CHAPTER III

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY AND HYPOTHESES

Overview of Methodology

The research was designed to explore the political role of women in Thailand through an examination of the characteristics and attitudes of those women who, during the session 1979-1983, were members of the Thai Parliament. The significance of this study lies in the new data and information analyzed bearing on the role of women in the political affairs of a Third World country. The study of female participation in Thailand serves as a case study of female participation in developing countries and may be useful in a comparison with participation in highly developed countries as well. It is also hoped that the study will be a significant contribution to the research that has been done on the role of women in politics.

The study was designed to generate data which would allow comparisons between selicted characteristics and attitudes of the most politically active Thai women and those characteristics and attitudes of the most politically active Thai men[1] to determine whether or not significant differences could be detected. Chi-square statistics were computed for each value and a Type I error rate of $p < .05$ was used as a criterion for rejecting the null hypotheses.[2] In addition, when a characteristic,

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[1]"Most politically active Thai men" here includes only those presently holding office at the national legislative level. The administrative level is here excluded as those holding offices therein do by appointment only (for example, the Prime Minister) and do not run for elective office.

[2]G. David Garson, _Political Science Methods_ (Boston: Holbrook Press, Inc., 1976), p. 240.

attitude, or value was found to exist among the female parliamentary elite
that was inconsistent with the general female population as commonly
understood, such differences were noted. This second consideration was
made possible by combining new data with that of other scholars in Thai
studies,[3] while the first (and the major focus of this study) was solely
the result of using internally generated data, i.e., data gained through
responses to the questionnaire.

Hypotheses

Although Thai women have not had a substantial role among Thailand's
governing political elite, they have been part of it. Therefore, it is
important to understand the type of woman who has succeeded in a field
so few women enter. Specifically, in comparing these Thai women with
their male counterparts, major areas of interest are (1) the differences
that emerge in their background characteristics and (2) whether or not
sex differentiates their political attitudes. There is little prior
research available which might suggest some strong hypotheses for poli-
tically elite women. However, this study attempts to examine a number
of specific questions suggested by what literature is available in
Thailand, as well as by that which deals with political women in general.
Using the theoretical framework of the elite theory and role theory
paradigm, the present study tests the following hypotheses:

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[3]Kulap Saipradit et al., Thai Female History (Prawattisat Satri
Thai) (in Thai), 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Sang Runk Press, 1979); Chirana
Phitpricha, The Fourth World (Lok Thi Si) (in Thai) (Bangkok: San Sok-
sa Press, 1979).

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

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

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

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

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

6. Female parliamentarians tend to be more "leberal"[4] than male parliamentarians in their perceptions of major problems and solutions.

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[4]Liberal 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).