

## ***First Lady / O2 / Mom-in-Chief***

The eyes of the world have been focussed on the charismatic U.S. president and new Nobel Peace Prize laureate Barack Obama – but our seminar was equally fascinated by Michelle Obama, and has selected the term ***First Lady*** as a word of the semester. An Ivy League graduate (Princeton University, B.A.; Harvard Law School J.D.), Michelle Obama served as a highly paid lawyer specializing in corporate affairs and community organizing for the Chicago city administration and the University of Chicago. She ostensibly interrupted her flourishing career to devote herself completely to her husband's presidential campaign and to take care of their two daughters.

The term ***O2*** was first used by the media to refer to “Obama and Oprah”, since the popular talk-show host Oprah Winfrey supported Obama vigorously during the election campaign. But since Michelle's entry into the White House has proved to be so successful, now the media applies this term to the *two Obamas*.

With the youngest children in the White House since Jackie Kennedy, Michelle has, with such widely quoted statements as “*My No. 1 job as First Lady is to be First Mom*”, managed to create a new image of the First Lady as a self-proclaimed professional mother. Is this simply a return to the “stay-at-home mom” stereotype of the 1950s? Surely she would not have achieved rank 9 on Harvard Law School's 2008 list of its “most influential graduates” if she were simply a full-time “mom”. There is obviously a difference between that and the “**Mom-in-Chief**”! We should not underestimate Michelle Obama. To an unprecedentedly large extent this First Lady chooses her own roles.

