

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO CHARACTERISTICS OF THAI PARLIAMENTARIANS

This chapter examines both the general backgrounds and characteristics of the study population. The results of the pertinent findings are discussed and, where appropriate, comparisons are made by references to the findings of previous studies.

Overall, some of the backgrounds and characteristics of the members of the Parliament of Thailand during the session 1979-1983 tend to be remarkably similar to those of political leaders examined in prior research. Even more important, for the purposes of this investigation, is the fact that many of the differences (in terms of age, income, and history of political activism) that others have noted between males and females in similar target groups are clearly discernible in the data generated by the questionnaire.

For the purpose of clarity, each of the appropriate hypotheses is presented, followed by short discussions of whether or not the data tended to support the original assumptions, or, conversely, the corresponding null hypotheses. For each, one or more tables depicting the results of the answers received from the members of Parliament is provided.

It is hoped that the research will serve the following purposes:

First, the differences and similarities that emerge between males and females should serve to benefit future scholars of the Thai political system.

Second, the generated data should prove useful for cross-country (comparative) studies.

Third, the backgrounds and characteristics presented in this research will help develop a better understanding of the aggregate of individuals holding the values and attitudes discussed in Chapter V.

Family Background of Political Activism

Hypothesis 1. Female parliamentarians are more likely to have a family background of political activism than male parliamentarians.

Unlike the situation Epstein found in the United States,¹ most female parliamentarians in Thailand did not gain political office by moving into one vacated, either through death or retirement, by their husbands. Indeed, at first, a perfect zero order correlation was believed to have been found to exist in that apparently not a single member had a husband who was, or had been, a member of parliament.

To test the above hypothesis, each respondent was asked to provide information on the occupation of his/her spouse. The responses (Table 1) show that none of the husbands of female parliamentarians had been a government official of any sort, nor had any of them even worked for a government enterprise in the past. Only one had a husband connected in any fashion to the government, and he was an officer in the army. Two

¹Epstein noted that ". . . until about 1972 most women who attained high political posts were usually appointed to fill vacancies left by husbands or fathers." See Cynthia F. Epstein, "Women and Power: The Roles of Women in Politics in the United States," in Access to Power: Cross-National Studies of Women and Elites, eds. Cynthia F. Epstein and Rose L. Coser (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 141.

were not married² and the remaining spouses were all self-employed. Thus, this first attempt, using the occupation of the spouse, to verify the hypothesis seemed to have proved unsuccessful. The discussion concerning Table 6 will show the flaw in this initial assessment.

Table 1
Occupation of Spouse/Former Spouse

Occupation	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Self-employed	7	87.5	182	85.0	189	85.1
Government employed	1	12.5	32	15.0	33	14.9

$$\chi^2 = 0.03, df = 1, p = .84.$$

²The finding that only 20 percent of Thai female legislators were unmarried contrasts significantly with Haavio-Mannila's finding that, in Finland, 36 percent of the female political elites were unmarried, a result, she believed, that stemmed from the demands a marriage places on a woman's time and energy, to the extent that there may be enough of neither left to engage in politics. See Elina Haavio-Mannila, "Women in the Economic, Political, and Cultural Elites in Finland," in Access to Power, eds. Epstein and Coser, p. 72. This phenomenon was also noted by Douglas in his study on Indonesia. See Stephen A. Douglas, "Women in Indonesian Politics: The Myth of Functional Interest," in Asian Women in Transition, eds. Sylvia A. Chipp and Justin J. Green (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), p. 178.

In another attempt to test the same hypothesis, respondents were asked to provide information concerning their father's occupation. As in the previous question, respondents were asked by means of an open-ended question to provide former occupation if the father was now retired or deceased.³ Table 2 shows the present occupation results.

Table 2
Father's Occupation

Occupation	Female		Male		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Self-employed	10	100.0	155	81.6	165	82.5
Government employed	0	0.0	35	18.4	35	17.5

$$\chi^2 = 2.23, df = 1, p = .13.$$

Of the responses of the female parliamentarians, none of the "at home" category were shown to have previously held public office. One of the deceased fathers had held the same elective office as the daughter now held. However, even before the male responses for these two categories were considered, "government official" accounted for 10.5 percent of the male responses. Thus, once again, the null hypothesis appeared to be upheld.

³It should be noted that this procedure did not prove satisfactory, as most respondents that checked these two categories failed to provide the relevant information.

Information on "mother's occupation" was also solicited. However, due to the traditional non-involvement in politics of Thai women, it was not really expected this measurement would produce any meaningful correlations regarding the hypothesis. It did not. The only point of interest it raised was that 27.3 percent of the mothers of female parliamentarians were classified as "self-employed," as compared to 12 percent for the mothers of their male counterparts. While such a finding stimulates questions, in isolation it is of little real value.

Respondents were further requested to provide information concerning brothers and sisters who had occupations as government officials. Again, the results served only to prove the null hypothesis with the resulting ratio indicating that male parliamentarians tend to have as many, or slightly more, siblings working for the government as do female parliamentarians (.83 to .58, respectively).

A similar question was asked concerning uncles and aunts of the respondents who had served or were now serving as government officials. A similar ratio emerged with .58 for males and .42 for females. Again this finding only serves to substantiate the null hypothesis.

Up to this point, it appeared the original hypothesis should be rejected. However, checks were built into the questionnaire to insure against misinterpretations in reading. For each of the four preceding categories (spouse, parents, brothers and sisters, and uncles and aunts), respondents were asked if any had run for the Parliament and whether or not they had won the election. These follow-up questions produced substantially different results than those that have been previously discussed.

For the sibling category, 1.9 percent of the male parliamentarians had a brother or sister who had run for election and lost, and an additional 1.9 percent had a sibling who had run for, and been elected to, the national parliament (see Table 3).

Table 3
Brothers and Sisters in Parliamentary Elections

Election Participation	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Did not run	11	100.0	208	96.3	219	96.5
Defeated	0	0.0	4	1.9	4	1.8
Elected	0	0.0	4	1.9	4	1.8

$$\chi^2 = 0.42, df = 2, p = .80.$$

Female parliamentarians had no siblings that had preceded them to Parliament. Thus, very little difference existed.

In the question regarding uncles and aunts, 10.8 percent of the male parliamentarians had one who had run for office, but only 7 percent were elected. Of the female parliamentarians, 16.7 percent had uncles or aunts who ran for election, all of whom were subsequently elected. However, again the difference (see Table 4), while about 3 to 2 in favor of females, was not too substantial in light of the remaining percentages that had not had uncles or aunts run (83.3 percent for female, 89.2 percent for male).

Table 4
Uncles and Aunts in Parliamentary Elections

Election Participation	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Did not run	10	83.3	190	89.2	200	88.9
Defeated	0	0.0	8	3.8	8	3.6
Elected	2	16.7	15	7.0	17	7.6

$$\chi^2 = 1.88, df = 2, p = .38.$$

When the respondents were asked whether or not one or more of their parents had run for election to Parliament, the results conflicted with the data in Table 2. Only 1.4 percent of the male respondents were shown to have had a father⁴ who won an election, while 16.7 percent of the female parliamentarians had fathers who were, or who had been, members of the Parliament. This apparent conflict was found not to result from any internal inconsistency in the data, but rather from the phrasing of the previous question. In Thailand, unlike the case in many Third World nations, elected members of the Parliament, although not appointed members, must resign their posts as government officials once elected. Thus, the earlier question had, by the way it was phrased,

⁴In all cases "parent" was explained as "father" in the open-ended explanatory section accompanying the question.

precluded respondents from indicating parental election to the Parliament. The present question overcame this shortcoming and it was found that the parental political background was indeed significantly different for male and female parliamentarians, as shown in Table 5, and the null hypothesis was, thus, rejected. Female parliamentarians do, indeed, tend to come from the family backgrounds of greater political activism than their male counterparts.

The final question, concerning whether spouses had run for election to the Parliament, serves to substantiate the previous finding. Again, as in the previous pair of questions, the inconsistencies that arose were the result of the misapplication of the measuring tool (question) and not of any conflict in the actual data. As shown in Table 6, it was found that the political background of spouses was significantly different for male and female members of the Parliament, so the earlier rejection of the null hypothesis is upheld. Female parliamentarians tend to be more apt to have a spouse who has run for the Parliament than male parliamentarians in that only 1.4 percent of the males had wives who had done so, but 20 percent of the females had husbands who had previously served in the Parliament.

Table 5
Parents in Parliamentary Elections

Election Participation	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Did not run	10	83.3	211	96.3	221	95.7
Defeated	0	0.0	5	2.3	5	2.2
Elected	2	16.7	3	1.4	5	2.2

$$\chi^2 = 12.77, df = 2, p = .001.$$

Table 6
Spouse in Parliamentary Elections

Election Participation	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Did not run	8	80.0	208	98.6	216	97.7
Defeated	0	0.0	2	0.9	2	0.9
Elected	2	20.0	1	0.5	3	1.4

$$\chi^2 = 27.24, df = 2, p = .0001.$$

Taken together, these last two tables are even more revealing. Of the male members of the Parliament, only 5.1 percent ever had a spouse or parent run a national election. On the other hand, 36.7 percent of the females had had a husband or parent who not only had run for the election, but had actually won the election. In light of these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that female parliamentarians in Thailand do, indeed, have a higher likelihood of having a family background of political activism⁵ than their male counterparts.

Socioeconomic Class

Hypothesis 2. Female parliamentarians are more likely to come from a higher socioeconomic class than male parliamentarians.

Of all the variables under consideration in previous studies of this sort, the one upon which most scholars agree is that female political leaders are likely to come from the middle or upper socioeconomic classes.⁶ In Thailand, where the average per capita income is well below 15,000 baht,⁷ and women tend to earn substantially less than men, this study found that only 8.3 percent of the female parliamentarians had earned less than 15,000 baht per year prior to assuming office, a finding which is in full agreement with the earlier works.

⁵Here "political activism" includes not only Milbrath's top category, those who hold public office (the definition used for "political participation"), but also those who run unsuccessfully for the Parliament as well. See Lester Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1965), pp. 23-29.

⁶Riddell, p. 266; Jaquette, "Female Political Participation in Latin America," p. 68; and Douglas, "Women in Indonesian Politics," p. 178.

⁷Thai monetary unit. The Par value established on October 20, 1963, was fixed at 0.0427245 grams of fine gold, or an exchange rate of 20.8 baht to one United States dollar.

It was hypothesized, however, that not only did female parliamentarians enjoy a superior economic status, vis-a-vis other Thai women, before entering office, but that their prior income was likely to surpass, as well, that earned by the male members of the Parliament in their former occupations. To test this hypothesis, all respondents were asked to state what their income had been prior to their present position. In addition, each respondent was asked to describe his/her previous occupation. The results of this second question appear in Table 7.

Table 7
Prior Employment Status of the Respondents

Employment Status	Female		Male		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
At home	0	0.0	10	4.5	10	4.3
Self-employed	9	81.8	106	47.7	115	49.5
Government enterprise	0	0.0	16	7.2	16	6.9
Armed forces	0	0.0	67	30.2	67	28.8
Government official	2	18.2	23	10.4	25	10.7

$$\chi^2 = 7.67, df = 4, p = .10.$$

It is interesting to note that, unlike the female members of the Parliament in Bangladesh, who Jahan found to be mostly housewives who had not held a job before,⁸ not a single female respondent fell in that classification in Thailand. Approximately 82 percent had been self-employed, while the other 18 percent had been government officials. Of the men, 4.5 percent had been unemployed, while the remainder were evenly split between self-employment and some sort of government employment, with nearly two-thirds of this latter group coming from the armed services.

It was found that the income levels of men and women, before becoming members of the Parliament were significantly different ($\chi^2 = 9.53$, $p = .04$) as shown in Table 8.

The probability value of chi-square satisfied the .05 standard and the null hypothesis was thus rejected. The degree of relation between sex of the respondent and prior income is .19 (contingency coefficient) with women having tended to earn substantially more than men before joining the Parliament. Over 83 percent of the female parliamentarians had earned 20,000 baht or more per year before their present job. Only 61 percent of the men now in the Parliament fell in that category.

⁸Rounaq Jahan, "Women in Politics: A Case Study of Bangladesh," in Asian Women in Transition, eds. Chipp and Green, p. 229.

Table 8

Respondents' Income before Entering the Parliament

Income	Female		Male		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Less than 15,000 baht/year	1	8.3	42	18.8	43	18.3
15,000-19,999 baht/year	1	8.3	45	20.2	46	19.6
20,000-24,999 baht/year	6	50.0	37	16.6	43	18.3
25,000-29,999 baht/year	0	0.0	20	9.0	20	8.5
Over 29,000 baht/year	4	33.3	79	35.4	83	35.3

$$\chi^2 = 9.53, df = 4, p = .04.$$

Educational Attainment

Hypothesis 3. Female parliamentarians are likely to have a higher level of educational attainment than male parliamentarians.

In order to test this hypothesis the respondents were asked to give the highest level of formal education they had completed. There was a total of seven categories ranging from "less than high school" to "Ph.D.," with a special "other" category added for those who had received their training outside of the formal state educational system (i.e., military cadet, monastery studies, etc.). The chi-square value of 8.63

with 7 degrees of freedom did not produce a probability value within the accepted range. ($p = .27$). (See Table 9.) This is not to say, however, that significant differences did not exist beyond the four-year college level. Indeed, while only 17.1 percent of the men had achieved an advanced degree, 41.6 percent of the women had received either a master's or a Ph.D. degree. The overall female educational average was indeed higher than the corresponding male average, but this difference was not statistically significant and the null hypothesis could not be rejected. This finding tends to confirm that the sex-education differential cited in earlier studies tends to hold true for Thailand. This is especially significant in a society that has traditionally given little emphasis to educating females, and that still sees only a relatively few women in the higher educational system. In the society at large, males are much better educated than females. The government of Thailand has noted: "At every level, educational attainment is better for males."⁹ Thus, female parliamentarians are atypical when compared to other women in Thai society. Education emerges as an important possible explanatory variable when it comes to evaluating political participation of women.

⁹National Statistical Office, National Economic and Social Development Board, and the Institute of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University, The Population of Thailand (Bangkok: Committee for International Coordination of National Research in Demography, 1974), p. 28.

Table 9

Highest Educational Attainments of the
Thai Parliamentarians in 1979-1983

Highest Educational Attainment	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Less than high school	0	0.0	6	2.7	6	2.7
High school	1	8.3	7	3.2	8	3.4
Some college	0	0.0	11	5.0	11	4.7
Two years college	2	16.7	17	7.7	19	8.1
B.A. degree	4	33.3	138	62.2	142	60.7
M.A. degree	4	33.3	32	14.4	36	15.4
Ph.D. degree	1	8.3	6	2.7	7	3.0
Other	0	0.0	5	2.3	5	2.1

$$\chi^2 = 8.63, df = 7, p = .27.$$

It should be stressed here that, while the overall average number of school years completed for females exceeded that for males, it did so only marginally. As such, the case for a female political elite better educated than its male counterparts in Thailand is not nearly as strong as it appears to be in other countries. Indeed, when controlling for age, the relationship completely disappears. The zero order partial correlation between sex and education (with education the dependent variable) is only .03 when controlling for age. Thus, the higher level of

education is more a function of age than sex, with younger elites tending to have a higher education than older ones.

Age

Hypothesis 4. Female parliamentarians are likely to be younger in age than male parliamentarians.

To test this hypothesis all respondents were asked to state their age in one of five categories. It was found that the ages of men and women were significantly different ($\chi^2 = 10.86, p = .01$), as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Age of the Thai Parliamentarians When Elected to Public Office in 1979-1983

Age When Elected to Public Office	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Under 26 years	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
26-35 years	2	16.7	5	2.3	7	3.0
36-45 years	5	41.7	55	24.8	60	25.6
46-55 years	3	25.0	80	36.0	83	35.5
Over 55 years	2	16.7	82	36.9	84	35.9

$\chi^2 = 10.86, df = 3, p = .01.$

The probability value of chi-square satisfied the conventional, although arbitrary, standard of .05, and the null hypothesis was thus rejected. The degree of relation between the sex of the respondent and age is .21 (contingency coefficient) with men tending to be substantially older than women. The earlier cited studies found the average age of parliamentarians (congressmen) to be late forties and fifties;¹⁰ Thai male parliamentarians tend to conform to this norm. Among the male respondents, 72.0 percent were forty-six years of age or older. However, 58.4 percent of the female respondents were forty-five years old or younger. Thus Thailand's Parliament, in terms of an age-sex differential, does indeed seem to conform to the pattern evident in earlier studies.

Urban Origins

Hypothesis 5. Women parliamentarians are more likely to come from an urban background than their male counterparts.

"Urbanness" is the one variable that has caused considerable problems in previous studies. First of all, researchers do not agree on what population size differentiates an "urban" center from a "rural" one. Camp assumed it to be 5,000 people,¹¹ while the U.S. government

¹⁰Donald Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), p. 57.

¹¹Camp, p. 431.

defines it to be 2,500 people.¹² The distinction is not relevant for the purposes of this study, however, as only four members of the study population were born in centers of less than 10,000 people, and only two still reside in such centers. The other major problem lies in the belief that "urbanness" is somehow related to increased levels of political participation, while researchers have consistently been unable to verify that any direct causal linkages exist. (See Chapter II.)

Because of the above, reliance on a single measurement to determine relative urbanity was deemed inadequate. The present study utilized four scales to help address this problem. In the first one, objective in nature, the respondents were asked to designate the population size of their birthplace. The scale ranged from under 2,500 people to a million or more. As seen in Table 11, no one was born in a city of less than 5,000 people.

¹²"The urban population comprises all persons living in (a) places of 2,500 inhabitants or more incorporated as cities, boroughs, and villages, (2) incorporated towns of 2,500 inhabitants or more except in New England, New York, and Wisconsin, where "towns" are simply minor civil divisions of counties, (c) the densely settled urban fringe, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas, around cities of 50,000 or more, and (d) unincorporated places of 2,500 inhabitants or more outside any urban fringe. The remaining population is classified rural." U.S., Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population : 1950. United States Summary, II, 9; as quoted in Robert E. McArthur, "The Impact of Metropolitan Government on the Rural-Urban Fringe: The Nashville-Davidson County Experience" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, 1967), p. 8f.

Table 11
City Size of Birthplace of the Respondents

City Size	Female		Male		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Less than 2,500	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
2,500-4,999	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
5,000-9,999	0	0.0	4	2.0	4	1.9
10,000-49,999	5	45.5	58	28.9	63	29.7
50,000-99,999	2	18.2	73	36.3	75	35.4
100,000-499,999	4	36.4	60	29.9	64	30.2
500,000-999,999	0	0.0	6	3.0	6	2.8
More than 999,999	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

$$\chi^2 = 2.63, df = 4, p = .62.$$

The second scale, also objective, asked the respondents to rate the population size of their present city of residence. This scale covered the same range as the previous one, and as can be seen in Table 12, only 0.5 percent of all respondents live in a city of under 50,000 population.

Table 12
City Size of Residence of the Respondents

City Size	Female		Male		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Less than 2,500	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
2,500-4,999	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.5
5,000-9,999	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.5
10,000-49,999	1	8.3	13	6.2	14	6.3
50,000-99,999	1	8.3	52	24.9	53	24.0
100,000-499,999	6	50.0	118	56.5	124	56.1
500,000-999,999	4	33.3	22	10.5	26	11.8
More than 999,999	0	0.0	2	1.0	2	0.9

$$\chi^2 = 6.70, df = 6, p = .34.$$

Up to this point, according to conventional classifications of "urbanness," no one was born in a rural area and, depending on the classification used, either no one or, at most, 0.5 percent, of the respondents now reside in rural areas. According to the conventional wisdom, this is all that is needed to determine the "urbanness" of the population under study. However, on the assumption that the problem other researchers encountered when attempting to find a causal link between urbanization and political participation might well be the result, at least in

part, of their total reliance on objective criteria, two subjective responses were elicited from the respondents in an attempt to determine if they considered themselves urban or rural. While it is acknowledged that there is presently near unanimous agreement on the need to base statistical results on objective measurements, this author believes that a person's subjective self analysis may be an important missing explanatory variable in most contemporary social science research.¹³ Thus, an attempt was made to discover whether or not differences existed between the observable criteria of "urbanness" and the degree to which the respondents subjectively saw themselves as being either urban or rural.

¹³ For example, Centers found that ". . . stratification variables show stronger correlations with class affiliation and conservatism--that is, with purely psychological variables--than they do with an aspect of socioeconomic stratification." See Richard Centers, The Psychology of Social Classes (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1949), p. 116. Even Marx argued that "common interests" were the basis for a social class (see Karl Marx, Das Elend der Philosophie, rev. ed. (Berlin, 1947), p. 187, as quoted by Ralf Dahrendorf in Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, p. 14) and warned that only "the vulgar mind commutes class differences into 'differences in the size of purses' . . ." (see Karl Marx, "Die moralisierende Kritik und die kritische Moral," in Franz Mehring, ed., Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, 3d ed. (Stuttgart, 1920), p. 466; as quoted by Dahrendorf, p. 11). Marx failed accurately to predict the course of political and social events in Western "capitalist" countries, because, in part, he did not listen to his own observations and failed to foresee that workers might place more relative importance on the "differences in the size of purses" than on what he perceived as their "common interest." Where a person sees himself (his own self perception) is a much more predictable determinant of human action than objective criteria ascribed to him by others. Centers' main contribution was to verify this through objective measurement of subjective attitudes and feelings.

In one question, each parliamentarian was asked to classify his/her place of residence as either urban or rural. As seen in Table 13, 17 percent of all those who answered saw themselves as residing in a rural area.

To further verify that subjective criteria may play an important role in determining a person's "urbanness" or "ruralness," respondents were asked to define their place of birth as either urban or rural. Remembering that only 1.9 percent were born in centers of under 10,000 population, it is interesting to note, as seen in Table 14, that a full 38.6 percent replied that they were born in a rural area. Here a substantial sex difference is evident with 14.4 percent more of the men claiming an urban birth than their female counterparts.

Thus, while women do indeed tend to reside in larger urban areas than male parliamentarians, their perception of their present residence as urban is nearly identical to that of the males (83.3 percent to 83.0 percent, respectively). However, while women were born in towns/cities of the same, or slightly smaller, populations than the men, a substantially higher percentage of the former perceived of themselves as having been born in an urban area. While such conflicts between objective and subjective criteria may eventually help explain why previous studies have been unable to agree on the extent to which "urbanness" is correlated with political participation, the contribution of the present study is merely to point out that such discrepancies do, in fact, exist.

The above findings for Thailand coincide with those Camp delineated for Mexico, in that female political leaders were born in urban areas¹⁴

¹⁴Camp, p. 431.

(using his definition of 5,000 or more people). His assertion that this holds true for women more so than for men, however, is not substantiated by data generated for this study.

Table 13
 Respondents' "Subjective" Area of Residence

Area of Residence	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Rural	2	16.7	37	17.0	39	17.0
Urban	10	83.3	181	83.0	191	83.0

$$\chi^2 = 0.0007, df = 1, p = .97.$$

Table 14
 Respondents' "Subjective" Area of Birthplace

Area of Birthplace	Female		Male		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Rural	3	25.0	87	39.4	90	38.6
Urban	9	75.0	134	60.6	143	61.4

$$\chi^2 = 0.99, df = 1, p = .31.$$

In comparing the data for Thailand with what Jahan found in Bangladesh, the results are somewhat different. In that study, female members of the Parliament were more "urbanized" (i.e., came from larger cities) than did the male members.¹⁵ This is not true for Thailand. However, Jahan also found that these female political leaders, when compared to men, came from families which were more "urban oriented."¹⁶ As self perceptions are, in large part, molded by one's external environment, and the principle actors in that environment are one's family, the greater subjective urban orientation evident in the responses given by the female members of the Thai Parliament tend to suggest that Jahan's second observation may, indeed, hold true for Thailand.

Summary

Through a comparison between the generated data and previous studies in the area of backgrounds and characteristics, several variables emerged that suggested women legislators in Thailand shared characteristics with female political elites in other countries. They were more prone to come from a family with a history of political activism, of a higher socioeconomic status, and were found to be younger than their male counterparts.

One area in recent literature over which there has been little agreement is the extent to which "urbaness" is correlated with both political participation and attitudes. The findings presented in this research suggest that the source of this problem may be the way in

¹⁵Jahan, p. 229.

¹⁶Ibid.

which "urbanness" is measured. A strictly objective measure of the respondents' place of residence, either urban or rural (i.e., population less than 5,000) was calculated and only one respondent was classified as having a rural residence. With virtually no variance, this objective measure for urban/rural was useless as a predictor for measurement. This tends to suggest that Jahan's use of "urban orientation"¹⁷ may prove a more viable approach than the more widely used convention of relying on the population size of a birthplace or place of residence.¹⁸ Another consideration, which has much broader implications, is that other variables, such as "social status" (which is usually measured by locating a particular occupation on a continuum ranging, for example, from "hobo" to "president"), may be more reliably measured if at least some weight is given to a respondent's (subjective) opinion of himself.¹⁹ The scope of the present study did not enable this researcher to speculate further, but the findings suggest the need for more research in this area.

¹⁷Jahan, p. 229.

¹⁸It is noted that this researcher originally accepted the popular convention for the purposes of this study.

¹⁹For example, does a plumber earning \$30,000 a year see himself as "working class" or "middle class"? The answer probably depends on many factors, such as age, family background, circle of friends, union and others. However, depending on the answer, he may have very different opinions concerning, for example, which candidate he is likely to support in an election.