

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO ATTITUDES

OF THAI PARLIAMENTARIANS

Once the backgrounds and characteristics of the respondents had been established, an attempt was made to measure those attributes which more directly affect the ways in which legislators perceive any given issue. Following the widely held convention of dividing issue areas into the three broad headings of social issues, economic issues, and political issues, questions, designed to help determine the relative liberalism or conservatism of each member of the Parliament who chose to take part in the present study, were selected.

As much of the literature that dealt with the liberal/conservative attitudes, in Western democracies¹ as well as in developing countries,² was in agreement with the finding that women tended to be more liberal than men, especially on "social" issues. The following hypothesis was designed to test whether or not this phenomenon held true for Thailand.

¹Bonnie Cook Freeman, "Power, Patriarchy, and 'Political Primitives,'" in Beyond Intellectual Sexism: A New Woman, a New Reality, ed. Joan I. Roberts (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1976), pp. 244, 255; John W. Soule and Wilma E. McGrath, "A Comparative Study of Male-Female Political Attitudes at Citizen and Elite Levels," in A Portrait of Marginality, ed. Marianne Githens and Jewel L. Prestage (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1977), pp. 178-195; John Gruhl, Cassia Spohn, and Susan Welch, "Women as Policy-makers: The Case of Trial Judges," American Journal of Political Science 25 (May 1981): 309; Edmond Costantini and Kenneth H. Craik, "Women as Politicians: The Social Background, Personality, and Political Careers of Female Party Leaders," Journal of Social Issues, 28 (1972): 234; and Barbara Burrell, "A New Dimension in Political Participation: The Women's Political Caucus," in A Portrait of Marginality, eds. Marianne Githens and Jewel L. Prestage (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1977), pp. 241-257.

²Kathy Staudt, "Politics and Philippine Women: An Exploratory Study," Philippine Journal of Public Administration 17 (October 1973): 475-476.

Liberal/Conservative Scores

Hypothesis 6. Female parliamentarians tend to be more "liberal"³ than male parliamentarians in their perceptions of major problems and solutions.

For the overall (Liberal/Conservative) score, the possible range of scores was from 24 (all strongly conservative) to 120 (all strongly liberal). As this resulted in ninety-seven possible answers, and a Likert scale has five divisions, it was impossible to give each cell an equal range. Whenever such a situation arose, the extra possibilities, in this case two ($97 + 5 = 102$), were added on to the most extreme categories as this is where they would least affect the relative distribution. For example, in this situation all scores of 24 - 43 (a range of 20) were recorded as "Strongly Conservative," all scores of 101 - 120 (also a range of 20) were recorded as "Strongly Liberal," and the remaining three divisions each had a range of 19 (see Table 15). It should be mentioned that while this convention may have the effect of shifting a minimal number of observations from one subcategory to another (for example, mildly conservative), it has no effect whatever on the actual scores, their means, or their resulting chi-square, degree of freedom (df), or probability value. Furthermore, no female scores were in any manner affected. This was the major concern as a shift of even one could result in a misleading table. Because of the much larger number of male responses, such a shift does not noticeably affect the

³Liberal is defined here as favoring deconcentration of economic and political powers (the widening of societal participation in policy formation and implementation) and a more active role for government in providing services in the area of "social welfare" (i.e., a change from the status quo).

results. The actual range of women's scores was 59 to 84; the actual range of the men's scores was 50 to 91. The mean for the women was 70.50, while for the men it was 69.58, with a difference of .92. With a possible range of 97, this represents a .95 percent difference between men and women, with the latter appearing slightly more liberal. However, the word "slightly" cannot be emphasized enough here for the difference is quite small when compared to the possible range of values/scores. The probability value of chi-square registered at .0005 ($\chi^2 = 63.60$, $df = 31$). However, the large number of cells with an expected cell frequency of less than 5 demanded that the categories be collapsed.⁴ When this was done, in Table 15, χ^2 fell to 1.60 with $df = 2$ and $p = .44$. This shows that there was much more similarity than differences between the responses of males and females and that neither could be said to be more conservative or more liberal.

⁴E. Terrence Jones, Conducting Political Research (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), p. 170.

Table 15

Total Liberal/Conservative Scores

Scores on Liberal/ Conservative	Female		Male		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Strongly conservative (24-43)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Mildly conservative (44-62)	2	16.7	22	9.9	24	10.2
Moderate (63-81)	9	75.0	194	87.0	203	86.4
Mildly liberal (82-100)	1	8.3	7	3.1	8	3.4
Strongly liberal (101-120)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

$$\chi^2 = 1.60, df = 2, p = .44.$$

Political Issues

In the "political issues" category, the possible range of scores was from 11 (all strongly conservative) to 55 (all strongly liberal). The possible range divided by five categories determined that each category would hold a range of nine scores ($45 - 5 = 9$). Throughout this section, it should be remembered that while subtracting the lowest possible score from the highest possible score will give a value for "X," the total range is actually "X + 1." The actual range of the women's scores was 20 to 40, the actual range of the men's scores was 20 to 41.

The mean for the women was 30.17, while that for the men was 30.80, with a difference of .63. With a range of 45, this represents a 1.4 percent difference between men and women with men appearing slightly more liberal. The probability value of chi-square was .12 ($\chi^2 = 27.28$, $df = 20$), but little credence could be given it for the same reasons mentioned above for Liberal/Conservative. Once the categories were collapsed, see Table 16, χ^2 was 1.43 with $df = 2$ and $p = .48$. As with Liberal/Conservative, sex was not shown to be a predictor of conservative or liberal attitudes when it came to political issues.

Table 16

Liberal/Conservative Scores on Political Issues

Scores on Political Issues	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Strongly conser-vative (11-19)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Mildly conser-vative (20-28)	4	33.3	57	25.6	61	26.0
Moderate (29-37)	7	58.3	159	71.3	166	70.6
Mildly liberal (38-46)	1	8.3	7	3.1	8	3.4
Strongly liberal (47-55)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

$\chi^2 = 1.43$, $df = 2$, $p = .48$.

Economic Issues

In the "economic issues" category, the possible range of scores was the same as for "political issues," from 11 (all strongly conservative) to 55 (all strongly liberal). The actual range for female legislators was 27 to 40; the actual range for the male legislators was 17 to 44. The mean for the women was 31.25 and for the men it was 29.69. The gap of 1.56, with a range of 45, represents a difference of 3.5 percent, the largest percentage difference of all the four combined tables, with women appearing to be more liberal than men. This was not totally unexpected since the only two of the twenty-four questions that produced probability values of less than .05 both dealt with economic issues. The probability value of chi-square is .76 ($\chi^2 = 19.57$, $df = 25$), but, once again, 76.9 percent of the cells had an expected cell frequency of less than 5, so the scores were collapsed (see Table 17).

Once the scores were combined into five categories, the changes in chi-square, etc., that had taken place in the earlier two tables were repeated. The probability value is .76, $\chi^2 = 1.16$ and $df = 3$. Thus, sex was not shown to be significantly related with attitudes on economic issues.

Table 17

Liberal/Conservative Scores on Economic Issues

Scores on Economic Issues	Female		Male		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Strongly conservative (11-19)	0	0.0	2	0.9	2	0.9
Mildly conservative (20-28)	4	33.3	90	40.4	94	40.0
Moderate (29-37)	7	58.3	124	55.6	131	55.7
Mildly liberal (38-46)	1	8.3	7	3.1	8	3.4
Strongly liberal (47-55)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

$$\chi^2 = 1.16, df = 3, p = .76.$$

Social Issues

In the final group, "social issues," the possible range of scores was from 9 (all strongly conservative) to 45 (all strongly liberal). The actual range for female legislators was 13 to 27; the actual range for male legislators was 16 to 30. The mean for the women was 22.92, while that for men was 24.19. The difference of 1.27, with a possible range of 37, represents a 3.4 percent difference, with women appearing

to be more conservative than men on social issues. The probability value for chi-square was .0001 ($\chi^2 = 45.44$, $df = 16$); however, this value proved invalid because 67.6 percent of the expected cell frequencies were less than 5. To correct this problem scores were collapsed into five categories. However, the range 37 did not evenly fit into the five divisions, so once again the two extreme scores were included, one each in the two extreme categories. Thus, "Strongly Conservative" had a range of eight, as did "Strongly Liberal"; while the remaining center categories all had a range of seven. (See Table 18.)

Once the scores had been collapsed into five categories, chi-square was 25.26, degrees of freedom were = 2, and the probability value was less than .0001. Thus, it was evident that when it came to "social issues," female political elites in Thailand were significantly different and tended to be more conservative than male counterparts.

Table 18

Liberal/Conservative Scores on Social Issues

Scores on Social Issues	Female		Male		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Strongly conservative (9-16)	2	16.7	1	0.4	3	1.3
Mildly conservative (17-23)	2	16.7	91	40.8	93	39.6
Moderate (24-30)	8	66.7	131	58.7	139	59.1
Mildly liberal (31-37)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Strongly liberal (38-45)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

$$\chi^2 = 25.26, df = 2, p = .0001.$$

Summary

The data generated by this part of the study have led to observations about the attitudes and values of Thai Parliamentarians that suggest Thailand may be atypical when it comes to differences in liberalism or conservatism between males and females. The findings suggest that Thailand does not conform to the norm established in the investigations of the countries covered by the cited literature.

There was nothing to suggest that Thai women parliamentarians are more liberal than men in their approach to "economic issues," "political issues," or a combination of all three issue areas. The only area where the responses suggested a difference might exist was that of "social issues." Here, however, the data suggested that rather than being more liberal than men, as has been asserted in several previous works,⁵ women actually appeared to be more conservative in the area of social problems. While the correlation was, at least, only moderate on this, it did suggest that the conventional wisdom should be treated cautiously when attempting to apply it to countries in which it was not generated.

Another phenomenon which was evident in this chapter is that, in spite of a fairly broad range of questions that covered several "social issue" areas, there were only two sets of responses where a difference between males and females was discernible. In the vast majority of cases, twenty-two out of twenty-four, or 91.67 percent, there was simply no correlation at the .05 level between sex and liberalness or conservativeness.

It was also observed that Parliamentarians in Thailand are, for the most part, closely grouped and not spread out over the ideological spectrum. In not one of the "issue" categories was there a single "Strongly Liberal" score. Furthermore, there was never more than 3.4 percent of the total in any "Mildly Liberal" category, and never more than 1.3 percent in that designated "Strongly Conservative." From 10.2 percent to

⁵Freeman, p. 244 and p. 255; Soule and McGrath, pp. 178-195; Gruhl, Spohn, and Welch, p. 309; Costantini and Craik, p. 234; Burrell, pp. 241-257; and Staudt, pp. 475-476.

40.0 percent of all respondents fell in the "Mildly Conservative" category, and between 55.7 percent and 86.4 percent were listed, according to their responses, as moderates. These two categories combined accounted for the following percentages of the three issue areas: Economic = 95.7 percent, Political = 96.6 percent, and Social = 98.7 percent. In two of the three the mean fell in the "Moderate" zone, but both times it was far towards the "Conservative" side. In the third, social issues, the mean was over the division and in the "Conservative" zone. Thus, the tight grouping mentioned above occurs very near the division between "Moderate" and "Mildly Conservative."

Finally, in light of the above, the original hypothesis had to be rejected as the data did not substantiate that female political elites tend to be more liberal, in any of the "issue" areas, than their male counterparts in Thailand.