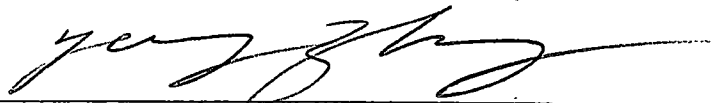


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by James Christopher Allen entitled "Electoral System Effects on Women's Representation in the Thai National Parliament." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts, with a major in Political Science.

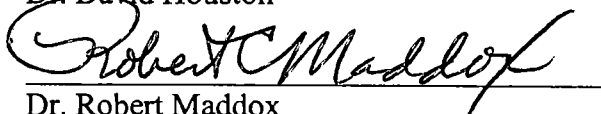


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**Electoral System Effects on Women's Representation in
the Thai National Parliament**

**A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**James Christopher Allen
May 1999**

Abstract

In this research electoral data from Thailand was used in order to test the concepts of district magnitude—the number of seats being contested in an electoral district—and party magnitude—the number of seats a party realistically expects to win in an electoral district—as regards their relevance to women being elected to office. Electoral data was used from all elections from 1979 to 1996. Regarding district magnitude Pearson's correlation values were generated in order to test for statistical significance between district magnitude and the women's percentages of district delegations to the Thai national Parliament. District magnitude was not found to have a consistent, statistically significant effect on women's election to Parliament.

Regarding party magnitude, Pearson's correlation values were generated in order to test for statistical significance between the number of fighting positions a political party had in a district and the percentage of women who held fighting positions in those districts. No statistically significant relationships were found. Further, a regression was run using the percentage of women who held fighting positions in electoral districts as the dependent variable and party magnitude and the Democrat party as independent variables. Again it was found that party magnitude had no statistically significant correlation with women being elected to national Parliament.

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1 Introduction

“Poochai bin khon; phuying bin kwai.”

(Men are people; women are water buffalo.)

--Thai saying

Background

The full accomplishment of the universality of human rights requires that equality of the sexes be considered a basic human right. Today, equality of rights for all, including the right to full participation in all areas of life, is widely recognized as a basic right in both national and international legal instruments. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the Covenant on Civic and Political Rights are general texts applicable to everyone. A more specific text is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It contains a global program of action aimed at addressing discriminatory situations that violate basic human rights in all fields of society, it stresses the importance of participation of women in decision-making in general and in politics in particular. In this regard this research will look specifically at women's representation in the Thai Parliament.

The functioning of a democratic system and the image it projects to its actors has a determining influence on the whole of society. The ideal of democracy rests on the ideas of progress and social justice. Reflection on the possibilities of how to realize these ideas needs a permanent examination of who can legitimately represent the people and partake in decision-making in the name of everyone. Who talks and who decides? Who determines the law? Who manages daily life in national, regional and local assemblies? Who, by his or her presence, personifies public power? The answer to each of these questions in terms of the categories of men and women is that it is the males who do this. Men, especially at the highest levels of decision-making, hold a quasi-monopoly in politics. Consequently public office, institutional organizations and democratically elected representation give a masculine image to the role of peoples' representative.

A clear under-representation of women in political decision-making poses the problem of the legitimacy of existing structures. When there are hardly any women participating in decision-making, the legitimacy of the outcome of political-decision-making may not be the same for both men and women. This argument, based on the notion of democracy, deals with the recognition of women's rights to full citizenship and with the implication that these rights must be reflected in the effective participation of women, at all levels of political life. There cannot be a true democracy if women are excluded from positions of power.

Political participation necessitates the articulation and defense of the interests of the group or groups that are represented. Women are more aware of their own needs and interests and are therefore better able to push for them. Do women, as a group in society, have certain specific interests that distinguish them from other groups, and will these be better articulated and defended by politicians of the same group?

Women as a group have the following in common:

- a historical deprivation of rights;
- a lower participation rate in the labor force, and one which exhibits both horizontal and vertical segregation;
- a feeling of responsibility to reproduce the labor force and bear children, which has resulted in a gendered division of domestic labor. Women are the caretakers in society. (Leijenaar, 1996)

The interests arising from this collective situation of women can be defined as objective women's interests, in the sense that they are an empirical description of the group situation in which women find themselves, and are therefore independent of any subjective evaluation. On the basis of this definition, concrete women's interests can be presented.

Women can also change the structure and culture of politics. Several studies have shown that women develop leadership styles that differ from those of men. For example,

in a study of parliamentarians in the Netherlands, it was found that more often than their male colleagues, female Members of Parliament (MPs) were of the opinion that they were functioning differently in politics from men. They considered themselves to be more practical, more pragmatic, and to have a greater sensitivity to their constituents. There was also a difference in how they defined their job: women MPs showed a preference to reaching compromises and to sustaining contacts with MPs from other parties. Women paid more attention to attending party conferences, meetings at party centers, and sessions of the parliamentary meetings, and also to considering the views of the electorate and to participating in meetings with social groups. Male MPs were more inclined to mention the importance of parliamentary meetings and sustaining contacts with government members. (Leijenaar, 1996)

Finally, women comprise half the world's pool of potential talent and ability. Each individual, male or female, and each of the genders have differences in experience, insight and knowledge that can lead to a more rounded, informed public policy, while maximizing the human and material resources of the State. Not recognizing women and providing them with opportunities to play on an even political playing field is denying the State their experience, their talent, and their capacity to contribute meaningfully.

Obstacles to Women's Success in Political Systems

Academic research has played an important role in defining the problem of the under-representation of women in politics. Since the 1970's quite a lot of research has

been carried out studying the limited participation of women. Based on the findings of these studies, it is possible to present an overview of the factors, which help or hinder women in their attempt to enter higher level political positions. Table 1-1, borrowed from Leijenarr, offers a description of levels of involvement in the political decision-making process.

Table 1-1		
Levels of Involvement in Political Decision-Making and Factors Affecting Women's Involvement		
Recruitment	Selection	Election
<i>Institutional factors</i>	<i>Institutional factors</i>	<i>Institutional factors</i>
• level of development • urbanization • gender division of labor • social climate • potential climate/level of corporatism • gender equality	• electoral system • party ideology • selection procedures • integration of women in politics/parties	• voting procedure • nomination procedure
<i>Individual factors</i>	<i>Individual factors</i>	<i>Individual factors</i>
• structural • situational • psychological	• degree of organization • civic experience • support	• electoral attractiveness

(Leijenaar, 1996)

Recruitment is the process by which people get involved in political and party activities. Another way of saying this is recruitment is a potential candidate choosing him or herself as an actor in the political arena. At the next level, selection determines which

citizens, from the pool of those who are active in politics, are eventually seen as being qualified for a representative position. Another way of saying this is that the citizen is chosen by his or her society to potentially serve as a representative. This usually means the choosing of a citizen to run as a candidate on a party ticket. Finally, election is the decision whether candidates will become members of a representative body. In other words, a candidate is chosen by his or her constituency to be their representative.

In each step of this process – recruitment, selection, election – individual and institutional factors affecting the electoral chances of women have been identified. Individual factors address the extent to which individual characteristics favor the attainment of a representative position. For example, a high level of educational, professional experience, or coming from a politically active family are advantages when pursuing a political career. On the other hand, being married and having small children are a hindrance to women who are striving to achieve a representative position. Institutional factors affecting the achievement of representation of women relate to the organization of society as well as to the political system itself.

Recruitment

Institutional factors affecting recruitment fall into the category of socio-economic-cultural characteristics. In countries with lower achievement in the areas of economic development and degree of urbanization, women have fewer opportunities. While economic development is not a guarantee of equality it does play an important role

in providing opportunities for women. Division of labor is related to this. Many societies are organized in such a way that leaves little opportunity for women to be involved in public affairs. A lack of nurseries, obstacles caused by the labor market, and regulations which reinforce traditional role patterns are examples of structures that have an impact on the individual development of women. The social and political climate also strongly affect the degree to which women can become involved in public life. The dominant religion and religious practices, strict notions of sex roles, and the tone of the government in power can function either to support or deter the involvement of women in the political system. Finally, gender equality can be thought of in three categories: economic, social, and political. Countries vary in the constitutional provisions created to allow for rights to own property, equal treatment, freely marry and divorce, and participate in the political process.

Individual factors can be distinguished into three types: structural factors, situational factors, and psychological factors. Structural explains refer to a group's place in the social structure and emphasize differential access to political resources. They include educational level, professional experience, and level of income. Greater attainment in each of these areas grants women the individual resources to make better-informed decisions. Situational factors refer to the circumstances of the majority of women – their role as homemakers. Potential political employers and women themselves may view their role as wife and mother as in impediment to their participation in the political process. Being overlooked by employers and being stricken by self-guilt as family time is used for political endeavors are two clear obstructions to women entering

the political arena. Finally, the psychological effects of sex-role socialization and political socialization also carry a heavy toll on women's public participation. The distinction between the private and the public domain, the related ideas about the social roles of men and women and the definition of politics as belonging to the public domain, all combine to result in a lesser transformation of political values and attitudes for girls and women than for boys and men. As a consequence women lack confidence in their own political capabilities.

Selection

Electoral and political system, party ideology, and the selection process each affect women being chosen as candidates. In a proportional representation system, women stand a better chance of being elected than in a majority system with single-member constituencies. Generally, male candidates stand a better chance in majority systems because selectors doubt the electoral appeal of women candidates. Party ideology affects women's political involvement in a number of ways. Liberal thought supports equal opportunity, while socialist and communist ideology contain specific commitments to female emancipation. Conservative ideology, on the other hand, glorifies female participation in the family rather than politics. In general political parties based on specific religious objectives view women's participation negatively, because they do not encourage women's integration in the party and because they bring religious principles in to subjects such as the role of women in the family, abortion, and sexuality. Finally the

selection process can be described by three factors that affect the likelihood that women will be selected:

- who makes the selection;
- the selection criteria used;
- whether there are any special policies to strengthen the position of women candidates.

Election

Two institutional factors are considered here, voting procedures and nomination procedures. Voting procedures may produce a barrier to women wanting to serve in public office. Preferential voting is very common in some political systems. This can, however, be an advantage for women candidates, given the fact that, more and more, women voters are tending to vote for women candidates. Regarding nomination, there is evidence that women are more likely to be selected for political position by appointment than when the system calls for a direct election. One explanation for this is that authorities who make appointments are more concerned about balance among relevant groupings including women. Finally, the individual factor considered here, electoral attractiveness, is not so relevant in party list systems because voters vote for a party. However, perceived ideas about electoral appeal of men and women do play a role in first past the post electoral systems.

Purpose of this Research

The schema discussed above identifies several areas that affect women's ability to be effective participants in political systems. Of particular interest to this research is the electoral system in Thailand and how it may affect women's representation to the Thai national Parliament. The strength of women's movements, women's representation among professions from which candidates are drawn, political culture, party systems, and electoral systems (Darcy, Welch, & Clark, 1994; Karvonen & Selle, 1995; Rae, 1967; Duverger, 1955; Grofman, Bernard and Lijhart, 1986) are all factors that deserve review in the Thai situation, but the electoral system seems an ideal place to start due to the fact that its structure is clear and it is one of the basic structures of democratic forms of government. The study of how electoral systems affect women's representation is still young, however. Research has been done almost exclusively in advanced industrialized democracies. Reports tend to focus on the single finding that proportional representation (PR) electoral systems lead to better representation of women than do majoritarian electoral systems (Darcy, et al 1994; Lijphart & Gibberd, 1977). Of interest to this research are two concepts that have shown to be relevant to the representation of women on national parliaments: district magnitude and party magnitude.

District magnitude refers to the number of seats that open for election in an electoral district. (Matland, 1993) The argument is that the larger the district magnitude, the greater the chance minority groups (minority in terms of representation) have of achieving representation. The strongest results indicating that district magnitude has a

significant effect are found in a study by Rule (1987), comparing 23 advanced industrialized democracies. Rule tests a series of institutional, political, social, and cultural variables to see what effect they have on the proportion of women in national legislatures. She finds of strong positive relationship between district magnitude and percent of women legislators in party list PR countries. Engstrom (1987) considers district magnitude and female representation in the Irish Dail. He finds that districts with four or five seats are more likely to have female representatives than districts with only three seats. He suggests that one explanation for the relatively few women in the Irish Dail is that district magnitude is lower than in other PR systems.

Despite the encouraging results from these studies, there are other studies that offer differing analyses. Studies in Italy (Beckwith, 1990), the United States, and Great Britain (Welch and Studlar, 1990; Studlar and Welch, 1991) found little relationship between district magnitude and women's representation. With these inconsistent findings it is difficult to identify district magnitude as a strong predictor of women's representation; however, it's potential has been established.

Party magnitude is a phrase coined by Robert Matland in his research on women's representation in the Norwegian national legislature (1993). Party magnitude is the number of seats that a party has in an electoral district. Matland suggests that district magnitude affects women's representation only if it leads to greater party magnitude. With greater party magnitude, women have a greater chance of appearing on the party list. Research in Norway and Costa Rica have found relatively strong correlation

between party magnitude and women's representation. (Matland, 1993; Matland and Taylor, 1997)

The case of Thailand will be used to evaluate the concepts of district magnitude and party magnitude. Election results from the eight elections held from 1979-1996 will be evaluated to determine if, in Thailand, district magnitude and party magnitude are good predictors for women's representation to the national parliament.

Thailand was chosen for several reasons. First, Thailand is distinctive in Southeast Asia in that it has no colonial history like its ASEAN neighbors Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Brunei Darusallam, and Vietnam. Perhaps due to having never been colonized Thailand boasts arguably the longest history of democratic rule in the region. In 1932 the absolute monarchy was overthrown and replaced by a constitutional monarchy that allowed for Thailand's first democratic elections with men and women receiving the right to vote. Though fraught with periods of political unrest, 10 years of martial rule from 1958-1968 and bloodless as well as bloody coups, Thailand was steadily developed its political system into a relatively stable, if particularly Thai, democracy. Especially since the new Constitution of 1978 Thailand has experienced marked economic and political development. Of interest in this research are the gains that women as a group have made in Thai society, particularly in the political arena.

Second, in late 1997 a new Constitution was promulgated by the Thai Parliament and signed into law by His Majesty King Phumiphol Aduljadej. Under this new constitution, a strikingly different electoral system will be implemented with the next election. By evaluating the present system, some predictions might be made about how the new system will affect women's representation on the national parliament and senate.

Finally, the researcher has spent a total of almost ten years living in Thailand. Experience with the Thai government system, knowledge of the Thai language, the opportunity to return to Thailand for data collection during the implementation of the project, and connections in Thailand to facilitate the collection of data were major considerations in the choice of Thailand as the country to be evaluated.

In summary, the case of Thailand will be used for three goals. First, it will expand the literature into developing Southeast Asia by looking at the situation of women being elected to Thai parliament over the last twenty years and their participation in other areas of the political system. Second, the Thai case will be used to evaluate the concept of district magnitude to identify possible relationships with women's representation. Third, Thailand will be used to test theories developed in Western Europe and Central America regarding the effect of party magnitude. As such this research will be organized as follows:

- Chapter two will provide background information about the general political situation and the electoral system in Thailand, as well as illustrate the success

of women in the political process, particular in filling administrative offices and elected offices.

- Chapter three will consider the concepts of district magnitude and party magnitude, especially their significance, if any, with regard to Thai women and their getting elected to Parliament.
- Chapter four will look at the success of women in developing strong political organizations. Particularly, successful women's political organizations will be described and evaluated.
- The final chapter will seek to summarize the implications of this research, make predictions about future Thai elections, and suggest areas where further research may be conducted.

2 Women and Thailand's Political System

“... women have to step forward and prove themselves even though it means a departure from their social values. Society must, however, give equal opportunities to all its people regardless of gender. This is in fact a significant pre-requisite for a democratic society which is committed to creating opportunities for all citizens. Only then can they fully share in and contribute to the development of their nation.”

(Khunying Supatra Masdit, 1991)

In Thailand's last general election, held on November 17, 1996, a total of 38,564,593 adults were eligible to vote. Of those, 50.89% were women and 49.11% were men. 24,070,750 people actually voted in the election. Of those, 52.09% were women and 47.91% were men. These statistics are telling. Women not only hold a slight majority in terms of potential voters, they are also more likely to use their right to vote. Just looking at these basic statistics, it seems that women would hold an advantage when running for public office if they could mobilize women voters behind them. However, this has not been the case. In nationally elected offices women have experienced a severe disadvantage in terms of representation. Perhaps for some of the reasons discussed in the

previous chapter, women have not been able to translate their success in numbers into political success. In this chapter, two general areas will be discussed. First, the political system and political atmosphere of Thailand will be discussed, particularly with reference to the new Constitution promulgated in 1997. Second, the actual political success of women in government, in both elected and civil offices, will be considered.

Thailand's Political and Electoral System

Thailand's present system for parliamentary elections is a first-past-the-post system featuring both single-member- and multimember-districts, with the largest size district reaching three seats. Voters receive as many votes as seats being contested in their district -- three votes in a three seat district, two votes in a two seat district, and one vote in a single-member district. Districts are decided first by province, with each of the country's provinces receiving one seat. Presently, for every additional 150,000 population a province receives another parliamentary seat. Electoral districts are divided in provinces prior to each election as required to meet the quota allotted to the province.

A proportional representation system was proposed in Thailand for the election in 1979. Each province was to be considered one district with the number of seats allotted as allowed for in the multimember-district system. This system was never actually used however. The reason stated was that the constitution of 1978 called for a multimember district system and that this system had to be used for at least four years. An addendum to

the constitution was proposed so that the proportional representation system could be used, but parliament failed to ratify it.

Members of parliament are elected to four year terms and all seats are open for election simultaneously. The prime minister is chosen from the elected members of parliament by the coalition of parties which forms the government. In the period under consideration (1978-1997, eight elections) only one government completed a four-year term. All others dissolved Parliament and called for new elections early.

Political parties have been legal since 1957. The 1957 election marked the first instance of political parties forming a coalition to administrate the country. However, political party ascription tends to be more fluid than in Anglo democracies. Politicians routinely change parties, create new parties, and create factions as deemed necessary to achieve perceived political efficacy.

As in many other countries, incumbency is very strong in Thailand. Take the case of Khunying Supatra Masadit. From 1979 to 1996, she was the top vote-getter in her district for every election except September 1992. In that one election she stood down so that another member of her party could be elected. There are much larger numbers of male politicians who have accomplished the same feat. Present Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai is a case in point. He has been the top vote-getter in his district in every election since first being elected in 1969.

The New Constitution

Uthai Pimjaichon, Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA) called the constitution promulgated on October 11, 1997 “the people’s Constitution,” and claimed that it “returned power to the people.” Under previous Constitutions, sovereign power had been usurped either by the military or elected politicians. The new Constitution is therefore not another in a long line of Constitutions tailored by power holders to maintain their grip on power. Its distinctiveness is fourfold: it took four years of continuous effort by civil society forces to have it drafted at all; an indirectly elected body separate from Parliament (the CDA) did the drafting; the public was involved to an extent unprecedented anywhere in proposing provisions and in commenting on summary drafts; and its provisions, aimed at political reform, are markedly different from those of previous Constitutions. (Jumbala, 1998)

In the aftermath of the 1992 uprising, Thai politics was no longer the exclusive domain of bureaucrats and parliamentarians. However, the fact that the King had to once again bear the burden of resolving the 1992 conflict was evidence that Thai democracy and its component parts – bureaucracy, Parliament, the party system, and civil society – had not matured. This immaturity led to what came to be called political reform (karnpatiroop karnmuang), an idea that gradually congealed as democracy-oriented groups pressured and bargained with parliamentarians for constitutional amendments.

In May 1996, a Constitution Amendment Bill provided for the establishment of a ninety-nine person CDA. The first category of members, seventy-six total, was to consist of one representative from each of the 76 provinces. The other category, twenty-three in number, was to comprise public law experts (eight), political science and public administration experts (eight), and members with national political and Constitution – drafting experience (seven). These were shortlisted by national universities and chosen by Parliament itself.

By March 1997 the Constitution Drafting Committee (an ad hoc committee of the CDA) finished laying out the basic framework of principles and guidelines, which were divided into three parts. The first part dealt with rights and freedoms, and the duties of the people; the second with structures, old and new, to ensure accountability; and the third with political structure. After approval by the CDA, these were put to the first round of public debate. At this stage extraordinary committees for the purpose were set up in each of the seventy-six provinces with the province's CDA member as chairman, and made up of candidates to the CDA who were not selected by Parliament. In all, some 600,000 people turned up.

Civil society groups also organized their own meetings to hammer out their recommendations, published them, and submitted them to the CDA. A network of pro-democracy organizations, comprising a broad spectrum of people, from intellectuals and businessmen to slum labor associations, submitted a document of twenty-five pages detailing their wishes. They insisted the Constitution recognize that power belonged to

the people. In addition to individual rights, they contended that group and community rights should be recognized so communities could manage local natural resources. The setup of an independent human rights commission was also sought. Regarding political institutions, they argued for a single, elected House, for the combined use of single-member and party-list electoral systems, and for a separation of duties, with members of parliament resigning their parliamentary post if appointed to the cabinet. The right of the public to initiate an impeachment process was also sought.

The Constitution was clearly a reformist one. It aimed to strengthen the people's ability to exercise their rights, to enjoy their liberties, to participate in public decision-making, and to hold elected politicians and public officials accountable, and hence pave the way for cleaner politics and a more participatory form of democracy. Attention was also paid to the achievement of governmental stability, the exercise of leadership by the Prime Minister, and parliamentary effectiveness.

Electoral System Changes

In the area of the electoral system, with the new constitution, striking reforms were made to the existing structures. With the next election a mixed electoral system, adapted from Germany, will be introduced for elections to Parliament. One hundred will be elected country-wide on a party-list basis and another 400 will be elected from single-member constituencies. The party-list method is intended to deter vote-buying, lead to fairer allocation of seats, strengthen the party system, and encourage knowledgeable

candidates not good at campaigning. The single-member constituencies, using a first past the post voting format, is argued to be fairer than the multi-member district method previously used. Further, the small constituency size should make for closer contact between candidates and constituents. Political parties may be easily formed and not required to dissolve if they did not win seats, provided with a state subsidy, but have their finances scrutinized for transparency – leading, hopefully, to parties less dependent on funding than in the past.

The constitution also addressed the problem of government instability arising from Thai elected governments being loose coalitions. Parties are to be strengthened through the party-list system; parties gaining less than five percent of the total vote will not gain seats. This will diminish the number of small parties that could precipitate governmental instability. Further, the prime minister is made more difficult to dislodge than members of the cabinet.

Finally, for the first time the Senate, rather than being appointed, will be elected in a country-wide constituency. A single, non-transferable vote will be used. Candidates must not be party members; former members of parliament must have vacated their post for at least one year in order to be eligible for election. Senators may serve only one consecutive term of six years.

Women's Success in Attaining Administrative Office

Thai women have had the political rights of voting and competing in elections for almost sixty years. However, until recently, Thai women participated very little in political and administrative positions of power at the national, provincial, or local levels. The presence of women at the highest political level of Parliament and the Prime Minister's Cabinet occurred only intermittently from 1949 onwards. At the provincial and local levels, the presence of women was limited because of legal prohibitions. (Statistics used in this section were provided by the Local Administration Department, Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok, Thailand.)

Recently, participation has increased in political and administrative positions. From 1980 to 1992 women's presence in the appointed Senate increased from 3 to 9. The number of women in Parliament increased from 9 to 16 between 1979 and 1992. Administrative prohibitions the previously discriminated against women and limited their access to higher level positions in the civil service were changed. These data indicate a trend of increased participation in the political sphere. The following discussion will provide data about women's election to political office in Thailand and their participation in levels of leadership in the civil service.

Elected/Appointed Office

Thai Legislature

The Thai legislature is divided into two houses, the Senate and the Parliament. Members of the senate are appointed by the Prime Minister's Office. Members of the parliament are elected in provincial constituencies. Representation in these two houses provides a good reflection of the progress women have made in trying to achieve equality with men in the political arena. Table 2-1 shows the total number of seats in the senate and the Parliament then shows the number of female representatives. Only elections after the 1978 constitution will be considered. Before 1978 women's participation in elected and appointed government was very limited. Further, following the 1978 constitution, the Thai government entered a much more stable period of political growth while the economy also experienced extensive economic growth.

Table 2-1

Women's Participation in National Government

Year	Senate	Women	Parliament	Women
1979	225	3	301	9
1983	243	4	324	13
1986	260	5	347	12
1988	267	5	357	10
1989	267	6		
1992	270	7	360	12
1992			360	15
1995	260	21	391	24
1996			393	22

(Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

The number of female appointed senators and elected members of parliament (MPs) shows a steady increase over the seventeen-year period. With the electoral system and method of choosing senators remaining static during this period, the increases suggest a greater awareness of women's ability to serve successfully in congress and a greater willingness for nominating committees and voters to choose them for office.

Prime Minister's Cabinet

Another indication of women's influence in the political sphere is the number of positions they have held on the Prime Minister's Cabinet. Under the Thai system, ministers and assistant ministers are often chosen from elected members of parliament, though this is not a requirement. They hold the two positions jointly. Historically, they have been appointed by the party or group of parties which are able to form a coalition majority in the parliament. Usually appointments are made to satisfy political demands from member parties in the coalition. Therefore the positions are filled for reasons of political efficacy. Holding those positions is dependent of many factors, least of which is qualification for that specific position. The positions are also very fluid. The length of a minister's tenure is never certain. Table 2-2 shows women's participation in the cabinet.

A total of twelve women have held the post of minister or assistant minister. In some cases that held such a position more than once. The first female minister was appointed in 1976. The first assistant minister was appointed the same year. Both

Table 2-2				
Women's Participation in the Cabinet				
Year	Women	%	Men	%
1976-77	2	11.11	16	88.89
1977-78			33	100
1979-80	1	2.33	42	97.67
1980-83			37	100
1983-86			44	100
1986-88			45	100
1988-90	1	2.22	44	97.78
1990-91			45	100
1991-92	1	2.86	34	97.14
1992	1	2.04	48	97.96
1992	1	3.85	25	96.15
1992-95	1	2.04	48	97.96
1995-96	1	2.04	48	97.96
1996-97			49	100
1997-98	1	2.08	47	97.92

(Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

ministers enjoyed tenures of one year. The next female assistant minister held her position for 9 months in 1979-80. The next female minister held her post for two years from 1988-90. The majority of female ministers have been appointed since 1992. 8 women have filled 14 minister and assistant minister positions from 1992 to the present.

Constitutional Drafting Council

In 1996 a special Constitutional Drafting Council was created for the purpose of constitutional reform. The Council was to comprise 99 members, 76 elected, one from each province, and 23 appointed from relevant experts to provide guidance. The 76 provincial representatives were elected in March 1996, 6 of the 76 elected candidates were women. None filled an appointed slot. While the number is small, it does represent

about 8 percent of the total number of elected positions. When compared to the percentage of women elected in the 1995 election eight months earlier, just over 6 percent, it is significantly higher.

Regional Representation

In the Thai administration system, the bureaucracy is centrally located in Bangkok. The country is divided administratively into 76 provinces, which are then divided into a certain number of districts. These districts are further divided into sub-districts. The sub-districts comprise a certain number of villages, which are the lowest level of administration in the government bureaucracy. Elections are held for membership to the national parliament and provincial council and for leaders of sub-districts and villages. There are changes that are occurring in this system with some decentralization of the bureaucracy, but these changes are very recent and statistics are not complete. Election results are available from three elections of the sub-district organization. They do not reflect the whole country because this structure has not been implemented throughout the entire country, but they should provide ideas about tendencies for women on those organizations. In this section women's representation on provincial councils, as sub-district heads, on sub-district administration organizations, and as village heads will be considered.

Provincial Council

The next level of elected office in the Thai government system is the provincial council. Each province allots positions according to population, and representatives are

elected by local constituencies. The provincial council is responsible for coordinating provincial allotment of monies and activities with the office of the centrally appointed governor. Therefore, at a local level, the provincial council is a very powerful governing body. Further the members of these councils are generally very well respected and powerful individuals in the provincial society. Table 2-3 provides data about the number of male and female members of provincial councils for the whole country for three years over a ten-year period. This data was provided by the local administration department; more detailed data was not available.

Table 2-3		
Women's Representation on Provincial Councils		
Year	Women	Total
Aug. 1985	78	1,896
Oct. 1990	82	1,964
Dec. 1995	135	2,013
Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok		

These figures show that there was a significant increase in the number of women representatives on provincial councils between 1990 and 1995. This corresponds to the gains made in the national legislature during the same period. The lack of change in women's representation between 1985 - 1990 also compares to women's representation on the national legislature, where little change occurred in the numbers of women elected.

Sub-District Head/Sub-District Administration Organization

The sub-district head represents a very powerful individual his or her community. However, it wasn't until 1982 that women could be elected to this position. In that year a law which specified that the village head must be male was overturned. Being village head gave one the necessary experience, political skill, and political power base to become sub-district head. The sub-district head is the political leader of the sub-district. National projects, funding, and administration is coordinated and disseminated by him/her. All civil servants in the sub-district must coordinate activities with him/her. In the decade and a half since then, women have made good progress in filling these positions. Table 2-4 shows national figures for the total number of sub-district heads and for the number of women sub-district heads.

Table 2-4		
Number of Women Sub-District Heads		
Year	Total	Women
1989	6,673	33
1990	6,950	72
1995	7,161	102
1996	7,240	110
(Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)		

The figures reflect marked growth in terms of real numbers. However, when considered as a percentage of the total number of sub-district heads, the numbers are discouraging. The 1996 figure of 110 female sub-district heads is only 1.52 percent of the total.

Thus far statistics are available on three sub-district administrative organization elections. This is the newly implemented organ of government whose purpose is to decentralize much of the decision-making that affects local communities. This committee serves a function similar to the provincial council, only at a more micro level. Table 2-5 provides figures showing the number of eligible voters included in each election, the total number of positions and the number of women elected.

The 1995 figures show women winning over 9 percent of seats; the 1996 figures show them winning about 7.5 percent; the 1997 figures show them winning approximately 8.7 percent. These percentages are much higher than those for

Table 2-5

Sub-District Administrative Organization Elections Data

Election	Eligible Voters	Total Positions	Women
5/21/95	2,406,090	11,971	1,085
4/28/96	9,356,166	43,332	3,316
5/11/97	11,766,081	63,541	5,543

(Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

representation on the national parliament. They suggest a growing trend for women's representation at local levels.

Village Head

The lowest level of administration in Thailand is the village. A village head is elected by each village to coordinate activities and projects with the sub-district head. The village head has the final word in projects that affect his/her village as a whole. He/she is responsible for seeing that births and deaths are registered and that central administration policy reaches each household under his/her jurisdiction. In the fifteen years since they became eligible to run of the office of village head, women have made good progress in filling these positions. As late as 1996, almost 10 percent of all village heads were women. Table 2-6 provides national figures showing the total number of village heads and the number of women holding these positions.

Table 2-6

**Number of Women
Village Heads**

Year	Total	Women
1989	55,598	418
1990	63,373	856
1995	59,934	1,074
1996	65,873	6,375

(Source: Ministry of the
Interior, Bangkok)

These figures show that women seem to be making much better progress at local levels of administration. While women were able to take only about 6 percent of seats in the national parliamentary elections in 1996, they were able to take almost 10 percent of the village head seats.

Civil Office

It is generally acknowledged that the Thai political system is characterized as a bureaucratic polity that has been evolving towards a more democratic polity. Many significant elements of policy-making, decision-making, and implementation are in the hands of the civil service bureaucracy in the various ministries, government agencies, and state enterprises.

Keeping in mind the centralized structure of the Thai government discussed above, the attainment of civil leadership positions by women is very desirable. However, similar to the law allowing only men to become village head, which was repealed in 1982, there was a Ministry of the Interior law allowing only men to become district officers. These administrative positions are the first, and required, positions before any civil servant in the powerful Ministry of the Interior can achieve the rank of provincial governor. This law was repealed in 1993 and women are still working to make progress in this area of the civil service.

Top level or executive decision-making in the Thai government is at the civil service positions of C-9 through C-11, with C-11 being equivalent to the highest level bureaucrat, usually the Permanent Secretaries of the various ministries. As of 1994 at these three levels, there were 493 officials of whom only 46 were women (9 percent). Among the 46 women, 30 were clustered at C-9 which was 13 percent of all officials at this level. There were 15 women out of 240 officials at level C-10 (6 percent). At level C-11 there was only one woman out of 23 officials. Despite the fact that there are more women civil servants throughout the Thai government, the number of women in high-ranking positions is still considerably lower than the number of men.

The distribution of high-level women civil servants has important implications for development policy-making and capability to mobilize resources and opportunities development. It appears in sectors where a major role is played by women, such as agriculture, industry, health, and education, women's leadership is lacking in the government. For example, as of 1994 there were no women in the positions C-9 to C-11 in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. In the Ministry of Industry, only two women hold C-9 positions and there are none at the C-10 and C-11 levels. The Ministry of Public Health has three women at level c-9 and none at C-10 and C-11. In the education sector (excluding universities) there are no women at the top levels in the Ministry of University Affairs and there only three women at level C-9, one at C-10, and none at C-11 in the Ministry of Education.

Table 2-7 provides 1996 figures showing the total number of positions for governor, deputy governor, and vice governor, and the number of women filling these positions.

In this table the figures show that women are not filling a large number of leadership administrative positions. These high-ranking positions generally require that candidates had been a district officer. The experiences they gain in that position prepares them for higher-ranking positions. Therefore with the repeal of the law only in 1993, the low number of women represented is understandable. The number of women filling deputy district officer positions is approximately 8.6 percent of the total number. This is comparable to women's participation on sub-district administration organizations and as village heads and is higher than their participation on the national parliament.

Table 2-7		
Women Holding Ministry of the Interior Administrative Positions		
Position	Total	Women
Governor	75	1
Deputy Governor	139	2
Vice Governor	75	0
District Officer	749	1
Deputy District Officer	5,629	486
(Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)		

At this level of generality, interpretations must be made cautiously. However, it is possible to see a distinct gender gap at the highest end of the salary scale for administrators, executives and managers. Statistics from the 1989 Labor Force Survey show that 65,800 men received monthly salaries of 10,000 baht and above (19 percent of male wage-earners). 9,800 women (12 percent of the women's total) received similar monthly salaries. By 1991, 124,000 men were at the top end of the salary scale as compared to 30,100. Women have made numerical progress by tripling their participation at the top level of salary scale for administrators, executives, and managers compared to men, who doubled their number. Men have continued to outnumber women in this occupational category, and the high end of the salary scale, although the numerical gap narrowed between 1985 and 1991.

3 District Magnitude & Party Magnitude

“As the number of seats in each district increases, likelihood that any given formula will approximate proportionality also increases, because the larger number of available seats introduces a more flexible combination of rewards with which to account for the relative strength of the parties.” (Rae, 1967)

Similar to elections in the United States and the United Kingdom, Thailand does not use a proportional representation system to elect members of parliament. Candidates contest positions as individuals under a party label. Similar to proportional systems, however, elections are conducted using single-member and multimember districts ranging in size from one to three. Moreover, campaigning is done on a party ticket, generally composed of the number of seats available in the district. Although the voting system used is a first-past-the-post system, the party ticket technique and campaigning for the party as a whole closely represents a proportional representation system. The unity exhibited in party lists is much greater than in U.S. and British systems. An important reason for this is the leading party, the party which gains the most seats in a parliamentary election, will be the one which selects the prime minister and the cabinet. Therefore, candidates strongly campaign for the party ticket and voters have a strong sense of voting for parties as well as individual candidates.

Because of its similarities with the proportional representation system, it is appropriate to talk about the affect of district magnitude—the number of seats being contested in an electoral district—and party magnitude—the number of seats a party expects to win in an electoral district—on the outcome of parliamentary elections in Thailand. In this regard, the purpose of this section is to determine if greater district magnitude and party magnitude seem to support the candidacy and election of women. To this end election results from the eight most recent Thai elections will be considered to see if district magnitude seems to affect women being competitive candidates in parliamentary elections. Varying district magnitudes will be evaluated in order to ascertain possible trends between increased district magnitude and increased candidacy and election of women. All elections following the new constitution of 1978 (1979, 1983, 1986, 1988, 1992-1, 1992-2, 1995, 1996) will be analyzed. Complete 1995 election data was not available; only winning candidates' data was available. Therefore, the 1995 election will not be considered in certain parts of the analyses.

District Magnitude

According to Richard Matland, “most of the theoretical arguments for why district magnitude should have a positive effect on female representation are closely related to the assumption that as district magnitude increases, election strategies change “(Matland, 1993). The nature of those changes is determined by a party’s desire as a whole to perform well in an election. When moving from a single-member district to a multi-member district, parties’ are no longer fighting for one seat in a district; they are fighting

for as many seats as possible in a district. This quantitative difference in the number of seats per district, leads to qualitative differences in election strategies.

Darby, et al states that "the consequence of a change to more multimember districts is a jump in the proportion of women among the candidates and among those elected. The jump is greater than the national trend of increasing numbers of women elected. When states change toward less use of multimember districts, there is the opposite effect." This suggests that there are some particular reasons why women have a greater chance for candidacy. Matland suggests that one might be that in slating candidates, party officials deem it necessary to place women on ballots in order to appeal to voters. Says Matland, "as district magnitude increases, the exclusion of women from the party's list of candidates becomes increasingly obvious and increases the danger of a negative reaction from voters" (Matland, 1993). Darcy, et al adds, "since women are a legitimate grouping with political relevance, slate makers will be under greater pressure to include them as candidates as the number to be nominated increases" (Darcy, Clark & Welch, 1994). Another reason women could have a greater chance of candidacy with higher district magnitude might be that with larger district magnitude, it is easier to respond to intra-party needs and still place women and other minorities on the ballot. In a single-member district, the selection of a female candidate means that a male is shut out. With higher district magnitude possible powerful intra-party male constituencies mustn't necessarily be deposed if a women is to be a candidate. Higher magnitude allows for party flexibility in balancing the ticket.

Darcy, et al and Matland also suggest another reason that in multimember districts women might be more likely to consider candidacy. In a single-member district an election can be based not only on a candidate's qualifications but also on their lack of them. Candidates are running for themselves but also against their opponents in a bi-polar manner. With multi-member districts, candidates are more free to run on their qualifications because there is no clear opponent. In the particular case of women Darcy, et al suggests that "many women candidates prefer to campaign for themselves, running on their qualifications and programs, rather than against their opponents" (Darcy, Welch & Clark, 1994). Related to this, voters might also respond better to women in a multi-member district. Matland suggests that "voters who might be hesitant to vote for a woman as their only representative may be more willing to vote for a woman as one of many candidates" (Matland, 1993).

One final argument is that higher district magnitude may also related to greater turnover. Matland states: "if social or institutional conditions change so that women who were previously discriminated against are now competing on a level playing field, low turnover rates can serve as an anchor impeding change and keeping (women's) representation rates unnecessarily low" (Matland, 1993). This argument suggests that effects of incumbency may in some way be curbed by increased district magnitude.

Table 3-1 lists the actual number of women elected to Parliament divided by district magnitude. In Thailand, if one considers the actual number of women candidates elected there is a clear trend that seems to support the idea of district magnitude. As one

moves from single-member districts, to two-member districts, to three-member districts, there is a striking difference in the numbers of women who have been elected.

Two parliamentary seats have been filled by women elected from single-member districts; twenty-two seats have been filled by women elected from two-member districts; and seventy-one have been filled by women elected from three-member districts. The implication in the Thai context at least is that higher district magnitude affects the number of women elected to parliament.

Table 3-1			
Number of Women Elected by District Magnitude			
Year	Single-member	Two-member	Three-member
1979	0	1	8
1983	0	4	9
1986	0	4	9
1988	0	1	9
March 1992	0	2	10
September 1992	1	5	9
1996	1	5	17
Total	2	22	71

District data for 1995 not available.

(Source: Election Data, Thai Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

In order to look at the electoral performance at a somewhat deeper level, party lists in all electoral districts have been analyzed. All parliamentary candidates have been divided into three categories: mandate, fighting, and ornamental. To determine whether positions are mandate, fighting, or ornamental, total votes received were considered as follows. To determine if a position is mandate, all winning candidates' votes were compared to the top vote-getting, non-winning candidate. The non-winning candidate's votes were increased by 25% and the winning candidates' votes were decreased by an

equal amount. If this 25% shift of votes would not have resulted in a change in election results, the winning position(s) is coded as mandate. To determine fighting positions, the same 25% shift is used. If the shift would have resulted in a change in election results, both the winning and non-winning positions are coded as fighting. To determine ornamental positions, the same 25% shift is used. If the shift would have resulted in no change of election results, the non-winning position is coded as ornamental. Only candidates from parties with at least one winnable -- mandate or fighting -- position are considered. Independent candidates are considered on an individual basis, not in the context of all independent candidates in a district; therefore no independent candidates will be coded as ornamental positions.

After the categorization, the number of mandate and fighting positions were summed in order to determine the number of potentially winnable seats on each party list. Again, because concern is with women's representation in the national parliament and not just women candidates, consideration has been limited to parties with at least one winnable seat in a district. Table 3-2 shows the percentages of women who filled winnable and ornamental positions, separated by district magnitude.

Due to the comparatively small number of winnable positions in districts with a magnitude of one, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from comparison with greater district magnitudes. However, between district magnitudes of 2 and 3 there are appreciably higher percentages of women filling winnable positions for every election except one. In the 1992-2 election, women enjoyed 4.1% of winnable positions in

Table 3-2

Women Candidates in Winnable Seats by District Magnitude

Election	District Magnitude = 1				District Magnitude = 2				District Magnitude = 3			
	Women Elected	Winnable Positions	Ornamental Positions	Women Elected	Winnable Positions	Ornamental Positions	Women Elected	Winnable Positions	Ornamental Positions	Women Elected	Winnable Positions	Ornamental Positions
1979	0	0/20	--*	1	1/201	--*	8	12/306	--*			
1983	0	0/13	0/0	4	6/302	1/57	9	14/214	0/92			
1986	0	0/18	0/0	4	4/160	3/71	9	18/388	5/258			
1988	0	0/12	0/0	1	2/162	11/101	9	18/400	25/292			
1992-1	0	0/13	0/0	1	5/158	3/62	10	26/442	22/276			
1992-2	1	2/16	0/2	5	6/145	8/68	9	19/446	11/387			
1996	1	2/10	0/0	5	6/181	9/84	16	26/373	19/205			

*Ornamental position figures are not available for the 1979 general election.

(Source: Election Data, Thai Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

districts with a magnitude of 2 and 4.2% of winnable positions in districts with a magnitude of 3. The numbers are basically the same. However, for all other elections, districts with a magnitude of 3 saw women gaining percentages of winnable seats 2 to 3 times higher than percentages of winnable seats in districts with a magnitude of 2. This suggests that greater district magnitude aids women in gaining potentially winnable seats on party lists.

Empirical Testing of District Magnitude's Relevance

The conclusions that may be drawn from the raw data presented above are perhaps cursory and not reliable. In order to provide a more rigid test for district magnitude, correlation values will be determined run to test district magnitude's relevance. To test whether district magnitude influences women's representation in Thailand, data has been collected on all candidates in all elections since 1979 (eight elections), with the exception of 1995, where data is available only for successful candidates. The unit of analysis is the percentage of parliament seats held by women in each electoral district. These percentages were then correlated with district magnitude to generate correlation values. These are shown in table 3-3.

In Chapter 2 the number and percentage of women serving in the Thai parliament have already been documented. Table 3-3 shows that in three elections, 1979, 1988, and

Table 3-3

Correlation Values Between District Magnitude and Women's % of District Delegation

Election	1979	1983	1986	1988	1992-1	1992-2	1996
District Magnitude	.203*	.093	.128	.198*	.191*	-.112	.010

*significant to .05 level (2-tailed test)

(Source: Election Data, Thai Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

1992-1, district magnitude had a statistically significant correlation with women being elected. The overall results, however, do not show a consistently positive relationship. This finding is in line with the inconsistent results that have been found in previous testing of district magnitude in other countries. There could be several explanations. One is that women have yet to achieve enough political power to make them a strongly felt political force in national elections. Considering the numbers of women elected this seems a reasonable conclusion. Although the raw numbers suggest that district magnitude does help to get women on the ballot, they do not yet have enough political power to achieve statistically significant numbers. Another possible explanation is that the first-past-the-post system forces more attention in individual candidates, even though the nature of campaigning is as a party ticket. If this is the case, then the very small magnitudes that have been present in the Thai electoral system could work to the disadvantage of Thai women. If larger magnitudes were in place, it might be possible that an evening effect would take place. Where now only a very small number of candidates per district have a chance of winning, there might be a larger magnitude point where women would have a more significant chance of gaining representation.

Party Magnitude

Robert Matland has done detailed work on the possible effect of district magnitude on women's representation. Several important nuances have been found, which provide possible explanations for the inconsistent results in the literature regarding its explanatory power. First, it is not so much district magnitude as "party magnitude" -- the number of seats a party expects to win in a district -- that makes a difference. District magnitude leads to greater women's representation only if it leads to larger party

magnitude. It is possible to have a system with high district magnitude, but where many parties win just a few seats, as in Israel. If a party has a realistic chance of winning only one or two seats in a district, then competition for those top positions take on the characteristics of nominations in single-member district systems. If a party expects to win several seats, then ticket-balancing dynamics can come into play. Higher district magnitude is usually associated with higher party magnitudes, but this is not guaranteed.

Second, party magnitude's effect on women's representation is likely to be time bound. Party magnitude improves women's representation only if women are an effective political force with some power in the party. When women have almost no power, as was the case in Norway in the 1950's, there is no push for greater representation, and other groups fill the final electable seats on the lists. By the mid-1980's in Norway several parties had institutionalized quota systems, and women were an extremely powerful force. Gender equality has become one of the very first considerations in putting together lists. It does not matter whether there are two seats or eight; equal division between the sexes is the rule. In the crucial years between, however, when women were working toward greater access, it was much easier for women to get elected in districts where a party elected several candidates than when it only elected one or two.

Though perhaps not a most different systems case, Thailand provides a very different case for the testing of party magnitude. Culturally, women's rights and equality have much greater legitimacy in Norway than in Thailand. Further, the centralized nature of candidate choice by political parties would seem to work against party magnitude being relevant to women's representation in Thailand.

Empirical testing of party magnitude's relevance

To test whether party magnitude influences women's representation in Thailand, data has been collected on all candidates in all elections since 1979 (eight elections), with the exception of 1995, where data is available only for successful candidates. The unit of analysis is district party candidate lists. Because concern is with women's representation in the national parliament, and not just women candidates, only parties with at least one winnable seat in a district were considered. Candidates' chances for election were described as either mandate, fighting, or ornamental as described in the section on district magnitude. Two tests were run. First, a correlation was run between the number of winnable seats that women attained, party magnitude and the Democrat party in order to determine if there was any relationship between these independent variables. Second, a regression was run with party magnitude and the Democrat party as independent variables.

Table 3-4 shows the correlation values between women's number of winnable seats, party magnitude, and Democrat party. None of the party magnitude scores proved to be statistically significant. There could be many reasons for this. First, as mentioned in the discussion of party magnitude, women must have some real political power in order to be able to manifest it in terms of parliamentary seats. There must be effective political mobilization of women for party magnitude to show any effect. Therefore, it could be that women, as a group, have too little political strength for party magnitude to show any effect.

Further, it could be that district magnitude is too low in Thailand for party magnitude to have any appreciable effect. With very low district magnitudes, party races

Table 3-4**Correlation Values to Percentage of Women in Winnable Positions**

Election	1979	1983	1986	1988	1992-1	1992-2	1996
Party Magnitude	-.050	-.012	.051	.054	.098	.037	.009
Democrat Party	.064	.115*	.125*	-.026	.036	.053	.076

*significant to .05 level (2-tailed test)

(Source: Election Data, Thai Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

can take on the form of individual races, thereby counteracting any effect that party magnitude might exert.

The correlation values do show some relationship between women's success and the Democrat party. In two elections statistically significant values may be observed. However, the values are not consistent throughout all elections and suggest some other effect that was time bound to the particular elections.

For the regression, mandate and fighting slots were summed in order to get the number of winnable positions. The dependent variable was the number of winnable seats on a district party list held by women. One control variable was included in order to more accurately estimate party magnitude's effect and to test an additional hypothesis as to which factors might influence women's representation. A dummy for the Democrat party was included. The Democrat party in Thailand has been more vocal in supporting women than other parties and has a history of working for women's rights. It is expected that women should find it easier to gain access to viable positions on the Democrat party's lists. Table 3-5 shows the regression results.

Table 3-5**Regression Results—Women's Percentage of Winnable Seats on Party Lists**

Election	1979	1983	1986	1988	1992-1	1992-2	1996
Constant	3.464*	3.954	1.792	1.644	7.537	2.216	4.892
(t-scores)	(1.989)	(1.801)	(.979)	(.928)	(.379)	(1.116)	(1.815)
Party	-1.017	-5.295	1.040	1.039	1.942	6.459	1.002
Magnitude	(-1.113)	(-.426)	(1.028)	(1.029)	(1.827)	(.602)	(.071)
(t-scores)							
Democrat	7.574*	.026	-1.287	-1.042	3.075	4.432*	2.929
Party Dummy	(3.139)	(1.84)	(-.701)	(-.484)	(1.175)	(2.065)	(1.187)
(t-scores)							
Adjusted	.026	.004	-.002	-.002	.008	.007	-.002
R-square							
N	322	331	351	371	363	370	336

*significant to .05 level (2-tailed test)

(Source: Election Data, Thai Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

Again, in the regression no statistically significant scores were found for party magnitude. The dummy variable for the Democrat party did show significance in two elections, 1979 and 1992-2, but the results are inconsistent throughout all the elections and suggest some other time-bound factor, rather than the party itself. The R-square scores suggest that the model provides very little explanatory power for women getting elected to parliament.

4 Women's Political Organizations

Various women's organizations have been formed in Thailand. Particularly in this century women of privilege have focused their considerable resources on causes they felt were pertinent, interesting, and within their skill to respond to. This has resulted in a somewhat ad hoc approach to dealing with women's issues in general and at times caused conflict between women leaders themselves as differences in opinion arose over appropriate methods to respond to perceived needs. The purpose of this section is not to chronicle the complex history of women's organizations in Thailand. The more specific objective is to provide an overview of significant and lasting political manifestations organized for the purpose of furthering the causes of women in Thailand. To this end the following organizations will be profiled: National Council of Women of Thailand (Sabha Satri Haeng Chart), Friends of Women (Klum Phuan Ying), National Commission on Women's Affairs, and Women and the Constitution Network (Krua-khai Phuying Kub Rathathammanun). The National Council of Women in Thailand represents the oldest and longest lasting women's organization in Thailand. The Friends of Women was started in the late 1970's by a group of young, well-educated urban men and women, who were a product of the politically violent 1970's. The National Commission on Women's Affairs

is the coordinating government body for women's issues. Finally, the Women and the Constitution Network is a new organization developed specifically to respond to the needs of women during the drafting of the 1997 constitution.

National Council of Women of Thailand (Sabha Satri Haeng Chart)

The National Council of women of Thailand is one of the largest, longest lasting and best-known women's organizations in Thailand. It came into existence in 1956 as the first umbrella body for Thai women's organizations. For its more than forty-year history the council has been run primarily by high society women. It has, however, recently attempted to add development programs to its predominantly charity-welfare focus. As a representative of over 100 women's organizations throughout the country, the council enjoys significant participation from elite women and close association with the government.

Although specific focus changes depending on the interests of the council's president, according to its charter the council has two broad objectives:

1. To act as a coordinator for the exchange of information and ideas among women's associations in Thailand in order to promote welfare and understanding among women.

2. To carry out activities aimed at raising the standard of living, status, and welfare of Thai women, and to find ways to eliminate obstacles confronting women's associations (Darunee, Pandey, 1991).

In response to these objectives, various activities have been coordinated by the council. The first project, initiated in 1961, was called the Trokjan Community Club Project. The goal of this project was to train women in principles of good sanitation, health, and hygiene. A second project was in response to a rape and murder of a female student who had traveled to Bangkok to continue her schooling. The Tuanjai Foundation (named for the murdered girl) sought to prevent to reoccurrence of such crimes. It taught women how to dress properly as well as home-making skills and sports and recreation.

As the Council developed stronger ties with the government it became more involved with projects that fell under government policy: family planning, consumer protection, and non-formal education. These projects were focused primarily and Bangkok and continued through the 1970's. With the beginning of the decade of women (1975-1985), the Council became more involved with the status of women and took up specific projects. It was further given responsibility to coordinate efforts between the women's organizations and government organizations. However, due to internal structural problems and a lack of power to command government agencies, this coordination was largely unsuccessful. It did, however, conduct its own activities in the

areas of education, health, culture, employment, women's advancement, slum reform, and women as consumers.

Friends of Women (Klum Phuan Ying)

Friends of Women was the conception of a group of young urban women who, their critical skills honed by the politically turbulent times of the 1970's, felt that no existing organizations, government or private, responded significantly to the needs of poor rural women. Many previous programs were based on charity and welfare rather than truly improving the status of this important group of women as a whole. Further, the government lacked the will-power to promote women's rights. Distinct from other women's associations, Friends of Women comprised members of the relatively new middle-class rather than the upper class women, who were the primary constituency of most women's organizations. The inception of Friends of Women in the early 1980's marked an attempt to take the development of women's rights out of the hands of the social elite and put it in the hands of all women.

In an attempt to respond more realistically to social circumstances, Friends of Women has enjoyed considerable change in its objectives since its beginning; however, much of their original objectives content remains:

1. to be a conceptual movement group which disseminates ideas and approaches for raising women's rights.
2. to carry out activities concerning the rights and benefits of women who are victims of society, particularly in terms of concepts, beliefs, and opportunities.
3. to encourage the formation of new groups which share a common goal with Friends of Women.
4. avoid becoming a political device for furthering the personal interest of any political party. (Darunee, Pandey, 1991).

Activities of Friends of Women are divided into five areas: documentation, campaign and dissemination, publication, women's rights protection, and women industrial workers. Documentation is primarily for internal use, but its resources are open to the public. Publications, in Thai and western languages, are available there. Campaign and dissemination activities include the study of selected women's issues and organizing seminars and exhibitions. Panel discussions have been organized on such topics as women in politics, mass media, national plans and women's development, rape, and Thai women's working conditions abroad. Publication activities include a quarterly magazine, Friends of Women Magazine, which functions as a platform for an exchange of ideas on women's rights at international and local levels.

Women's rights protection is the most active area of the organization. It champions cases which evoke public sentiment and involve helpless female victims. An example is a young woman who was charged with murder when she killed, in self-defense, a man who was trying to rape her. After two months of campaigning by Friends of Women, the charges against the young woman were dropped. Other suits have been advocated in the areas of domestic conflict, sexual violence, wives charged with murdering abusive husbands, children and women being lured into prostitution, and labor disputes.

Finally, work in the area of women industrial workers was begun near the end of 1986. Problems that women faced when working in industry include low wages, poor working conditions, lack of security, and poor physical health. To promote health consciousness, a welfare and health fund was initiated to provide financial and educational assistance for health.

National Commission on Women's Affairs

The National Commission on Women's Affairs is a government-supported body affiliated with the Prime Minister's Office. It was established in 1989 as a permanent government agency with general goals to further the cause of women's rights in Thailand in a coordinating capacity. More specifically it strives to serve as a computerized information center and to develop a well-coordinated women's information network.

The Commission describes its functions as follows:

1. to submit policies and master plans for the promotion of women's activities, roles and status to the Cabinet for approval
 2. to recommend guidelines for implementing plans and policies in accordance with the National Economic and Social Development plan, as well as to coordinate, monitor, and assess the results of such efforts.
 3. to support and assist activities to promote women's development by government agencies, state organizations, state enterprises, as well as private organizations.
 4. to give comments and recommendations to the Prime Minister on the need for new legislation, or revision and amendment of existing legislation, to promote women's activities, roles, and status.
 5. to report to the Cabinet on the situation of Thai women at least twice a year.
 6. to gather from officials and government agencies or other concerned persons whatever information or documents which might prove useful for deliberations.
 7. to consider other women-related matters as entrusted to it by the Cabinet.
- (personal interview with Director, National Commission on Women's Affairs, October, 1998)

In an attempt to respond to these objectives, the Commission has developed several programs. These include development of indicators on the status of women, production of a WID directory, and a bibliography of research results. The indicators on the status of women are to be used as a tool for assessing changes in women's status both in qualitative and quantitative terms, as well as to remove gender-based bias in statistical data collection. The indicators, based on ESCAP's Selected Statistical Data and Indicators on the Status of Women for Asia and the Pacific, cover nine fields. The WID directory will contain basic information on organizations involved in WID activities, and is expected to improve the Commission's ability to conduct workshops and seminars for women, especially at the grassroots level. Bibliographies of women's studies from various sources are stored in CDS/ISIS software. (CDS is a Computerized Documentation System developed by UNESCO for structured-text retrieval, while ISIS stands for Integrated Sets of Information Systems.) Since all the above functions require constant updating of data, updating is high on the Commission's list of priority projects. The next important concern is the development of an information network nationwide and participation in regional and international networks that might be formed or are already existing.

Women and the Constitution Network (Krua-khai Phuying kub Rathathammanun)

The Women and the Constitution Network started with 16 women's organizations and quickly expanded to 36, all joined with the following objectives:

1. campaign for women's participation in drafting the constitution
2. campaign for women's participation in defining content regarding equal rights between men and women in the new constitution
3. campaign for women from various professions to push for equal rights between men and women in the new constitution
4. unite in order support important issues in the new constitution in order to achieve true political reform
5. campaign and disseminate information, particularly to women, about the constitution so that they can understand and use their legal rights (Women and the Constitution Network <in Thai>, 1998)

In responding to these objectives, the Network has developed several programs. First, during the drafting of the new constitution, a request was made to make various changes in the content to respond more effectively to the needs of women. A meeting was held in June, 1997 by the Network in order to discuss the proposed draft of the constitution. A ten-page request was drafted and presented to the Constitution Drafting Committee; of the requested items, a large percentage appeared in the Constitution when it was promulgated in late 1997. Second, the Network produces a newsletter and other documents related to issues of the Constitution and women's legal rights. Finally, the Network conducts trainings and seminars on constitutional issues in an attempt to further educate women and men about the importance of understanding their rights and taking advantage of them.

5 Conclusion

Conclusions

Female candidates have achieved increased success in Thai parliamentary elections over the last twenty years. The numbers and percentages in Table 5-1 show that there has been a fairly steady increase in the number of women elected to the Parliament and running in realistically winnable seats. Particularly in the last two elections, women have made great bounds in terms of percentage of increase of parliamentary seats won. The goal of this research was to provide a background about the political participation of women in Thailand and test theories about electoral system structure and whether the structure assists or hinders their election.

The data provided in chapter two offer a glance at how well women are performing in the political and government sector in Thailand. Presently, their success

rate in the civil service and in local politics outstrips their performance in the national parliament. This bodes well for the future electoral success of women parliamentary candidates. As Thai citizens become more accustomed to the idea of women leaders at the local level, it seems likely that more will make their way to the national stage as well. Additionally, increased organization of women around particular issues during the last decade, such as the drafting of the new Constitution and women's social needs and legal rights, suggests that women are becoming more accustomed to the role of leader in social and political situations.

Table 5-1

Women's Performance in Thai Parliamentary Elections

Election	Women Elected	Women in Winnable Positions	Women in Ornamental Positions
1979	9/301 3%	13/629 2.1%	3/106 2.8%
1983	13/324 4%	19/529 3.6%	1/149 .7%
1986	12/347 3.5%	17/563 3%	8/329 2.4%
1988	10/357 2.8%	20/575 3.5%	36/393 9.2%
1992-1	12/360 3.3%	32/618 5.2%	25/338 7.4%
1992-2	15/360 4.2%	26/607 4.3%	15/358 4.2%
1995	24/391 6.1%	--*	--*
1996	22/393 5.6%	33/567 5.8%	28/289 9.7%

*Complete election data unavailable for the 1995 general election.

(Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bangkok)

The evaluation of election data in chapter three suggests that district magnitude and party magnitude have little explanatory power in explaining women's successful candidacy for parliament in Thailand. A relationship between electoral success and district magnitude was present in three elections, but there was not a clear, consistent relationship across all the elections considered. As regards party magnitude, no clear relationship was found between the successful candidacy of females and the party magnitude. Matland suggested some possibilities in his research regarding Norway. In Norway during the 1950's party magnitude and district magnitude had little relationship with women being elected because women as a group did not yet wield sufficient political power to be considered a significant electoral force. This case may also be true of Thailand presently. Perhaps women in the 1980's and 1990's in Thailand are just beginning to develop their political mettle. If this is the case district magnitude and party magnitude are not appropriate models for consideration in the Thai context. A more developed female political force is necessary for district magnitude and party magnitude to have a detectable effect.

Further Research

If it is true that women are developing greater political power during this period, as the huge jump in electoral success in 1995 suggests, it provides a great opportunity to study the developing mobilization of women's political power in Thailand. I think successful, interesting research could be conducted in three areas. First, carefully

evaluated successful female candidates for parliament in order to discover what traits and approaches have made them successful candidates. Many interviews have been conducted with female MP's. However, no project has been implemented that methodically seeks to make sense of what defines successful Thai female politicians. The Gender and Development Research Institute in Bangkok has done some cursory study of women MP's, but, perhaps due to limited funding, the work is not very comprehensive in its approach. Such research could provide valuable data for women's organizations that want to field successful candidates in order to further their causes.

A second area where interesting research could be done is in the area of women's organizations. The last extensive study of women's organizations in Thailand was published in 1991 by Darunee Tantiwiranond and Shashi Pandey. In the ten years since the data was collected for their study, there have been great changes in the structure and number of women's organizations as well as their focus and political clout. Research in this area could provide very useful background data for understanding the mobilization of Thai women into a stronger political force. Further, such a study could look at the inter-relationship between various organizations, something that the Tantiwiranond's 1991 study failed to do. This could be very important because in some cases, apparently related organizations are working on mutually under-cutting projects. This lack of coordination and inter-organizational sense of purpose could be one Thai women's greatest political weaknesses.

A final area of study, which could prove fruitful, is that of successful local female politicians. The increasing number of female village heads and sub-district heads could be a great source of insights into what composes a successful woman candidate.

Increased candidacy and electoral success at lower political levels could be the key to increased representation in national politics. Because in the new electoral format, parliamentary candidates will be elected from local constituencies, political success as a village head or sub-district head could be translated into success as an MP. Therefore, understanding the dynamic of local politics for women and looking at cases of successful, local women politicians could provide very useful data for future candidates.

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