimination against women,

*Considering* that discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity and with the welfare of the family and of society, prevents their participation, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries and is an obstacle to the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity,

*Bearing in mind* the great contribution made by women to social, political, economic and cultural life and the part they play in the family and particularly in the rearing of children,

*Convinced* that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women as well as men in all fields,

*Considering* that it is necessary to ensure the universal recognition in law and in fact of the principle of equality of men and women,

*Solemnly proclaims* this Declaration:

### ***Article 1***

Discrimination against women, denying or limiting as it does their equality of rights with men, is fundamentally unjust and constitutes an offence against human dignity.

### ***Article 2***

All appropriate measures shall be taken to abolish existing laws, customs, regulations and practices which are discriminatory against women, and to establish adequate legal protection for equal rights of men and women, in particular:

(a) The principle of equality of rights shall be embodied in the constitution or otherwise guaranteed by law;

(b) The international instruments of the United Nations and the specialized agencies relating to the elimination of discrimination against women shall be ratified or acceded to and fully implemented as soon as practicable.

### ***Article 3***

All appropriate measures shall be taken to educate public opinion and to direct national aspirations towards the eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women.

### ***Article 4***

All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to women on equal terms with men, without any discrimination:

- (a) The right to vote in all elections and be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
- (b) The right to vote in all public referenda;
- (c) The right to hold public office and to exercise all public functions.

Such rights shall be guaranteed by legislation.

### ***Article 5***

Women shall have the same rights as men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. Marriage to an alien shall not automatically affect the nationality of the wife either by rendering her stateless or by forcing upon her the nationality of her husband.

### ***Article 6***

1. Without prejudice to the safeguarding of the unity and the harmony of the family, which remains the basic unit of any society, all appropriate measures, particularly legislative measures, shall be taken to ensure to women, married or unmarried, equal rights with men in the field of civil law, and in particular:

- (a) The right to acquire, administer, enjoy, dispose of and inherit property, including property acquired during marriage;
- (b) The right to equality in legal capacity and the exercise thereof;

(c) The same rights as men with regard to the law on the movement of persons.

2. All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure the principle of equality of status of the husband and wife, and in particular:

(a) Women shall have the same right as men to free choice of a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(b) Women shall have equal rights with men during marriage and at its dissolution. In all cases the interest of the children shall be paramount;

(c) Parents shall have equal rights and duties in matters relating to their children. In all cases the interest of the children shall be paramount.

3. Child marriage and the betrothal of young girls before puberty shall be prohibited, and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

#### ***Article 7***

All provisions of penal codes which constitute discrimination against women shall be repealed.

#### ***Article 8***

All appropriate measures, including legislation, shall be taken to combat all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

#### ***Article 9***

All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to girls and women, married or unmarried, equal rights with men in education at all levels, and in particular:

(a) Equal conditions of access to, and study in, educational institutions of all types, including universities and vocational, technical and professional schools;

(b) The same choice of curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard, and school premises and equipment of the same quality, whether the institutions are co-educational or not;

(c) Equal opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(d) Equal opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult literacy programmes;

(e) Access to educational information to help in ensuring the health and well-being of families.

### ***Article 10***

1. All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to women, married or unmarried, equal rights with men in the field of economic and social life, and in particular:

(a) The right, without discrimination on grounds of marital status or any other grounds, to receive vocational training, to work, to free choice of profession and employment, and to professional and vocational advancement;

(b) The right to equal remuneration with men and to equality of treatment in respect of work of equal value;

(c) The right to leave with pay, retirement privileges and provision for security in respect of unemployment, sickness, old age or other incapacity to work;

(d) The right to receive family allowances on equal terms with men.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on account of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, measures shall be taken to prevent their dismissal in the event of marriage or maternity and to provide paid maternity leave, with the guarantee of returning to former employment, and to provide the necessary social services, including child-care facilities.

3. Measures taken to protect women in certain types of work, for reasons inherent in their physical nature, shall not be regarded as discriminatory.

### *Article 11*

1. The principle of equality of rights of men and women demands implementation in all States in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals are urged, therefore, to do all in their power to promote the implementation of the principles contained in this Declaration.

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.**

(CEDAW)

(Often described as an international bill of rights for women).

## **INTRODUCTION**

On 18 December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981 after the twentieth country had ratified it. By the tenth anniversary of the Convention in 1989, almost one hundred nations have agreed to be bound by its provisions.

The Convention was the culmination of more than thirty years of work by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, a body established in 1946 to monitor the situation of women and to promote women's rights. The Commission's work has been instrumental in bringing to light all the areas in which women are denied equality with men. These efforts for the advancement

of women have resulted in several declarations and conventions, of which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is the central and most comprehensive document.

Among the international human rights treaties, the Convention takes an important place in bringing the female half of humanity into the focus of human rights concerns. The spirit of the Convention is rooted in the goals of the United Nations: to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity,<sup>v</sup> and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women. The present document spells out the meaning of equality and how it can be achieved. In so doing, the Convention establishes not only an international bill of rights for women, but also an agenda for action by countries to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights.

In its preamble, the Convention explicitly acknowledges that "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist", and emphasizes that such discrimination "violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity". As defined in article 1, discrimination is understood as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made o.1 the basis of sex...in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field". The Convention gives positive affirmation to the principle of equality by requiring States parties to take "all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men"(article 3).

The agenda for equality is specified in fourteen subsequent articles. In its approach, the Convention covers three dimensions of the situation of women. Civil rights and the legal status of women are dealt with in great detail. In addition, and unlike other human rights treaties, the Convention is also concerned with the dimension of human reproduction as well as with the impact of cultural factors on gender relations.

The legal status of women receives the broadest attention. Concern over the basic rights of political participation has not diminished since the adoption of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1952. Its provisions, therefore, are restated in article 7 of the present document, whereby women are guaranteed the rights to vote, to hold public office and to exercise public functions. This includes equal rights for women to represent their countries at the international level (article 8). The Convention on the Nationality of Married Women - adopted in 1957 - is integrated under article 9 providing for the statehood of women, irrespective of their marital status. The Convention, thereby, draws attention to the fact that often women's legal status has been linked to marriage, making them dependent on their husband's nationality rather than individuals in their own right. Articles 10, 11 and 13, respectively, affirm women's rights to non-discrimination in education, employment and economic and social activities. These demands are given special emphasis with regard to the situation of rural women, whose particular struggles and vital economic contributions, as noted in article 14, warrant more attention in policy planning. Article 15 asserts the full equality of women in civil and business matters, demanding that all instruments directed at restricting women's legal capacity "shall be deemed null and void". Finally, in article 16, the Convention returns to the issue of marriage and family relations, asserting the equal rights and

obligations of women and men with regard to choice of spouse, parenthood, personal rights and command over property.

Aside from civil rights issues, the Convention also devotes major attention to a most vital concern of women, namely their reproductive rights. The preamble sets the tone by stating that "the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination". The link between discrimination and women's reproductive role is a matter of recurrent concern in the Convention. For example, it advocates, in article 5, "a proper understanding of maternity as a social function", demanding fully shared responsibility for child-rearing by both sexes. Accordingly, provisions for maternity protection and child-care are proclaimed as essential rights and are incorporated into all areas of the Convention, whether dealing with employment, family law, health care or education. Society's obligation extends to offering social services, especially child-care facilities, that allow individuals to combine family responsibilities with work and participation in public life. Special measures for maternity protection are recommended and "shall not be considered discriminatory". (article 4). "The Convention also affirms women's right to reproductive choice. Notably, it is the only human rights treaty to mention family planning. States parties are obliged to include advice on family planning in the education process (article 10.h) and to develop family codes that guarantee women's rights "to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights" (article 16.e).

The third general thrust of the Convention aims at enlarging our understanding of the concept of human rights, as it gives formal recognition to the influence of

culture and tradition on restricting women's enjoyment of their fundamental rights. These forces take shape in stereotypes, customs and norms which give rise to the multitude of legal, political and economic constraints on the advancement of women. Noting this interrelationship, the preamble of the Convention stresses "that a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality of men and women". States parties are therefore obliged to work towards the modification of social and cultural patterns of individual conduct in order to eliminate "prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women" (article 5). And Article 10.c. mandates the revision of textbooks, school programmes and teaching methods with a view to eliminating stereotyped concepts in the field of education. Finally, cultural patterns which define the public realm as a man's world and the domestic sphere as women's domain are strongly targeted in all of the Convention's provisions that affirm the equal responsibilities of both sexes in family life and their equal rights with regard to education and employment. Altogether, the Convention provides a comprehensive framework for challenging the various forces that have created and sustained discrimination based upon sex.

The implementation of the Convention is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Committee's mandate and the administration of the treaty are defined in the Articles 17 to 30 of the Convention. The Committee is composed of 23 experts nominated by their Governments and elected by the States parties as individuals "of high moral standing and competence in the field covered by the Convention".

At least every four years, the States parties are expected to submit a national report to the Committee, indicating the measures they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention. During its annual session, the Committee members discuss these reports with the Government representatives and explore with them areas for further action by the specific country. The Committee also makes general recommendations to the States parties on matters concerning the elimination of discrimination against women.

The full text of the Convention is set out herein

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**CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF  
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

***The States Parties to the present Convention,***

Noting that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,

Noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the

rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex,

Noting that the States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights,

Considering the international conventions concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

Noting also the resolutions, declarations and recommendations adopted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

Concerned, however, that despite these various instruments extensive discrimination against women continues to exist,

Recalling that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity,

Concerned that in situations of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs,

Convinced that the establishment of the new international economic order based on equity and justice will contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality between men and women,

Emphasizing that the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women,

Affirming that the strengthening of international peace and security, the relaxation of international tension, mutual co-operation among all States irrespective of their social and economic systems, general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control, the affirmation of the principles of justice, equality and mutual benefit in relations among countries and the realization of the right of peoples under alien and colonial domination and foreign occupation to self-determination and independence, as well as respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, will promote social progress and development and as a consequence will contribute to the attainment of full equality between men and women,

Convinced that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields,

Bearing in mind the great contribution of women to the welfare of the family and to the development of society, so far not fully recognized, the social significance of maternity and the role of both parents in the family and in the upbringing of children, and aware that the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination but that the upbringing of children requires a sharing of responsibility between men and women and society as a whole,

Aware that a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women,

Determined to implement the principles set forth in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, for that purpose, to adopt the measures required for the elimination of such discrimination in all its forms and manifestations,

Have agreed on the following:

## **PART I**

### ***Article I***

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis

of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

***Article 2***

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

### ***Article 3***

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

### ***Article 4***

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

### ***Article 5***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

### ***Article 6***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

## **PART II**

### ***Article 7***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

### ***Article 8***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

### ***Article 9***

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

### **PART III**

#### ***Article 10***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

### ***Article 11***

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;

(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

### ***Article 12***

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph I of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

### ***Article 13***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to family benefits;

(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;

(c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

#### ***Article 14***

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;

(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;

(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;

(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;

(e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment;

(f) To participate in all community activities;

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

(h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

## **PART IV**

### ***Article 15***

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

### ***Article 16***

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

## **PART V**

## *Article 17*

1. For the purpose of considering the progress made in the implementation of the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) consisting, at the time of entry into force of the Convention, of eighteen and, after ratification of or accession to the Convention by the thirty-fifth State Party, of twenty-three experts of high moral standing and competence in the field covered by the Convention. The experts shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution and to the representation of the different forms of civilization as well as the principal legal systems.

2. The members of the Committee shall be elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States Parties. Each State Party may nominate one person from among its own nationals.

3. The initial election shall be held six months after the date of the entry into force of the present Convention. At least three months before the date of each election the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a letter to the States Parties inviting them to submit their nominations within two months. The Secretary-General shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated, indicating the States Parties which have nominated them, and shall submit it to the States Parties.

4. Elections of the members of the Committee shall be held at a meeting of States Parties convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters. At that meeting, for which two thirds of the States Parties shall constitute a quorum, the persons elected to the Committee shall be those nominees who obtain the largest number of votes and an absolute majority of the votes of the representatives of States Parties present and voting.

5. The members of the Committee shall be elected for a term of four years. However, the terms of nine of the members elected at the first election shall expire at the end of two years; immediately after the first election the names of these nine members shall be chosen by lot by the Chairman of the Committee.

6. The election of the five additional members of the Committee shall be held in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this article, following the thirty-fifth ratification or accession. The terms of two of the additional members elected on this occasion shall expire at the end of two years, the names of these two members having been chosen by lot by the Chairman of the Committee.

7. For the filling of casual vacancies, the State Party whose expert has ceased to function as a member of the Committee shall appoint another expert from among its nationals, subject to the approval of the Committee.

8. The members of the Committee shall, with the approval of the General Assembly, receive emoluments from United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the Assembly may decide, having regard to the importance of the Committee's responsibilities.

9. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall provide the necessary staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the present Convention.

### ***Article 18***

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee, a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and on the progress made in this respect:

(a) Within one year after the entry into force for the State concerned;

(b) Thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.

2. Reports may indicate factors and difficulties affecting the degree of fulfilment of obligations under the present Convention.

### ***Article 19***

1. The Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

2. The Committee shall elect its officers for a term of two years.

### ***Article 20***

1. The Committee shall normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order to consider the reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the present Convention.

2. The meetings of the Committee shall normally be held at United Nations Headquarters or at any other convenient place as determined by the Committee.  
(amendment, status of ratification)

### ***Article 21***

1. The Committee shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities and may make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from the States Parties. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be included in the report of the Committee together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit the reports of the Committee to the Commission on the Status of Women for its information.

### ***Article 22***

The specialized agencies shall be entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the present Convention as fall

within the scope of their activities. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities.

## **PART VI**

### ***Article 23***

Nothing in the present Convention shall affect any provisions that are more conducive to the achievement of equality between men and women which may be contained:

(a) In the legislation of a State Party; or

(b) In any other international convention, treaty or agreement in force for that State.

### ***Article 24***

States Parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

### ***Article 25***

1. The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States.

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is designated as the depositary of the present Convention.

3. The present Convention is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

4. The present Convention shall be open to accession by all States. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

#### ***Article 26***

1. A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any State Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

2. The General Assembly of the United Nations shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such a request.

#### ***Article 27***

1. The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

2. For each State ratifying the present Convention or acceding to it after the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention

shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or accession.

### ***Article 28***

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.

2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.

3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to this effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States thereof. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received.

### ***Article 29***

1. Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court.

2. Each State Party may at the time of signature or ratification of the present Convention or accession thereto declare that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph I of this article. The other States Parties shall not be bound by that paragraph with respect to any State Party which has made such a reservation.

3. Any State Party which has made a reservation in accordance with paragraph 2 of this article may at any time withdraw that reservation by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

### ***Article 30***

The present Convention, the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts of which are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, duly authorized, have signed the present Convention.

## APPENDIX IV

### **Mainstreaming gender in UNICEF: the Women's Empowerment Framework.**

UNICEF has adopted the Women's Empowerment Framework, developed by Sara Longwe, as an appropriate approach to be used in mainstreaming gender. The framework states that women's development can be viewed in terms of five levels of equality, of which empowerment is an essential element at each level. The levels are:

1. **Welfare:** this addresses only the basic needs of women, without recognizing or attempting to solve the underlying structural causes which necessitate provision of welfare services. Women are merely passive beneficiaries of welfare benefits.
2. **Access:** equality of access to resources such as educational opportunities, land and credit is essential for women to make meaningful progress. The path of empowerment is initiated when women recognize lack of access to resources as a barrier to their growth and overall well-being and take action to redress this.
3. **Awareness-raising:** for women to take appropriate action to close gender gaps or gender inequalities there must be recognition that their problems stem from inherent structural and institutional discrimination. They must also recognize the role that women themselves often play in reinforcing the system that restricts their growth.
4. **Participation:** this is the point where women take decisions equally alongside men. Mobilization is necessary in order to reach this level. Women will be empowered to gain increased representation, by organizing themselves and working collectively, which will lead to increased empowerment and ultimately greater control.
5. **Control:** The ultimate level of equality and empowerment, where there is a balance of power between women and men and neither has dominance. Women are able to make decisions regarding their lives and the lives of their children and play an active role in the development process. The contributions of women are fully recognized and rewarded.

Source: UNICEF, 1994

## APPENDIX V

### **The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**

#### **CIDA's indicators of empowerment**

##### **Legal empowerment indicators include:**

- the enforcement of legislation related to the protection of human rights;
- number of cases related to women's rights heard in local courts, and their results;
- number of cases related to the legal rights of divorced and widowed women heard in local courts, and results;
- the effect of the enforcement of legislation in terms of treatment of offenders;
- increase/decrease in violence against women;
- rate at which the number of local justices/ prosecutors/ lawyers who are women/men is increasing/decreasing;
- rate at which the number of women/men in the local police force, by rank is increasing or decreasing.

##### **Political empowerment indicators include:**

- percentage of seats held by women in local councils/ decision-making bodies;
- percentage of women in decision-making positions in local government;
- percentage of women in the local civil service;
- percentage of women/men registered as voters/ percentage of eligible women/men who vote;
- percentage of women in senior/junior decision-making positions within unions;
- percentage of union members who are women/men;
- number of women who participate in public progress and political campaigning as compared to the number of men.

**For economic empowerment, changes should be noted over time:**

- changes in employment/unemployment rates of women and men;
- changes in time use in selected activities, particularly greater sharing by household members of unpaid housework and child-care;
- salary/wage differentials between women and men;
- changes in percentage of property owned and controlled by women and men (land, houses, livestock), across socio-economic and ethnic groups;
- average household expenditure of female/male households on education/health; ability to make small or large purchases independently;
- percentage of available credit, financial and technical support services going to women/men from government/ non-government sources.

**Social empowerment, changes over time of:**

- numbers of women in local institutions (e.g. women's associations, income generating groups etc.) to project are population, and numbers of women in positions of power in local institutions;
- extent of training or networking among local women, as compared to men; control of women over fertility decisions (e.g. number of children, number of abortions);
- mobility of women within and outside their residential locality, as compared to men.

In addition to these quantitative indicators are a series of suggested qualitative indicators comprised of indicator questions to assess empowerment:

- To what degree are women aware of local politics, and their legal rights? Are women more or less aware than men? Does this differ by socio-economic grouping, age or ethnicity? Is this changing over time?
- Do women and men perceive that they are becoming more empowered? Why?
- Do women perceive that they now have greater economic autonomy? Why?
- Are changes taking place in the way in which decisions are made in the household, and what is the perceived impact of this?
- Do women make decisions independently of men in their household? What sort of decisions are made independently?

## APPENDIX VI

### **MY DAY - WOMEN ISSUES**

Eleanor Roosevelt's syndicated newspaper column *My Day* was published six days a week from 1935 to 1962 by which she reached to millions of Americans with her views on social and political issues. She wrote on different subjects far out of the range of the conventional first lady's concerns. To mention some, she wrote on subjects such as equal rights, race issues, civil rights and women issues.

#### **My Day - Women Issues:**

Women and Employment July 13, 1939

Women & Work August 5, 1939

Democratic National Committee February 9, 1940

Equal Rights May 14, 1945

Women & Population May 13, 1955

Housewives October 17, 1955

First Lady October 21, 1960

Commission on the Status Women February 16, 1962

Women and Employment

## My Day - Women Issues

### Women and Employment

HYDE PARK, JULY 13, 1939 - Yesterday, with great interest, I read Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt's appeal to the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. It seems to me so obvious that married women should not be discriminated against, that I cannot imagine anyone who would really consider such a proposition.

It seems this discussion was given impetus by a rule in the federal government during the Depression, forbidding two married people to hold government positions. Now that the emergency is over, that rule has been rescinded, but there is, I think, one consideration in government employment that does not exist in private employment. The government wants to prevent the building up of a family bureaucracy.

It seems to me that if a generous sum is set, on which an adequate standard of living may be preserved for the average family that it might be well, if one member of the family earns that amount, to bar the employment of any other member of the family in government service. If a man and his wife together earn that amount, children who live in the same household should be barred from government employment.

Such a rule would not be directed at women particularly, married or single, but, if adopted by the federal government, it should be very carefully

considered for the same pattern might easily be followed by state and local governments.

I see by the morning papers that the Senate Committee has voted for delay on neutrality. One vote makes this important decision. These gentlemen must go on the theory that if you delay making up your mind long enough, perhaps you may never have to, for somebody else may make it up for you. My own experience is that the things you refuse to meet today always come back at you later on, usually under circumstances which make the decision twice as difficult as it originally was. I would not weep over the difficulties of the gentlemen who made this decision, were it not for the fact that the results of their decision may not rest on their heads alone but may affect innocent people in our country and other countries.

## My Day - Women Issues

### Women & Work

HYDE PARK, AUGUST 5, 1939 - The other day I was sent a most amusing page from a magazine called "Future: The Magazine for Young Men." An article by Dr. S. N. Stevens, which contains the following quotation, was marked for my attention:

"Women are generally more intuitive than empirical. In other words, they play hunches instead of examining facts in the evaluation of a situation. And I have never yet seen one who, in a tight spot, didn't try to take advantage of the fact that she was a woman."

I am willing to agree to the first part of the paragraph, women have so much intuition and are so much quicker to feel things than men are that they occasionally count too much on that particular gift. However, the woman who has trained herself has the advantage over a man in that she still has her intuition, but to it she has added his gift of examining facts and evaluating all the factors entering into a situation. As to the second half of his statement, I'll grant some women do it, but they are never the women who succeed in their jobs. They are the ones who always preyed on men and always will, for that is a job in itself.

There are so many occasions when a woman is in a tight spot which only she herself can face, that it is rather rare to find her trying to share her burden or ask for assistance on the ground that she is a woman.

What good would it do to try to get someone else to stand by when you are about to have a baby? What good would it do to turn to anyone else if your husband drank and you had to try to collect his wages before they were all spent? A woman may use her womanly wiles to help her in tight spots, but she isn't trading on being a woman, she is just handling the job which is hers, and frequently it is the job of handling a man and making him think he isn't being handled. These doctors and editors who write for magazines like this are very clever, but they should know a little more about women and real life before they venture to write about them.

## My Day - Women Issues

### Democratic National Committee

BOSTON, FEBRUARY 9, 1940 - The members of the Democratic National Committee, who were meeting in Washington, came to tea. The ladies seemed particularly elated by the passage of a resolution which is a new milestone in the participation of women in party politics.

Steps of this kind are not of interest only to the women in one political party, they are of interest to all women, because what is done by one party is soon done also by the others. Those of us who believe that women's advice and influence are of importance in public affairs, look back with considerable interest at the record of our own party. In both major parties, the record shows the growing importance of women. I belong to the Democratic party, and so I give you my party's record here.

In 1919 the Executive Committee of the National Democratic Committee, anticipating the ratification of the constitutional amendment permitting women to vote, decided on September 27th, to admit women to membership. In 1920 Miss Charl Ormond Williams was elected vice chairman of the National Democratic Committee. In 1936, at the Democratic National Convention held in Philadelphia, women were named as alternates to the platform committee for the first time, with the privilege of voting when regular members were not present and now, on February 5,

1940, the Democratic National Committee meeting in Washington, has passed the following resolution:

"Whereas, it is the sense of this committee that women be given an equal voice in the affairs of the Democratic party."

"Now, therefore, be it resolved, that this committee recommend to the next Democratic National Convention a consideration of a resolution there to be introduced, providing that each State, District and Territory shall name two members to serve on the committee on platform and resolutions, and that the members so designated by each State, District and Territory shall be of the opposite sex."

In addition, resolutions passed provided that four delegates-at-large be chosen from each State for each Senator in Congress and it was recommended to the States that one-half of those delegates be women.

At present, in the Democratic party, women have fifty-fifty representation on the state committees in 38 States. Only 9 states in the Union do not give women equal representation on some of the political committees, either by party regulations or by law.

Even more important than these gains, however, is the caliber of women chosen for political offices. I hope that every woman is going to feel a great responsibility, not only in holding party offices, but in choosing those who are to hold these offices and who will, therefore, represent the women of their communities.

## My Day - Women Issues

### Equal Rights

HYDE PARK, MAY 14, 1945 - I have been getting a good many letters of late about the Equal Rights amendment, which has been reported out favorably to the House by the House Judiciary Committee. Some of the women who write me seem to think that if this amendment is passed there will be no further possibility of discrimination against women. They feel that the time has come to declare that women shall be treated in all things on an equal basis with men. I hardly think it is necessary to declare this, since as a theory it is fairly well accepted today by both men and women. But in practice it is not accepted, and I doubt very much whether it ever will be.

Other women of my acquaintance are writing me in great anxiety, for they are afraid that the dangers of the amendment are not being properly considered. The majority of these women are employed in the industrial field. Their fear is that labor standards safeguarded in the past by legislation will be wrecked, and that the amendment will curtail and impair for all time the powers of both state and federal government to enact any legislation that may be necessary and desirable to protect the health and safety of women in industry.

I do not know which group is right, but I feel that if we work to remove from our statute books those laws which discriminate against women today

we might accomplish more and do it in a shorter time than will be possible through the passage of this amendment.

## My Day - Women Issues

### Women & Population

NEW YORK, MAY 13, 1955 - Few people may have noticed a little item in the newspapers the other day under a dateline from Washington. The Population Reference Bureau says that since 1900 the proportion of persons over 65 has doubled from four to eight percent. There also has been a steady increase in the proportion of women, particularly in the age groups above 20.

In terms of voting power, ownership of land and corporate equities the United States could be seen on the road toward a gerontomatriarchy-"control by aging females," the bureau said.

This will make us smile, particularly in a country where for so many years women were scarce and the young man held the important position in our population.

This fact, however, should give us a little food for thought. Why do women live longer than men? They are the "weaker" sex, they bear the children and, therefore, should wear out more quickly since we no longer live in a time when men must run the daily risks of hunting for their food and having to defend by physical prowess their homes on a day-by-day basis.

Is the answer perhaps that women, through the ages, have had to learn how to conserve their strength and to build resistance?

More and more in the modern world men have been obliged to set their goal for success in a competitive atmosphere. One may be under as great a strain when sitting quietly at a desk as in the days when one went out hunting to sustain himself. So, since men must work every minute in order to excel and must work at high tension in constant competition with all those around him, men often die earlier than do women.

The modern killers are heart disease and cancer and brain hemorrhage--all of which represent the pace at which modern man lives. Transportation and communication have so greatly increased in speed that man can cover more ground and do more than he could in years gone by, yet he stood up better apparently under hard physical labor than seems to be the case under the modern type of strain.

I wonder if there is not something in teaching children how to acquire an inner calm. It seems to me that in some of the books written in days gone by there was more emphasis on serenity. It may be that we must learn how to have inner serenity in spite of outward speed and activity.

Certainly, we should find ways of keeping a better balance in our population, for whether in youth or in age I think too great a predominance of one or the other sex is a distinct drawback. Our doctors had better start finding out why men wear out faster than women and they had better keep them alive for the happiness and contentment of all.

## My Day - Women Issues

### Housewives

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 17, 1955 - Recently I received a letter which raised a question of interest to many women. It reads as follows:

"Reading your article in the August Safeway Magazine gives me the inspiration and opportunity I have long been looking for, namely to 'speak' to you regarding the word 'housewife,' used to define the greatest profession we women perform.

QUESTION: What is your occupation?

ANSWER: Housewife, wife of a house.

QUESTIONING A CHILD: What does your father do?

ANSWER: He is a lawyer on Wall Street, N.Y.C.

QUESTION: What is your mother's occupation?

ANSWER: Oh, she is just a housewife.

I have heard this on TV. I am sure other women have cringed at the term. The dictionary defines the word as 'the woman in charge of a household. 'Wife' is defined as 'a woman joined in marriage to a man as husband.'

"Surely there is another name for us. How do you feel about it? Why not write an article which will bring opinions from other married women?"

I must confess that in days gone by I have often entered myself on questionnaires as "housewife" without feeling the slightest embarrassment. Now I put down "writer" or "lecturer," because the major part of my life is taken up in this way rather than in running a home and watching over the daily needs of a household and children plus guests, as it used to be in earlier days. I am not sure, however, that I did not feel more useful when I had to be home the greater part of the time. I had to make very careful plans when I left home so that all would go on in the same way while I was gone. I was limited in my free time. One could never be sure that there would not be sudden illness which would make a change in plans inevitable, or that home tasks would not clash with some demands outside my family--and of course, the demands outside the family were always secondary.

Those were the days when on a questionnaire I would put down "housewife" and feel very proud of it, and I am quite sure that no woman has any reason for feeling humiliated by the title. It is one of the most skilled professions in the world. When one adds to the business of running a house the care and bringing up of children, there is so much needed preparation for this occupation that I think it could be classed today among

the most skilled occupations in the world. To be sure, there are good and bad homes; and there are children who are well brought up and children who are badly brought up. This happens in any business or professional activity. But when one adds up what it means to a nation, one must concede that the well-run home and the well-brought-up children are more more important even than a well-run business. More people are affected by the occupation of a housewife and mother than are ever touched by any single business, no matter how large it may be.

## My Day - Women Issues

### First Lady

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 21, 1960 - As we watch the Presidential campaign unroll, I wonder how many have noticed one rather interesting change in the modern type of campaign. This was brought to my attention the other day when a young newspaper reporter said to me: "Do you really think that the decision as to a man's fitness for the office of President should depend, in part at least, on what kind of a President's wife his wife will be?"

I looked at her in surprise for a moment, because it had not dawned on me what changes had come about since Mr. Eisenhower's first campaign.

Apparently we have started on a new trend. I can't remember in my husband's campaign, nor in Mr. Truman's, that such a question could be asked. Some of the children or I would accompany my husband on the various campaign trips, and if we were around at railroad stops he would introduce us to the crowd in a rather casual manner. He often said "My little boy, Jimmy," when Jimmy was as tall as he was!

My husband insisted always that a man stood on his own record. He did not bring his family in to be responsible in getting him votes or in taking the blame for his decisions. I think he sometimes found it amusing to let me do things just so as to find out what the reaction of the public would be. But

nothing we did was ever calculated and thought out as part of the campaign in the way we feel that Mr. Nixon plans every appearance with his wife.

There must be times when the whole situation becomes practically unbearable, I would think, for the woman of the family. And I hope that we will return to the old and rather pleasanter way of looking upon White House families as people who have a right to their own lives.

The wives, of course, have certain official obligations, but they are certainly not responsible for their husband's policies. And they do not have to feel that sense of obligation at every point to uphold the ideas of the man of the family.

With so many people around a President who say "yes" to everything he says, it is fun sometimes for the family around him to say "no" just for the sake of devilment--but that should be a private family relaxation.

## My Day - Women Issues

### Commission on the Status Women

PARIS, FEBRUARY 16, 1962 - Before coming over here my last two days in the United States were spent largely in Washington, D.C., and I want to tell about them before writing about my current month-long trip.

On last Monday morning in the White House the President opened the first meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women. After very brief preliminaries and upon being introduced by Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, President Kennedy put us all at ease by starting the conference off on a note of levity by remarking that he had appointed the commission in self-defense--self-defense against an able and persistent newspaperwoman, Miss May Craig. No other lady of the press has waged a longer or more persistent battle for the rights of women than has May Craig, and I am sure she is flattered by the President's recognition of her tremendous interest in the field of women's equality.

After the morning session we had lunch in a downstairs restaurant that did not exist in my day there but which must be a tremendous convenience for those working in the White House today. A guide showed us around the White House, telling us about certain things that have been changed under Mrs. Kennedy's direction and which she explained to the American people over two television networks this week.

The basement floor and the first floor for entertaining have certainly been made far more attractive than ever before. Mrs. Kennedy has succeeded in having presented to the White House some really very beautiful pieces of furniture and decorative pictures, which add enormously to the interest of these rooms.

We kept ourselves strictly on schedule all day and opened our afternoon meeting promptly at 2 o'clock at 200 Maryland Avenue, below the Capitol, where the Commission on the Status of Women will have its permanent office.

We soon began to discuss the best way to organize to achieve the maximum of work not only on the six points laid down in the President's directive to the commission but in other situations which will certainly arise. The commission will try to make its influence felt concerning women's problems not only in the federal area but in state and local areas and in industry as well as in women's home responsibilities.

The effort, of course, is to find how we can best use the potentialities of women without impairing their first responsibilities, which are to their homes, their husbands and their children. We need to use in the very best way possible all our available manpower--and that includes womanpower--and this commission, I think, can well point out some of the ways in which this can be accomplished.

I was glad to hear brought up the question of part-time work for women and of better training in certain areas because the possibilities available to

women could be more widely publicized and education could be directed to meet and prepare for these new openings.

The Vice President and Mrs. Johnson gave a delightful reception at their home in the late afternoon for the members of the commission.

The meetings continued through Tuesday morning and into early afternoon, and I felt that the discussions had brought us to a point where we could get the staff to continue with the organization and start some of our subcommittees to working very shortly.

I was back at my home in New York City by 5:30 P.M. on Tuesday and a few people came in to say goodbye at 6 o'clock and then I packed and dressed and was ready to leave the house a little after 10 o'clock. My secretary, Miss Maureen Corr, and I left by Air France for Paris at midnight and had a most delightful trip--smooth and comfortable. We are now at the Crillon Hotel, where I always feel at home because of the many months I've stayed here when we used to hold meetings of the General Assembly of the United Nations in Paris.

Henry Morgenthau III met us at Orly Airport and told us of the plans made for doing two educational television programs, and a little later we were joined at the hotel by Professor Alfred Gorsser for discussion of our joint responsibilities on the programs. By this time it was 7:00 P.M. Paris time, though only 1:00 P.M. New York time, and after a delightful dinner we felt well adjusted to the change and feel well prepared for busy days ahead.