

1974

## Women in the Political Elite

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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WOMEN IN THE

POLITICAL ELITE

(TITLE)

BY

LOIS M. GUYMON  
2

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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## INTRODUCTION

The passage of the nineteenth amendment in 1920 was accompanied by a variety of predictions: dark allusions to family breakups, the corruption of women, and war between the sexes and optimistic predictions of the end of graft, corruption, and war. In reality, of course, the entrance of women into the political system has had very little effect on the course of American politics and society because so few women have chosen to participate in the political processes. Only recently have women voted in a proportion approaching that of men voters,<sup>1</sup> and the record of their progress in other forms of political participation is even worse.

The Women's Lib movement of recent years has aroused interest in the place of women in all sectors of society, including the political one. The need for women to become active politically has been recognized as an essential part of the movement toward liberation in all fields. Remarks from the Statement of Purpose of the National Organization for Women makes the point more vividly:

We believe that women must now exercise their political rights and responsibilities as American citizens. They must refuse to be segregated on the basis of sex into separate-and-not-equal ladies' auxiliaries in the political parties, and they must demand representation according to their numbers in the regularly constituted party committees - at local, state, and national levels - and in the informal power structure, participating fully in the selection of candidates and political decision-making, and running for office themselves.<sup>2</sup>



Traditionally, women have served only in those positions of political leadership which are ceremonial or clerical. Whether this state of affairs has come about because of discrimination on the part of men or because of a lack of initiative and determination on the part of women, the fact remains that it is a rare event for a woman to attain a position of real political power.

The injunction quoted above for women to become active does not prescribe what kinds of women should become active, or which kinds are likely to be successful. Answers to such questions may be found in the examination of women who have already attained positions of political leadership. What, then, is already known about those women who may be found in the ranks of the powerful and influential? Their most notable characteristic is their smallness of number. As of July, 1970, over 53 per cent of all eligible voters were women; if there were women representatives in accordance with the number of eligible women voters there would be 220 congresswomen and 51 women senators. In all the years since 1920 only 65 women have served in the House, and only ten in the Senate.<sup>3</sup> This pattern of underrepresentation is true not only at the national level, but at the state and local levels as well. The pattern also extends to nonelective positions. Among the political elite, among those who actually exercise power, women are a distinct minority. Nevertheless, it would be of value to examine those few who have overcome the obstacles of discrimination and apathy to become a part of the political elite. This paper will attempt to explore the attributes of the female elite, and thus to answer the question of what kind of woman is most

likely to achieve success in the political world.

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Gruberg, Women in American Politics (Oshkosh, Wis.: Academia Press, 1968), p. 10. In the 1964 election, for the first time as many women as men voted. However, the proportion of men who voted was still slightly higher.

<sup>2</sup>Cynthia Epstein and William J. Goode, ed., The Other Half (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 197.

<sup>3</sup>Kirsten Amundsen, The Silenced Majority (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 75.

## CHAPTER I

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies of women in the political elite are relatively few in number, particularly studies focused on women who currently hold, or have recently held, positions of political influence. Those writing about women in politics often direct their attention only toward those women who have served in Congress or in other high political office since the entry of women into the political arena. One such work is Annabel Paxton's Women in Congress,<sup>1</sup> which was the first book ever published exclusively about women who had served in the national legislature. The author presented only brief biographical sketches of congresswomen and women senators prior to 1943, discussing at greater length those women elected in 1942 and 1944 to serve in the 78th and 79th Congresses. However, no attempt was made to determine what characteristics were shared by the women or to speculate as to why they were able to achieve what so few others of their sex had achieved.

Another book which is historical in its approach to women in politics is Ladies of Courage by Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickock.<sup>2</sup> The authors told the stories of women who had been successful in national, state, and municipal politics, and they concluded that for a woman to achieve political office she should belong to one of the two major political parties and should be willing to work within the party organizations. How high a woman

can rise in her political career depends upon the ability, experience, personality, and luck of each particular woman, as well as the amount of time and money she has at her disposal.

A more recent biographical work is Peggy Lamson's Few Are Chosen.<sup>3</sup> Ten women were chosen as representatives of those who hold positions of high public office. The author observed that they generally came from families of modest means, that most were married, and that most were college graduates. The purpose of the author was not to present findings about the general characteristics of the ten women, but to set forth a short biography of each individual and her political career. The work is therefore purely descriptive, as is most of the work about women in politics.

The most recent biographical work, and the most complete, is A Minority of Members: Women in the U.S. Congress by Hope Chamberlin.<sup>4</sup> Included are biographies of all the women who have served in the House and Senate since 1917. Chamberlin noted in the introduction that most of the women were reared in modest economic circumstances, almost all attended college, only a few were single, and most were white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. Once again the work is descriptive in nature, and no attempt was made to use the data gathered in an explanatory or interpretive manner.

The most significant work in the area of women political elites has been done by Emmy E. Werner. In "Women in Congress: 1917-1964"<sup>5</sup> she dealt with the demographic characteristics of the seventy women who served in the twenty-four Congresses between 1916 and 1964. Among her findings were the following:

- 1) Forty of the women were Democrats, thirty Republicans.

- 2) Western states have contributed a larger percentage of women to Congress than any other region.
- 3) About one-half had had relatives in Congress.
- 4) Slightly over one-third had husbands who were congressmen.
- 5) Ninety per cent have been married.
- 6) The modal age at which they first entered Congress was 52.
- 7) Four-fifths had training beyond high school; more than half graduated from college.
- 8) The most common occupation prior to service in Congress was teaching.
- 9) Three-fourths had prior service in state legislatures or other state offices.
- 10) Two-thirds of former congresswomen held responsible positions in public service after the completion of their terms in Congress.

It must be remembered that these findings were based upon a study of women in Congress over a period of almost fifty years. Our concern is with the present, and with those women who are or have recently been a part of the political elite. Whether the above characteristics would apply to the women currently in Congress, or whether they would apply to women in other political offices has not been determined.

Werner's second article, "Women in the State Legislatures,"<sup>6</sup> was based upon a study of a sample of the women elected to the state legislatures in 1964. It was found that the states where women legislators were most numerous were states with small populations, while the five most populous states had few women legislators. Most of the women in the sample were married and had children, and most had some form of post-high school education, although less than half graduated from college. These findings

may be considered more significant to a study of the characteristics of women currently in the political elite because they are based upon an examination of women who have recently held office rather than a historical examination of women who served over a long period of time.

Another significant study which offers some insight into the female elite is "Men and Women in Party Elites: Social Roles and Political Resources" by M. Kent Jennings and Norman Thomas.<sup>7</sup> The authors attempted to explore the sex differences within a specific American party elite - the Michigan delegates and alternates to the 1964 Democratic and Republican National Conventions. They found that slightly over one-half of all the women listed their occupation as housewife, but the Republican women were much more likely to list such an occupation than the Democratic women, 59 per cent of whom were employed outside the home. Those women of both parties who were employed were three times less likely to be employed as attorneys or other professionals than the men in the study. The women delegates tended to be older than the men delegates and were not as well-educated. The women were more likely to be alternates than the men, a pattern which was more prevalent among the Republican delegation. The proportion of males in the study who had held elective or appointive public office was twice as great as the proportion of women. In turn, the proportion of career women who had held such an office was twice as great as the proportion of non-career women. Women fared better in primary elections than general elections. The authors found no substantial differences between the sexes in their per-

ceptions of the political process, the nature of their political party, and the party's role in the political process, although the housewives tended to have somewhat more idealized views of the political world than the women who were employed. Jennings and Thomas present some information, then, as to the nature of part of the female party elite as to age, education level, and occupation. However, the information is limited to one part of the elite only.

The most recent study of women in high political office is "Recruitment of Women for Congress: A Research Note" by Charles S. Bullock, III and Patricia Lee Findley Heys.<sup>8</sup> Using as their sample the women who have served in Congress since 1916, Bullock and Heys compared those who were widows appointed to their office after the deaths of their husbands to those who were regularly elected. It was found that those who were regularly elected were better educated, more politically involved, more likely to have had careers before serving in Congress, and more likely to have held state or local public office. A minor attempt was made to compare the women to freshman congressmen, and the authors concluded that political experience is more crucial for women than men in being elected to Congress. The question may be raised of what similarities and differences there are between the characteristics of men and those of women in politics. Are the routes leading to success the same for both men and women? Questions such as these have largely been neglected by the authors working in this field.

A review of the literature dealing with women in the political

elite reveals that most of the work done in this area is historical in nature. The tendency has been to concentrate attention on those women who have served in Congress since the entrance of women into politics. Most of the available material is in the form of biographical data with very few attempts to convert the biographical data into explanatory or interpretive form. No extensive study of the female political elite in the United States has ever been attempted to the knowledge of this author, and work in this area is embryonic. The recent surge of interest about the place of women in politics may soon correct this deficiency, but there currently is a severe lack of research into the attributes of the women who have attained positions of political authority.

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<sup>1</sup>Annabel Paxton, Women in Congress (Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1945).

<sup>2</sup>Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickock, Ladies of Courage (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954).

<sup>3</sup>Peggy Lamson, Few Are Chosen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).

<sup>4</sup>Hope Chamberlin, A Minority of Members: Women in the U.S. Congress (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973).

<sup>5</sup>Emmy E. Werner, "Women in Congress: 1917-1964," Western Political Quarterly, XIX (March, 1966), 16-30.

<sup>6</sup>Emmy E. Werner, "Women in the State Legislatures," ibid., XXI (March, 1968), 40-50.

<sup>7</sup>M. Kent Jennings and Norman Thomas, "Men and Women in Party Elites: Social Roles and Political Resources," Midwest Journal of Political Science, XII (November, 1968), 469-92.

<sup>8</sup>Charles S. Bullock, III and Patricia Lee Findley Heys, "Recruitment of Women for Congress: A Research Note," Western Political Quarterly, XXV (September, 1972), 416-23.



## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

This study will be an analysis of already existent biographical data on women in the political elite. It will be descriptive in nature and will represent an attempt to obtain information about the demographic characteristics of the female elite. For the purpose of this analysis, the political elite will be defined as persons listed in Who's Who in American Politics, 1971-72.<sup>1</sup> The elite, then, will consist of the following: the President, the Vice-President, Cabinet and sub-cabinet officers, and key Presidential appointees; U.S. Senators and Representatives, and their staff members; Governors, Lieutenant Governors, major state officials, members of state legislatures, and appointees on the state level; mayors and council members of major cities; national, state, and key local officials of major parties, including national officers and staff members, and state chairmen, as well as leaders of minority parties; former Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Senators, Congressmen, and Governors who are still living.

A code book was prepared for the purpose of quantifying the data. Because of the difficulty in taking a random sample and still insuring an adequate sample of persons in the smaller sub-groups, such as Congresswomen, and due to the relatively small number of women included in the political elite, all women listed

in Who's Who in American Politics, 1971-72 were coded. A supplementary source of information was Who's Who of American Women,<sup>2</sup> which was used when the information in the first volume was incomplete and the woman being coded was also listed in the second volume. The information which was obtained was first converted into the percentages in each category within each variable, and that information is presented in the Statistical Profile. Then each variable was compared with all others to determine what kind of relationships might exist between variables. All of the tables found within this work are composed of data obtained from the two sources listed above.

The use of data which is already available involves the use of data which was collected for a purpose other than that for which it will be used in this study. Flexibility is necessary, then, with respect to the form in which research questions are asked; they must be made to accommodate the available data rather than the opposite. The researcher is limited to only the type of information contained in the biographical source and is dependent upon its accuracy.

When the data was processed, it was analyzed in the light of propositions about the women who have achieved political positions. The following hypotheses were made concerning the female elite in general:

1. Women in the political elite are likely to be married and to have children.
2. Women in the political elite are likely to hold their first political position after their child-rearing years.

3. There is no significant trend in party affiliation; women in politics are as likely to be Democrats as they are Republicans.
4. Women in the political elite are likely to be members of nonpolitical associations to a greater extent than the general population.
5. Women in the political elite are likely to be high school graduates and to have had some post-high school education.
6. Women in the political elite are likely to come from the fields of education, business, or clerical work.
7. Women in the political elite are more likely to be Protestants than either Catholics or Jews.

The following hypotheses were made concerning the sub-groups within the female elite:

1. Women in elective positions are more likely to have had a previous occupation other than "housewife" than are women in nonelective positions.
2. Women in elective positions are likely to have a higher level of education than women in the party organizations.
3. Women in elective positions are likely to hold office in states with small populations.
4. Women in national elective positions are likely to have had prior service in the state legislatures or other state offices.
5. Women in national elective positions are likely to have a higher education level than women elected to state positions.
6. Women who are part of the national party organizations are likely to have a higher education level than women in the state or local party organizations.

Hypotheses were also formulated about the female elite in relation to the male elite:

1. Women in the various political positions are likely to be as highly educated as their male counterparts.
2. Women in the political elite are likely to hold their first political position at a later age than men.

3. Women in the political elite are likely to have different occupations than the male elite.
4. Women in national elective positions are more likely to have had previous experience on the state level than are men who hold national elective positions.

The analysis of the data should provide a clearer picture than has before been presented of the female political elite. It is unfortunate that information is not more readily available concerning other characteristics, such as the socioeconomic backgrounds of the women who hold political positions. It is hoped that the information provided by this study will be helpful in answering the following questions about women in politics: What characteristics do they share? How does one group within the elite differ from another? And how does the female elite differ from the male elite and in what ways are they alike?

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<sup>1</sup>Paul A. Theis and Edmund L. Henshaw, ed., Who's Who in American Politics, 1971-72 (3rd ed.; New York: R. R. Bowker, 1971).

<sup>2</sup>Who's Who of American Women, 1972-73 (7th ed.; Chicago: A. N. Marquis Co., 1971).

## CHAPTER III

### STATISTICAL PROFILE

#### Age

The data on age in Table 1 reveals that women in the political elite tend to be middle-aged. Over half of the women, 54 per cent, were in their forties or fifties. Only about 12 per

TABLE 1

AGES OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE  
BY PERCENTAGE IN AGE CATEGORIES

Age Categories	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
20-29	2%
30-39	10
40-49	25
50-59	29
60-69	16
70-79	8
80-89	1
Under 20 and no age listed	<u>9</u> 100%

cent were less than thirty-nine years of age, while about 26 per cent were more than fifty-nine years of age.

Data concerning the ages of the women when they first held a political position of any kind indicates that the entry into the political sphere takes place before middle age. As can be seen in Table 2, over half of the women, 54 per cent, held their first position before the age of forty. There was no data available on this variable for 15 per cent of the women, and the re-

maining 32 per cent were in their forties, fifties, or sixties before they held their first political position.

TABLE 2

AGES OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL ELITE AT TIME  
OF FIRST POLITICAL POSITION BY  
PERCENTAGE IN AGE CATEGORIES

Age Categories	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
0-19	2%
20-29	20
30-39	32
40-49	22
50-59	8
60-69	2
No information	15
	<u>101%*</u>

\*In this and subsequent tables, variations in total percentages from 100 per cent are the result of rounding.

Marital Status and Family Size

Almost three-fourths of the women in the study were married. Those who had been married, but were widowed or divorced, represented 12 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. Only 10 per cent of the women had never been married (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN  
THE POLITICAL ELITE

Marital Status	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
Married	73%
Single	10
Widowed	12
Divorced	5
	<u>100%</u>

About 23 per cent of the women in the study had no children. Forty per cent had only one or two children, and the remaining 37 per cent had more than two children (see Table 4).

TABLE 4  
FAMILY SIZE OF WOMEN IN  
THE POLITICAL ELITE

Number of Children	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
None	23%
1	14
2	26
3	19
4	10
5	5
6	2
7	1
8 or more	1
	<u>101%</u>

Religion

Table 5 shows that 70 per cent of the female political elite were Protestant, 16 per cent were Catholic, and 3 per cent were

TABLE 5  
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS CLAIMED BY  
WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE

Religious Affiliation	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
Protestant	70%
Catholic	16
Jew	3
Other	1
None listed	11
	<u>101%</u>

Jewish. Eleven per cent listed no religious preference, while 1 per cent expressed a religious affiliation other than Protestant, Catholic, or Jew.

### Party Affiliation

Over half of the women, 53 per cent, were Republicans, 43 per cent were Democrats, and 4 per cent listed a third party affiliation (see Table 6). Most of those in the latter group

TABLE 6

#### PARTY AFFILIATION OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE

Party Affiliation	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
Democrat	43%
Republican	53
Other	4
None listed	1
	<u>101%</u>

were members of the Democratic Free Labor Party in Minnesota and might properly be considered as part of the Democratic Party on the national level. Those expressing a third party affiliation also included members of the Communist and Socialist Parties, Independents, and members of parties in the United States Territories.

### State and Region

The data on the states in which the women lived reveals that about 10 per cent of the women came from the most populous state in the Union, California. Other states ranking in the twelve states having the largest percentages of the women in this study, in order, were as follows: Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Colorado, New York, Michigan, Connecticut, Illinois, New Hampshire, Texas, and Kansas. The thirteen states having the smallest percentages of the women, beginning with the state with the small-



est percentage, were as follows: Rhode Island, Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Nevada, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, West Virginia, Wyoming, New Mexico, Tennessee, and North Dakota.

When the twelve largest states and the twelve smallest states in terms of population were compared,<sup>1</sup> it was found that the most heavily populated states were the home-states of 37 per cent of the women, while the states having the smallest populations were the home-states of 14 per cent of the women. The women were also classified according to the region of the country in which they live, and it was found that 32 per cent, or almost one-third, of the women holding political positions were from the twelve Midwestern states. Twenty-five per cent were from the thirteen Western states, 23 per cent were from the twelve Eastern states, and 21 per cent were from the thirteen Southern states, the District of Columbia, and the two territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Tables 7 and 8 show the twelve states from which the largest percentages of the women in the study came, and the thirteen states from which the smallest percentages came, as well as their population rank and the geographical region of the country in which the state is located.

#### Education

Only 1 per cent of the women had not completed high school, and only 17 per cent had only finished high school with no training beyond. The largest group, 36 per cent of the women, had attended college but received no degree; 30 per cent were college graduates, and 12 per cent held advanced degrees. There

TABLE 7

TWELVE STATES WITH LARGEST PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL  
OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL ELITE; POPULATION  
RANK OF STATE AND REGION OF COUNTRY  
IN WHICH STATE IS LOCATED

State	Percentage	Population Rank	Region
California	9.6%	1st	W
Minnesota	5.6	20th	M
Missouri	5.1	14th	M
Ohio	4.4	6th	M
Colorado	3.6	30th	W
New York	3.2	2nd	E
Michigan	3.2	7th	M
Connecticut	3.1	24th	E
Illinois	2.7	5th	M
New Hampshire	2.7	42nd	E
Texas	2.5	4th	S
Kansas	2.4	29th	M

TABLE 8

THIRTEEN STATES WITH SMALLEST PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL  
OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL ELITE; POPULATION  
RANK OF STATE AND REGION OF COUNTRY  
IN WHICH STATE IS LOCATED

State	Percentage	Population Rank	Region
Rhode Island	0.5%	39th	E
Alaska	0.5	50th	W
Delaware	0.6	46th	E
Hawaii	0.6	40th	W
Nevada	0.7	47th	W
South Carolina	0.7	26th	S
Louisiana	0.8	19th	S
Mississippi	0.8	28th	S
West Virginia	0.8	33rd	E
Wyoming	0.9	49th	W
New Mexico	0.9	37th	W
Tennessee	1.0	17th	S
North Dakota	1.0	45th	M

was no information on the education levels of 4 per cent of the women (see Table 9).

TABLE 9  
EDUCATION LEVELS OF WOMEN  
IN THE POLITICAL ELITE

Education Level	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
Did not complete high school	1%
High school graduate	17
Attended college, no degree	36
College graduate	30
Advanced degree(s)	12
No information	4
	<u>100%</u>

Occupation

As can be seen in Table 10, the most prevalent occupational listing among the women was that of housewife, accounting for 35 per cent of those in the study. Almost two-thirds of the wo-

TABLE 10  
OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN IN  
THE POLITICAL ELITE

Occupation	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
Housewife	35%
Clerical work	16
Education	15
Business	13
Journalism	5
Law	4
Medicine	2
Social services	2
Performing and fine arts	1
Other	3
None	2
No information	4
	<u>102%</u>

men, then, had occupations outside the home. The three categories in which the most women were employed were clerical work, 16 per cent, education, 15 per cent, and business, 13 per cent. Journalism was the occupation of about 5 per cent, law of 4 per cent, medicine of 2 per cent, social services of 2 per cent, and the performing and fine arts of 1 per cent. Eight per cent of the women had occupations other than those listed, had no occupation, or gave no information as to their occupation.

The category "clerical work" also included sales clerks. The "education" category included not only teachers at all levels, but also administrators and librarians. The "business" category included women in real estate and insurance and those who were self-employed as well as those in executive positions. Included in the "journalism" category were also those in radio, television, and public relations. And "medicine" included not only doctors and nurses, but also pharmacists and optometrists.

#### Membership in Nonpolitical Organizations

Table 11 reveals that over half of the women in the study belonged to four or more nonpolitical organizations. Only 14 per

TABLE 11

#### MEMBERSHIP IN NONPOLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE

Number of Organizations	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
None	14%
1	11
2	12
3	12
4 or more	51
No information	1
	<u>101%</u>

cent belonged to no such organizations, 11 per cent to one, 12 per cent to two, and 12 per cent to three.

### Political Position

The largest percentage of women in the study were part of the political party organizations (see Table 12). About 72 per

TABLE 12

#### CURRENT OR MOST RECENT POLITICAL POSITION HELD BY WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE

Political Position	Percentage of Total (N 1959)
Party official	71.7%
State legislator	13.9
Staff member	5.1
State appointee	2.1
Presidential appointee	1.7
State official (elected)	1.3
U.S. Representative	.9
City councilman	.9
Cabinet or sub-cabinet member	.5
U.S. Senator	.2
Mayor	.1
Other	1.4
No information	.2
	<u>100.0%</u>

cent of the women were currently holding, or had recently held, a position in the party structures or related organizations. The next largest group, state legislators, accounted for about 14 per cent of the women, and the third largest group, staff members, accounted for only 5 per cent. Each of the other nine categories represented only a small percentage of the women. Only 17 per cent of the women held positions which were elective in nature rather than appointive. This number included mayors, councilmen, state legislators, state officials, U.S. Representatives, and U.S. Senators.

### Tenure in Office

Of the 339 elected women there was data available on 317 as to the number of years they had held the position to which they had been elected. As Table 13 shows, 76 per cent had served for less than ten years, while only 24 per cent had served for more than ten years.

TABLE 13

#### NUMBER OF YEARS ELECTED WOMEN HAVE HELD POSITIONS

Number of Years	Percentage of Total (N 317)
1-5	38%
6-10	39
11-15	13
16-20	7
More than 20	<u>4</u>
	101%

### Previous Experience

There were only twenty-one women who had served or were serving in elective positions on the national level, that is as U.S. Senators or Representatives. Only eight of the women, or 38 per cent, had had previous experience in an elective position on the state level. Of the eight with previous experience, seven had served as state legislators, and one had served as Secretary of State in her home state.

### Party Officials

The 72 per cent of the female elite who were party officials represented 1401 women, 13 per cent of whom held positions on the national level. The other 87 per cent held positions in the

state and local party organizations (see Table 14).

TABLE 14

LEVEL OF PARTY ORGANIZATION IN WHICH  
FEMALE PARTY OFFICIALS  
HELD POSITIONS

Level of Party Organization	Percentage of Total (N 1401)
National level	13%
State and local level	87
	<u>100%</u>

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<sup>1</sup>Population ranks of states as reported by the Council of State Governments in The Book of the States: 1970-71, Vol. XVIII (Lexington, Ken.: Council of State Governments, 1970), pp. 562-611.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESES

#### Marital Status and Family Size

One of the hypotheses made at the beginning of this study was as follows: Women in the political elite are likely to be married and to have children. The data presented in the Statistical Profile confirms this hypothesis. Married women accounted for 73 per cent of the women in the study. When those who had been married but were widowed or divorced are included, the figure becomes 90 per cent. Only 10 per cent of the women had never been married. In 1971 the figures for women in the general population were as follows: 71 per cent married, 13 per cent widowed, 4 per cent divorced, and 12 per cent single.<sup>1</sup> In terms of marital status, then, women who occupy positions of political power do not differ greatly from other women. In addition, 77 per cent of the women had one or more children. These findings tend to contradict the belief by some that politics is the province only of single "career" women who have no family responsibilities.

There are differences, however, in the marital situations of some of the sub-groups within the female elite. Table 15 reveals that certain political positions are more likely to be filled by single, widowed, or divorced women. The most striking example of this is the position of staff member, that is those who serve on the staffs of congressmen or senators. Only about 41 per



TABLE 15  
 MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE;  
 BY POLITICAL POSITION

Marital Status	Party Official (N=1404)	Presidential Appointee (N=33)	Cabinet or Sub- cabinet Member (N=10)	Mayor (N=2)	City Councilman (N=17)	State Legislator (N=270)	Elected State Official (N=25)	U.S. Representa- tive (N=18)	U.S. Senator (N=3)	Staff Member (N=98)	State Appointee (N=41)	Other (N=27)
Married	79%	58%	60%	50%	71%	64%	40%	50%	33%	41%	73%	67%
Single	8	24	10	0	0	11	24	0	0	37	12	11
Widowed	10	15	20	50	30	20	32	44	67	8	7	7
Divorced	$\frac{4}{101\%}$	$\frac{3}{100\%}$	$\frac{10}{100\%}$	$\frac{0}{100\%}$	$\frac{0}{101\%}$	$\frac{5}{100\%}$	$\frac{4}{100\%}$	$\frac{6}{100\%}$	$\frac{0}{100\%}$	$\frac{14}{100\%}$	$\frac{7}{99\%}$	$\frac{15}{100\%}$

cent of these women were married, while about 37 per cent were single, 8 per cent were widowed, and 14 per cent were divorced. Of the women who held elective state offices other than legislators, only 40 per cent were married, while 24 per cent were single, 32 per cent widowed, and 4 per cent divorced. Presidential appointees were also more likely than most other groups to be single women. These three positions contrast sharply with the figures for women who held positions in the political party organizations. About 79 per cent of the party officials were married; only 8 per cent were single, 10 per cent were widowed, and 4 per cent were divorced. Table 16 reveals that women in the same three political positions are also less likely to have more than two children; one-fourth or less of the women in those categories had two or more children. More than 40 per cent of the women in those three categories had no children. Of course, part of the great number of childless women can be accounted for by those who were single, but not all of them. However, it is clear that certain political positions are more compatible with marriage and family responsibilities. Those positions which have a greater percentage of single and childless women are positions which are full-time occupations. Certainly a position in the party organizations, which would require only part-time responsibilities, would be more attractive to a married woman who was interested in politics but had no need for a full-time job. Also, in this society the wife is expected to take care of the house and raise the children in addition to any outside occupation, so a part-time position would obviously be more attractive

TABLE 16  
FAMILY SIZE OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE;  
BY POLITICAL POSITION

Number of Children			
None	19%		Party Official (N=1405)
1 or 2	42%		Presidential Appointee (N=33)
	20%		Cabinet or Sub- cabinet Member (N=10)
	0%		Mayor (N=2)
	24%		City Councilman (N=17)
	25%		State Legislator (N=273)
	42%		Elected State Official (N=26)
	17%		U.S. Representa- tive (N=18)
	67%		U.S. Senator (N=3)
	62%		Staff Member (N=99)
	27%		State Appointee (N=41)
	26%		Other (N=27)
More than 2	$\frac{40}{100\%}$	$\frac{25}{100\%}$	$\frac{30}{100\%}$
	$\frac{100}{100\%}$	$\frac{52}{100\%}$	$\frac{36}{100\%}$
	$\frac{20}{100\%}$	$\frac{27}{100\%}$	$\frac{33}{100\%}$
	$\frac{9}{100\%}$	$\frac{36}{100\%}$	$\frac{22}{100\%}$

to a married woman. On the other hand, single women must support themselves and therefore may be more likely to be found in full-time "career" positions. Widows and divorced women may also need full-time occupations by which they can support themselves and their children. Even if they do not need to work, it may be that they feel more free in some cases to seek and accept full-time positions than married women whose husbands sometimes object to "working wives."

A breakdown of the female party officials into those serving on the national level and those serving on the state and local levels reveals that women in the national organizations are significantly less likely to be married, are more likely to be childless, and are less likely to have more than two children (see Tables 17 and 18). Again the explanation may lie in the increased amount of time and effort needed to carry out responsibilities at the national level, as well as the necessity for periodic travel. Another breakdown of the group into those whose positions were

TABLE 17

MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE PARTY  
ORGANIZATIONS; BY LEVEL  
OF ORGANIZATION

Marital Status	National Level (N=183)	State and Local Level (N=1217)
Married	66%	80%
Single	15	7
Widowed	13	9
Divorced	6	4
	100%	100%

TABLE 18  
 FAMILY SIZE OF WOMEN IN THE PARTY  
 ORGANIZATIONS; BY LEVEL  
 OF ORGANIZATION

Number of Children	National Level (N=183)	State and Local Level (N=1218)
None	32%	17%
1 or 2	41	40
More than 2	27	43
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

elective and those whose were nonelective reveals a different pattern, as shown in Table 19. Elected women were less likely to

TABLE 19  
 MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL  
 ELITE; BY ELECTIVE OR NONELECTIVE  
 STATUS OF POSITION

Marital Status	Elected (N=335)	Nonelected (N=1613)
Married	62%	75%
Single	10	10
Widowed	23	10
Divorced	5	5
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

be married, but were not more likely to be single or divorced; they were significantly more likely to be widows. This finding tends to lend some credence to the idea that some women build successful political careers upon their "inheritances" of their husbands' political positions. Table 20 reveals a slight tendency for the elected women to have fewer children than the women in nonelective positions.

TABLE 20

FAMILY SIZE OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL  
ELITE; BY ELECTIVE OR NONELECTIVE  
STATUS OF POSITION

Number of Children	Elected (N=339)	Nonelected (N=1616)
None	26%	22%
1 or 2	39	40
More than 2	35	38
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table 21 reveals an interesting finding concerning the marital statuses of the members of the two major parties. Democratic women in the political elite were less likely to be married than

TABLE 21

MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL  
ELITE; BY PARTY AFFILIATION

Marital Status	Democrat (N=839)	Republican (N=1026)	Other (N=77)
Married	69%	76%	82%
Single	13	8	10
Widowed	13	12	4
Divorced	6	5	4
	<u>101%</u>	<u>101%</u>	<u>100%</u>

the Republican women, and were more likely to be single. A partial explanation for this finding may be the slight tendency for more of the Democratic women to be in their twenties and thus not as likely to be married. However, the total number of women in the study who were in their twenties is so small that it would not greatly affect the number of Democratic women who were married

or single. It might also be noted that a greater percentage of the Democratic women were in elective positions than were Republican women, and that women in elective positions were less likely to be married than women in nonelective positions. One might also speculate that women in the more liberal Democratic party are less bound by "traditional" roles and therefore less likely to feel it necessary to marry. It seems likely that a combination of these factors might explain the differences in the marital statuses of the Democratic and Republican women.

### Age

A second hypothesis concerns the age at which the women in the study held their first political position: Women in the political elite are likely to hold their first political position after their child-rearing years. This hypothesis is based upon the assumption that women might tend to delay their entrance into the political world until their children had been raised and their family responsibilities reduced. It is difficult to determine at exactly what age a woman's child-rearing years are over, but it seems safe to assume that most women's family responsibilities are at a minimum by the time they are in their forties. One would not expect a great many women to hold their first political position before the age of thirty, that is at a time when those who want children are in the process of starting their families.

As previously reported, the data on the women as a whole reveals that the single largest percentage of women, 32 per cent, held their first position when they were in their thirties, with the next largest percentage, 22 per cent, being women who held their first position in their forties. Ten per cent were in their fifties or sixties before they held their first political position, while 22 per cent held their first position before the age of thirty. There is some indication, then, that a sizable percentage of women hold their first position after they have raised their children and presumably have more free time. But at the same time, almost one-fourth of the women entered politics before the age of thirty.

A closer examination reveals, however, that single women



were much more likely to have held their first position while in their twenties than was any other group. Table 22 shows that single women were twice as likely to have entered politics during

TABLE 22

AGES AT WHICH WOMEN HELD FIRST POLITICAL POSITION;  
IN AGE CATEGORIES BY MARITAL STATUS

Age Category	Married (N=1424)	Single (N=197)	Widowed (N=234)	Divorced (N=96)
20-29	19%	38%	10%	24%
30-39	35	23	21	34
40-49	24	11	20	20
50-59	7	5	16	6
60-69	1	2	6	1
Under 20 and no age listed	$\frac{14}{100\%}$	$\frac{22}{101\%}$	$\frac{28}{101\%}$	$\frac{15}{100\%}$

their twenties than were married women. Widows, on the other hand, were about three times as likely to have held their first political position when they were in their fifties or sixties than were the other groups. It seems reasonable to assume that this later entrance into politics on the part of widows is due to the greater amount of free time they would have after their children are grown and they no longer have even a husband to take care of. It is possible that some of these women would never have held a political position had they not been widowed.

It should be noted that the ages reported were those at which the women first held a political position. Most of them had prob-

ably been interested and involved in politics much earlier in their lives. But what is of interest here is the point at which a woman becomes a part of the political elite. The data suggests that a woman's marital status and family responsibilities have some influence on the age at which she becomes interested and involved enough to attain some political position.

It was also hypothesized that women in the political elite are likely to hold their first political position at a later age than men in the political elite. The hypothesis is based on the assumption that marital and family responsibilities would have less effect on a man's participation in politics. In American society the wife has traditionally assumed more of the responsibilities connected with maintaining a home and raising children, and many hold outside jobs as well, leaving them less free time for political activity. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find data on the entrance age of men into the political elite. There is a great deal of data, however, on the ages of men in political positions, and that data suggests overwhelmingly that the male elite tends to be middle-aged, that is in their forties or fifties. Slightly over half of the women in this study were in their forties or fifties, while one-quarter were older. A breakdown of the elite into sub-groups may prove more helpful in determining what differences there are in the ages of the men and women who are in positions of political influence.

Donald R. Matthews' study of U.S. Senators revealed that the average Senator was in his mid-fifties.<sup>2</sup> The median age of the membership of the House has gradually risen to a median age of 52

in the 79th Congress.<sup>3</sup> A more recent study of the House revealed relatively little change in this finding since 1945.<sup>4</sup> Data gathered for various studies on state legislators suggests a median age of around 50.<sup>5</sup> A sample of American party officials revealed that they are a somewhat younger group.<sup>6</sup> The largest group of officials were those aged 35 to 44, with the next largest group being those aged 45 to 54. Three-fourths of the party officials were over the age of 35.

Table 23 shows the age distribution of some of the sub-groups of the female elite. The small number of female senators in the study and the fact that only one was an active member of that body at the time the data was gathered makes it difficult to make any real comparison. Margaret Chase Smith was in her seventies during her last term of office, and was therefore older than the "average" senator; she was 52 when she entered the Senate and thus not far from the average. The data on the congresswomen suggests that they are somewhat older than their male counterparts. The fact that some of the eighteen congresswomen were retired from Congress at the time of the study probably contributed to the tendency toward a higher age. The average age of the women was 61; however, the most frequently found age category was ages 50 to 59. The data indicates that the average woman in Congress is not substantially older than the average man in Congress.

Female state legislators show a slight tendency to be older than their male counterparts, as Table 23 reveals. The median age of the male legislators was 50, suggesting that as many legislators were younger than 50 as were older. However, for the female

TABLE 23

AGES OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE;  
BY POLITICAL POSITION

Age Category	Party Officials (N=1405)	State Legislators (N=273)	U.S. Congresswomen (N=18)
20-29	2%	1%	0%
30-39	10	6	0
40-49	29	15	17
50-59	29	29	22
60-69	16	19	17
70-79	8	12	17
80-89	1	2	6
Under 20 and no age listed	$\frac{6}{101\%}$	$\frac{16}{100\%}$	$\frac{22}{101\%}$

legislators, about 62 per cent, or well over half, were 50 years of age or older; only 22 per cent were in their twenties, thirties, or forties. The tendency for the female elite to be older is also confirmed by a comparison of female party officials with the sample of American party officials in general. While 75 per cent of the party officials in general were over the age of 35, about 82 per cent of the women in this study were over the age of 40. Because of the differences in the age categories used in each study, it is difficult to compare the two groups. Also, part of the difference might be explained by the inclusion in the first study of ward leaders and above, while this study included only women serving at the county level and above. It seems safe to assume that

the inclusion of party officials at a lower level might result in a younger sample. Despite these differences, it appears that there may be a tendency for women in the party organizations to be slightly older than the men in similar positions.

The original hypothesis, that women in the political elite hold their first political position at a later age than men in the political elite, remains to be proven or disproven. There does appear to be a slight tendency for the female elite to be older than the male elite. Whether this results from a tendency on the part of women to become involved in politics later in life than men remains for some future study to resolve.

### Party Affiliation

Another proposition made concerning the female elite was that there is no significant trend in party affiliation; women in politics are as likely to be Democrats as they are Republicans. The results previously reported in the Statistical Profile have shown this hypothesis to be untrue. Women in the political elite are more likely to be Republicans than Democrats. The hypothesis was based upon the assumption that the majority of the female elite is in the party organizations, that the two parties are equally open to women, and that therefore the women holding political positions would be equally divided between the two parties. However, the party which is in the minority among the general population was the majority party among the female elite. Over half of the women in the study, 53 per cent, were Republicans, 43 per cent were Democrats, and 4 per cent listed a third party affiliation. These figures are in contrast to the findings of a survey by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan in 1968 in which 55 per cent of the voters identified themselves with the Democratic Party, and only 33 per cent with the Republican Party; of the remainder, 11 per cent were Independents and 1 per cent was apolitical.<sup>7</sup>

Further examination of the data on party affiliation reveals some differences between the Democratic women and the Republican women. Table 24 shows the differences in the types of political positions held by the two groups. The Democratic women were more likely to be in elective positions than were the Republican women. They were less likely, therefore, to be in nonelective positions.

TABLE 24

TYPE OF POLITICAL POSITION HELD BY  
WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE;  
BY PARTY AFFILIATION

Type of Position	Democrat (N=840)	Republican (N=1030)	Other (N=76)
Elective	20%	16%	4%
Nonelective	80	84	96
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

A closer examination reveals that the Republican women were more likely to be found holding positions in their party organizations; three-fourths of the Republican women in the study were party officials, compared with the two-thirds of the Democratic women in the study who held positions in their party. The greater tendency for Republican women to be a part of their party organizations may indicate a greater openness on the part of the Republican Party toward women. It may be that the Republican Party, because of its minority party status, is more receptive toward women who wish to volunteer their time and efforts. Whatever the explanation, it is clear that a greater percentage of Republican women who hold political positions owe their status to the party organizations than do Democratic women. The Democratic women appear to be more likely than the Republican women to hold elective offices. The women in parties other than the two major ones were overwhelmingly in nonelective positions because most were members of the Democratic Free Labor Party of Minnesota and were serving in the party organizations on the state or local level.

A further analysis of women in the party organizations re-

veals that even though the Republican women are more likely to hold positions in their party, they are somewhat less likely than the Democratic women to hold such a position on the national level. Table 25 shows the slight difference between women party officials in the two major parties. The data on the few women who were members of parties other than the two major ones shows that an even

TABLE 25

LEVEL OF PARTY ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH WOMEN  
HELD OFFICE; BY PARTY AFFILIATION

Level of Party Organization	Democrat (N=561)	Republican (N=768)	Other (N=71)
National	15%	12%	4%
State and Local	85	88	96
	100%	100%	100%

smaller percentage of them held positions on the national level. The category included members of the Communist and Socialist Parties, Independents, and members of parties in the U.S. Territories, some of whom were officials in their national party organizations. However, it should be noted once again that most of the women who listed a party affiliation other than Democrat or Republican were members of the Democratic Free Labor Party which exists only in the state of Minnesota.

There are also differences in the religious affiliations of Democratic and Republican women. As Table 26 reveals, the vast majority of Republican women, 81 per cent, were Protestants, with only about 10 per cent being Catholic and 1 per cent Jewish. In contrast, of the Democratic women, 60 per cent were Protestant,



TABLE 26

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL  
ELITE; BY PARTY AFFILIATION

Religious Affiliation	Democrat (N=841)	Republican (N=1030)	Other (N=77)
Protestant	60%	81%	44%
Catholic	23	10	36
Jew	5	1	4
Other	1	0	0
None listed	12	9	16
	<u>101%</u>	<u>101%</u>	<u>100%</u>

23 per cent were Catholic, and 5 per cent were Jewish. A further examination of the relationship between religion and party affiliation will be deferred until the discussion of religious affiliation.

Table 27 reveals that Democratic women in politics are less likely than their Republican counterparts to be housewives. And they are slightly more likely to hold all the other occupations listed except "medicine." Part of the explanation of this finding might be found in Table 21 (see p. 31), which shows that the Democratic women were less likely to be married and more likely to be single. Certainly it would not be likely that single women would be housewives. Also, the Democratic women were somewhat more likely to be widowed or divorced, and therefore might be more likely to hold occupations. In addition, it is generally accepted that members of the Republican Party tend to be better off financially than members of the Democratic Party; it may be that more of the Democratic women have a need to work.

Table 28 shows another difference between the Democratic fe-

TABLE 27

OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL  
ELITE; BY PARTY AFFILIATION

Occupation	Democrat (N=804)	Republican (N=1002)	Other (N=73)
Housewife	32%	41%	26%
Clerical work	16	16	27
Education	17	13	23
Business	15	14	6
Journalism	6	4	1
Law	5	3	3
Medicine	2	3	6
Social services	2	1	1
Performing and fine arts	1	1	3
Other	3	2	4
None	2	1	0
	<u>101%</u>	<u>99%</u>	<u>100%</u>

TABLE 28

NUMBER OF NONPOLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH  
WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE ARE  
MEMBERS; BY PARTY AFFILIATION

Number of Organizations	Democrat (N=839)	Republican (N=1026)	Other (N=76)
None	15%	14%	12%
1	11	10	12
2	13	11	18
3	10	13	18
4 or more	51	52	40
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

male elite and the Republican female elite. Republican women are slightly more likely to be members of a greater number of nonpolitical organizations. Although the difference is slight, it is possible that the Republican women enjoy a higher social status and are therefore more likely to be "joiners."

## Membership in Nonpolitical Organizations

The correlation between membership in nonpolitical organizations and political participation has long been recognized. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba in The Civic Culture, for example, found that "those who are members of a nonpolitical organization are more likely to feel subjectively competent to influence government than are those who belong to no organization."<sup>8</sup> Further, they found that "the members of more than one organization show even higher competence than those whose affiliation is limited to one."<sup>9</sup> It would be reasonable to speculate that those who belong to a greater number of organizations and feel more competent to influence government would be more likely to be among the political elite. To say it another way, members of the political elite by definition are those who feel competent to influence the government and therefore may be likely to be members of nonpolitical organizations. Thus it may be hypothesized that women in the political elite are likely to be members of nonpolitical associations to a greater extent than the general population.

The data on the women in the study revealed that 85 per cent belonged to at least one organization. What is even more significant is that over half, 51 per cent, belonged to four or more organizations. Almond and Verba found that only 57 per cent of their national cross-section sample in the United States belonged to one or more organizations, and only 9 per cent belonged to four or more organizations.<sup>10</sup> One may conclude then that the hypothesis is correct; women in politics do belong to nonpolitical organizations to a greater extent than the general population. It may be stated

further that they are more politically competent than the general population. One might look toward women who are active in non-political organizations for future women politicians.

It might be of interest to determine some of the factors which influence the number of organizations of which a woman is likely to be a member. As noted previously, there was only a slight difference between the Democratic and Republican women as to the number of nonpolitical organizations to which they belonged (see Table 28, p. 44). Party affiliation appears to have little influence on a woman's tendency to join organizations. One factor which does have some influence is marital status. As Table 29 reveals, married women tend to belong to a greater number of non-

TABLE 29

NUMBER OF NONPOLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH  
WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE ARE  
MEMBERS; BY MARITAL STATUS

Number of Organizations	Married (N=1419)	Single (N=194)	Widowed (N=234)	Divorced (N=96)
None	14%	19%	11%	24%
1	10	14	12	14
2	13	9	9	14
3	13	13	8	8
4 or more	<u>51</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>41</u>
	101%	100%	102%	101%

political organizations than single women. But widowed women tend to belong to an even greater number than married women, while divorced women belong to even fewer than do single women. Table 30 shows that women who had occupations outside the home tended to belong to more organizations than the housewives. Married and

TABLE 30

NUMBER OF NONPOLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH  
WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE ARE  
MEMBERS; BY OCCUPATION

Number of Organizations	Housewife (N=685)	Clerical work (N=315)	Education (N=286)	Business (N=259)	Journalism (N=95)	Law (N=72)	Medicine (N=47)	Social Services (N=31)	Performing and fine arts (N=15)	Other (N=48)	None (N=30)
None	17%	14%	9%	9%	8%	7%	11%	10%	7%	10%	40%
1	12	15	8	8	10	6	11	3	7	15	13
2	12	15	10	10	12	6	13	16	13	17	20
3	13	14	11	14	13	3	2	10	13	17	10
4 or more	<u>46</u> 100%	<u>44</u> 102%	<u>62</u> 100%	<u>60</u> 101%	<u>58</u> 101%	<u>79</u> 101%	<u>64</u> 101%	<u>61</u> 100%	<u>60</u> 100%	<u>42</u> 101%	<u>17</u> 100%

widowed women who work outside the home would appear to be the likeliest groups to belong to a great number of organizations.

Another factor which appears to influence a woman's membership in nonpolitical organizations is her education level. Table 31 reveals that with the exception of the small group of women who

TABLE 31

NUMBER OF NONPOLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE ARE MEMBERS; BY EDUCATION LEVEL

Number of organizations	Did not complete high school (N=25)	High school graduate (N=326)	Attended college, no degree (N=698)	College graduate (N=585)	Advanced degree(s) (N=232)
None	16%	16%	13%	15%	9%
1	8	15	12	9	7
2	12	16	13	11	8
3	12	16	13	11	7
4 or more	<u>52</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>70</u>
	100%	100%	101%	100%	101%

did not graduate from high school, the percentage of women belonging to four or more organizations increases as the education level increases. In the last group, those women holding advanced degrees, 70 per cent belonged to four or more such organizations.

Another factor which might be considered is religion. However, a woman's religious affiliation does not appear to have a great deal of influence on her tendency to join organizations. Table 32 shows the small differences among the three major religious groups in the United States. There are only a few percentage points difference among those belonging to four or more nonpolitical organizations. There are only small differences in all the

TABLE 32

NUMBER OF NONPOLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH  
WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE ARE MEMBERS;  
BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Number of Organizations	Protestant (N=1362)	Catholic (N=315)	Jew (N=57)
None	12%	13%	21%
1	11	11	7
2	11	15	11
3	13	11	5
4 or more	<u>53</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>56</u>
	100%	100%	100%

categories between the Protestant and Catholic women. However, while the Jewish women have a somewhat higher percentage of their number who are members of four or more organizations, they also have a larger percentage who report belonging to no organizations. It would appear that Jewish women are the most likely to join nonpolitical organizations, followed by the Protestant women and the Catholic women in that order. Thus it would seem that the factors which most affect a woman's tendency to belong to organizations are her marital status, her occupation, and her education level; party affiliation and religion seem to influence such membership to a lesser degree.

Another interesting relationship is that between membership in nonpolitical associations and the political positions held by the women. The women in the study who were elected to the positions they held were much more likely to belong to four or more organizations than were women in nonelective positions. Table 33 shows the differences between the two groups. It is unlikely that a woman's membership in organizations affects her political



TABLE 33

NUMBER OF NONPOLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH  
WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE ARE  
MEMBERS; BY ELECTIVE OR NON-  
ELECTIVE STATUS OF POSITION

Number of Organizations	Elective (N=339)	Nonelective (N=1609)
None	10%	15%
1	9	11
2	8	13
3	11	12
4 or more	63	49
	<u>101%</u>	<u>100%</u>

position directly, or that her position affects her membership. It seems more likely that the same personality characteristics which make women "joiners" also make them more likely to run for a political office. It may also be that the greater feeling of political competence associated with membership in nonpolitical organizations has some bearing on a woman's decision to run for elective office. However, it should also be noted that women in elective positions generally have a higher education level, which may also partially explain their tendency to belong to a greater number of nonpolitical organizations.

### Education

A number of hypotheses were made concerning the education level of the female elite. The first was that women in the political elite are likely to be high school graduates and to have had some post-high school education. The data reported previously showed that only about 1 per cent of the women in the study had not graduated from high school, and about 78 per cent had at least some post-high school education. Almost one-third were college graduates, and 12 per cent held at least one advanced degree. The female elite, then, is considerably better educated than the general population. In 1970 the median years of school completed for the population as a whole were 12.2, and only 11 per cent had completed four or more years of college.<sup>11</sup>

A second hypothesis about the education levels of the women was as follows: Women in elective positions are likely to have a higher level of education than women in the party organizations. Table 34 indicates that this hypothesis is true. Women in elec-

TABLE 34

EDUCATION LEVEL OF WOMEN IN ELECTIVE POSITIONS  
AND IN THE PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Education Level	Elected Women (N=323)	Party Officials (N=1349)
Did not complete high school	2%	1%
High school graduate	16	19
Attended college, no degree	29	40
College graduate	32	31
Advanced degree(s)	22	9
	<u>101%</u>	<u>100%</u>

tive positions were slightly more likely to have college degrees and much more likely to hold advanced degrees. Over half, or 54 per cent, of the women holding elective positions were college graduates or higher, while well over half of the party officials, or 60 per cent, had less than a college education terminating with a degree. The hypothesis is based upon the assumption that one's education is a factor in being elected to a political office. Since elected officials tend to be better educated than their constituencies, this seemed to be a valid assumption.

A related hypothesis is that women in national elective positions are likely to have a higher education level than women elected to state positions. As Table 35 shows, of the women in the

TABLE 35

EDUCATION LEVEL OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL  
AND STATE ELECTIVE POSITIONS

Education Level	National Position (N=20)	State Position (N=284)
Did not complete high school	0%	1%
High school graduate	5	17
Attended college, no degree	20	30
College graduate	30	32
Advanced degree(s)	45	20
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

study who had been elected to a national position in the House or Senate, almost half had advanced degrees, compared to only 20 per cent of the women elected to state positions. Only one of the nationally elected women, representing 5 per cent, had not at least attended college, while 18 per cent of the women in

state offices had not. It would appear, then, that women who are successful on the national level are better educated than those elected on the state level.

It might also be expected that women who are part of the national party organizations are likely to have a higher education level than women in the state or local party organizations. This hypothesis also seems to hold true, as can be seen in Table 36. About half, or 49 per cent, of the women in the national par-

TABLE 36

EDUCATION LEVEL OF WOMEN IN THE PARTY ORGANIZATIONS;  
BY LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION IN WHICH  
POSITION IS HELD

Education Level	National Level (N=174)	State and Local Level (N=1171)
Did not complete high school	0%	2%
High school graduate	8	21
Attended college, no degree	43	40
College graduate	39	29
Advanced degree(s)	10	8
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

ty organizations had college degrees or advanced degrees, compared with 37 per cent of the women in the state and local organizations. And while 23 per cent of the state and local party officials had never attended college, only 8 per cent of the national party officials had not. Thus it seems that a woman's education level may be a factor in determining the level to which she will rise in the party organizations.

A final hypothesis which was made concerning the educational attainments of the women was the following: Women in the various

political positions are likely to be as highly educated as their male counterparts. Analysis of this hypothesis, of course, requires data on the male elite in various political positions. Data which was available allows the examination of three separate groups: members of Congress, state legislators, and party officials. Table 37 shows the figures for the women in each of these groups.

TABLE 37  
EDUCATION LEVEL OF WOMEN IN SELECTED  
GROUPS OF THE FEMALE ELITE

Education Level	Party Officials (N=1349)	State Legislators (N=259)	Congress- women (N=17)
Did not complete high school	1%	2%	0%
High school graduate	19	17	6
Attended college, no degree	40	29	18
College graduate	31	32	24
Advanced degree(s)	9	21	53
	<u>100%</u>	<u>101%</u>	<u>101%</u>

At the time when the biographical information was collected on the women there were only three women who were classified as U.S. Senators, and two of the three were retired. Margaret Chase Smith has since been defeated in an election, so at present there is no woman serving in the Senate. Of the three former Senators, two had college degrees and one had attended college but received no degree. Donald R. Matthews in his study of the Senate found that 84 per cent of the Senators from 1947 to 1957 had attended college. Forty-five per cent attended both undergraduate school and law school, and an additional 8 per cent had attended some other form of graduate school.<sup>12</sup> Obviously, the three female sena-

tors had a lower education level than their male counterparts. It should be noted that in the past, female senators were very often widows who were appointed to complete their deceased husbands' terms. Even in the case of Margaret Chase Smith, her original success in election was based upon her husband's success. One might speculate that any future female senators will not be elected on the basis of their relationship to a man, but on the basis of their own merit. Then one might expect those women to have attained an education level equal to that which male senators have, and which seems to be expected of those running for such a high office.

Of the eighteen women who were or had been members of the House, there was information available on seventeen. Over half of the seventeen held advanced degrees. Another 24 per cent had college degrees, and 18 per cent had attended college without receiving a degree. Matthews, in another study of "decision-makers," found that in 1941 to 1951, 87 per cent of the members of the House of Representatives had attended college.<sup>13</sup> It would appear, then, that Congresswomen have a slightly lower level of education than Congressmen.

Comparison of the female state legislators with their male colleagues is more difficult, for the education level of state legislators varies from state to state. About 82 per cent of the women serving in the state legislatures had attended college; 32 per cent had earned degrees and 21 per cent held advanced degrees. Data gathered on state legislators in the late 1950's and early 1960's indicates that the women legislators are as well educated

as the men. Two-thirds to three-fourths of the members of the Missouri, Indiana, and Iowa legislatures had attended college. Over 50 per cent of the members of the Indiana General Assembly in 1961 were college graduates.<sup>14</sup> A study of Pennsylvania legislators and their opponents in the 1958 election for the legislature indicates a somewhat lower level of education. Only 32 per cent were college graduates, with an additional 14 per cent having attended college with no degree. It should be pointed out that the candidates who were not elected had a slightly lower level than those who were elected, resulting in a somewhat lower set of percentages than would be obtained by including only the elected candidates. However, the differences were slight and would not substantially alter the findings.<sup>15</sup> It seems clear that in general the women who serve in the state legislatures are as well educated as the men with whom they serve.

The final group of women to be compared with their male colleagues is the party officials. Unfortunately, the only information available is a study carried out in the late 1960's which itself included women party officials in its sample. Obviously a sample of which one-third were women cannot be used to represent male party officials in comparison with female party officials. However, it might be of some value to compare the two groups, keeping in mind that one is entirely female and the other two-thirds male. Of the sample of American party officials in the 1969 survey, 27 per cent were high school graduates or less, 19 per cent had one to three years of college, 25 per cent were college graduates, and 29 per cent had advanced degrees.<sup>16</sup> Of the

women party officials in this study, 20 per cent had a high school education or less, 40 per cent had attended college but did not graduate, 31 per cent were college graduates, and 9 per cent held advanced degrees. Comparison of the two groups indicates that the women are not as highly educated as the other group, particularly in the percentage of each group which had advanced degrees. Also, 54 per cent of the other group, and only 39 per cent of the women, were college graduates or higher. These figures would seem to indicate that women party officials may be less well educated than men party officials.

Because it is necessary to depend on other sources for data on the male elite, and because such data is sometimes in a form which makes comparison with the female elite difficult, one cannot reach a definite conclusion as to the validity of the hypothesis under discussion. However, the data which is available indicates that the female elite, although very well educated in comparison with the general public, is probably not as highly educated as the male elite. The exception to this conclusion is the women serving in the state legislatures, who appear to be as highly educated as their male colleagues. It is likely that in the future, as women graduate from colleges at the same rate as men and attend graduate and law schools in greater numbers, that one might expect the education levels of women in the general public as well as women in political positions to rise to the levels of men.



### Occupation

Another hypothesis concerning the female political elite is as follows: Women in the political elite are likely to come from the fields of education, business, or clerical work. It was assumed that the women who held positions outside the home would be likely to be found in those occupations which have traditionally been most open to women. As might have been expected, the Statistical Profile showed that the largest percentage of women, 35 per cent, were housewives. Among those women who listed occupations, only three occupational categories had substantial numbers, those categories being clerical work, education, and business; these three occupations were held by 16 per cent, 15 per cent, and 13 per cent of the women respectively. Clerical work and teaching are occupations which have been traditionally accepted as "proper" for women. And while business might be considered a less traditional occupation for women, the inclusion of real estate and insurance personnel, and women who are self-employed, makes it a field which has been more open to women than many others have been.

A second hypothesis concerning the occupations of women politicians may be made as follows: Women in elective positions are more likely to have had a previous occupation other than "housewife" than are women in nonelective positions. Table 38 indicates that there is a tendency for elected women not to be housewives to a greater extent than nonelected women, but the difference between the two groups is not great. It would appear that a woman's occupation or lack of one has only a slight effect on the likelihood

TABLE 38

OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN IN ELECTIVE AND  
NONELECTIVE POSITIONS

Occupation	Elective Position (N=321)	Nonelective Position (N=1564)
Housewife	32%	37%
Other than housewife	68	63
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

that she will be found in an elective position.

Because women have traditionally entered only certain occupations, and have not entered others to any great degree, it may be hypothesized that women in the political elite are likely to have different occupations than the male elite. This proposition would appear to be confirmed by the data collected for this study (see Table 39). Comparative information on the occupational categories from which the male elite is drawn can be found for the following groups: Senators, Representatives, and state legislators.

As might be expected, the principal occupation of U.S. Senators is law. In Matthews' study of the Senate he found that about half of the Senators between 1947 and 1957 were lawyers.<sup>17</sup> The other half included business executives, farmers, journalists, and professors. Of the three women in the study who were Senators, one was a housewife, one was an educator, and one was a journalist.

Members of the House of Representatives also tend to be lawyers. Of those serving in the House from 1957 to 1959, 54 per cent were lawyers, 18 per cent were businessmen, and the others

TABLE 39  
OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN IN SELECTED GROUPS  
OF THE FEMALE ELITE

Occupation	Party Officials (N=1369)	State Legislators (N=257)	Congress- women (N=17)	Senators (N=3)
Housewife	41%	35%	18%	33%
Clerical work	18	10	0	0
Education	15	18	12	33
Business	14	14	6	0
Journalism	4	7	12	33
Law	2	9	35	0
Medicine	3	3	0	0
Social services	2	2	6	0
Performing and fine arts	1	0	6	0
Other	3	2	0	0
None	0	0	6	0
	103%	100%	101%	99%

were divided among the fields of education, journalism, and radio, farming, and public service.<sup>18</sup> Although law was the occupation of more of the Congresswomen than any other single occupation, only 35 per cent were lawyers. Eighteen per cent were housewives, 12 per cent were journalists, and another 12 per cent were educators; the remainder were in the performing arts, business, and the social services.

There are a variety of figures on the occupational groups in the state legislatures. One study, which included state legis-

lators from thirteen states in the decade from 1925 to 1935, found that 28 per cent of the legislators were lawyers, 22 per cent farmers, 25 per cent businessmen, and 6 per cent lower-level white-collar workers and laborers.<sup>19</sup> A study of the Washington State Legislature found that in the decade from 1941 to 1951, farmers were the largest single occupational group with around 20 per cent, followed closely by lawyers, who accounted for about 16 per cent of the legislators. However, when all the categories connected with business were added together, they accounted for about 32 per cent of the legislators.<sup>20</sup> In the Massachusetts House of Representatives during the 1951-52 session, 26 per cent of the members were lawyers, 25 per cent were the heads of businesses, with an additional 10 per cent in insurance and real estate, 13 per cent were professionals or semi-professionals, and 26 per cent were employees in large organizations or were unemployed.<sup>21</sup> It would appear that lawyers and businessmen are the largest occupational groups among the male state legislators. In contrast, the two largest occupational groups among female state legislators are housewives and educators, representing 35 per cent and 18 per cent of the women respectively. Businesswomen make up 14 per cent of the female legislators, a figure which is much lower than that for businessmen, who usually make up one-fourth or more of the male legislators. Only 9 per cent of the women serving in state legislatures are lawyers in contrast with the higher figures for men.

Although there are no figures available on the breakdown of occupational groups in the party organizations, it can be stated

with some degree of certainty that there would be differences between the male officials and the female officials. One difference is the 41 per cent of the women holding positions in the parties who are housewives. Obviously none of the men in the party organizations would be housewives. It is also unlikely that a large percentage of men would hold clerical positions, while 18 per cent of the women do clerical work, making up the second largest occupational group. Only 14 per cent of the female party officials were occupied in the business world, and only 2 per cent were lawyers. One would certainly expect a greater percentage of the men involved in politics on this level to be businessmen and lawyers.

Law is the field of endeavor which is most often connected by many people with a political career, particularly with an elective political career at the state or national level. Only 4 per cent of the women holding political positions are lawyers, and even though the percentage is larger for certain positions, it never reaches the level of male lawyers. The explanation for this lack of female lawyers is simple: only 3 per cent of the lawyers in this country are women.<sup>22</sup> Because of the small number of female lawyers, one would not expect a large percentage of the women in politics to be lawyers. However, the larger percentage of lawyers in some positions, particularly among Congresswomen, strongly suggests that law is indeed the occupation which those recruiting candidates and those voting for candidates consider an appropriate one. Whether the small number of women who choose law as a career is due to a lack of interest and ambition on the

part of women or to discrimination toward women seeking entry into law schools, it might be predicted that the number will rise in the future. And as the number of female lawyers increases, it may be expected that the percentage of lawyers among women holding political positions will increase also.

### Religious Affiliation

The final hypothesis concerning the female elite in general is that women in the political elite are more likely to be Protestant than either Catholic or Jew. This hypothesis is confirmed by the findings reported in the Statistical Profile. Seventy per cent of the women in the study were Protestants, 16 per cent were Catholics, and 3 per cent were Jews; 1 per cent expressed some other religious affiliation, and 11 per cent listed no religious preference. Data on American voters in general reveals that 68 per cent are Protestant, 25 per cent Catholic, and 4 per cent Jewish.<sup>23</sup> It would appear that there is a very slight tendency for the women to be Protestant to a greater extent than the voting public, and they are less likely to be Catholics and Jews. It should be noted, of course, that the figures for American voters leave 3 per cent unaccounted for, presumably representing those having no religious affiliation and those having one other than the major three. The women in this study were much more likely to express no religious affiliation than were the voters in general.

The tendency for the women to be Catholics or Jews to a lesser extent than the general population is consistent with the findings of most studies of the male elite. For example, Donald R. Matthews found that both Catholics and Jews were underrepresented in the U.S. Senate, where 88 per cent of the membership was Protestant, 11 per cent Catholic, and 1 per cent Jewish.<sup>24</sup> Catholics have also been underrepresented in state legislatures. For example, in Pennsylvania in 1958, Catholics made up 46 per cent of

the state's church membership, but only 34 per cent of the state legislators and candidates for the legislature were Catholic.<sup>25</sup>

A study of persons holding positions in the party organizations found that 20 per cent of the sample was Catholic, reflecting once again an underrepresentation of persons affiliated with that faith.<sup>26</sup> Thus it would seem that the underrepresentation of Catholics and Jews is not a characteristic of the female elite alone, but is a characteristic of the political elite in general.

The relationship between party affiliation and religious affiliation was noted previously in the discussion of party affiliation (see Table 26, p. 42). It was found that the Republican women were overwhelmingly Protestant, while the Democratic women had greater percentages of Catholics and Jews, although the majority was still Protestant. The tendency for religious affiliation to influence party affiliation is shown more clearly in Table 40.

TABLE 40

PARTY AFFILIATION OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE; BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Party Affiliation	Protestant (N=1365)	Catholic (N=318)	Jew (N=57)	Other (N=9)	None Listed (N=199)
Democrat	37%	60%	79%	56%	50%
Republican	61	31	16	44	44
Other	3	9	5	0	6
	101%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Of the Protestant women in the study, 61 per cent were Republicans. Of the Catholic women, 60 per cent were Democrats, and 79 per cent of the Jewish women were Democrats. The generally ac-



cepted idea that Protestants tend to be Republican, and Catholics and Jews tend to be Democrats is confirmed by the results of this study.

### State and Region

Based upon the finding of a previous study on female state legislators that women were more likely to be found in the legislatures of states with small populations,<sup>27</sup> the following hypothesis was formulated: Women in elective positions are likely to hold office in states with small populations. This hypothesis seems to be supported by the data from this study, as is shown by Table 41. Of the 339 women holding elective office, only 24 per

TABLE 41

PERCENTAGE OF ELECTED WOMEN WHO CAME  
FROM MOST HEAVILY AND MOST SPARSELY  
POPULATED STATES

State Size Group	Elected Women (N 339)
12 Largest States	24%
12 Smallest States	32
26 Middle States	44
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 100%

cent were from the twelve states with the largest populations, while 32 per cent were from the twelve states with the smallest populations. This finding seems even more significant in light of the much larger percentage of all the women in the study who came from the most heavily populated states as compared to the most sparsely populated states; 37 per cent of all the women were from the largest states, 14 per cent from the smallest.

But when the women in elective positions are divided into the three largest groups - state legislators, state officials, and U.S. Congresswomen - it becomes obvious that the hypothesis holds true only for two of the three groups. Table 42 reveals

TABLE 42

PERCENTAGE OF ELECTED WOMEN WHO CAME FROM  
 MOST HEAVILY AND MOST SPARSELY  
 POPULATED STATES; BY TYPE  
 OF ELECTED POSITION

State Size Group	State Legislators (N=273)	State Officials (N=26)	Congress- women (N=18)	Party Officials (N=1405)
12 Largest States	18%	15%	61%	40%
12 Smallest States	36	35	6	10
26 Middle States	46	50	33	50
	100%	100%	100%	100%

that female state legislators and female state officials are more likely to come from the smaller states than they are from the larger states. However, the reverse is true for the women serving in the U.S. House of Representatives. Why this should be so is difficult to explain. The original hypothesis was generally based upon two suppositions, the first being that a woman has a better chance of being elected in a state where election districts are smaller. Because a certain percentage of all voters are unwilling to vote for a female candidate, it is more important for a woman candidate to become known to the voters through personal appearances, and such personal campaigning is much easier when there are fewer voters to reach. The second supposition is that the smaller states are more likely to be one-party states and a woman therefore is more likely to be nominated by party officials. It has been suggested that those responsible for nominating their party's candidates are not likely to nominate women unless their party is assured of victory (or defeat). In other words, women are not likely to be nominated to carry a party's standard in a

closely contested election. While there may be some validity to the two suppositions, they do not seem to be entirely accurate, for they fail to shed any light on the definite tendency for Congresswomen to come from heavily populated states.

The picture becomes even more confusing when the three groups are divided according to the geographical region in which their state is located, as in Table 43. Half of the Congresswomen and

TABLE 43

GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS FROM WHICH WOMEN WERE ELECTED; BY TYPE OF ELECTED POSITION

Geographical Region	State Legislators (N=273)	State Officials (N=26)	Congresswomen (N=18)	Party Officials (N=1405)
East	49%	15%	50%	17%
Midwest	19	15	28	37
South	10	42	0	20
West	22	27	22	26
	<u>100%</u>	<u>99%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

almost half of the female state legislators came from the East, while the highest percentage of the state officials, 42 per cent, came from the South. It should be noted, however, that even though both Congresswomen and state legislators tended to come from the East, they did not necessarily come from the same states in the East. Of the nine Congresswomen from the East, seven came from states which ranked among the twelve most populous states. On the other hand, of the 134 women state legislators from the East, 45 per cent came from two states alone, those states being New Hampshire and Vermont, both of which are among the twelve least populated states. The four Eastern states which are among

the most populous states accounted for only 13 per cent of the legislators from the East. It becomes clear, then, that female legislators tend to be found in the smaller Eastern states, while Congresswomen tend to be found in the larger Eastern states.

The state officials elected in the South were all from states ranking, according to population, in the middle twenty-six states. None were from the three heavily populated Southern states, and there were no Southern states ranking among the least populated states. Five of the state officials were serving or had served in Alabama, the only state which could claim more than two female state officials. One possible explanation for the comparatively large number of female state officials in the South is the "one-party" status, at least until recently, of most of the Southern states. As noted previously, it has been suggested that a lack of party competition is more conducive to female candidates than closely contested elections. Unfortunately, such an explanation fails to account for the fact that the South is the worst area of the country in terms of electing female state legislators and Congresswomen. The explanations offered for the tendencies of women to be elected in certain regions of the country and in either heavily or sparsely populated states, while they may partially explain such tendencies, do not offer a complete answer.

Party officials represent the largest group of nonelected women, as well as the largest group in the study as a whole. Half of the women holding positions in the party organizations were from the middle twenty-six states in population rank, 40 per cent were from the twelve largest, and 10 per cent were from the twelve

smallest (see Table 42). Certainly it would appear that population has some influence on the number of women accepted into the party ranks. However, it clearly is not the only factor, for of the five states having the largest percentages of the female party officials, only two, California and Ohio, were among the most heavily populated states. The other three, Minnesota, Missouri, and Colorado, were among the twenty-six states falling between the most heavily and most sparsely populated states. Whether the party organizations in the latter three states are more open to women is difficult to say; certainly that is one possible explanation. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know what the explanation for the relatively large number of female party officials in these three states is without a more thorough examination. Neither does there seem to be any explanation for the fact that well over a third of the women party officials were found in the Midwest, as Table 43 shows, while only 17 per cent were found in the East, a region which seems to be so favorable for women seeking elective office.

Other interesting results in relation to population and region were found in regard to party affiliation. Women in the smallest states in terms of population rank tended to be Republican to a greater degree than women in the largest states, although in both groups the Republicans greatly outnumbered the Democrats (see Table 44). In the smallest states, 64 per cent of the women were Republicans, compared to 36 per cent who were Democrats. In the largest states the figures were 59 per cent and 40 per cent respectively, with 1 per cent reporting affiliation with a third

TABLE 44

PARTY AFFILIATION OF WOMEN IN THE  
POLITICAL ELITE; BY POPULATION  
SIZE OF STATES

Party Affiliation	12 Largest States (N=717)	12 Smallest States (N=264)	26 Middle States (N=974)
Democrat	40%	36%	48%
Republican	59	64	45
Other	1	0	7
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

party. However, a greater number of the women in the twenty-six middle states were Democrats than were Republicans; 48 per cent were Democrats, 45 per cent Republicans, and 7 per cent members of other parties.

In each region, Republicans outnumbered Democrats. Table 45 shows that, as might be expected, there was a greater percentage

TABLE 45

PARTY AFFILIATION OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL  
ELITE; BY GEOGRAPHICAL REGION

Party Affiliation	East (N=439)	Midwest (N=620)	South (N=408)	West (N=484)
Democrat	42%	42%	48%	43%
Republican	57	47	52	57
Other	1	11	0	0
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

of Democrats in the South than in the other regions. In the Midwest, 11 per cent of the women were members of parties other than the two major ones, compared with less than 1 per cent in this category in the other three regions. The primary reason for this

is, of course, the presence of the Democratic Free Labor Party in Minnesota to which the majority of the women holding positions in that state belonged. It might be argued that since these women are likely to support the Democratic Party nationally, it well may be that in the Midwest the Democratic women are not in the minority. It would seem, then, that the tendency for women in the political elite to be Republican is one which occurs in the large and small states, but not the middle states, and in all the geographic regions, with the possible exception of the Midwest.

There are a few other differences among the groups which may be worth noting. In regard to religious affiliation, the East varied substantially from the other three regions, having larger percentages of both Catholics and Jews, and a smaller percentage of Protestants. The South was the most predominantly Protestant region (see Table 46). Table 47 reveals that the women in the

TABLE 46

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ELITE; BY GEOGRAPHICAL REGION

Religious Affiliation	East (N=442)	Midwest (N=620)	South (N=410)	West (N=484)
Protestant	59%	72%	76%	72%
Catholic	24	17	10	13
Jew	6	2	2	3
Other	1	0	0	0
None listed	11	8	11	12
	101%	99%	99%	100%

smallest states had a slightly lower level of education than the women in the largest and middle states, although the differences are small. But women in the Midwest had a significantly lower



TABLE 47

EDUCATION LEVEL OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL  
ELITE; BY POPULATION SIZE OF STATE  
AND BY GEOGRAPHICAL REGION

Education Level	12 Largest States (N=682)	12 Smallest States (N=255)	26 Middle States (N=935)	East (N=428)	Midwest (N=589)	South (N=395)	West (N=460)
Did not complete high school	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
High school graduate	16	22	18	18	27	10	11
Attended college, no degree	39	33	38	34	36	41	39
College graduate	31	33	32	30	26	34	37
Advanced degree(s)	$\frac{14}{102\%}$	$\frac{10}{100\%}$	$\frac{12}{101\%}$	$\frac{16}{100\%}$	$\frac{9}{99\%}$	$\frac{13}{99\%}$	$\frac{13}{101\%}$

level of education than women in the other three regions. The Midwesterners had larger percentages of women who had never attended college, and smaller percentages of women with college degrees and advanced degrees. Why the Midwest should be different from the other regions in this respect is difficult to say. Certainly the Midwest is rural and traditional in its lifestyle, both of which might affect the likelihood of women to receive advanced education, but the South is also rural and traditional in its lifestyle, and the South had more women who were college graduates and had advanced degrees than any of the other groups. Whatever the reason, the Midwestern women who hold positions of political influence are less well educated than the women in the other geographical regions.

### Experience

Two final hypotheses concern the previous political experience of women who have been elected to national offices. The first of these is as follows: Women in national elective positions are likely to have had prior service in the state legislatures or other state offices. This hypothesis was based upon the assumption that a woman is more likely to be nominated and elected to a national office if she has "proven herself" by campaigning for, winning, and serving in an elective office on the state level. However, this does not appear to be the case. Of the twenty-one women who had served or were serving in national elective office only eight, or 38 per cent, had served in a state elective office. Of those who had such experience, seven had previously been state legislators, and one had been a state official.

A second hypothesis is closely related to the first: Women in national elective positions are more likely to have had previous experience on the state level than are men who hold national elective positions. It was thought that it might be more necessary for a female candidate to have experience in order to be elected than for a male candidate to have such experience. It has been suggested that political experience is more crucial for a woman Congressional candidate than for a man, based upon a comparison of freshmen representatives.<sup>28</sup> However, on the basis of the findings of this study and the small amount of information which could be found concerning the men in Congress, it would appear that about the same percentage of men as of women in Congress have had previous experience in elective positions on the state

level. It should be noted, however, that the most recent figures found for the men were from the 83rd Congress, in 1952-53. In the House of Representatives in 1952, 40 per cent of the members had served in the state legislatures or other state elective position.<sup>29</sup> Of the eighteen women in this study who were or had been serving in the House, seven, or 39 per cent, had previous experience in a state elective position. Therefore, on the basis of this information, the hypothesis does not appear to be confirmed, and it would seem that Congresswomen have no more or no less experience than Congressmen when they enter the House.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S., Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1971 (92nd ed.; Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Donald R. Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>George B. Galloway, History of the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on House Administration, House Document No. 246, 87th Congress, 1st Session, 1962, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>David B. Walker, "The Age Factor in the 1958 Congressional Elections," Midwest Journal of Political Science, IV (Feb., 1960), 6.

<sup>5</sup>Frank J. Sorauf, Party and Representation: Legislative Politics in Pennsylvania (New York: Atherton Press, 1963), p. 67.

<sup>6</sup>Allan Kornberg, Joel Smith, and David Bromley, "Some Differences in the Political Socialization Patterns of Canadian and American Party Officials: A Preliminary Report," Canadian Journal of Political Science, II (March, 1969), 73.

<sup>7</sup>William E. Ekinstein, et.al., American Democracy in World Perspective (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 241.

<sup>8</sup>Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965), p. 254.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 264.

- <sup>11</sup>John Paxton, ed., The Statesman's Yearbook, 1972-1973 (London: Macmillan Co., 1972), p. 548.
- <sup>12</sup>Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World, pp. 25-26.
- <sup>13</sup>Donald R. Matthews, The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday & Company, 1954), p. 29.
- <sup>14</sup>George S. Blair, American Legislatures (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 121.
- <sup>15</sup>Sorauf, Party and Representation: Legislative Politics in Pennsylvania, p. 69.
- <sup>16</sup>Kornberg, Smith, and Bromley, "Some Differences in the Political Socialization Patterns of Canadian and American Party Officials: A Preliminary Report," p. 73.
- <sup>17</sup>Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World, pp. 30-31.
- <sup>18</sup>Galloway, History of the U.S. House of Representatives, p. 36.
- <sup>19</sup>Charles S. Hyneman, "Who Makes Our Laws?," Political Science Quarterly, LV (Dec., 1940), 557.
- <sup>20</sup>Paul Beckett and Celeste Sunderland, "Washington State's Lawmakers: Some Personnel Factors in the Washington Legislature," Western Political Quarterly, X (March, 1957), 197-98.
- <sup>21</sup>Duncan MacRae, Jr., "The Role of the State Legislator in Massachusetts," American Sociological Review, XIX (April, 1954), 186.
- <sup>22</sup>Edwin C. Lewis, Developing Woman's Potential (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1968), p. 169.
- <sup>23</sup>Richard M. Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg, The Real Majority (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1970), p. 64.
- <sup>24</sup>Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World, p. 24.
- <sup>25</sup>Sorauf, Party and Representation: Legislative Politics in Pennsylvania, pp. 69-70.
- <sup>26</sup>Kornberg, Smith, and Bromley, "Some Differences in the Political Socialization Patterns of Canadian and American Party Officials: A Preliminary Report," p. 73.
- <sup>27</sup>Werner, "Women in the State Legislatures," p. 43.
- <sup>28</sup>Bullock and Heys, "Recruitment of Women for Congress: A Research Note," p. 420.

<sup>29</sup>W. J. M. McKenzie, "Local Government Experience of Legislators," in Legislative Behavior, ed. by John C. Wahlke and Heinz Eulau (Glenco, Ill.: The Free Press, 1959), p. 279.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

Having considered the various hypotheses proposed, generalizations may be made about the women in this country who can be considered part of the political elite. It may be helpful to profile a "typical" female politician, keeping in mind that few women in the study would actually fit the description on every single point. However, the typical woman holding a political position is married and has children. She is middle-aged, but held her first political position before the age of forty. She is a Protestant, a member of the Republican Party, and has some post-high school education, but not necessarily a college degree. The typical woman in politics has a job outside the home as either an educator, businesswoman, or clerical worker, and she belongs to four or more nonpolitical associations. Her position in the political world is as a party official on the state or county level in a Midwestern state.

The above description is concerned with the findings of this study in regard to the female elite in general. Other findings concerned the sub-groups within the female elite. Women holding elective positions are slightly more likely to work outside the home than are women holding nonelective positions. They are also likely to have a higher level of education than nonelected women.

And with the exception of women elected to Congress, they are more likely to be elected in states with small populations than those with large populations. Women elected to positions on the national level are likely to have a higher education level than those elected to positions on the state level. However, they are not likely to have had previous experience in elective office on the state level. Women serving in the party organizations on the national level are more highly educated than those serving in the state or local party organizations.

An attempt also was made to compare the female elite to the male elite. Data concerning the education levels of men and women in various political positions, while not conclusive, indicate that the female politicians, with the possible exception of female state legislators, are somewhat less well educated than their male counterparts. Data concerning the ages of male and female politicians was also not conclusive. There appears to be a slight tendency for women in the various political positions to be older than their male colleagues, but this may or may not be because women hold their first political position at a later age than men, as was speculated. There was also some difficulty in finding recent data concerning the previous experience in elective office on the state level on the part of men serving in Congress. However, on the basis of what was found, it appears that Congresswomen are not likely to be either more experienced or less experienced than Congressmen in terms of previously holding a state elective position.

One area in which there was sufficient data available and in



which it was possible to confirm a hypothesis was that of occupation. It can be stated with some assurance that women in the political elite are likely to have different occupations than the male elite. This statement was found to be true for four political positions: senators, representatives, state legislators, and party officials. Male senators and representatives tend to be lawyers, with businessmen running a distant second. None of the female senators were lawyers or businesswomen, and although law is the occupation of more of the Congresswomen than any other single occupation, it is so to a lesser extent than for Congressmen. Other occupations engaged in by Congresswomen are journalism and education, with housewives constituting the second largest occupational group. Male state legislators tend to be businessmen, lawyers, and in some states, farmers. The two largest occupational groups among the women are housewives and educators, with businesswomen and lawyers representing much smaller percentages. And finally, even though there is no data available on the occupational groupings of men in the party organizations, it seems fair to assume that the two largest occupation groups of such men would not be housewives and clerical workers, as they are for the women serving in the party organizations. So even though there are some occupations which are common to both men and women in politics, the two groups tend to be drawn from different occupations.

Thus there comes into focus a picture of the women who have achieved success in the field of politics. They are in many ways similar to women in the general population, particularly in regard to their marital status, family size, and religion. But they dif-

fer from women outside politics in terms of the level of education they have achieved, participation in work outside the home, and participation in nonpolitical organizations. There are also differences among the groups within the elite, differences in education levels, in occupations, and in places of residence. And the women who are part of the elite also are different from the male elite in terms of age, education levels, and occupations, while the two sexes are alike in terms of the amount of previous experience had by those in national elective office.

### Theoretical Implications

It might be questioned what relationship the findings of this study have to the general theory of political elites. First of all, of course, it presents a clearer picture of the elite in the United States by clarifying the characteristics of one segment of that elite, women. It should be noted, however, that the author is cognizant of the fact that the definition of the elite used in this study is a narrow one, encompassing only those in positions of direct influence in the national, state, and local governments and party structures. Those persons who are in positions to indirectly influence the political decision-making process, such as members of the business and military sectors, were not considered. Despite this omission, it is of value to discover more about those women who have attained positions of influence in what has traditionally been a male-dominated sector of society. For while these women have some characteristics in common with the male elite, they are also different from their male colleagues. In light of the current interest in greater participation in politics by women, it seems particularly relevant to examine more closely those women who are already actively participating in the political decision-making process.

Another reason for studying these women is to find out what clues they might offer as to changes which are occurring in society. By comparing what is known about the women involved in politics in the past with the findings of this study, and in turn the findings of this study with some future study, one might hope to find some indications of the changing role of women in society, or

of changes in the political system in response to societal changes. Due to the small number of interpretive works in this area, it is necessary to limit one's comparison to two groups - Congresswomen and state legislators. A comparison of the findings of this study with those of Emmy Werner's "Women in Congress: 1917-1964"<sup>1</sup> reveals some differences which might reflect changes in society. One such difference is the education levels attained by the two groups. Werner reported that about 80 per cent of her group had training beyond high school, with more than half having graduated from college. In the current group, 94 per cent had training beyond high school, and 76 per cent graduated from college, with more than half holding advanced degrees. Certainly this can be seen as an indication of the rising level of education among women in general, particularly in regard to higher education. Another indication of change is the difference in occupations between the two groups. The most common occupation prior to service in Congress of Werner's women was teaching. The most common prior occupation of the Congresswomen in this study was law. This difference may indicate the greater acceptance of women performing in what was previously thought of as a male occupation. Another difference between the groups is the tendency to have had prior service in the state legislatures or other state offices; three-fourths of Werner's group had such service, but only 38 per cent of the Congresswomen in this study had. It would appear that women elected more recently have found it less necessary to have "proven themselves" on the state level before aiming higher.

One finding of Werner which did not appear to have changed

was that over one-third of the women in Congress had husbands who had served in Congress. About one-third of the women in Congress in this study had political careers based upon that of their husbands. However, this apparent lack of change in this area might be deceptive. Four of the women included in this study who were widows of Congressmen or Senators were no longer active, but were retired at the time of their listing. It would be expected that a survey of the women presently serving in Congress would have different results, as the tendency today is for women to be elected on their own rather than as a successor to their deceased husbands.

In regard to the female state legislators, one may compare Emmy Werner's "Women in the State Legislatures"<sup>2</sup> to the findings of this study. The only difference between the two groups is their respective education levels. Most of the women in Werner's sample had some form of post-high school education, but less than half graduated from college. Most of the women legislators in this study, 82 per cent, had some form of post-high school education, and more than half graduated from college. This difference may be yet another indication of the way the education level of American women has risen, even over the few years since Werner's sample of women in the 1964 state legislatures.

As to the findings of future studies, one might find further educational and occupational changes and a further decrease in the number of women elected on the basis of their husbands' careers in Congress. One might also expect an increase in the number of women who will be serving in Congress in future years.

One currently controversial topic in regard to elitist theory is the discussion of the part played by elites in a democracy. According to the classic theorists of elite doctrine, "there may exist in any society a minority of the population which makes the major decisions in the society."<sup>3</sup> This minority is the elite, a coherent, united, and self-conscious group. The classic texts of elitist thought - Vilfredo Pareto's The Mind and Society, Gaetano Mosca's The Ruling Class, and Robert Michels's Political Parties - are anti-democratic in nature. They claim that the elite gains its position by means other than ordinary election, or, if there are those among the elite who are elected, they claim that electoral victory is not gained entirely by open democratic means.<sup>4</sup> The views expressed by these elitists are obviously not in accord with the classical theory of democracy which conceives of democracy as a means of growth and development for the individual through participation in decisions affecting his life. The problem of reconciling elitism and democracy led to the formulation of a theory of democratic elitism which rejects both the elitists' view of an unchecked minority ruling the masses and the democrats' view of a mass participation in government by all citizens. The democratic elitists argue that since it is inevitable in a modern society that there will be an elite, that is a small group which makes the decisions for the rest of society, democracy should be redefined as follows: Democracy may be said to exist in a society when there is competition between elites for the peoples' votes, an open society with independent political parties and pressure groups, and the existence of the capacity of the totality of the

community to get into the political game in a meaningful way.<sup>5</sup>

What, then, do these theories and definitions of democracy have to do with the findings of this study? It is not the purpose here to determine which view of democracy is or should be the correct one. The purpose is to first look at the role of women in society and in its elite and then to discuss the relationship of that role to democracy. The various characteristics and attributes of the women who have been successful in politics have been discussed, as well as the differences between the various groups within the elite, but one characteristic which they all have in common has not been emphasized. That characteristic is the fact that the women who are part of the elite are a definite and distinct minority, regardless of which group within the elite they are a part. Women made up only about 12 per cent of the people who were listed in Who's Who in American Politics, 1971-72. In terms of elected positions, women make up a dismally small percentage. They hold only 4 per cent of the nation's 7,700 state legislative seats, 4 per cent or less of the 435 House seats, and presently are not even represented in the Senate.<sup>6</sup> It is more difficult to obtain exact figures for the party organizations, but there is no indication that women comprise anything near half of the positions.<sup>7</sup> The exception is in the national committees where each state is represented by one man and one woman according to a 50-50 rule. Unfortunately, this rule, which was to provide a practical solution to the entrance of women into party politics, does not always work out as it was meant to. Eleanor Roosevelt is quoted as saying, "Too often the vice chair-

men and the committeewomen are selected by the men, who naturally pick women who will go along with them and not give them any trouble. Thus they are apt to be mere stooges. . . ."8 It would seem that even where the numbers appear more representative, the quality of representation is open to question. One may conclude that the role of women in the political elite is a limited one due to the small number of women holding political positions and, in some cases, the type of women holding those positions.

A second point which should be made concerning the role of women in society and in the political elite is that women are generally not found in the "high status" occupations. The top four occupational groups among the women in this study were housewives, clerical work, education, and business, accounting for 79 per cent of the women. Certainly the first two, accounting for about half of the women, are not "high status" occupations. Since most of those involved in the field of education were elementary or high school teachers, and were not administrators or college professors, it is doubtful that one could consider most of them to be in a "high status" occupation. Also, those involved in business were more likely to be real estate brokers or insurance salesmen rather than the "higher status" business executives. The fact is that there were very few lawyers and business executives among the women, the categories which are those most often associated with politicians, particularly at the national levels. The small number of women politicians who are employed in "high status" occupations is simply a reflection of the small number of women in general who may be found among the ranks of those in such occupations.



A final point which should be made before discussing the relationship of women in the political elite and democracy is that there are differences in the process of political socialization as it relates to males and females. The general finding of studies in the area of political socialization in the United States is that girls are more apolitical than boys. They generally exhibit less sophisticated attitudes toward politics, and are less interested and less likely to participate in the political process.<sup>9</sup> The explanation generally given for the political differences between girls and boys is that children at a very early age learn sex roles which affect their behavior. The feminine sex role involves being more submissive, more interested in persons and personal relationships, and more likely to conform socially. An awareness of sex roles appears early in life and becomes increasingly apparent as the children grow older.<sup>10</sup> The subtle and complex process brings about psychological sex differences which reflect the general cultural atmosphere and which affect the political behavior of adult men and women.

With the above three points in mind, one may return to the original question: What do the theories and definitions of democracy have to do with the role of women in the political elite? Or, to phrase it another way, in view of the role played by women in the political elite, what is the implication for democracy? The implication is this: Whichever definition of democracy one chooses to accept, the classical one or the elitist one, the limited role played by women in the American political system throws into question the extent to which that democracy is functioning.

First, the criteria used for the success of classical democracy is the growth and development of the individual through participation in decisions affecting his life. It is desirable, then, for each individual to acquire a sense of being able to control his own life and to relate to other individuals on an equal footing. The traditional female role as learned by most little girls in the United States is a submissive one, secondary to the male role. A woman is expected to marry and to thereafter be defined in terms of her husband. Decision-making is generally limited to the minor, everyday decisions to be made in the home. Major decisions, such as where she will live, what kind of work she will do, or even if she will work, and how the family income will be spent, are ultimately made for her by her husband. In other words, the qualities traditionally viewed as desirable for women are not those qualities which are viewed by classical democratic theorists as desirable for a citizen in a democracy. And neither are the qualities of submission and social conformity the qualities which one would expect of someone in a political decision-making position. Thus, a major group in society, women, are not "growing and developing as individuals through participating in the decisions affecting their lives." The cultural atmosphere in which most young girls learn their sex role tends to steer them away from political activity. In a political system such as the classical democrats describe, where each citizen's participation is so important, the exclusion through cultural conditioning of half of the citizens would be unacceptable.

However, as discussed previously, the elitist democrats would

argue that the idealistic society described by the classical democrats is impossible in the modern world. Since it is impossible for each individual to participate in all the decisions affecting his life, there must be a group, an elite, chosen to make political decisions. Democracy depends, then, upon a competition between the elites for votes, an open society, and the ability of all segments of society to get into politics in a meaningful way. It is the last point which is most relevant in determining how well democracy, as described by the democratic elitists, is functioning. In light of the small number of women in positions of political influence, the small number of women in "high status" occupations, and a socialization process which discourages political activity by women, it would appear that the female segment of society is generally deprived of the opportunity to get into politics in a meaningful way. Theoretically, of course, there are no barriers placed in the way of women who desire to enter the political sphere, but in reality it is harder for a woman to enter the political elite than for a man, whether one is concerned with elective offices or the political party organizations. And even when a woman does succeed in acquiring a political position, she may well be without any real political power.

One can only conclude that by either definition of democracy, the classical one or the elitist one, the United States' political system falls short of complete compliance. When one considers that women comprise over half of the population, one is faced with the fact that American democracy is thus deprived of the informed and intelligent contributions of more than half of its citizenry, both as voters and as members of the political elite.<sup>11</sup>

### The Future of Women in the Political Elite

Having considered the characteristics of the female political elite, and the relationship between the female elite and democracy, it would seem fitting to conclude by considering what the future may hold in regard to women in politics. Are women likely to enter political life in greater numbers or will they remain a tiny minority in the political elite?

There are some indications that women may enter politics in greater numbers in the future. First, as women become better educated, they are likely to become more politically aware, to have more political information, and to consider themselves more competent to influence the government,<sup>12</sup> the latter being particularly important in regard to persons becoming active enough to become part of the elite. It might be expected that as women become better educated, they also will be more likely to work outside the home. In addition, the trend toward smaller families and the increase in the amount of leisure time for women due to labor-saving devices also increase the chances of a woman working outside the home. Since women who work outside the home are more likely to become members of the political elite than those who do not, it may be expected that an increase in the number of women in the labor force will mean an increase in the number of politically active women. Also, the greater amount of leisure time which results from smaller families and fewer household chores means that women who do not need or want to work may devote their time to political work if they are so inclined.

It is not only the number of women who may in the future work

outside the home which is significant, but also the kind of work they will be doing. It was noted previously that the women in this study, and women in general, tend to be found in "low status" occupations. It has been suggested that if there is to be a breakthrough for women in politics, women must enter occupations leading to a political career.<sup>13</sup> Few women are presently found in the two "high status" occupational categories, law and business. However, recent statistics reveal that women now comprise 16 per cent of the national law school enrollment.<sup>14</sup> And female enrollment in prestigious business schools is also on the increase. In 1968, 5.1 per cent of the business students at Columbia University were women; today, 21 per cent are women, and next year's class may be 30 per cent women. At Stanford Business School, about 18 per cent of those enrolled are women, as opposed to 1.6 per cent in 1970.<sup>15</sup> An increase in the number of female lawyers and business executives may be particularly significant in regard to the number of women who will run for elective office, for those occupations appear to be compatible with such office, and voters seem to be inclined to vote for members of those professions.

The most important indication of what kind of future women have in the political sphere is the way in which the socialization process for girls in our society is carried out. Dr. Alice Rossi, a sociologist, asserts, "It is far easier to change laws which presently penalize women as workers, students, or citizens than it will be to effect social changes in family life and higher education, which depress the aspirations and motivations of women. We have yet to devise a means to compensate for the influence of

parents who depress a daughter's aspirations to become a physician while urging a son to aspire beyond his capacity or preference."<sup>16</sup> Attitudes formed early in life tend to persist into adulthood, and adult experiences may do little to change them. Thus a woman who has been taught "feminine" values and who views politics as a male function may be drawn into the political arena only at the cost of great psychological discomfort.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, one should examine the socialization process carefully to determine whether changes are taking place which will affect the thinking of future women in regard to politics. Unfortunately, a thorough examination is beyond the scope of this paper, but a few general observations may be made.

First, the feminist movement must certainly have had some influence on the perceptions women have of themselves and, more importantly, have had some influence on the way they are raising or will raise their children. The movement has also had some effect on the educational system in terms of new textbooks and an opening up of classes previously thought of as the province of one sex to both sexes. Certainly the general atmosphere created by the rhetoric and philosophy of the women's movement is one which makes it somewhat easier for those women who wish to enter the political arena. And as more women enter politics, they provide more examples for young girls as they mature.

However, the process of changing traditional sex roles and cultural values is a slow one, and one cannot expect that changes will immediately be seen. One example of attitudes which must change if women are to enter political life on an equal footing

with men is the attitude toward female candidates for elective office. A 1970 Gallup poll revealed that 18 per cent of those asked would not vote for a qualified woman if she was nominated by their own party for Congress. And a 1969 Gallup poll revealed that 42 per cent of the men and 51 per cent of the women who were asked would not vote for a woman for President. Polls taken periodically since 1937 show that even though the percentages of men and women saying that they would vote for a woman candidate for President have increased since that original poll, the recent trend is a decline in the number answering in the affirmative among both men and women. The high point for the men was in 1967 when 61 per cent answered "yes" to the question; the high point for the women was in 1955 when 57 per cent answered "yes".<sup>18</sup> It is clear that women running for elective office do still face prejudice on the part of some voters. It also is clear that the prejudice is not limited to male voters, but exists to the same or to a greater extent among female voters. It is attitudes toward women in politics such as those expressed in the polls cited above which must be altered if future women are to have greater success in the political arena.

In conclusion, the women found in the political elite are much like the women outside politics, although better educated and more active outside the home. They are few in number compared to their male colleagues, to whom they are similar in some respects and different in others, most notably in the types of occupations from which they come. It is difficult to answer the question of why the women in this study have been successful in

attaining positions of political influence. The answer probably lies partly in their high level of education, their memberships in voluntary associations, and their occupations held outside the home, all of which tend to make a person more politically competent. But part of the answer would undoubtedly also lie in the experiences and environments to which each individual woman was exposed, a variable which is difficult to quantify. There are indications that in the future more women may be raised in environments conducive to political interest and maturity. As a result, women as a whole will be better citizens, more politically knowledgeable, more politically interested, and more politically sophisticated. And those women who are inclined toward political activity as a vocation or an avocation will feel less psychological discomfort at becoming politically active. Ultimately, democracy can only benefit from being able to draw upon the intelligent contributions and the leadership talents of all of its citizens.

<sup>1</sup>Emmy E. Werner, "Women in Congress: 1917-1964," Western Political Quarterly, XIX (March, 1966), 16-30.

<sup>2</sup>Emmy E. Werner, "Women in the State Legislatures," ibid., XXI (March, 1968), 40-50.

<sup>3</sup>Geraint Parry, Political Elites (London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-32.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 74, 143-45; Emmette S. Redford, Democracy in the Administrative State (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 197-201.

<sup>6</sup>Gruberg, Women in American Politics, pp. 169-70.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 64-68.



<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62.

<sup>9</sup>See David Easton and Jack Dennis, Children in the Political System (New York: McGraw Hill, 1969), pp. 336-42; David Easton and Jack Dennis, "The Child's Acquisition of Regime Norms: Political Efficacy," American Political Science Review, LXI (March, 1967), p. 35; Fred I. Greenstein, Children and Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 115-18; and Robert D. Hess and Judith V. Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 175-92.

<sup>10</sup>Lewis M. Terman and Leona E. Tyler, "Psychological Sex Differences," in Manual of Child Psychology, ed. by Leonard Carmichael (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1954), pp. 1078-1104.

<sup>11</sup>Amundsen, The Silenced Majority, p. 140.

<sup>12</sup>Almond and Verba, The Civic Culture, pp. 317-19.

<sup>13</sup>Gruberg, Women in American Politics, p. 39.

<sup>14</sup>"Carol, Diane, Janice & . . .," Newsweek, April 1, 1974, p. 69.

<sup>15</sup>"Still More Room at the Top," Newsweek, April 29, 1974, pp. 74-79.

<sup>16</sup>Rochelle Girson, "Women's Status Fifty Years After the Vote," in Women and Society, ed. by Diana Reische (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1972), p. 51.

<sup>17</sup>Greenstein, Children and Politics, pp. 126-27.

<sup>18</sup>Hazel Erskine, "The Polls: Women's Role," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXXV (Summer, 1971), 275.

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