POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF WOMEN AND MEN

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I certify that this thesis is my own composition, and that all sources have been acknowledged.
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INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of a democratic political system, a central issue for political scientists is electoral behaviour: what determines how people vote. The reasons for concern with this issue are several. The findings of the political scientists may be of use to politicians and political parties, to keep them informed of 'public opinion', to help predict election results, or to provide more direct information as to how to best ensure re-election. Alternatively, the findings may help political scientists and sociologists understand more about the political and social structure of their society. Or they may shed some light on the relationship between democracy on the one hand, and apathy and alienation on the other: why is it that there can be a low level of interest in politics, yet people will still bother to vote? For these reasons and others, political scientists are interested in political behaviour. The concern of many of them - in particular, those whose work is relevant to this thesis - is to discover what the social factors are that influence voting behaviour and political attitudes.

The social influences of political attitudes and behaviour are considered to include childhood socialisation by agents such as family and peer groups; later socialisation through a person's experiences in adult life; social characteristics such as occupation, education, income, religion, region, age and sex;¹ and the political 'climate of opinion'. The research of the political scientists falls into broad

¹ Although age is a biological characteristic, it has social ramifications: for example, it is thought to influence a person's degree of conservatism. The characteristic sex is strictly speaking only a biological one, as it refers to the male-female dichotomy. Gender, referring to the masculine-feminine dichotomy, is the more correct term when social aspects are involved. For the sake of conformity the more common term - sex - will be used throughout this thesis, but should be taken to refer to the social features.
streams corresponding to these groupings. Thus there is a large body of research on political socialisation, usually involving surveys of schoolchildren. There is an equally large body of research into the socio-economic determinants of political behaviour and attitudes, involving surveys of adults. Adult socialisation, although acknowledged to be important, has not attracted much research. The 'climates of opinion' idea also has had little empirical study.

The importance of childhood socialisation studies rests on the dubious assumption that they can cast light on adult political behaviour. 'Political socialization', say Dawson and Prewitt, 'is the name given the processes through which a citizen acquires his own view of the political world'. The studies therefore focus on children, to find out how much they know about politics at different ages, and how sophisticated their political concepts are. What the studies do not do, however, is demonstrate just how the children's attitudes and knowledge are translated into adult attitudes and interest. Recent research has raised doubts about whether such a process even takes place.

If the subject of childhood socialisation is regarded as a field of study in its own right, rather than assuming it will contribute to an understanding of adult behaviour, there are still problems to be

2 R.E. Dawson & K. Prewitt, Political Socialization, 1969, p.6. As A.F. Davies notes in 'Political socialisation', 1972, the researchers in this field probably have an underlying assumption involving the Freudian notion that much of importance in adult behaviour is established very early in childhood.

For all references, author, title of article or book, and year of publication are given. Full journal or publication details are given in the bibliography.

3 Doubt on the validity of the assumption that there is a link between childhood and adult orientations has been raised by D. Searing et al, 'The structuring principle: political socialization and belief systems', 1973.
overcome. The researchers rarely study, at anything more than a superficial level, the social-psychological processes by which children come to form their political outlooks from the heterogeneous and disordered pieces of political information they receive. The most damaging criticism, however, is that there is now serious doubt that children even have meaningful political attitudes. Yet political socialisation researchers have never questioned whether their subject-matter exists.

Researchers in the social characteristics school take a different approach. Rather than assuming that childhood experiences are the most important factors in determining adult political outlooks, they assume that it is a person's social position, defined in terms of occupation, education, income, and the rest, that determines his or her attitudes. A rationale for this approach is given by Milne and MacKenzie. A researcher, they say, in seeking why people vote the way they do, cannot just ask them directly, because the answers he receives may be a mixture of factors. Some may refer to the present, others to the past, while habitual voters may be quite unable to give a reason. To do so, they would be forced:

to pull up their whole psychology by its roots, to get outside themselves, in order to give a reasoned answer. This is clearly impossible, and the alternative is for the researcher himself to try to discover correlations between what the person says and his circumstances, or what he says and his history.


6 There is some recognition, if only implicit, of childhood experiences because these partly determine a person's occupation, education and income. But of course it is not these kinds of experiences that the other researchers, in the political socialisation school, study.

Milbrath takes a similar line: conditions such as class or place of residence 'form personalities, beliefs and attitudes which, in turn, do "cause" (are requisite to) specific acts such as participation in politics'.

A criticism of this approach is provided by researchers who emphasise the importance of the political climate of opinion. V.O. Key argues that social characteristics or attributes are important only when there is a topic of debate that is directly relevant to a particular attribute. For example, businessmen will only vote as a group when an election concerns an issue in which they have a direct and clear interest. Key makes the point that if the political scientists find that 70 percent of businessmen voted one way, he would ask why the other 30 percent did not vote according to their apparent economic interest.

The answer to such a question, rather than destroying the validity of the social characteristics approach, shows how the different schools can be integrated to provide a comprehensive explanation. In any election there will be several issues, and the relative importance of each to an individual will depend partly on how that person has been socialised, partly on his or her social position, and partly on current experiences influenced by the climate of opinion. If these different influences create cross pressures it is possible that the businessmen will not necessarily vote in their best economic interests: other factors may be more important.

What I am suggesting, then, is that probably the most valid explanation of political behaviour would involve a combination of all

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approaches. However, the relative importance of each, and their interrelation with each other, has rarely been discussed, much less studied. The researchers in the first two schools make token recognition of the importance of the other influences, but then assume them to be constant for the purposes of their study. For example, the influence of social class on childhood socialisation is either not studied - by choosing a sample of children from one school and assuming that this will produce (in terms of social class) a relatively homogeneous sample - or if it is mentioned, it is given only brief treatment. Conversely, those researchers who study the influence of social characteristics on political behaviour often take socialisation into account only by asking about parents' party preferences.

When a comprehensive theory is suggested, it usually rests on the idea of layers of orientation. This argument is that childhood socialisation produces the most basic and firmly held beliefs, while adult experiences, which are partly determined by one's social position, reinforce these basic beliefs and provide less basic orientations. The particular political influences of the time produce the least basic orientations, such as attitudes on current issues. This may sound plausible, but at present it is only an hypothesis and has yet to be subjected to rigorous examination. Also, the criticisms of the political socialisation school, particularly the questioning of whether fundamental and meaningful attitudes are established in childhood and have any relation to adult attitudes, would first have to be overcome.


11 Dawson & Prewitt, Political Socialization, 1969, suggest this in Chapter 2, and Davies has a similar argument in his article 'Political socialisation', 1972. H. McClosky & H.E. Dahlgren also mention the idea in 'Primary group influence on party loyalty', 1959. See also W.J. McGuire, 'The nature of attitudes and attitude change', 1969.
This thesis focuses on research of the social characteristics school, and in particular on the attribute of sex. However, this should not be taken to indicate that I believe that social characteristics are the only influences on political behaviour, or even the most important ones. An understanding of the influence of sex can only be gained by a study of its interrelationship with socialisation, adult experiences, and the political and social climates of opinion. Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt such an integrated approach.

What I hope to do in the thesis is establish whether there are any differences between women and men in their political behaviour, attitudes, knowledge and interest. This will be done in two stages. The first involves an extended literature review of some of the major studies of political behaviour and social characteristics, to find out what has been said about sex differences, what the image is of the political behaviour of women, and what assumptions the political scientists have made in constructing the image. The arguments used to support the political scientists' findings will be critically examined. That such an examination is essential is shown by a recent review of the political science studies by Murray Goot and Elizabeth Reid which finds countless discrepancies between figures and interpretation, between statements of fact and conclusion.12

From the literature review I will draw some hypotheses about sex differences, which are tested in the second stage of the research. This involves an analysis of data from an Australian survey of political attitudes, carried out in 1969 by Don Aitkin and Michael Kahan.


In Australia the major studies include Burns, *Parties and People* (1961), Rawson, *Australia Votes* (1961), and Power, *Politics in a Suburban Community* (1968). These have been based on single electorates and relatively small sample sizes. The Aitkin and Kahan survey is the first national survey in Australia, with a sample size large enough to permit multidimensional analysis. As the questionnaire for this survey incorporates questions with similar wording to overseas surveys, comparisons can be made. The Aitkin and Kahan study really involves two separate surveys, one conducted in 1967 and one in 1969. About three-quarters of the people interviewed in the first wave were reinterviewed in the second, so that the 1969 survey of over 1800 people included about 1400 who had previously been interviewed. My research uses data from the 1969 survey only.
The literature review will be limited primarily to the American, British and Australian studies as it is felt that these three countries are similar enough in tradition and culture to enable comparisons to be made. It is recognised, however, that the findings in one country are not necessarily generalisable to the other countries. However, the use of Australian data for testing hypotheses drawn from overseas data, besides pointing up needs for further research, should also suggest limits, in geography and time, to the generality of the original claims.

A second limitation of the study involves the use of secondary analysis: my purpose in using the data is different from that for which the survey was designed. While the survey may be all that the original researchers hoped for, there is some information missing which would have been helpful to my research. The most serious omission is that the survey asked for the occupation and income of the head of the household, defined as the person responsible for the rent or purchase of the house, instead of asking this information of the respondent. This means that for most of the married women, and women living with their parents, we know only whether they are working or not. This imposes a serious limitation on the measurement of social class of the female respondents. It is felt that the social class of the woman's husband or her father is not a completely satisfactory alternative measure of her own social class. Another serious omission from the

13 As will be seen in Chapter 4, the head of the household is usually male. Only 17% of the women in the sample are classified as heads of households, compared with 65% of the men. It has been standard practice to determine the socio-economic status of married women by their husband's status, along with using the father's status for those respondents, male and female, who live with their parents. The practice can hardly be justified for those women (and offspring) who work full-time, while for those who stay at home, the sociologists should start thinking about how to classify the occupation 'housewife'. If it is argued that the husband's status should be taken as the relevant one because the wife's status is determined by his occupation and income, then perhaps we should be looking at some average (cont. next page)
survey, as far as my work is concerned, is that there are no questions relating to sense of political efficacy.

A third limitation in using a 1969 survey is that already it is more than five years old, and any findings as regards sex differences could now be out of date. This is particularly so in light of recent changes that have come about as a result of the women's movement. Although the movement was well under way in the United States and Britain in 1969, it did not start to have an impact in Australia until 1970. So my research will uncover the sex differences (or lack of them) before the advent of the new feminist movement. This means that it can be used for comparison with later research to find out to what extent the women's movement has had an effect on the political orientations of women in Australia.

Finally, as regards the subject-matter, the scope of the research includes 'active' behaviour such as working for a political party, or voting, and 'passive' behaviour such as following political news and discussing politics. Political attitudes include party preferences, and various specific issues from current affairs to more fundamental principles: anything from opinions on conscription to the relative powers of trade unions and big business. Interest in politics, and knowledge about political matters, are also included. 'Political' is used in

13 (cont.) family status. If the wife is working, the total family income will be higher than if she is not. A good discussion of the problems of defining the status of women is found in D. Darroch, 'Some thoughts on a theory of sexual stratification', 1974.

14 Probably the first Women's Liberation meeting in Australia was in December 1969 in Sydney. Women's Electoral Lobby started in mid-1972. The Australian Women's Weekly first published an article on Women's Liberation in February 1971.

the usual sense that political scientists use it, to cover those matters relating to institutional, or public, politics. It does not include private or personal politics, which involve power relations between individuals in a family, a workplace, or a peer group situation. Thus while it may be of interest to discover the power relationship between, say, husbands and wives, in this study it is of interest only insofar as it may affect who influences whom in matters of public politics such as voting.
Some of the most solidly researched and validated findings in the social sciences relate to the differential participation of men and women in political activities of all kinds from voting and membership of parties, to interest in politics and political attitudes.

So say Dowse and Hughes at the start of their article on sex differences among children.¹ Milbrath, also, states that 'The finding that men are more likely to participate in politics than women is one of the most thoroughly substantiated in social science.'²

If such statements are correct, this review of past research would largely consist of no more than listing the thoroughly substantiated findings and listing the writers who have solidly researched and validated them. However, doubts about the research have been raised by Goot and Reid in 'Mindless matrons or sexist scientism?' This very comprehensive review has pointed up numerous contradictions, biases, unsubstantiated claims and sheer misreporting in the various political science studies. The authors look at evidence that the researchers present to support various common hypotheses concerning the political role of women. These hypotheses include: that children adopt the party preference of their fathers; that wives follow their husbands; that women are more conservative than men; that women are traditionalists, or alternatively, that they are fickle; and that women personalise politics. Goot and Reid come to the

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¹ R.E. Dowse & J.A. Hughes, 'Girls, boys and politics', 1971, p.53
² L. Milbrath, Political Participation, 1965, p. 135. Presumably in this quotation he is using 'participation' in the same broad sense as is used in the rest of his book. i.e., to include participation from holding office to 'exposing oneself to political stimuli'. (p. 18)
conclusion that the evidence taken to be support for these hypotheses is often very biased, and the bias is in one direction:

... much of the work we have reviewed simply assumes the dominant values serving the dominant groups of society. The values taken for granted here are the values of the (male) researchers operating in a male dominated society.\(^3\)

It is inevitable that my research into the same studies, undertaken with a similar perspective, will produce much overlap with the Goot and Reid article. It is inevitable, also, after the comprehensiveness of their review, that I can contribute very little that is new. Rather than try, I will take a different approach which will focus on only a few articles, but will go into them in more depth. That is, instead of picking out what various writers say on a particular topic, I will go through the arguments of each writer, to try to discover how the image of women's political roles has been built up. In the course of doing this, and with the support from the Goot and Reid article, I will draw out those hypotheses, or 'substantiated findings' that seem to be the most commonly accepted in the research.

The survey in Erie County concerning the 1940 Presidential election, conducted by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, was the first of the modern political science studies of electoral behaviour. As it is undoubtedly a source of influence for later studies, it is of interest to note what these researchers said about sex differences. It seems that they did not make the discovery that there are political differences; even before their research it was conventional wisdom that differences existed: 'There is a prevailing belief that women are less interested in politics than are men. This is corroborated by our data . . . 33 per cent of the men but only 23 per cent of the women professed great

\(^3\) M. Goot and E. Reid, 'Mindless matrons or sexist scientism?' 1973, p. 53
interest in the election.'

Intention to vote provides more evidence: although the writers do not give overall figures, the trend is that at each level of interest (great, medium or none), women are less likely to say they intend to vote. As interest decreases, the greater is the amount of deliberate non-voting among women compared with men. The authors say that there is greater social pressure on men to vote, even when they are not interested. Thus 'men are better citizens but women are more reasoned: if they are not interested, they do not vote.'

The researchers then give three quotes to show that some women regard politics as a man's business, and conclude from this that although legal restrictions on women's participation in politics have been removed, 'the attitude of women toward politics has not yet brought them into full equality with men'.

This type of reasoning is typical of the researchers. From small differences, or from a few quotations, they draw a conclusion that implicates all women. In this case, three quotations from the 1400 women they interviewed is enough for the researchers to talk about 'the attitude of women toward politics', as if all women held only one attitude.

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5 Ibid., Chart 16, p. 48. Working from this chart, the overall figures of non-voting are about 2% for men and 17% for women. The figure for men seems particularly low in the light of later findings on male non-voting rates. This suggests that there may be pressure on men to say they will vote even when they do not intend to. 
6 Ibid., p. 48. 
7 Ibid., p. 49. 
8 They say that only 'some' women held this particular attitude, but claim that remarks such as the ones they quoted were 'not infrequent'. However, they should be giving absolute numbers if they want to draw a general conclusion such as they have done. 
9 The use of anecdotal material in discussing women's political roles is fairly common in the studies, more common than in other areas. One could suspect that this may be because the figures are not strong enough to show what the political scientists believe to be the case. In the same chapter, only two other responses are quoted. Both are very short and no broad conclusion is drawn from them in the same way that the conclusion on women's attitudes is drawn.
Along with the report on findings about political interest and voting turnout, the only other mention of sex differences concerns husband-wife relationships. The researchers found a high degree of agreement on voting intention between couples, with less than 5 percent disagreeing. They say of this 'the almost perfect agreement between husband and wife comes about as a result of male dominance in political situations'. \(^{10}\) The evidence of male dominance is that more women than men report discussing the election with their spouse, which means that 'Men do not feel that they are discussing politics with their wives; they feel they are telling them'. \(^{11}\) This is evidenced by two quotes, one of which hardly supports the notion that the husband is telling his wife: the woman states 'My husband has always been Republican. He says that if we vote for different parties there is no use in our voting. So I think I will give in this year and vote Republican.' \(^{12}\)

The difference between the sexes in this area, that the women are more likely to report political discussions with their spouses than are the men, can hardly be regarded as an important one. In the sample, 45 women and 4 men reported such discussions, but while the relative difference is large, the absolute numbers are small. At the most, only 15 percent of women said they discussed politics with their husbands, \(^{13}\) hardly evidence of 'male dominance in political situations'.

\(^{10}\) Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, The People's Choice, 1948, p. 141.
\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 141.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 142.
\(^{13}\) It is not clear what size sample this was drawn from, and it may be anything from 600 to 2700. The authors state only 'at one point of the study we asked each respondent whether he had discussed politics with someone else in recent weeks'. (ibid., p. 141.) This would suggest that the full sample of 2700 was asked, in which case only about 4% of women say they discussed politics with their husbands.
Six years later, Berelson and Lazarsfeld came together again, with William McPhee replacing Hazel Gaudet, to produce Voting, a study of the 1948 Presidential election in Elmira, New York. This study, too, does not devote much attention to sex differences. It confirms (or repeats) what was found in Erie County regarding political discussions between husbands and wives. At the time of the election, 69 percent of married women, but only 41 percent of married men, said they discussed politics with a family member. Although spouses are not differentiated from other family members, the authors state that this shows that women look to their husbands: 'the men discuss politics with their wives - that is, they tell them - but they do not particularly respect them'.\(^{14}\) The wives have trust in their husband's opinions, and the husbands feel they need to give them guidance.

Either the authors have more evidence than they have presented in the book, or they are allowing their preconceptions to influence them in their conclusions.\(^{15}\) The figures, obviously, relate only to the extent to which people discuss politics with their family; they do not relate to the nature of these discussions. The fact that more women than men admit to family political discussions does not necessarily lead to the conclusion they reach. Indeed, this conclusion is not supported a few pages later, when we are told about the nature of political discussions: 'At the height of the campaign ... political discussion of the grass-roots level apparently consists more of the exchange of mutually agreeable remarks than of controversial ones.'\(^{16}\) An even greater contradiction comes from a point they make some pages earlier, concerning the effects of small groups. They find primary

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15 If their preconceptions have been formed by their earlier book, this conclusion is not surprising.

16 Ibid., p. 106.
group solidarity of a high order. 'In the end many American families vote as a unit, making joint decisions in voting as in spending parts of the common family income.'

Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee also find a difference between men and women regarding voting. They note that there is a relation between party preference and social class, as the higher socio-economic status groups 'vote more Republican'. These groups also have greater political solidarity compared to the workers who are not particularly class conscious. The sex difference is that 'women, less politicized than men, follow the class tendency in voting less than men'. Thus while 88 percent of men with high socio-economic status voted Republican, only 76 percent of the women did. Among those with low socio-economic status, 51 percent of the men voted Republican, compared with 61 percent of the women.

It is not clear whether the authors are saying that women are less politicised than men because they follow the class tendency less, or whether they are claiming that women follow the class tendency less than men do because they are less politicised. Either way the statement is questionable: the first is a dubious definition of politicisation, the second makes a claim without offering evidence to support it. Furthermore, the finding is not very meaningful because they are probably talking about the socio-economic status of the woman's husband (or father) rather than her own status.

18 Ibid., p. 75.
19 If this is so, then the fact that women differ from men in following the class tendency less than men do, may be an indication of the extent to which women do not just vote the way their husbands (or fathers) do.
The finding does indicate that women are not always 'more Republican' than men, at least not in the highest status groups. The authors discuss this subject, the influence of sex on party choice, in the concluding part of the book. They state that there is not a 'distinctive woman's vote' because a political interest needs to have a social base, and there are few policy issues persisting over time that affect men and women differently. Thus they conclude that in relation to sex, 'there is little relevance of this characteristic to political matters, at least so far as party preference is concerned'.

The same year that Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee published their study of Elmira, the Survey Research Center at Michigan published its first national study of voting behaviour. This was Campbell, Gurin and Miller's *The Voter Decides*, based on the 1952 Presidential election. This report provides some further evidence of differences between the sexes, in particular on candidate orientation and political efficacy.

Firstly the authors look at voting behaviour among their 1600 respondents. They found that 79 percent of the men, and 69 percent of the women, said they voted. Combining actual vote with party preference of those who did not vote, they found 53 percent of the men and 54 percent of the women supported the Republican candidate, while 44 percent of the men and 43 percent of the women chose the Democratic candidate. By looking at voting preferences in 1948, the authors find that there was a general shift to the Republicans, but 'women did not contribute any greater proportion of the Republican vote in 1952 than they did in 1948'.

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From this the authors conclude that the vote division among women and men is not significantly different. Further, women's participation,

although somewhat on the restrained side, was not greatly different from that of men. The relationship between sex differences and partisanship conforms, by and large, to the lack of a sex difference in the vote.\(^2\)

However there is a difference, say the authors, in candidate and issue orientation. Women were 'disproportionately low in their concern with issues, contributing only 39 per cent of the highly issue-involved people and 75 per cent of the uninvolved'.\(^{23}\) The authors do not point it out here, but it should be noted that only 19 percent of the sample were in this uninvolved group. In contrast to this, continue the authors, the women showed 'a somewhat greater than average concern with candidates'.

'Somewhat greater', turns out to be that 61 percent of the people much concerned with candidates were women, and only 51 percent of the people least concerned were women. Again, searching through the book we discover that the 'highly concerned' group make up only 10 percent of the sample, while those who are least concerned with the candidates (where the male-female difference of 2 percentage points is negligible) comprise 43 percent of the sample. The lowest two of five groups comprise 64 percent of the sample: of these groups, 51 percent are women, 49 percent men, compared with the overall sample average of 53 percent women, 47 percent men. Thus for two-thirds of the sample there is virtually no difference in candidate orientation and for the remaining third the difference is small, with 58 percent of

\(\text{22 Campbell, Gurin & Miller, The Voter Decides, 1954, p. 154.}\)
\(\text{23 Ibid., p. 155. Women comprised 53% of the sample.}\)
those having a medium to high candidate orientation being women, that is, 5 percentage points more than would be expected.

Nevertheless, the authors turn this into a general conclusion of 'women's concern with candidates' and note that this, together with some other findings relating to education and to being a member of a labor union family, are meaningful differences consistent with 'expectations about political attitudes of these demographic groupings'.

Campbell, Gurin and Miller have produced the candidate-oriented woman, on the basis of a small difference among one-third of the sample, and measured in a way that, to say the least, is rather subjective.

Another difference between the sexes that the authors found was in sense of political efficacy. This was measured by responses to five questions designed to find out the extent to which people feel they have some influence on government. On a scale of high, medium and low efficacy, the authors found that 35 percent of the men, but only 20 percent of the women, had a high sense of efficacy. Correspondingly, 17 percent of the men and 23 percent of the women had a low sense. No significance tests are given. The authors note also that a high sense of efficacy is more likely among whites, among those with college education, among those in the highest income group, and among those in professional occupations. That is, high efficacy occurs more frequently among those with high socio-economic status and greater opportunity of access to government - a finding which is not really surprising.


25 Without going into the issue of accurate measurement of attitudes at this stage, it should be noted that the authors base their measure on the 'spontaneous personal references to the candidates made by the respondents', and note that certain arbitrary distinctions had to be made between what was regarded as personal and what was nonpersonal.
A final point on this study concerns the lack of a sex difference in sense of citizen duty. This is measured by four questions, each tapping the respondent's attitude to the importance of voting. The survey found that most people had a relatively high sense of citizen duty, with only 7 percent of the men and 12 percent of the women having a low sense. The authors say of this that there is virtually no difference between the sexes.26

Up to this stage, the findings on sex differences have been minor commentaries in reports on general electoral behaviour. The researchers analysed their data on voting behaviour in relation to a number of variables such as occupational class, education, age, race and so on, and sex was just one of these variables. As the evidence on sex differences started to accumulate, researchers realised that such differences could be interesting enough to become a separate subject of study. Thus in the early 1950's, UNESCO commissioned a study on sex differences in political behaviour. This resulted in Maurice Duverger's *The Political Role of Women*, published in 1955. Before considering his book, however, I shall summarise the situation at this stage.27

The findings from the three American studies fall into three groups. The first consists of differences in numbers, and it should be noted that none of these factual differences is large enough to suggest that there is any qualitative difference in political behaviour of the majority of men and women. The factual differences include

26 This indicates a change in the difference between men and women in sense of citizen duty from 12 years previously, when Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet found that 'men are better citizens'. This claim was from their finding that only 2% of men did not intend to vote, compared with 17% of women. See above, p. 13.

27 This summary is from the three studies that I have discussed so far.
voting turnout: Lazarsfeld et al claim that in 1940, 2 percent of the men were non-voters, while 17 percent of the women were in this category. Campbell et al find corresponding figures of 21 percent and 31 percent in 1952. Another factual difference is in professed interest in the election: the first study found the proportions of men and women having 'great interest' were 33 percent and 23 percent respectively. The Campbell et al study has another factual difference, in political efficacy: 35 percent of men and 20 percent of women have a high sense of efficacy.

The second group of findings consists of those where the researchers note that there are no differences. That they have at least been considered worth reporting suggests that the researchers expected them to be otherwise. Campbell et al report the non-differences: they find no sex difference in sense of citizen duty, no 'significant difference' in the vote division, and a 'not greatly different' degree of participation. Berelson et al also note that sex has 'little relevance' to political matters, or at least to party preference.

The third group of findings consists of those differences that the authors say exist but which have not, to my mind, been adequately demonstrated. This group includes the idea suggested by Lazarsfeld et al that politics is a man's world and women have a different attitude to it than do men. Following from this is the idea that men tell their wives how to vote. The studies by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, and not surprisingly, by Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, suggest this. Campbell, Gurin and Miller produce the questionable finding that women are less issue oriented and more candidate oriented than are men.

28 There is some degree of contradiction here. On the one hand, fewer women than men vote, but on the other, Campbell et al say that women's participation is not greatly different from men's, and there is no difference in sense of citizen duty, measured by one's feeling towards duty to vote.
So what did Duverger add to the state of knowledge? Duverger wanted to discover the extent to which there is real equality between the sexes in exercising their political prerogatives, given that legal equality now exists in most modern countries. His study is a comparative one, using material from France, Germany, Norway and Yugoslavia. Although none of the countries that I am primarily concerned with - Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States - are included, Duverger's book is worth consideration because it is regarded as a major work on sex differences and is cited by many of the later researchers.

Duverger's study is divided into two aspects: the part played by women in elections, and the part played by women in political leadership. I shall consider only the first part, because my study is concerned with electoral behaviour. Duverger considers two broad topics in this area, women non-voters and the way women vote. Before looking at the findings in detail, Duverger's conclusion from the discussion should be noted.

So far as elections are concerned, the proportion of women taking part in political life is large, and does not differ materially from that of men, as regards either numbers or composition. It is true that there are generally slightly more non-voters among women than among men, and that the woman's vote is generally slightly more conservative and more subject to religious influences. But these differences are small and apply only to a tiny fraction of the female electorate.

The points made in the section on women non-voters include the following. There is a general finding that a higher proportion of

29 The other aspect of the political role of women, their part in political leadership, is worthy of study but is excluded from my thesis because it involves such a small number of women. This of course reflects something about the nature of our society - the fact that nearly all our political leaders are men.

women than men abstain from voting, but only in Norway (of the four countries studied) are the differences large, being up to 19 percent. There is some evidence that the small differences in other countries are narrowing over time, and are smaller when the total vote is large. Non-voting is not clearly related to age, but it does seem to be related to occupation, with professional women and civil servants having the highest voting turnout. However, women who are not gainfully employed do not have a lower turnout, a finding which contradicts the generally accepted idea that women must be integrated into the professional and business life of the community before they can become politically integrated.

In particular, a study in Germany found that the highest voting turnout among women was in two groups, single or widowed civil servants (the typical emancipated women), and married women not gainfully employed. The latter result is surprising, says Duverger, because this group, 'being dependent on their husbands and engaged in the traditional occupations of the housewife, are much less concerned with the world of politics'. This would seem to suggest that these married women are following their husbands. But the answer is not as clearcut as this because marriage affects men too: married men have a higher vote turnout than single men. Thus:

we are compelled to discard the simple theory that the small percentage of abstentions for married women is due to their obedience to their husbands' instructions . . . the political behaviour of husband and wife is usually identical . . . but this does not mean that it is unilaterally determined by the husband.32

31 Duverger, The Political Role of Women, 1955, p. 44. He gives no evidence to support this claim.

32 Ibid., p. 44.
In the second part of this chapter on women's electoral behaviour, Duverger looks at the way women vote. His argument is somewhat spurious here. On the one hand, he asserts that the differences are almost negligible, yet on the other he goes to some pains to show that there are differences. By doing so, he gives them an importance that contradicts his claim that they are very slight. He is forced to some degree to concede that the differences affect only a small proportion of women because he states that most married couples vote the same way. Therefore any differences between the sexes depend on those of unmarried men and women and the 10 percent or so of married couples who do not vote the same way.

The problem with this argument - that we need not consider those women who vote the same way as their husbands - is that it assumes they vote the same way either because they simply follow their husband's choice, or because the influences on the wife's choice are exactly the same as those factors influencing the husband's. Yet political scientists do not generally assume that everyone who votes for a particular party does so for the same reasons.33

Duverger considers the married women who vote the same way as their husbands only in the context of who influences whom. The evidence is from one very small survey of 56 women and 27 men in France. Duverger says that it is not possible from this survey to state definitely which way the process of influence goes, but nevertheless the figures 'give a fairly clear pointer', as 'nearly a third of the women questioned stated that they were not interested in politics themselves and preferred to rely on their husbands' judgment. No man gave such

33 A similar dismissal of women is made by R.E. Renneker, in 'Some psychodynamic aspects of voting behavior', 1959. He does not bother discussing the women because they 'shared the political views of their husbands, or if unmarried, their fathers'. (p.410)
a reply. Another one-fifth said they voted the same way 'to avoid arguments', while only one man answered this way. This evidence suggests that it is the husband and not the wife who decides which way the couple will vote. 35

Although Duverger has hedged his conclusion with words like 'fairly clear pointer' and 'suggests', and notes that the sample is 'much too small', he nevertheless gives this 'evidence' considerable weight. In the general conclusions he states that the only difference between the sexes is 'marital authority in political matters', as the unanimity in voting between husband and wife tends to stem from the submission to the will of the husband. 36 But the evidence he bases this on is questionable as, apart from the small sample size, Duverger has misinterpreted the data. His figure of 'nearly a third' is in fact 15 women of 56, which is 27 percent, not 30 percent as given in the table. Further, these women who prefer to rely on their husbands' judgment are actually classified in the table as 'Not concerned with politics and have confidence in husband's opinions', which is rather different from submitting to the will of the husband. The most popular reason for voting the same way was that they had the same views on life in general, with 21 women (38 percent) giving this reason. Duverger, it seems, has interpreted the data to suit his own purposes: to provide an answer to a question he considers to be vital, namely, does the husband influence the wife or vice versa. But he ignores the other possibility, that neither may be influenced by the other. If any interpretation of the data is possible, it is that the couples vote the same way because they

34 Duverger, The Political Role of Women, 1955, p. 49 and table 7, p. 48
35 ibid., p. 49
36 Duverger, ibid., p. 122.
have similar interests.\textsuperscript{37} It is being less than scientifically objective to conclude from the survey that it is the husband who decides which way the couple will vote.

A similar process of argument, of asserting that in general differences are small while also asserting that particular differences are important enough to discuss at length, is used in the next part of the discussion concerning direction and stability of voting behaviour. Duverger first states that

\begin{quote}
    such differences in electoral behaviour as are to be seen between the sexes are never very considerable and that, on the whole, men and women vote on much the same lines.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

This statement is immediately followed by a subheading proclaiming 'The More Conservative Character of the Woman's Vote', under which Duverger notes that 'there seems to be little doubt that the woman's vote is more conservative'.\textsuperscript{39} Just which part of the page are we to believe? Perhaps we should look at the figures.

It is immediately apparent when we look at the tables that Duverger has engaged in statistical sophistry, as he has presented the figures in such a way that differences between the sexes are exaggerated. The relevant sections of the tables are reproduced below:\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{37} This explanation is more likely when it is taken into account that people marry each other because they do get along and do have interests in common. Table 7, p. 48, provides more evidence of the 'similarities of interest' argument in different forms. Madge Dawson, in Graduate and Married, 1965, makes a similar point in opposing Duverger. She suggests the similarity of married couples in voting may be 'part of a complex of identity of interests within their marriage'. (p.81).

\textsuperscript{38} Duverger, The Political Role of Women, 1955, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 50.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., Table 8 p. 50 and Table 9, p. 51.
### Tables from 'The Political Role of Women', 1949 Figures, Norway

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agrarians</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian People</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Conservatives</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both tables are describing the same distribution of votes. The difference is that in Table 8 the percentages add down the columns to 100%, while in Table 9 the percentages add across the rows. But while the figures in Table 9 are not incorrect, they are misleading for two reasons. Firstly, from Table 8 we see that the differences between the sexes, although they exist, are not very large. There is a difference of 5 percentage points among the Socialist voters, 2 percentage points among the Liberals, and so on. But when we look at Table 9, the first difference becomes one of 20 percentage points, as does the second.

Alternatively, if one were to consider just the figures from Table 9, one would conclude that the men are far more likely to vote Communist than are the women - 76 percent of the Communist Party supporters are men, and only 26 percent are women. But in fact, as we see from Table 8, only a small fraction of both sexes vote Communist. While it is true to say that more men than women vote Communist, we must take into account the fact that we are making a comparison between only 6 percent of the men and 3 percent of the women.

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41 Duverger does not give significance tests, nor does he give the number of people involved, so such tests cannot be calculated. The figures are from a survey, however, rather than from the whole of the Norwegian electorate.
The example concerning the Communist Party demonstrates the second fault, an oversight that leads to an even greater exaggeration of the differences. From Table 9 we see that the proportion of men to women who vote Communist is about 3 to 1 (76% to 24%). Yet from Table 8, the proportion is only 2 to 1 (6% to 3%). Which is the correct figure? The answer is that in absolute terms, three times as many men as women vote Communist, but in relative terms, only twice as many men as women do. Duverger has not taken into account the fact that there are, in absolute terms, more men than women voting. Thus any proportional difference in which there are relatively more men than women voting for a particular party is exaggerated.

Conversely, when there are relatively more women than men voting for a particular party, the proportional difference is understated. For example, from Table 8 we see that almost three times as many women as men vote Christian People (8% to 3%), but from Table 9, the proportion is less than 2 to 1 (65% to 35%). It is important to note that the first fault still remains, so that a difference of 5 percentage points becomes one of 30 percentage points.

The figures presented in Table 9, therefore, are misleading to the point of being meaningless. What is more, they do not convey any further information than that given in Table 8. All they have done is exaggerate the differences between the sexes. This means that Duverger's interpretation, that 'the difference in voting between the sexes ... is still large', is questionable. We would need significance tests to determine whether we could regard a difference of, say 8 percentage points between the men and the women who support the parties of the Left (Socialists and Communists) as 'large'. But certainly the differences are not as large as Duverger tries to make out they are.
The figures are even more misleading in the next table (Table 10), which give voting figures from surveys in France. The figures are presented in the second way only, showing for each party the proportions of male and female voters. Absolute numbers voting are not given for either sex, nor do we have any idea of the relative support for each party. Therefore any interpretation that they show the greater conservatism of women should be regarded as suspect. Duverger says only that the sex difference is 'less clearly defined' than in Norway.

For Germany, Duverger presents 11 pages of tables, giving the sex breakdown in elections from as far back as 1919, but makes very little comment on these results. Looking at the most recent figures, in 1953 the Christian Democrats were supported by 37.9 percent of the men, and 45.5 percent of the women, while the Socialists were supported by 31.7 percent of the men and 'only' 26.6 percent of the women. These figures, says Duverger, 'confirm those previously recorded. The parties of the Left (Socialists and Communists) are unpopular with the women'. The figures also show that women were more likely than men to support the Christian parties.

Duverger looks at two more items concerning the woman's vote: one is its stability, on which it seems that the woman's vote is no more unstable than the man's. The second item concerns sensitivity to personalities. A 1943 French survey asked the question 'When you vote, are you influenced more by the personality of the candidates appearing on the list, or by the programme of the party to which these candidates belong?'. The survey found that 39 percent of the women and 32 percent

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42 Duverger, The Political Role of Women, 1955, p. 65. But with a difference of 5 percentage points, one could add that the Socialists are hardly very popular with the men either! Nor is the Communist Party very popular with either sex, being supported by 1.6% of the women and 2.9% of the men.

43 Ibid., p.70.
of the men mentioned personality, which Duverger says is 'quite a large difference'. However, he also notes that both sexes were more affected by the programme, with 41 percent of women and 51 percent of men nominating it. Also in regard to personalities, Duverger notes that it is not true that women are more likely to favour dictatorships: in 1933 fewer women than men voted for the National Socialist party in Germany.

Duverger concludes this chapter by reiterating that 'Upon the whole, women vote much as men do'. So it seems that he is putting forward two messages; one is that there is a difference between the voting behaviour of women and men, the other is that the difference is very slight. Unfortunately, as we shall see, later researchers have been more inclined to take and cite the first message, rather than the second.

The general conclusions to the study should be mentioned, because it is in this part that Duverger's often-cited quotation appears. As mentioned before, he starts the discussion of conclusions by noting that differences between the sexes in electoral behaviour are small and that 'There is nothing here to suggest an essential peculiarity in woman's nature or a fundamental difference in men's and women's behaviour'. This is apart from marital authority and the 'submission to the will of the husband'. He qualifies this by stating that observations in support of this may be superficial, as we do not know

44 Duverger, The Political Role of Women, 1955, p. 72. He notes also that we should not conclude from this that the woman's vote has had no political influence.


46 Ibid., p. 122. I hope I have demonstrated that this is not supported by the data he presents.
who has the real authority in the household. Duverger also notes that the part played by women in government is extremely small, and there is a progressive decline in their influence as higher levels are reached. When women do appear in government, they tend to be in areas such as health, education, housing, and so on - those areas which are often considered to be of special interest to women.

The reasons for this, says Duverger, lie both in male opposition, which he deplores, and in women's weak resistance to such opposition. The traditional role of women means they exist in a closed and limited world, and this conflicts with having an interest in politics where it is important to see things in a larger sphere, and where problems must be stated in general terms. Furthermore, the general structure of society, the psychological and social environment, creates difficulties:

If the majority of women are little attracted to political careers, it is because everything tends to turn them away from them; if they allow politics to remain essentially a man's business, it is because everything conduces to this belief, tradition, family life, education, religion and literature. From birth, women are involved in a system which tends to make them think of themselves as feminine.47

However, the fundamental obstacle to women's political involvement, continues Duverger, is their dependence on men. Democracy requires that political activity is 'essentially adult', which 'presupposes that anyone engaging in it takes full responsibility for his fate and does not leave it to another to decide for him'.48 Paternalism is incompatible with democracy. But,

48 Ibid., p. 129.
while women have, legally, ceased to be minors, they still have the mentality of minors in many fields and, particularly in politics, they usually accept paternalism on the part of men. The man — husband, fiance, lover or myth — is the mediator between them and the political world.49

Support for this claim is given in the next sentence: "When things go wrong, women blame their husbands, men blame the government" is a fairly apt summing up of this basic attitude.50 And evidence for this is from an analysis of sentimental women's magazines in France, which exist to provide escapism for those women who are in inferior social and economic positions. Men faced with similar circumstances turn to revolutionary parties or to trade unions.

This argument of Duverger's is rather odd. It is hard to believe that it is anything more than speculation because he provides so little concrete evidence to support any of it. Even the first part, which foreshadows the arguments of today's feminists — that it is the social system that has kept women in a position of inferiority — is little more than commentary. The statements on democracy may theoretically be correct, but the implications and conclusions he draws from them are blatantly wrong. While many women may not conform to the ideal of taking responsibility for their own decision, it is naive to think that every man does. Most people rely to some extent on others when they form an opinion, whether the others be family, friends, public figures, or political commentators reporting through the media. There is no evidence whatsoever that every woman has a man to act as a mediator between her and the political world; Duverger himself concedes that we do not really know who has authority in the home.

But this is what Duverger speculated, and later researchers have taken it as a conclusion based on evidence from the book. As we

50 Ibid., p. 129.
have seen, such a conclusion is completely unjustified. In fact the argument is unworthy of Duverger because he does have an understanding of the problems facing women in a patriarchal society. He concludes the text of the book by stating that changes in legislation are not enough to change the structure of society; we need to awaken in women a sense of their own independence. It is even more important to fight against the deeply-rooted belief in the natural inferiority of women, based on physiological or psycho-physiological considerations... There is no more an inferior sex than there are inferior races or inferior classes. But there is a sex, and there are classes and races, who have come to believe in their inferiority because they have been persuaded of it in justification of their subordinate position in society.  

Meanwhile in England, two researchers were following the tradition of the American electoral studies. Milne and MacKenzie studied the Bristol electorate during the 1951 British general election, and produced Straight Fight. They returned to the area to study the 1955 election and in 1958 they published Marginal Seat 1955, based on a survey of 528 electors. Rather than tracing the development of thought between the two studies, I shall concentrate on the latter as it cites some of the findings already discussed.  

The sample size in this study is rather small to expect to find many statistically meaningful sex differences, and general trends or tendencies only can be reported. On the direction of the vote, the authors find that 'There was a slight - and, in this case, statistically

51 Duverger, The Political Role of Women, 1955, p. 130. Duverger cites de Beauvoir. We can note somewhat cynically that these latter statements are never quoted by other researchers: they only ever quote the 'mentality of minors' statement.

52 The authors regard the Erie County study as their book's 'most eminent ancestor', and also make reference to Voting and to The Voter Decides. Milne & MacKenzie, Marginal Seat 1955, p. 2.
non-significant - tendency for women to be more pro-Conservative than men'.

Class affects men and women equally; that is, the proportions of men and women voting Conservative are almost the same in both the highest and the lowest social classes. As regards non-voting, the authors do not give the difference between the sexes but the overall figure of abstentions is 9 per cent.

There is a difference between the sexes in self-reported interest in the election, with 63 per cent of the women and 83 per cent of the men saying they are 'interested'. This difference varies according to the person's subjective social class. Thus in the middle class (the highest one), 81 per cent of men and 79 per cent of women say they are interested in the election; in the lower middle class, the figures become 87 per cent and 73 per cent - a difference of 14 percentage points; in the working class the difference increases to 27 percentage points, with 83 per cent of the men but only 56 per cent of the women claiming to be interested in the election.

Milne and MacKenzie comment on this by saying:

This finding is very much in accord with general knowledge. The typical working-class woman does not usually have enough leisure to take time off for politics, and she often tends to leave her political decisions to her husband. Better-off women, who usually vote in conformity with their social class - i.e. Conservative - have more time for outside interests and activities.

Presumably the typical working-class woman does not have much leisure time because she is more likely to be employed outside the home, while the typical better-off woman has more leisure time because she is less

53 Milne & MacKenzie, Marginal Seat 1955, p. 54
54 This contrasts with Berelson et al's finding that women are less affected by social class than are men. See above, p. 16.
55 ibid., p. 69
likely to be employed. If this is so, Milne and MacKenzie's explanation is an interesting one because it conflicts directly with Duverger's. Thus if a woman works, either she has more contacts with the outside world so she can become integrated into the political world (Duverger) or she no longer has time to take an interest in politics (Milne and MacKenzie). Alternatively, if she stays at home she has time enough for outside interests, (Milne and MacKenzie) or else she lives in such a small, isolated world that she lives her political life vicariously, through her husband the political mediator (Duverger). Such a contradiction suggests that the researchers really do not know what is the true situation, but speculate to suit their purposes and explain their findings.

The next sex difference that Milne and MacKenzie note concerns opinion leaders, that is, those people who said both that they discussed politics and that they were more likely to be asked their views on politics, compared with people they knew. Overall, 13 per cent of the sample were classified this way: 19 per cent of the men but only 5 per cent of the women were opinion leaders. Milne and MacKenzie attribute this to 'men's greater mobility as well as the specific male advantage that politics is a "man's subject"'. However they do not elaborate on this or say what evidence they have that politics is a man's subject.

This argument is returned to in the chapter entitled 'The electors' account of why they voted as they did'. 480 voters were asked their reasons for voting, from which it seems 'images are much

more important in determining voting behaviour than are issues'. 57
The Labour voters saw Labour as being for the working class, while
Conservative supporters saw their party's image in terms of the ability
of its leaders, and in terms of free enterprise. Thirty-five people
mentioned personal contacts, and of these, 26 were influenced by their
spouse. Further, 24 were wives influenced by their husbands. 'This
finding', say the authors, 'confirms the accepted view that some women,
believing politics and elections to be a man's job, are particularly
easy to influence in this respect'. 58

It should be noted that if all these women are simply passively
accepting what their husbands tell them, the proportion of easily
influenceable wives is small, being around 10 per cent of women in the
sample. It is not at all clear, however, that these women are just being
told how to vote: Milne and MacKenzie give as an example of a woman
who is particularly easy to influence, a female floater who said

I decided to vote Labour on the way to the poll.
I couldn't see anything different in any of the
parties, so I decided to vote as my husband does
for the sake of harmony in the home. 59

In other words, the parties' campaigns have failed to make an impression
on this woman, so she feels it does not matter which one she votes for.
Her grounds for choosing Labour thus become pragmatic, to keep the peace
at home. Surely there is no evidence here that this woman sees
politics and elections as a man's job. Yet this quotation is used to
bolster the image, particularly as it is similar to the one that
Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet cite.

57 Milne & MacKenzie, Marginal Seat 1955, p. 159
58 ibid., p. 162. At least they qualify the statement by use of
the word 'some'.
59 ibid., p. 162.
Finally there is mention of influence of one partner on the other when a change of party choice occurs. Milne and MacKenzie state that the number of married floaters is too small to support any firm hypothesis. Nevertheless, when there was a change from Conservative to Labour, it was usually a wife changing in line with her husband: 'The tendency was for husbands to lead and for wives to follow'.

The authors do not mention figures, but it seems from an earlier table that only 12 people changed their vote between 1951 and 1955 from Conservative to Labour. It is unlikely that all 12, or even a majority, were female and married to men who had earlier changed their allegiance in the same direction. But it is from such 'conclusions', even tentatively proposed, that the picture of women's political roles is constructed, or rather, fabricated.

The next person to be considered in the construction process is Robert Lane, another frequently-cited author. I have discussed at length elsewhere the flaws in Lane's argument, so will only summarise his views and note the links with the other researchers. Lane looks at various studies, some from as far back as 1924, and at least one is based on a very small sample. He advances some propositions including the following:

60 Milne and MacKenzie, Marginal Seat 1955, p. 163. The authors refer to Duverger, but it is not clear why they refer to the particular pages they do. Duverger is discussing the fact that in times of political crises women are not more likely to change their electoral choices than are men. He is also discussing the finding that women are only marginally more affected by personalities than are men; there is nothing to support or refute Milne & MacKenzie's rather shaky claim that husbands lead and wives follow.

61 J. Morgan, 'Women and political socialisation; fact and fantasy in Easton and Dennis, and in Lane', 1974.

62 To illustrate the difference in the nature of political interests of men and women, Lane cites March's study of 32 women.
The culture emphasises moral, dependent, and politically less competent images of women which reduce their partisanship and sense of political effectiveness and define a less active political role for them.

Women are slightly less likely to include voting among their social duties and have slight, but declining, cultural reinforcement for this interpretation.

A moralized political orientation characteristic of women, arising from maternal responsibilities, exclusion from more socially valued areas of activity, and narrower orbits, tends to focus female political attention upon persons and peripheral 'reform' issues.

The evidence that Lane draws these propositions from, however, is not very adequate. Part of the picture is speculation, and seems to be based on what Lane thinks is the case, while the factual evidence provided is by no means conclusive. To illustrate this, we can look at Lane's discussion of those works that have been considered above.

Duverger is mentioned only once, in relation to the European finding that women vote less than men. While this is one of Duverger's findings, it should be kept in mind that the difference is small and Duverger does not make as much out of it as Lane then does. Lane uses this finding as the basis for discussing the idea that some women regard voting as a male activity. Three of the quotations he gives to support this are from the 1940 study by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet.

In relation to reasons for non-voting, Lane cites the Campbell, Gurin and Miller finding on sense of citizen duty. The original researchers say that there is virtually no sex difference, but Lane sees that there is a difference worth talking about: 'the fact that

63 R. Lane, Political Life, 1959, pp. 215-216. As pointed out in my article, these 'propositions' seem to be transformed into concrete evidence, both by Lane and by later researchers citing him.

64 Yet another example of anecdotal material used in relation to women.
there is a difference as large as 5 per cent between the men and the women who fail to see a duty to vote under many circumstances is significant. Even when the researchers deny a difference exists, there is no guarantee that an enterprising commentator, wanting to prove a point, will agree with them!

Lane cites the same authors as evidence of the 'relatively greater candidate orientation of women', and suggests that women's moralism may account for such candidate orientation. This means that 'women, more than others, contribute to the personification of politics both in the United States and abroad'.

This is a prime example of the construction and reinforcement of the image. Lane accepts without question a finding which, as we have seen, is very questionable - that women are more candidate-oriented. He adds to this his theory (unsubstantiated) that women have a more moralistic orientation towards politics, using it as an explanation of the Campbell et al finding, and draws the conclusion that women personify politics. The interrelation of two types of 'evidence' such as this tends to give each of them more credibility.

Finally Lane takes another finding of Campbell, Gurin and Miller and exaggerates its importance - yet another way of helping to fabricate the image. The finding concerns the difference in sense of political efficacy. As efficacy is measured by, among other things, the feeling that 'I am important enough to have officials pay attention

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65 Lane, Political Life, 1959, p. 211. The figures given by Campbell, Gurin and Miller in The Voter Decides, p. 197, for sense of citizen duty are:

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<th></th>
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<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
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66 Lane, ibid., p. 213. One wonders if the 'others' in the sentence are anything more than men!

67 See above, pp. 18-19.
to me', Lane interprets the Campbell et al. findings as 'We would not expect women to rate high, and the scores show this'.

Lane does not give Campbell et al.'s figures; the reader takes on trust that the figures are proof of 'the low sense of political efficacy that characterizes women'. The figures are in fact that 17 percent of men and 23 percent of women have a low sense of political efficacy, while 75 percent of women (compared with 82 percent of men) have at least a medium sense of efficacy. Thus Lane continues in the tradition started by Lazarsfeld et al.: a finding for some women becomes, by implication, applicable to all women.

The next study to be considered does not commit the sins of misquoting, misinterpreting or exaggerating previous findings because in its section on sex differences it does not cite any other findings. However, as we have encountered two of the authors previously, we can assume they are aware of the tradition regarding the political role of women, and to some extent it will influence their interpretation. The study is the second by Michigan University's Survey Research Center, this time carried out by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, and published in 1960 under the title The American Voter.

In the section on the electoral effects of social characteristics, the authors discuss the findings relating to sex, based on their surveys of 3,300 people interviewed in 1952 and 1956. They found firstly that voting participation for women was 10 percent below that for men. The difference is least at higher levels of education, and in

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68 Lane, Political Life, 1959, p.213
69 Ibid., p. 213.
70 Campbell, Gurin and Miller, The Voter Decides, 1954, p. 191.
71 See above, p. 13.
fact among those with college education and under 35, marginally more women than men voted. A similar effect is found concerning sense of political involvement in the current political situation: fewer women than men express such a sense of involvement, although at higher education levels the differences are virtually obliterated or reversed.

They report that there are no differences between the sexes regarding strong identification with a political party, and only a marginal difference in sense of citizen duty. However, there is a difference in sense of political efficacy; the men are more likely than the women to feel that they can cope with the complexities of politics and to believe that their participation carries some weight in the political process. The figures certainly show this difference. On a scale of high, medium and low efficacy, for those with grade school education only (28 percent of the sample), 37 percent of the men and 67 percent of the women had a low sense of political efficacy. The corresponding figures for those with college education (18 percent of the sample) were 5 percent and 7 percent respectively. However, in the latter group, 83 percent of the men but only 68 percent of the women had a high sense of efficacy.

The next difference the authors note is in 'levels of conceptualization of politics'. The respondents were asked what they liked and disliked about the parties, and their answers were judged and classified as relating to ideology, group benefit, nature of the times, or having no issue content. The men tend to 'cluster at the more sophisticated levels', although the authors do not note that this

72 Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, The American Voter, 1960, p. 491, non-south sample only. These findings are similar to those found in the Survey Research Center's previous study, reported in The Voter Decides. See above, p. 19.
difference is again least at the highest education level. Finally they claim that women are 'more Republican', but note that the difference is small, being around 3-5 percent.

My interpretation of these findings would be that there are some small differences between the sexes in voting turnout, sense of political involvement, possibly in sense of citizen duty, and in conceptualisation of politics. These differences are interrelated with education so that at higher educational levels they largely disappear. The only difference that does seem to persist at all educational levels is in sense of political efficacy. This suggests two questions for further study: why are there differences between the sexes at low levels of education but not at high levels, and why do more women than men have less of a sense of political efficacy?

Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes have interspersed the reports of the findings with their own explanations. They suggest that a century ago there were clear-cut political roles, with men being the political agents. The 'newer political sex roles' are not yet fully accepted and this is why there is a difference in voting turnout. The difference in political efficacy is directly related to role beliefs that presume the woman to be a submissive partner. The man is expected to be dominant in action directed toward the world outside his family; the woman is to accept his leadership passively. She is not expected, therefore, to see herself as an effective agent in politics.

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73 The classification is rather subjective. See Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes, The American Voter, 1960, pp. 222-227. In such judgmental situations, it is always possible that coders will use external cues such as sex to help them code an answer; that is, they may code similar answers differently for male and female respondents.

74 In the sense that a century ago, women did not have the vote, they are of course right. But the argument, which has similarities with those of Duverger and Lane, is little more than speculation.

75 Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, ibid., p. 490.
No support is offered for this rather sweeping generalisation. The authors miss the obvious clue: not only do women have less of a sense of political efficacy, but so do those men and women who have low education. Perhaps the reality of the situation, rather than sex role expectations, is the important factor. That is, people have a sense of low efficacy when in fact they have low efficacy, when they know they can have little effect on the political process.76

The authors then argue that the sex differences are really greater than the figures suggest. Voting turnout is not a good indicator, as there are many women who respond to civic expectations about voting, but nevertheless show personal indifference and dependence upon their husbands' judgment. They do not say just how many women feel this way, nor how they know that there are 'many women' and presumably few men, who vote but are not interested in politics beyond that. However they spend some time discussing this group of women, so much so that the reader tends to lose sight of the fact that they are not talking about all women, maybe not even a majority. In fact they have not even established whether such a group of women exists. Nevertheless, they describe such a woman thus: she does not pay much attention to politics other than voting, but leaves the sifting of information up to her husband and abides by his decision. Her vote is probably stable over time, even though she has little information.77

The information that she brings to bear on 'her' choice is indeed fragmentary, because it is second hand. Since the partisan decision is anchored not in these fragments but in the fuller political understanding of the husband, it may have greater stability over a period of time than we would otherwise suspect.78

76 This interpretation is supported by the findings in The Voter Decides, where low political efficacy was correlated with low socioeconomic status. See above, p. 19.

77 This is a reference to a common, though questionable, finding that people who change party preferences or who make up their minds very late also have little information and low interest.

78 Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes, The American Voter, 1960, p. 492
The authors recognise that not all women fall into the 'dependent wife' category: 'Of course some wives, as well as some women without husbands, do strike out on their own politically.' These women may still be influenced by their primary groups but 'at least they have no single and immediate source of political cues that they are satisfied to accept without question, as wives often have'.\(^{79}\) This group of 'liberated' women is rather small, the authors argue, as it cannot offset the sex difference in levels of conceptualisation of politics which arise 'because of female willingness to leave political matters to men'.\(^{80}\)

But just where are these dependent wives, and how many are there? Perhaps we can define them according to the authors' criteria. Firstly they do not have college education presumably, because there are no differences between the sexes in sense of political involvement at this level. Secondly, they must have little or no interest in politics other than voting, and probably a low sense of political efficacy (so far we are already down to only 33 percent of the women in the sample). Thirdly they must be married. Fourthly, and this imposes the greatest limitation, they must be married to men who are interested in politics, have a 'fuller political understanding' and more sophisticated political information than their wives, sift through political information before deciding how to vote, hand down their decision to their wives, and get their political information first hand (so their wives can get it second hand). Yet the authors have not done a survey of husbands and wives, so they can give no evidence as to the number of these women, if indeed they exist. Even the combination of high

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80 Ibid., p. 492. The argument has similarities with Duverger's 'male mediators'.

political interest and first-hand involvement of the husband, and low political interest of the wife, would probably ensure that the numbers were very small.\textsuperscript{81} This underlines the type of error the researchers make: although there may be many women who are apathetic regarding politics, we must not overlook the fact that there are many men who are just as apathetic. Both parts of the image of the dependent wife and her politically sophisticated husband need to be queried.

The next study that is worth briefly mentioning is another comparative one, Almond and Verba's \textit{The Civic Culture}, published in 1963. This study, conducted in the late 1950's, looked at electoral behaviour in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Mexico. Regarding women and political orientation, the authors cite Duverger and Lane as sources of their image of women, which is that

\begin{quote}
women differ from men in their political behavior only in being somewhat more frequently apathetic, parochial, conservative, and sensitive to the personality, emotional and esthetic aspects of political life and electoral campaigns.\textsuperscript{82}
\end{quote}

The evidence the authors present is a set of tables on political information, political interest (measured by following both politics

\textsuperscript{81} It is not at all clear what is implied in getting one's information second-hand. Most people have contact with political affairs only through the media and through discussions with other people such as relatives, friends, and work colleagues. In all of these, the person could be said to be receiving political information through a mediator, and thus receiving it 'second-hand'. There is a difference in receiving political information from work colleagues and from one's husband only if in the first, an exchange of ideas takes place, while in the second, the wife is simply passively accepting the husband's ideas. Yet despite claims to the contrary, the authors have not demonstrated that women take no active part in conversations with their husbands.

\textsuperscript{82} G.A. Almond \& S. Verba, \textit{The Civic Culture}, 1963, p. 388. To keep the record straight, my analyses of Duverger and Lane above suggest that the only parts of this image that are substantiated are the greater frequency of apathy (measured by voting turnout) and conservatism (measured by voting for conservative parties).
and campaigns), sense of duty to participate in one's local community, and subjective political competence. The only part of their picture, therefore, that they give evidence to support is the greater degree of apathy of women - that is, if lack of interest in politics and in election campaigns is a measure of apathy. The parochialism, conservatism, personalising, and emotional aspects of the image are neither supported nor refuted: they are just ignored.

Considering just the figures presented for the United States, all we can conclude from them is that more men than women score highly on political knowledge (59 percent to 40 percent respectively score highly), and fewer men than women say they follow neither politics nor election campaigns (16 percent of men and 23 percent of women follow neither). The authors say, therefore, that Lane's picture of the culture emphasising the moral, dependent and politically less competent images of women is less applicable in America than in other countries. They also reject Duverger's 'mentality of minors' statement as being an 'essentially continental European comment', although they cannot resist quoting it. Of course the evidence that Almond and Verba have presented, on knowledge, interest, sense of duty to participate, and subjective political competence, has little relevance either to Lane's statement or to Duverger's, unless the lower political knowledge found among more women than men indicates the 'mentality of minors' - in which case a fair proportion of men would be just as juvenile.

A final study to be considered is Milbrath's *Political Participation*. It is one of the more recent works and is often cited as being a summary of the research on sex differences. The quotation from Milbrath at

the beginning of this chapter sums up his position, that men are more likely to participate in politics than are women. This 'thoroughly substantiated' finding is due to the tradition that politics is a man's business, says Milbrath. And evidence of the tradition is that 'a favourite excuse for not wishing to be interviewed is to claim that the husband takes care of the family politics'. The tradition also exists in the mind of one State Representative from Arkansas, and his chauvinistic comment about women meddling in politics is quoted. The third evidence is from a number of studies he cites, including Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee; Lane; and Almond and Verba.

The sex difference in political participation is slowly being eroded by economic and social factors says Milbrath, citing Almond and Verba as evidence. But, he continues, this erosion does not mean that women are becoming independent of men in their political views:

A good deal of solid evidence still suggests that wives follow their husband's lead in politics (sometimes vice versa), or at least that husband and wife tend to support the same parties and candidates.

There is a world of difference between saying that a couple support the same party and saying that the wife follows the husband. The solid evidence, as we have seen, supports only the proposition that

84 L.W. Milbrath, Political Participation, 1965, p. 135. Apart from the fact that no numbers are given, we can ask to what extent a convenient excuse for getting out of an interview is truly representative of the actual situation.

85 Ibid., p. 136. This is the only anecdotal material in the chapter. The quote is: 'We don't have that trouble up in Perry County. When our women get too nosey about something that doesn't concern them, we get another cow to milk or get them a little more garden to tend.'

86 He cites 17 other references, of which only 6 have been published since 1960. It is of course possible that there may be evidence in some of these studies that does substantiate his claims and is more valid than the studies that I have concentrated on. However, I have chosen these studies that are regarded as among the most important and consequently are the most frequently cited.

87 Ibid., p. 136. Emphasis in original.
husbands and wives vote the same way. There is no conclusive evidence that wives follow their husbands' lead, particularly as such a statement implicates if not all, then at least a majority of wives. It is not surprising that Milbrath states this, however, as one of the sources he cites in support is Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, while the other sources cited hardly provide solid evidence.  

Milbrath's discussion on sex differences, like Lane's, draws its material from studies of previous researchers rather than providing any new statistical evidence. It is included in my review to illustrate how the image of women's political roles is constructed. To extend the building imagery, we can regard the statistical evidence as the bricks, their interpretation as the mortar, and their consolidation by writers such as Milbrath and Lane as structural reinforcement. I have been endeavouring to show that the construction is not a very solid one. This is a result both of faulty foundations and poor quality mortar; the conventional wisdom that the researchers use to build on has prejudiced their building, while the interpretations of the data, influenced by their preconceptions, are often distortions or even scientifically unsound.

The objection could be raised that these studies are out of date and the image of the passive, non-participating women meekly following their husbands' lead is no longer regarded as true. Unfortunately the writers that I have discussed are still cited by later researchers, even when these researchers produce findings that conflict with part of the picture. Without going into great detail, some examples should illustrate the point.

88 Milbrath, Political Participation, 1965, p. 136. The other sources he cites are the Norwegian part of Duverger's study, a 1959 article and a book published in 1937.
Firstly, the writers in the political socialisation school use the findings as background to their discussions of sex differences among children. Thus we have Hess and Torney in 1967 noting the following findings: women are more interested in candidates that in issues (Campbell, Gurin & Miller); women evaluate political objects on a lower level of conceptualisation, and feel less competent and efficacious in political authority (both from Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes); women are less interested in political matters and elections (Berelson, Lazarsfeld & McPhee); and women vote less frequently (no source cited). It is not surprising, then, that Hess and Torney interpret their somewhat questionable findings on children to show that boys are ahead in attitude development, girls personalise more, and boys have a greater interest in politics.89

Easton and Dennis cite only Lane and Milbrath in their discussion of sex differences in children. Their preconceptions are thus: 'The rates of female participation have been found to be significantly lower than those of men; and the direction of female voting has somewhat less clearly been found to be more conservative.'90 I have discussed in detail elsewhere the bias in their interpretation of the findings that results from Easton and Dennis's preconceptions.91

89 The findings are somewhat questionable in the light of Vaillancourt's discovery that children may not even have stable attitudes. Vaillancourt found an alarming degree of instability among children of all ages. For example, only half the children nominated the same party affiliation after a two-month interval. See 'Stability of children's survey responses', 1973. A reading of the Hess and Torney findings uncovers similar faults to those in Easton and Dennis, discussed in J. Morgan, 'Women and political socialisation: fact and fantasy in Easton and Dennis, and in Lane'. 1974 As an example, Hess and Torney found that the children's interest in politics decreased with age.

90 D. Easton & J. Dennis, Children in the Political System, 1969, p. 335.

91 J. Morgan, op. cit.
Jennings and Langton, in a discussion of the relative importance of mothers and fathers in the formation of attitudes of their children, do at least recognise that the research of the past is not all that solid. They cite Campbell, Gurin & Miller, Berelson et al, and Lane, on male dominance and say that the 'fairly slender soundings' are buttressed by 'one's intuitive notions and observations about the place of the sexes in American party politics. As with most occupations men occupy the elite positions... Politics is conventionally thought of as sex-appropriate for men, whereas doubts and ambiguities prevail regarding women.'

Two years later we find Jennings, this time with Niemi, still talking about the conventional wisdom that says politics is a man's world, and this is evidenced by 'the greater male participation at the mass level and preponderant occupancy of political positions at the elite level'. And evidence for this has been documented by Jennings and Thomas in an earlier article. This article in fact cites the same old references: Duverger, Lane, Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, and Almond and Verba are cited as support for the statement that 'the existence of sex differences in political behaviour is one of the most consistently reported findings in empirical studies of political socialization, voting behaviour and political participation'. Specific sex differences are noted: women have a lower sense of political involvement and political efficacy, and are less sophisticated in their

92 M.K. Jennings & K. Langton, 'Mothers versus fathers: the formation of political orientations among the young Americans', 1969, pp.330-1
93 M.K. Jennings & R.G. Niemi, 'The division of political labor between mothers and fathers', 1971, p. 70
94 M.K. Jennings & N. Thomas, 'Men and women in party elites: social roles and political resources', 1968.
95 ibid., p. 469. They cite three other studies, a 1948 one by Gosnell, and two by Greenstein, one of which I briefly discuss in 'Women and political socialisation', 1974.
conceptualisation of politics (Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes); women are more apathetic, emotional and sensitive to personality (Almond and Verba); females personalise more (Hess and Torney); and women are more receptive to familial influence (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee). Jennings and Thomas say 'The basic conclusion which one derives from the literature is quite clear: men participate more, have a higher intensity of involvement, and view politics somewhat differently'.

No wonder, with all this weight of research-citing, that Dowse and Hughes in 1971 say that sex differences are 'solidly researched'. These authors cite Duverger and Milbrath as evidence that women participate less, vote less, know less, have less interest and are more conservative than men. Almost in contradiction to this, the authors note that middle-class women of higher educational levels differ only marginally from similar middle-class men, and Milbrath, Almond and Verba, and Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, are cited as evidence.

Still the process of citing, re-citing, building up the evidence continues. In Australia in 1969, Wilson and Western compare Australian findings that 'men are likely to participate more, both actively and

96 Jennings & Thomas, 'Men and women in party elites: social roles and political resources', 1968, p. 471.

97 R.E. Dowse & J.A. Hughes, 'Girls, boys and politics', 1971, p.53. The full quote is given at the beginning of this chapter. It should be noted too that both Lane and Milbrath, by summing up the findings, then become part of the solid research themselves: the process is self-perpetuating.

98 I say 'almost in contradiction' because middle-class women are not such a small minority of the female population, yet the earlier statement again implies that most women vote less, participate less, etc. Perhaps the conflict can be resolved if 'higher educational levels' means very high levels, such as university training. It is unclear from the context whether 'middle-class women of higher educational levels' refers to such a group, or whether middle-class women are being defined as those with higher educational levels such as completing secondary school at least, in which case they would comprise a fair proportion of the population, at least in the US and Australia, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom.
passively, than women', with similar findings in the United States, as noted by Milbrath. 99 And in November 1974 a New Zealand researcher quotes Duverger's 'mentality of minors' statement as 'the case against women', and cites Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, that men are more likely to believe they can cope with the complexities of politics and have some degree of political efficacy. 100

Before we make the mistake that so many of the researchers make, that by repeating a proposition often enough we will come to believe it is a solid fact, we shall recapitulate the findings and non-findings. The factual differences, the sound bricks in the construction, are the following. There is a difference between the sexes in voting turnout, a difference which varies with country, with type of election and with time. 101 Associated with this, there is a difference in professed interest in the election or in politics generally. Again the figures vary. One American study found 33 percent of men and 23 percent of women having a great interest; a British study found proportions of 83 percent and 63 percent respectively being interested. 102

Another finding connected with this is in sense of political involvement, although the difference exists only at lower educational levels.

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100 N.S. Roberts, 'The female kiwi as a political animal', 1974, p.200. He also cites an article by E. Costantini & K. Craik, entitled 'Women as politicians', 1972. These researchers find the literature 'replete with evidence' on sex differences in political behaviour. As expected when this is pursued, the evidence comes from the same authors that I have been discussing: Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes; Berelson, Lazarsfeld & McPhee; Duverger; Lane; Almond & Verba; Milbrath; Hess & Torney; Campbell, Gurin & Miller.

101 Lazarsfeld et al, Campbell, Gurin & Miller; Duverger; Lane (citing others); Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes. Of course no comparisons can be made in Australia, where voting is compulsory. Here, failure to vote involves a conscious decision of whether to risk a fine, and is thus qualitatively different from failing to vote because of apathy.

102 Lazarsfeld et al; Milne & MacKenzie; Almond & Verba.
levels. One study reports a difference in political knowledge of 19 percentage points. Two studies find a difference in sense of political efficacy, although only one gives overall figures: 35 percent of men and 20 percent of women had a high sense of efficacy. The British study looked at opinion leaders and found a difference, with 19 percent of men and 5 percent of women being thus classified.

There are a couple of findings which are reported by Duverger but are either not supported by other researchers, or are supported in a very questionable way. One refers to the direction of the vote: Duverger found differences of the order of 5 to 8 percentage points that indicate that more women than men vote for Conservative parties (and possibly for religious parties). However, other studies have found no difference (or no significant difference) in party preference or vote division. These findings may not be contradictory as Duverger's relate to Europe, and the others relate to the United States and the United Kingdom.

The second relates to women personalising politics, or being more sensitive to candidates. The only factual difference is Duverger's report of a 1943 French survey, based on unknown numbers. However, Duverger himself also reports a finding which may be counted against this, that women are not more attracted to dictatorships than are men.

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103 Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes.
104 Almond & Verba.
105 Campbell, Gurin & Miller; Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes; and Lane, but he exaggerates its importance.
106 Milne & Mackenzie.
107 Berelson et al; Milne & Mackenzie; Campbell, Gurin & Miller; Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes. Duverger does not place much reliance on the findings, and says there is no fundamental difference.
There is one finding reported only by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, on which it is difficult to pass judgment. This concerns the idea that women have less sophisticated conceptualisations of politics. While there is a difference between the sexes, according to the researchers' figures, I have suggested that its measurement is somewhat subjective. The finding really needs to be repeated (rather than just quoted) before we can regard it as a solid fact.

The lack of a difference between the sexes occurs, as has just been mentioned, in relation to direction of vote and in personalising politics. It also occurs in sense of citizen duty. These non-differences are mentioned because other researchers claim that there are differences in these areas, but give no factual evidence.

Finally there is the faulty mortar, the speculation and prejudiced interpretation that have helped to make the image of women's political roles a fabrication rather than a construction. The inadequately substantiated claims include the following: politics is a man's world; women's attitudes towards politics differ in nature to men's, for example in that they are more moralistic; men dominate in political matters and/or tell their wives how to vote; women are more candidate-oriented; women are more conservative; and women have less of a sense of citizen duty.

108 Campbell, Gurin & Miller; Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes. Actually, the latter note there is a 'marginal' difference, which I am taking to be closer to no difference than to being a significant difference.

109 Lazarsfeld et al; Milne & MacKenzie; Lane; Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes; Milbrath.

110 Lane; Almond & Verba, citing Lane. They are contradicted by Duverger and by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, at least.

111 Lazarsfeld et al; Berelson et al; Duverger; Milne & MacKenzie; Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes; Milbrath.

112 Campbell, Gurin & Miller; Lane (citing them); Almond & Verba (citing Lane).

113 Duverger (at times); Almond & Verba (citing Duverger).

114 Lane, misinterpreting Campbell, Gurin & Miller.
The above summary forms the framework for the second part of the study, the analysis of the Australian survey. To the extent that it is possible, I will look at the data from this survey with an eye to confirming or negating the factual evidence found by the overseas researchers, and to see whether any substance can be given to those findings that I consider to be dubious. Unfortunately this is limited in places because the relevant questions have not been asked in the Aitkin and Kahan survey. Thus the analysis will look at the following hypotheses:

Women are less interested in politics and elections than are men.
Women are less knowledgeable about political matters than are men.
Women participate less than men do.
Political sex differences are smaller at higher levels of education.
Women are more conservative than men.
Women follow their husbands in matters such as voting.
3 THE AUSTRALIAN SITUATION: SEX DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR

This chapter will provide some Australian-made factual bricks which can be used in the construction of an image of women's political roles. The data are taken from the second wave of the Australian Survey Project, a survey conducted by Don Aitkin and Michael Kahan just after the Federal election in October 1969. Details of the sampling procedure are given in their monograph, Drawing a Sample of the Australian Electorate. In this survey, 1873 people aged 21 and over from all Australian States were interviewed; 975 were men and 898 were women.

Before considering the data, a couple of methodological problems need to be raised. The first concerns the existence and stability of attitudes. The social-psychological concept of an attitude is that it is an 'enduring system of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and pro or con action tendencies with respect to a social object'. If we accept this definition as applying to political

1 This election saw the Liberal-Country Party coalition, led by John Gorton, returned to government. Their majority was reduced, an indication of the trend that brought about the ALP victory at the following election in 1972.

2 M. Kahan & D. Aitkin, Drawing a Sample of the Australian Electorate, 1968. Background to the Australian political scene, and the political climate prevailing at the time of the election, can be found in D. Aitkin, Stability and Change in Australian Politics, forthcoming, and in D. Aitkin & M. Kahan, "Australia", 1974. Both of these also discuss the general findings of the Australian Survey Project.

3 The survey included a number of respondents who had been interviewed in the first wave of the project, in 1967. My analysis is confined to just the 1969 survey, and does not distinguish between those being interviewed for the first time and those being reinterviewed.

4 D. Krech, R. S. Crutchfield & E. Ballachey, Individual in Society, 1962, p. 177. Quoted in P. Vaillancourt, 'Stability of children's survey responses', 1973, p. 376; emphasis added. We could extend this definition to include potentially enduring attitudes, to cover a situation where an attitude has recently been formed, or changed but will become an enduring attitude.
attitudes, we need to question whether a spontaneous answer to a forced-choice question, made under various social pressures, really represents a meaningful attitude. It may be that the researchers are tapping nothing more than random responses or 'non-attitudes'.

Non-attitudes exist because although people may be 'vibrant bundles of attitudes', it is unlikely that most would hold well-thought out opinions on every issue that political scientists can think to ask about. Often people have no need to develop an attitude or even to care very much about matters that are beyond their immediate environment. When they are asked about their political attitudes in a survey, they are suddenly required to give direct responses on issues which they may have never had to think about before, let alone give an opinion on. They do not admit that they have no opinion, however. They feel they ought to have an attitude - even though they may not see politics as important to them, they may still see that it ought to be important, so they ought to have an attitude. An interview tends to have the atmosphere of an intelligence test about it, and the respondent might think that a 'no opinion' answer could be interpreted as an indication of low intelligence. Another social pressure is that asking people for their opinion on an issue is a form of flattery. Probably some people respond simply because for once someone is interested in what they think, and is prepared to take their opinion seriously.

5 A 'non-attitude' is to be distinguished from 'no attitude'. The latter occurs when the respondent admits that he or she does not have an attitude on a particular issue. A non-attitude occurs when the person does state a position, but is doing so only in response to the fact that the question is being asked, rather than because it reflects a meaningful, thought-out, and thus enduring belief.

6 Its importance is reinforced by the fact that it is being asked about.

7 It is a case of impression management: the respondent wants to appear knowledgeable to the interviewer. See E. Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 1972.
Thus the attitudes that the political scientists think they are measuring may be no more than 'non-attitudes'. An approximate guide to the extent of non-attitudes is obtained by measuring attitude stability by use of a panel. Philip Converse in an article entitles 'Attitudes and non-attitudes: continuation of a dialogue', studied panels interviewed at two-year intervals on questions concerning major issues of public policy.\(^8\) He found very low test-retest correlations of government to free enterprise, he estimated that only 20 per cent had real and stable attitudes. Of the remaining 80 per cent however only a minority said they had no opinion; the rest gave an opinion but answered in what seemed to be a random fashion. Converse suggests that the random group consisted of people with no real attitudes on the issue, who nevertheless felt they ought to have an opinion. Similarly in Britain, Butler and Stokes found instability of attitudes on the issue of nationalisation, an issue they had expected to be a salient one for the majority of people. However, only 50 per cent of people interviewed on three occasions held the same broad view, of either supporting or opposing further nationalisation.\(^9\)

As the Australian Survey Project included a group of respondents interviewed in 1967 and re-interviewed in 1969, the degree of stability of some of the attitudes can be gauged. Unfortunately, at the time of my analysis of the 1969 data, the data from the panel were not available. Therefore, although I can be aware of possible shortcomings in

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8 P.E. Converse, 'Attitudes and non-attitudes: continuation of a dialogue', 1970. The surveys were carried out by the Survey Research Center between 1956 and 1960, and probably involve some of the data on which The American Voter is based.

the data, I am not able to overcome them. If the Australian situation is similar to that overseas, we could expect a relatively high degree of stability for party identification, but a somewhat lower degree for opinion questions and questions on political interest.\footnote{Converse, 'Attitudes and non-attitudes: continuation of a dialogue', found the highest test-retest correlation, of .80, was for affect towards major parties. He also found that stressing to the respondents to say so if they had no opinion on a particular issue was relatively effective. However, Aitkin and Kahan included this alternative explicitly only in 4 of the 14 opinion questions.}

The second methodological problem is common to studies using aggregated data, and concerns interpretation of the data. What does it mean when we find, for example, that 46 per cent of women and 38 per cent of men vote for the German Christian Democrat Party, or that 33 per cent of men and 23 per cent of women profess 'great interest' in an election? Duverger interpreted the first statement as showing that women are \textit{more conservative} than men,\footnote{Duverger, The Political Role of Women, 1955, p. 53. Similarly, Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes in The American Voter, 1960, found that women are 'more Republican', whatever that may mean.} while Lazarsfeld et al interpreted the second as showing that women were \textit{less interested} in politics.\footnote{Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, The People's Choice, 1948, p. 45.}

But leaving aside the question of definitions of conservatism and interest in politics, surely we have not established that women are \textit{more conservative} or \textit{less interested} than men. All we have found is that more women than men vote conservative, and fewer women than men claim a high degree of interest in politics. Being 'more conservative' implies that conservatism is a scale attribute, which it may well be. But if this is so, the degree of conservatism of a person or group of persons can only be measured if we have several items from which we can construct a scale. A scale attribute cannot be measured by a discrete item such as party choice, yet the researchers...
usually base their conclusions of the greater conservatism of women on one or more such discrete items. The same argument applies to other characteristics such as interest, apathy, political efficacy, and so on.

It is a neat summary to be able to say that women are more conservative and less interested in politics than are men. But such statements become generalisations, implicating the majority of women. Furthermore, they are not necessarily correct, although the reverse situation may be. For example, suppose we constructed a scale of conservatism for women and for men, and discovered that according to some average (mean, median or mode), women were more conservative than men. If the difference were large enough, and if conservatism affected party choice, we could expect to observe that more women than men voted for a conservative party.

Such an observed difference is not necessarily due to a difference between the sexes on degree of conservatism, however. There may be other reasons. For example, there may be a variable which influences party choice and which is present in differing proportions among women and men.13 Alternatively, it may be incorrect to assume that the social factors that influence political behaviour are correlated in the same way for both sexes. In fact there is some evidence that the relationship between educational status and party choice is different for women and for men, as will be seen below.

However, it is prejudging the issue to suggest explanations for observed differences when we have not yet determined what differences exist. It is time to look at the Australian data to try to discover where the differences and similarities in political behaviour and attitudes of men and women lie.

13 This is what underlies arguments such as that 'women are "more Republican" because they live longer'. (Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes).
The analysis of the Australian Survey Project data focuses on those areas where past researchers have suggested that differences exist. Thus the data are discussed under the topics of political interest, political knowledge, political participation, conservatism, and influence of spouse. The point made above in relation to conservatism, that there may be a third variable that produces an observed difference between the sexes, rather than sex itself, is applicable to any political characteristic. Thus the background variables of the two groups should be considered, to discover whether any influences need to be controlled for.

3.1 Social Characteristics and Sex

As regards the age distribution, there is no significant difference between the men and women in the sample. The greatest difference is that 18 percent of the men and 14 percent of the women are under 25. The differences in the other age groups of 10-year intervals are only 1 or 2 percentage points. There is also no significant difference in marital status, with 77 percent of the men and 74 percent of the women being married. Marginally more men than women are migrants, with 23 percent of the men being born overseas, compared with 18 percent of the women. Religion, also, provides a marginal difference. The proportion of non-Catholics is almost equal (71 percent of men, 70 percent of women), but there are more Catholic women than Catholic men (27 percent and 22 percent respectively), and conversely, more men than women who have no religion (7 percent to

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14 Significance or insignificance of differences between distributions is tested by the chi-square statistic, calculated in the computer program. For a description of chi-square, see J.P. Guilford, *Fundamental Statistics in Psychology and Education*, 1965, Chap. 11.

15 The test of significance of a difference between proportions is described in Guilford, ibid., pp. 185-186.
3 percent respectively). The differences in place of birth and in religion are statistically significant (p less than .01). There is no need, therefore, to control for age or marital status except when they are specifically involved, as in husband-wife discussions. The influence of religion and place of birth will be discussed in relation to party identification.

It is a basic assumption of this thesis that there is a difference in the status of men and women, brought about by the fact that sex is a social variable and not just a biological one. While the notion of status is a much-debated concept in sociology, for the present purpose it can be regarded as comprising an objective element - the socio-economic determinants - and a subjective element of prestige. The difference in the status of men and women occurs in both these factors. There is a difference in prestige, or subjective evaluation of self and others, in that men are regarded both by men and women as being more important than, if not actually superior to, women. Women also rank lower on socio-economic status than do men, on the three measures commonly used, occupation, income and education. Women are concentrated in occupations that have a lower

16 There are no a priori reasons why religion should affect the other items that will be discussed. However, there may be reasons for excluding foreign-born respondents, on the grounds that they may not be fully integrated into the Australian political scene. But to do this accurately, we should really exclude only those migrants who have recently arrived, which would be somewhat less than the total number of migrants in the sample.

17 Evidence of this is presented by many feminist writers. A factual demonstration is provided by Broverman et al, in 'Sex-role stereotypes: a current appraisal'; 1972. The authors found that clearly defined sex role stereotypes still exist, with both desirable and undesirable traits. The masculine stereotype has far more desirable than undesirable traits, but the feminine stereotype has the reverse. This means that women tend to have more negative self-concepts than men do, and that both sexes evaluate women at a lower level than men.
status than those that are male-dominated; women earn less than men, both on average and even when they are in the same job,\(^\text{18}\) and fewer women than men reach high education levels.\(^\text{19}\)

The Australian Survey Project data do not provide figures on the extent of the differences in occupational and income status, because these questions were asked only of the head of the household.\(^\text{20}\) Only 163 women were classified as heads of their household. This means that for 82 percent of the women, the occupational and income status coded for them is really that of their husband or father. In comparison, the status of the father (or, for a few cases, the wife) of 35 percent of the men is recorded. Thus for the majority of the sample, male occupational and income statuses are being coded. As a result, the distribution of occupational status of the male and female respondents is very similar. 49 percent of both sexes are classified as in the white collar occupations (professional, semi-professional and clerical). 49 percent of the men and 45 percent of the women are classified as blue collar, being in skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations.

18 The Equal Pay Case was decided in June 1969, but this only provided for equal pay for equal work, rather than for work of equal value - an important distinction when the occupational segregation of the sexes is taken into account. Even those doing the same jobs did not automatically get equal pay, though. The Public Service, for example, did not bring in full equality until 1972.

19 Evidence on all these items for the United States is provided by K. Amundsen, The Silenced Majority, 1971, Chaps. 1-3. In Australia, facts and figures on income and occupation are given by M. Power, 'The wages of sex', 1974, and 'Woman's work is never done - by men', 1974. Encel et al, Women and Society, 1974, provide further Australian evidence on income, occupation and education.

20 Defined as the person owning or responsible for buying or renting the house. However, convention prevails: by implication there is only one head of each household, so even when the house is jointly owned by husband and wife, the information is asked of the husband of the married female respondents. In this survey, even widows and divorced women were not regarded as the head of the household if they received any income such as maintenance, or a pension from their late husband's employer.
We cannot measure the occupational status of the women in the sample, therefore. All we can determine is their employment status - whether they are working full-time, part-time, or not at all. However, there is a further problem. Because of an error in coding, employment status is accurate only for those respondents, male and female, who are not the head of the household.\(^{21}\) We cannot find out the employment status of the female heads of households, although it would seem reasonable to assume that the majority are working full-time.\(^{22}\) Among the women who are non-heads, we find well over half - 62 percent - are not working outside the home. Only 23 percent are in full-time employment, while another 15 percent are working part-time.

The employment status of these women gives us an indication of their income status. Only those working full-time - 39 percent of the sample at the most, if we assume that all female heads are working full-time - are likely to come anywhere near male income rates. If, as is more likely, not all female heads are working, the proportion is even lower. And the majority of these women will probably be earning less than their male counterparts.\(^{23}\) Thus although we cannot give precise figures concerning the occupational and income status of women in the sample, we can conclude that almost certainly it is, on average, lower than the status of men.\(^{24}\)

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\(^{21}\) Employment status of respondents is coded separately for those respondents who are heads, and those who are not. The first classification is linked to an incorrect classification that has overstated the number of respondents who are heads. However the second is taken from two questions that were asked only of non-head respondents. The error means also that no comparable figures on the employment status of the men can be given.

\(^{22}\) The majority would be single women living alone; others would be widowed, separated or divorced, and would probably be working at least part-time.

\(^{23}\) M. Power, 'The wages of sex', 1974, found that the ratio of female to male median full-time incomes is around .60, even when educational qualifications and occupational categories are controlled for.

\(^{24}\) It could be argued that women benefit from their husbands' status, and of course many married women do have a higher standard of living (cont. next page.)
More accurate figures can be given on the third dimension of socio-economic status, that of education. Again we find that the women are less likely to be in the higher education groups. Education levels are grouped as follows: primary, which includes those who went no further than primary school; secondary, which includes those who undertook some secondary schooling or who finished secondary school; and tertiary, involving those who went on to technical college or to university. The education distribution for each sex is given in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(898)</td>
<td>(975)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While many women get through primary and secondary school, only half as many women as men proceed to tertiary education. The difference is statistically significant (p less than .01). Thus on the three commonly used indicators of socio-economic status - occupation, income and education - we find that the average levels are lower for women than for men. As the data do not provide very adequate measures

24 (cont.) than their own objective socio-economic status would allow. But we need to question to what extent dependence upon another detracts from this relatively high status, particularly as separation, divorce and widowhood emphasise its insecure nature.

25 The reason for this can no longer be accepted to be because women are less intelligent than men. The explanation must lie with social factors: women are not encouraged to undertake training for careers, and are even discouraged from appearing too intelligent. Despite the fact that in Australia, over 40% of the female workforce is married, the feminine stereotype that provides only for the career of housewife and mother, is still widely believed. See A. Summers, 'Women's consciousness of their role structure', 1970, and B. Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, 1972, Chap. 7.
of the first two indicators, socio-economic status will be represented only by educational status.

Not only does the education distribution differ between men and women, education is found to be correlated with party identification. The classification of party identification is: non-Labor - those who say they identify with the Liberal Party, the Country Party, the DLP, or 'other' parties (the last includes only 11 respondents); Labor - those who say they identify with the ALP; no party - those who say they do not identify with any party, and a small number who refused to say, or did not know. The interrelation of sex, education and party preference is shown in the following table.

Table 2: Educational Status and Party Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F  M</td>
<td>F  M</td>
<td>F  M</td>
<td>F  M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Labor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%  %</td>
<td>%  %</td>
<td>%  %</td>
<td>%  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39 38</td>
<td>59 47</td>
<td>68 48</td>
<td>55 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53 53</td>
<td>33 39</td>
<td>23 35</td>
<td>37 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No party</td>
<td>8  9</td>
<td>8  14</td>
<td>9  17</td>
<td>8  13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect of education on party identification is stronger for women than it is for men. Among those with primary education, 38 percent of both sexes say they identify with the non-Labor parties. Secondary education produces proportions of 59 percent of women and 47 percent of men identifying this way. At tertiary level, the proportion

26 This is no serious omission. Education, as would be expected, is found to be correlated with occupation and income, and is acceptable as a measure of socio-economic status in its own right.

27 The question on party identification is the usual one asked in the electoral studies overseas (with appropriate changes of party name): Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Liberal, Labor, Country Party or D.L.P.? (Q 37(a)) Party identification was originally defined as 'the sense of personal attachment which the individual feels toward the (party) of his choice'. Campbell, Gurin & Miller, The Voter Decides, 1954, pp. 88-89.
of female non-Labor identifiers has risen to 68 percent, but male non-Labor identifiers make up only 48 percent. Between the lowest and the highest education levels, therefore, there is a difference of 30 percentage points for the women, but only 10 percentage points for the men. A similar effect is found on the proportions identifying with the ALP. From primary to tertiary education, the proportion of female ALP supporters falls by 31 percentage points, but male supporters decrease by only 18 percentage points.

The purpose of the discussion of these variables - the demographic ones and those measuring socio-economic status - was to discern whether there are any factors that may be producing differences between the sexes, rather than the sex difference as such. Demographic differences, in age, marital status, and so on, were found to be too small to make much impact, and occupation and income differences could not be accurately measured. However, there is a difference is education levels. But we cannot simply control for education because it is clear from Table 2 that sex and education are interdependent. Education affects party identification in different ways for each sex. For both sexes, the higher the education level, the greater is the propensity to identify with the non-Labor parties, but the relationship is stronger for women than for men.

We can hypothesise, then, that any differences between the sexes may arise not just because of a difference is socio-economic status, but because there is some other difference between the sexes, at least

28 Madge Dawson found similar proportions among her sample of 1070 married women graduates: Liberal-Country Party, DLP and Independent supporters comprised 74% of the sample, 13% were Labor supporters and 12% were swinging voters. See Graduate and Married, 1965, p.73.
to the extent that increased education has different effects on the political outlooks of women and men. Why this difference exists is open to speculation.  

3.2 Political Interest

Previous research has provided figures to show that women are less likely than men to say they are interested in politics and in elections. The data from the Australian Survey Project generally support this. There are a few ways of gauging political interest from the survey. The most relevant ones are self-evaluated degree of political interest in politics generally and in the election campaign, the following of political news in the media, and the discussion of politics. Keeping in mind the social pressures that may lead people to claim a higher degree of interest than they actually have, the figures on claimed political interest are as follows.

Table 3: Interest in Politics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>F M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good deal</td>
<td>13 23</td>
<td>15 25</td>
<td>25 34</td>
<td>16 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>34 45</td>
<td>49 49</td>
<td>50 49</td>
<td>45 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not much</td>
<td>41 24</td>
<td>32 20</td>
<td>23 15</td>
<td>33 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>12 6</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>2 3</td>
<td>6 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.K.</td>
<td>* 1</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>* *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                | 100 | 100 | 101 | 100 | 100 | (261)(280) | (508)(399) | (129)(296) | (898)(975) |

* less than .5%
** percentages do not add to 100 because of rounding errors

29 This is not to suggest that increased education causes a change in political outlook. A person will not necessarily become more conservative with increased education. All we have shown is that there is a correlation, rather than a causal relation, between education and party identification, and for some unknown reason the correlation is stronger for women than for men.

30 See above, p. 52

31 Question 32: How much interest do you generally have in what's going on in politics, a good deal, some, not much or none?
From this table we see that a greater proportion of men than women claim to have a good deal of interest in politics (27 per cent to 16 per cent). Education has an effect on both sexes, and in the same direction, is that the proportion of those who have a good deal of interest in politics increases with increased education. When we control for education we find there is still a significant difference (p less than .01) between the sexes at primary and secondary education levels, but the difference is not significant at the tertiary level. 32

The figures are even more striking when we look at the proportions who say they have not much, or no interest in politics. Among those with primary education only, 53 percent of the women but only 30 percent of the men give these answers. With secondary education, the proportions decrease to 36 percent and 26 percent respectively, while with tertiary education the figures are 25 percent and 16 percent respectively. In other words, there is a difference between the sexes in interest in politics, and the difference (as well as the absolute level) varies with education levels. The figures support the hypothesis that sex differences are least at the highest education levels.

The second measure of political interest is again a self-evaluated one, namely interest in the election campaign. The data are presented in Table 4. 33

32 It may seem rather surprising that the difference between the sexes at tertiary level is not significant, as the differences are of the order of those for primary and secondary levels, which are statistically significant. The result comes about because of the small number of people who have tertiary education. (Chi-square = 6.03, 3 d. of f.; less than the critical value of 7.82)

33 Question 6: How much interest did you have in the election campaign, a good deal, some or not much? The wording of this question imposes a constraint on those people who had no interest at all in the campaign.
Table 4: Interest in the Election Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good deal</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not much</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.K.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(261)</td>
<td>(280)</td>
<td>(508)</td>
<td>(399)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern found is similar to that for general interest in politics, which is what we should expect. Thus there is a difference between the sexes, a difference which is significant (p less than .05) at the primary and secondary levels, but is not significant at the tertiary level. Further, as the educational level increases, so does the proportion who say they have a good deal of interest in the campaign. We must keep in mind, however, that there is a relatively large number of people who are hardly interested in the campaign: a third of the women, and a quarter of the men, admit that they have not much interest, while more than a third of each sex claim only to have some degree of interest. This is an indication of a fair amount of apathy, a finding which supports overseas findings. 34

A third measure of political interest, which is not so direct as the self-evaluated ones, is the extent to which political news is followed in the media. The questionnaire asked whether the respondent followed the election campaign on television, in newspapers, and on the radio. 35 The figures show that television is the most popular medium for following political news (at least during the election


35 Questions 1(a), 2(b) and 3(a) respectively.
campaign), with two-thirds of those with a television set saying they followed the campaign. There is no significant difference between the sexes: 65 percent of the men and 68 percent of the women said they followed the election campaign on television. There is also very little variation between education levels.

On the other hand, radio was not used as a source of political information by the majority of the sample. Only 17 percent of the men and 19 percent of the women said they followed the campaign on the radio. As with television, the sex difference is insignificant, and election level produces no major differences.

There is a difference, however, as regards following campaign news in newspapers. The proportions who say they followed the election campaign in the papers are as follows:

Table 5: Proportions who followed Campaign in Newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures show that at all education levels, more men than women say they follow political news in the papers, and the differences are significant (p less than .01). It is not obvious why the difference between the sexes is so marked for newspapers when there is no sex

36 Only 6% of the sample did not have a television set.

37 Radio may have increased in importance as a source of political news since this survey was taken, because of the advent of talkback radio programs. These programs were started in 1967, and while they were immediately popular they were not used directly by political parties until Labor's 'mini-campaign' in 1971. During the 1972 campaign they were used extensively by political leaders. By this time, a survey showed that 45% of the conversations were about political matters, and the majority of the audience (57%) and the participants (66%) were women. Further, of those participants who gave their occupation, 42% said they were housewives. See D. Aitkin & A. Norrie, 'Talk back radio and political participation', 1973.
difference for the other media. It may be that more men than women have access to daily papers, particularly as many men buy and read a daily paper on their way to work.  

The last measure of political interest is an item which can also be regarded as a measure of political participation. This is discussion of the election with other people. Almost two-thirds of the sample claimed they discussed the election, and again there are variations with sex and education.

Table 6: Proportion who said they discussed the election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education and discussions are more highly correlated for women than for men, as the increase in the proportion discussing the election between primary and tertiary levels is 32 percentage points for the women, and only 19 percentage points for the men. Furthermore, the difference between the sexes is significant at the primary education level (p less than .01) and at the secondary level (p less than .05), but it is not significant amongst those with a tertiary education.

These findings on political interest lead us to conclude that there is some degree of difference between the sexes, particularly at primary and secondary education levels. More men than women say they discussed the election with other people and consistent with this, more men say they are interested in politics and the campaign. Yet while this is

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38 A survey reported in H. Mayer, The Press in Australia 1959, found that, depending on the paper, up to one-quarter of men read the paper while travelling to work. Only 10% of women read the paper elsewhere than at home. However, differential access may not be enough to explain the difference between the sexes, as the survey also found that around 75% of homes received a paper daily.

39 Question 5(a): Did you talk to other people about the election?
so, we must still keep in mind that the overall picture is not very encouraging, for either sex. Only a minority (22 percent) claim to have a good deal of interest in politics, and there is little improvement regarding the election campaign, where 34 percent say they have a good deal of interest.

The majority of people, therefore, do follow campaign news on television and even claim to discuss the election, but have at the most only 'some' interest in elections and politics. This is so for both the men and the women, although more women than men conform to this picture. Therefore while we can draw a conclusion such as that 'more men than women are interested in politics', a more meaningful conclusion would be that neither sex exhibits a high degree of interest. Also, there is some support for the hypothesis that sex differences are least at highest education levels. On all measures of political interest except one there are no significant differences between those men and women who have tertiary education.40

3.3 Political Knowledge

Overseas studies and previous Australian ones suggest that we cannot expect the electorate to have a high degree of complex knowledge about political matters.41 This is what we find from the Australian Survey Project data: on even relatively simple matters,

40 The exception is following campaign news in the papers. This hardly invalidates the conclusion that at the highest education level, there are virtually no differences between the sexes. It must be kept in mind though that this conclusion is only a tentative one, because it is based on relatively small numbers - 296 men and 129 women have tertiary education.

41 See for example, Almond & Verba, The Civic Culture, 1963, Chap. 13. In Australia, Rawson in Australia Votes, 1961 and Western & Wilson, 'Politics, participation and attitudes', 1973, found very low levels of knowledge on such things as knowledge of one's Federal Member of Parliament.
there is widespread ignorance. Although this survey, as with other surveys of adult political attitudes, is not meant to be a test of knowledge, there are a few questions which reveal the extent of the respondent's knowledge or ignorance.

The first question concerns knowledge of the names and parties of the candidates who stood in the respondent's electorate in the Federal Election held a few weeks previously. The answers were coded in the following categories: (a) all names and all party identifications correct; (b) all names and some parties correct; (c) all names but no parties correct; (d) some names and some parties correct; (e) some names, no parties correct; (f) none correct; (g) no answer or don't know. These classifications are regrouped as: high knowledge, including categories (a) and (b); moderate knowledge involving categories (c), (d) and (e); and low knowledge, involving (f) and (g).

This regrouping gives the following breakdown.

Table 7: Knowledge of candidates and parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>F M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>20 19</td>
<td>19 19</td>
<td>19 17</td>
<td>19 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>50 60</td>
<td>57 60</td>
<td>64 64</td>
<td>56 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30 21</td>
<td>24 21</td>
<td>16 19</td>
<td>25 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>99 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42 Question 46(a): 'Do you remember the names of the candidates who stood for Parliament in this electorate?' For each name given, the respondent was then asked 'And which party does he/she belong to?'

43 The researchers took no account of the fact that some electorates would have had a larger number of candidates standing than others did. In such cases it would seem reasonable to assume that a respondent who knew the names and parties of the major candidates, but no others, has the same degree of knowledge as a person who knew all the names in an electorate with only two or three candidates.
The proportions who have a 'high' degree of political knowledge hardly vary between the sexes or across educational levels. There is a trend for there to be more women than men at the low knowledge (or more correctly, no knowledge) level, particularly among those with primary education only. We again find that education has a more marked effect on women than men. However, none of the differences between the sexes are statistically significant.

More striking than any sex or education difference, however, is the small proportion of the sample who have a high degree of political knowledge. Less than one-fifth can correctly name all the candidates and their parties in an election in which they voted only a matter of weeks ago. This proportion is virtually the same regardless of sex or education. At the other end, a quarter of the women and a fifth of the men in the sample could not name any candidate, or could not give correct names of any.

A second measure of political knowledge concerns the ability to name Senators. We would expect to find that political knowledge is lower on this measure because firstly, there had not been a Senate election for two years. Secondly, Senators are elected to represent States rather than individual electorates, so they are seen as more distant, and thirdly, the Lower House is seen as the place of political action, and more political news concerns its actions and its personalities than concerns the Senate. The expectation is fulfilled.

Taking, somewhat arbitrarily, knowledge of three or more names of

44 Perhaps this demonstrates not so much the lack of knowledge, but the shortness of memory of the respondents. One would hope that the proportions who could accurately name the candidates would have been higher at the time of the selection, particularly as their parties are not listed on the ballot paper.

45 Question 69(a): Do you happen to know the names of any Senators?
Senators to indicate high knowledge; knowledge of one or two names to be moderate knowledge, and naming none correctly to be low knowledge, we get these figures:

Table 8: Knowledge of Names of Senators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F  M</td>
<td>F  M</td>
<td>F  M</td>
<td>F  M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4% 8%</td>
<td>5% 12%</td>
<td>11% 23%</td>
<td>6% 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>17% 31%</td>
<td>26% 33%</td>
<td>33% 32%</td>
<td>24% 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>79% 62%</td>
<td>69% 55%</td>
<td>56% 45%</td>
<td>70% 54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>100</th>
<th>101</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>261</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall picture is that few people know the names of even a handful of Senators. Only 6 percent of the women and 14 percent of the men can name even three. Further, we find that there is a significant difference between the sexes at all education levels (p less than .01). While more than half of the men (54 percent) cannot name any Senators, over two-thirds of the women (70 percent) display the same amount of ignorance.

Both sexes are a little more knowledgeable about the functions of the Senate, however. The respondents were asked what the Senate did, and how it differed from the House of Representatives. The answers were coded according to whether they referred to electoral characteristics, constitutional procedures, political evaluation or 'other'. Three answers could be coded, although only a fifth of the men and a twentieth of the women gave more than one response. The first responses have the following distribution.

---

46 Electoral characteristics included proportional representation, equal numbers from the States, being an Upper House, and so on. Constitutional procedure covered items such as that it approves legislation from the House of Representatives, it is a House of review etc. Political evaluation included having veto power over the Lower House, or controlling the Lower House.
Table 9: **Knowledge of the functions of the Senate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral characteristics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional procedure</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political evaluation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.K., no answer</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(898)</td>
<td>(975)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures show that half the men, and nearly three-quarters of the women are unable to say anything about the functions of the Senate. The difference between the sexes is significant (p less than .01). This finding, with the one on knowledge of the names of Senators, suggests that the Senate is not a salient issue to most people. 47

It is of interest to note that the difference between the sexes is significant when knowledge of the Senate is involved, but it is not significant when the issue is more relevant, such as with the naming of candidates in a recently-held election.

A final measure of political knowledge concerns another issue which could be considered to be a salient one, that of Vietnam. The respondents were asked, in a forced-choice question, what they felt Australia should be doing about Vietnam. They were then asked what position they thought the government parties, the ALP, and the DLP held. 48

---

47 That it is not salient to many people is indicated firstly by the fact that a quarter of the sample could not say how they had voted at the last Senate election two years ago. Secondly it is shown by the high proportion of 'no opinion' answers to a question concerning whether the Senate should be abolished. 36% of the sample said they had no opinion. There was a significant sex difference too, in that 44% of the women and only 28% of the men had no opinion. This also illustrates the point made in the previous chapter, that our opinions transcend our knowledge: only 38% of the sample could say anything about the functions of the Senate, yet 64% gave an opinion as to whether it should be abolished.

48 Questions 18(a), (c), (d) and (e).
The alternatives presented were:

(A) we should have troops fighting in Vietnam, including conscripts
(B) we should have troops in Vietnam, but only volunteers
(C) we shouldn't have any troops in Vietnam, and only send civilian experts
(D) we should stay out of Vietnam altogether.

The respondents' own opinions will be considered later. What is of interest here is how accurately they perceived the parties' policies on Vietnam. At that time, the Liberal-Country Party government held and was implementing policy (A). The Labor Party's official policy was (C), although the sending of civilian experts was not stressed, so their stand may have been seen as closest to (D). The DLP's stand was the same as that of the government.

Vietnam seems to be a salient issue to most people as only 3 percent could not give an opinion of their own. Thus it is not surprising to find that the majority of the sample accurately perceive the Government's policy. 88 percent of the men, and 82 percent of the women, nominate position (A) as the government's position. Only 5 percent of each sex nominate another alternative; the rest (7 percent of men, 13 percent of women) say they do not know.

Controlling for education, the only difference between the sexes that is significant (p less than .05) is at the secondary education level. There is no significant sex difference among those with primary or with tertiary education.

The ALP's position is not so accurately perceived, although the overall level of knowledge is still high. Only 20 percent of the men

49 Whitlam had stated in the 1969 campaign that there would be immediate notification to the United States government of intention to withdraw all troops, rather than immediate withdrawal as such.
and 12 percent of the women correctly nominated position (C), although another 60 percent of each sex were nearly correct, in that they chose (D). 12 percent of each sex gave a wrong answer, while 9 percent of men and 16 percent of women would not give an answer. Again there is no significant difference between the sexes at primary or tertiary level, but there is a difference (p less than .01) at secondary level. This finding, together with the one on perception of government policy, give support to the hypothesis that there are no sex differences at the highest education level, but add something extra in that there is no difference at the lowest education level either.

The findings on political knowledge are thus not very conclusive. On an issue that does not seem to be salient, that of the Senate, we find widespread ignorance, and we also find a significant and relatively large difference between the sexes. However on two other issues that can be regarded as salient, there is no sex difference on one (naming House of Representative candidates), while the other (perception of parties' stands on Vietnam) has or has no sex differences, depending on the education level.

3.4 Political Participation

The literature claims that men are more likely to participate in politics than are women. This is true in one obvious and important area, that of political leadership. There has been a very small number of women elected to parliament, both in Australia

50 For example, L. Milbrath, Political Participation, 1965: see the discussion above, p. 11 and pp. 46-48; P. Western & P. Wilson, 'Politics: participation and attitudes', 1973.
and in other countries. As we descend the hierarchy from active participation through to passive forms, the proportion of women increases, relative to men. Thus only a tiny fraction of members of Federal and State Parliaments have been women, while there is a slightly greater proportion of women among local council positions.

At a lower level of participation, that of party membership, the figures start to improve. Men still dominate in the executive positions of all parties, except in the Liberal Party in Victoria, where there is a rule giving equal representation to women at all levels (other than preselection). Among the rank-and-file members, we find that the ALP is still male-dominated. It is estimated that men outnumber women by 3 or 4 to 1. However, in the Liberal Party, the proportion of female members approaches that of male members.

It is not possible to obtain the figures on party membership for the whole of the sample in the Australian Survey Project. However, among a subsection of the sample involving 161 women and 246 men, only 7 women and 9 men were members of a political party. This represents 4 percent of each sex. A more accurate measure of active participation,

51 At the time of the survey, there were only 3 women in Federal Parliament, all in the Senate. Encel et al, in Women and Society, 1974, p. 245, note that in 1972 there were only 16 women of a total of 728 seats in Federal and State Parliaments, that is, 2.2%. In 1968 there were 178 women in local government, of approximately 7,000 positions, i.e., about 3%. The situation is no better in the United States; see K. Amundsen, The Silenced Majority, 1971, Chap.4.

52 Encel et al, op. cit., pp. 254-256, give a summary of the situation regarding party membership. The ALP seems to be changing its attitude towards women, particularly since it has been in government. And the number of female ALP members of Federal Parliament has increased from none in 1969 to three in 1974.

53 The question 'Have you paid a subscription to any political party in the last year?' (N 12(a)) was, for some reason, only asked of new respondents, and the information for those respondents who had been interviewed in 1967 was not coded with the second wave data. I have not had access to panel data. From the first wave survey, though, 5% of the sample belonged to a political party.
rather than membership of a party as such, is whether the person is an active member or not. Only 2 women and 3 men in this subsample said they took an active part in party work.

A similar measure of active participation concerns working for a party during the campaign. Figures from the whole of the sample are available, and again prove to be negligible. Nine men and seven women worked for the Liberal Party, while 17 men and 3 women worked for the ALP. While these figures are too small for any statistical significance to be placed on them, the trend is in keeping with what is known of the parties, that the ALP is male-dominated while the Liberal Party has more nearly equal numbers, at least among the rank-and-file members.

A final measure of active political participation comes from a question asked in the survey concerning attendance at campaign meetings. The overwhelming majority of the sample - 97 percent - did not attend any meetings. Among those who did, the ALP attracted most, with 30 men and 3 women attending their meetings. Eight women attended Liberal Party meetings, and 4 men did. Three men attended both Liberal and ALP meetings, but no women did.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above discussion is that there is an extremely low level of active participation in politics among both men and women. Amongst the few who are active participants, there are more men than women. This is particularly so in the ALP, and it is so for both the ALP and the Liberal Party at higher levels of political power and leadership. Further up the hierarchy, at the

54 D. Rawson, in Australia Votes, 1961, found similar proportions among a sample of party workers interviewed on polling day, 1958, in Brisbane. Among ALP workers, 53 were men, 4 were women, while the Liberal Party had 20 men and 29 women working for it.

55 Questions 51(a) and (c): Did you attend any political meetings during the campaign? Which party was that?
level of elected representatives, the number of women participating is minute. However, it is unfair to conclude from this that men are more likely to participate in politics than are women, because such a conclusion suggests that men are even likely to participate. A better conclusion would be that women are even less likely than men are, to participate in politics in an active sense.

So far we have been discussing active participation in politics. Discussions of political matters and following political news in the media can be regarded as forms of passive participation. These were discussed earlier in relation to political interest, so will only be mentioned briefly. We found a relatively high proportion of people saying they had discussed the campaign - 60 percent of women and 70 percent of men. The sex difference is significant except amongst those with tertiary education.

At the level of participation that involves the least activity, that of following political news in the media, we find the highest proportion of participants. 73 percent of the men, and 66 percent of the women claimed they followed the campaign news in at least two media. Although significantly more men than women read about political news in the papers (61 percent to 48 percent), a larger proportion of each sex followed the campaign on television (65 percent of men and 68 percent of women), and here there was no significant difference between the sexes.

In conclusion, we can regard participation as having various levels, from the most passive to the most active. The proportions

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56 Even voting is a form of participation, but in Australia where voting is compulsory it is not as meaningful a measure as it is in the United States or Britain, where it is not compulsory.
participating at each level decrease, the more active the level becomes. Also, the difference between the sexes increases as we move up the hierarchy. Thus there is support for the hypothesis that men are more likely to participate in politics than are women, except, perhaps, at the most passive levels of participation.

3.5 Conservatism

Part of the conventional wisdom about women's political attitudes, at least among lay people, is that women are more conservative than men. Yet the overseas studies do not place much emphasis on this aspect of women's political behaviour. Indeed, some writers point out that there is hardly any difference between the sexes, at least in direction of vote. For example, Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes say that there is little partisan difference between the sexes. Women are 3-5 percent 'more Republican' but this is due 'not to something unique in female political assessments, but to aggregate differences in other social characteristics between the sexes'.

Duverger, also, found only slight differences in voting behaviour, although as shown above, he and later writers citing him have exaggerated the difference.

The problems in trying to support or refute statements such as 'women are more conservative than men' were discussed earlier. It was suggested that conservatism would need to be measured as a scale attribute. The Australian data do not provide information that can be readily transformed into such a scale, so the hypothesis cannot

be tested as such. Instead, all that can be done is to look at incidences on items such as party identification and various opinion questions.

As regards party identification, there is a sex difference that is more clear-cut than those found overseas, although it supports previous Australian studies. This is that more women than men say they identify with the non-Labor parties, and conversely, fewer women than men identify with the ALP. The distribution by sex is presented in the following table.

Table 10: Party identification by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Male %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Party</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.L.P.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-Labor</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No party</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a difference between the sexes of 10 percentage points among the non-Labor supporters, and 5 points among the Labor supporters. The difference between the sexes is statistically significant. 59

Why more women than men vote for the non-Labor parties is not clear. Aitkin and Kahan suggest that the differences they found in

59 The differences are similar to those found by previous researchers in surveys of single electorates. Burns in Parties and People, 1961, found in the 1960 La Trobe by-election that 57% of women and 44% of men voted ALP, while the non-Labor parties (Liberal, DLP and Republican) received support from 51% of women and 43% of men. Rawson found in Parkes before the 1958 Federal election a high proportion of undecided voters, and also that 16% of women and 35% of men supported Labor, while 31% of women and 28% of men supported the Liberals. Australia Votes, 1961.
their 1967 survey, where women showed a 'greater preference for conservative parties', are because women live longer, have less education, work less or earn less. Three of these claims can be tested, and are found to be false.

Taking age first, it is obvious that claims such as this one, and the one by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes that women are 'more Republican' because they live longer, and older people are more conservative, cannot be supported by a cross-sectional survey. Instead, a longitudinal survey would be needed. These statements imply that people become more conservative as they grow older, so that some Labor supporters (or Democrat supporters) will become Liberal (or Republican) simply by virtue of their reaching a certain age. However, there is little evidence to suggest that people do change their party preferences as they grow older.61

There is evidence, however, of a 'generation' effect. New voters entering the electorate at a time of political significance have been found to support one party rather than another, sometimes in overwhelming proportions. Years later, as they maintain their first loyalties, the effect can still be seen.62 The generation effect is

60 D. Aitkin & M. Kahan, 'Australia', 1974. In the 1967 survey, the proportions among those who have a party identification are: Liberal-Country Party - men 47%, women 58%; ALP - men 50%, women 39%; DLP - 3% for each sex. When we omit the people who do not identify in the 1969 survey, the figures are almost identical to these figures.

61 D. Sears, 'Political behavior', 1969, discusses the lack of evidence in his section on later socialisation. Any evidence of increased conservatism with age that does exist is to the effect that people become set in their ways and are more likely to maintain party identifications. One would think that if any change did occur, it would be more likely to be the other way, from Liberal to Labor, as people reached old-age pension age.

62 Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes illustrate the strong effect the Depression had on those voting for the first time in 1932 in the United States. The proportion of 'coming of age' voters who voted Democrat in 1928 was 38%, and in 1932 was 80%. See The American Voter, 1960, p. 155.
found in the Australian Survey Project data. The largest proportion of female non-Labor identifiers is not found amongst the oldest group (58 percent), but among the second oldest (64 percent) - those who reached maturity during the Depression. And the smallest proportion of such people is found in the third oldest group (47 percent), those who reached maturity during Labor's heyday. This group also had the highest proportion of Labor identifiers among the women, namely 44 percent, compared with the overall average of 37 percent. Interestingly, the generation effect is more marked for women than it is for men.

The second reason that Aitkin and Kahan suggest, that of education, is strongly refuted by the evidence. As we saw from Table 2, the less education a woman has, the more likely is she to vote for the Labor Party; the opposite of what Aitkin and Kahan are suggesting. In fact, among those with primary school education only, the figures are almost identical for each sex. This finding also goes against the hypothesis that sex differences are least at highest education levels.

The third claim of Aitkin and Kahan is that women who work less will be more likely to vote Liberal. This is also incorrect, as the following table shows.

Aitkin has distinguished 5 generations: I - aged 61-95, a heterogeneous group; II - 53-60, Depression generation; III - 44-52, those who reached maturity in Labor's heyday; IV - 36-43, those reaching maturity during the post-war Menzies government; V - 21-35, those who came of age during the DLP's existence. Stability and Change in Australian Politics, forthcoming, Chap. 6.

The range in proportions of non-Labor identifiers over the generations is 17 percentage points for the women, and 5 percentage points for the men. This could suggest either that at time of first vote, women are more likely to be influenced by the political climate of the time than men are, or that women are more likely to maintain their first party preference, while men change.

As discussed earlier, p. 64, we can only accurately know the employment status of those respondents not classified as heads of households. Thus the table is presented for women only, as the one-third of males who are not heads would not be comparable with the female non-heads.
Table 11: Employment status and party identification, women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-heads</th>
<th>Heads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Labor</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Party</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(167) (108) (460) (163)

While the difference between those women (who are not heads) working full-time outside the home, and those not working is in the expected direction, it is not statistically significant. Furthermore, if we assume that most of the women who are classified as heads of households are working full-time, and include them with the other women working full-time, the difference is reduced to 3 percentage points.

The final suggestion of Aitkin and Kahan, that women's greater preference for conservative parties is partly due to the fact that they earn less than men, cannot be directly tested because of the lack of information on income of the women in the sample. There seems to be no a priori reason why this should be so, particularly as low income, as with low education, is usually correlated with voting Labor rather than non-Labor.

A factor that Aitkin and Kahan do not mention, but is sometimes regarded as an explanation of women's 'greater conservatism', or if not an explanation then at least a closely linked factor, is religion. The argument is that people who attend church regularly tend to be more conservative than non-attenders. As more women than men attend church regularly, more women than men will be conservative.

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66 Duverger, The Political Role of Women, 1955, suggested that women are 'more subject to religious influences', p. 122. For example, he found that more women than men vote for the German Christian Democrat Party. Lane's 'moralized orientation' of women may also be seen to be linked to religion.
The hypothesis cannot be tested rigorously by the Australian Survey Project data, because information on church attendance for the whole of the sample was not available to me. However, the sample of 390 new respondents does provide some degree of support. Men and women who attended church with moderate or high frequency were more likely to be non-Labor supporters than were those who never attended church or attended at most once a year. The proportion of non-Labor identifiers are 54 percent and 39 percent respectively. Furthermore, more women than men attended church: in the subsample, three-quarters of the women were at least moderate church attenders, but only half the men were.

These findings do give some support to the hypothesis, although the sample size is too small to give too much importance to the result, especially as they may not be generalisable to the whole sample. And from the whole sample we discover that nominated religion also has an effect on party identification. Among non-Catholics, the proportion of non-Labor identifiers is 59 percent of women and 47 percent of men. But among those who nominate their religion as Roman Catholic, only 43 percent of women and 40 percent of men support the non-Labor parties. Indeed, more Catholics of both sexes support the ALP (47 percent and 43 percent respectively). As 71 percent of the sample say they are non-Catholic, while only 24 percent are Catholic,

67 Moderate to high frequency is defined as going to church at least several times a year.
68 The subsample has a different distribution of party identification from the total sample:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subsample</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Labor</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No party</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(155)</td>
<td>(235)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
it may be this factor, rather than church attendance as such, that produces the correlation between religion and party identification.  

It was mentioned earlier that the difference in proportion of each sex who are migrants is statistically significant. 23 percent of the men and 18 percent of the women were born overseas. While there is also some degree of difference in the distribution of party identification between those born overseas and those born in Australia, the proportion of migrants is too small to have much impact on the overall figures. The foreign-born men are less likely to support the ALP, and more likely to have no party identification than are the Australian-born men. However, the difference in proportions who have no party identification is not enough to account for the difference between the sexes, as there are still 12 percent of Australian-born men who say they have no party identification, compared with 8 percent of the Australian-born women. In contrast to the male migrants, female migrants are more likely to support the ALP than are their Australian-born counterparts (42 percent of migrant women and 36 percent of Australian-born women support the ALP). There is an even greater difference among non-Labor supporters, with 46 percent of migrant women and 56 percent of Australian-born women identifying this way. The difference is significant (p less than .05). We would have to look at the length of time spent in Australia, and perhaps country of origin, before speculating on the reasons for these differences - both between migrant and Australian-born women, and migrant women and men.

69 This could only be tested by controlling for both religious affiliation and church attendance, to discover which provided the greater variation in party identification. The subsample is far too small to allow this.
This discussion of party identification and various socio-economic factors suggests that the differences between the sexes cannot be simply explained solely by reference to differences in social groupings (other than possibly a difference in church attendance). Thus the statement of Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, that any difference between the sexes is due only to differences in other social characteristics, does not apply in Australia. Perhaps the difference in party identification is because women are, on average, more conservative than men. What can we discover from the questions in the survey that ask opinions on various issues?

The questionnaire contains a group of 14 opinion questions, ranging from issues of direct government policy such as conscription and government aid to schools, to more general issues such as censorship and capital punishment. To provide a framework for discussing these questions, the issues can be somewhat loosely classified into five groups. The first includes two issues that could be regarded as important at the time, and on which the Government and the Opposition held clear and opposing views. These are Vietnam, and conscription. The second group includes three issues of domestic policy which were not quite so central or visible as the previous two. These are government aid to schools, a choice between reducing taxes and spending more on social services, and a choice between maintaining full employment and keeping prices steady.

The third group are issues of foreign policy: Australia-U.S. links, foreign investment, and Communist China. The fourth group consists of issues which are more 'social' issues than overtly political

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70 As discussed earlier, p. 60, if women are, on average, more conservative than men, there could be a difference in party identification such as we observe.
ones - abolition of the death penalty, immigration (which is probably getting at racial attitudes), and censorship. Finally there are three issues which are tapping the respondent's view of the power structure. These concern the power of trade unions, the power of big business, and strikers.

The alternative opinion statements on Vietnam were presented earlier. We find, not surprisingly, that there is a difference between the non-Labor and the Labor supporters, with the former being more likely to support the government policy of having troops, including conscripts, fighting in Vietnam. Yet this is not supported by even a majority of non-Labor supporters: only 42 percent of men and 33 percent of women take this stand. More importantly, this difference between the sexes is significant (p less than .01). There is no significant difference between the male and female Labor supporters, however. Only 6 percent of these women support the most militant stand, and 12 percent of men do. The pacifist views, that we should be out of Vietnam altogether, or at most have only civilian experts there, is supported by more women than men, and by far more Labor identifiers than non-Labor. We can conclude that there is some evidence to suggest that, as with overseas findings, women are more likely to take a less militant stand than are men. However, party

71 See above, p. 78.

72 The proportions supporting (C) or (D) are: non-Labor - 19% of women, 16% of men; Labor - 46% of women, 44% of men.
identification has a stronger effect, and the sex difference is significant only among the non-Labor supporters.

While fewer women than men support the first position, that there should be troops, including conscripts, in Vietnam, this is partly offset by the fact that more women than men support the second stand, that there should be troops, but not conscripts, there. So what do the sexes feel about conscription generally? The figures are given for the party groupings in the following table.

Table 12: Attitudes toward conscription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Labor</th>
<th></th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>F M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Conscription for all</td>
<td></td>
<td>41 50</td>
<td>35 39</td>
<td>37 44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Current system</td>
<td>8 11</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Civilian alternative</td>
<td></td>
<td>39 32</td>
<td>29 27</td>
<td>36 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D No conscription</td>
<td>10 5</td>
<td>29 27</td>
<td>18 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>3 2</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(489) (438)</td>
<td>(334) (406)</td>
<td>(898) (975)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Including those who have no party identification

The pattern is similar to that found with attitudes toward Vietnam. Women are less likely to support conscription, either for all young men or for some, and Labor supporters of both sexes are more likely to advocate that there should be no conscription. Again, the sex difference is significant (p less than .01) among non-Labor supporters but not among the Labor identifiers. A similar sex difference was

74 46% of women and 41% of men hold this view, which is the most popular of the four alternatives.

75 The alternatives are: (A) we should have conscription for military service and it should be for all young men, not just for some; (B) the present system of the ballot for conscription should be continued; (C) we should have conscription, but those who are opposed to fighting should be allowed to do their national service in other ways; (D) we shouldn't have any form of conscription at all. (Question 28(a))
found in another, smaller, Australian survey. It is of interest to note that the government's position on conscription (policy B) was even less popular with the sample than was its position on Vietnam. This suggests that the respondents have thought about the issues, and are not just accepting the status quo, which they may be more inclined to do if they did not have an attitude on the issues.

So far we have not found evidence that more women than men take conservative stands on issues. If anything, we have found the reverse. Nor is there any clearer evidence from the next group of issues, those which concern domestic political matters. On government aid to schools, the question asked which of the following came closest to the respondent's opinion.

(A) the government should not give any financial help at all to private or church schools
(B) the government should not give any financial help to these schools until state schools have been brought up to date
(C) the government should give help, but only to really needy church schools
(D) the government should give as much help as possible to both private and church schools.

76 J. Western & P. Wilson, 'Attitudes to conscription', 1967, found in a Canberra survey of 98 women and 80 men, that while 45% of men supported conscription, only 31% of women did. 26% of men and 37% of women opposed it; the rest took a moderate view. Also, middle class men were more likely to support conscription than were working class men, while there was no difference among the women. This parallels the above finding concerning the differences among the party supporters.

77 It is of course a matter for debate whether militancy can be regarded as conservatism, and pacifism as liberalism. Certainly opposition to the Vietnam war was held by people regarded as radical - such as students, and left-wing members of the ALP. This highlights the problems in using a summary term such as 'conservatism'. A clear, if pragmatic, statement of the meaning of conservatism and liberalism can be found in Adorno et al, The Authoritarian Personality, 1950, Chapter 5.
It is difficult to say which of these policies is the most conservative and which is the most liberal. The problem of interpretation arises because the private and church schools include both those that could be regarded as elitist, as they cater for children of relatively well-off people, and the Catholic schools, which are chronically short of funds. Thus statement (D) could be seen either as supporting an elitist position (in which case it is the most conservative stand), or as supporting a high degree of social welfare (which would make it the most liberal position). In fact, Liberal-Country Party policy at the time was closest to (D), in that it gave aid to all schools - 'as much as possible' as determined by the priority it gave to education. ALP policy was not clearly any one of these positions, particularly as there was a split in the party over the issue. As a compromise, its policy was that it would bring all schools up to acceptable standards, while acknowledging its primary obligation was to government schools.\textsuperscript{78}

Given these ambiguities, we cannot assume that respondents choosing the same alternative would all mean the same thing by it. The figures can hardly be regarded as meaningful, therefore, so are given without comment. Statement (D) was the most popular, being supported by 47 percent of the men and 43 percent of the women. There was little difference between the non-Labor and the Labor supporters. Statement (B) was the next most popular, with 23 percent of men and 28 percent of women choosing it. Despite the ambiguities, only 3 percent of men and 2 percent of women had no opinion on the issue.

The next issue of domestic policy is not so ambiguous. The question asked 'If the Government had a choice between reducing taxes or spending more on social services, what do you think it should do?' The

\textsuperscript{78} I wish to thank Sue Read for clarifying this for me.
people in the survey show their acceptance of social welfare, as 70 percent say that they would prefer more to be spent on social services. And they do not see the issue in party terms, as 68 percent of non-Labor identifiers support this alternative, compared with 72 percent of the Labor identifiers. More importantly, there is virtually no difference between the sexes, regardless of party identification.

The third domestic issue represents a choice between full employment and keeping prices steady. Again we find the majority of the sample - 61 percent - taking the more liberal view of preferring full employment. The difference between the parties is only marginal (60 percent of non-Labor and 66 percent of Labor supporters prefer full employment). However, there is a significant sex difference (p less than .01) in that among non-Labor supporters, more women than men want full employment (63 percent to 57 percent respectively), and conversely, more men want steady prices (37 percent to 27 percent). There is no significant difference among the Labor supporters. Yet again, we have evidence that if anything, fewer women than men take a conservative stand. At least we can conclude from the discussion of the first 5 issues that there is no evidence of the reverse being true.

79 The question is rather biased though. One wonders what answers people would have given if the choice had been between increasing taxes or spending less on social services, or even the status quo versus increased taxes and increased social services.

80 This is a real alternative, according to economic theory. Even under present economic conditions where there is a high rate of inflation and a high level of unemployment, one can be improved only at the detriment of the other. The respondents, hardly surprisingly, did not appreciate this - only 32% recognised there is a conflict, and 40% said there was not (question 29(a)) Nevertheless, only 9% would not venture to choose an alternative.
The next three issues are related to foreign policy. On the question of Australia - U.S. links, we again find more men than women taking the position closest to Liberal-Country Party policy: 48 percent of men and only 40 percent of women wanted very close links, while more women than men advocated only fairly close or not very close links. The difference is particularly striking among Labor supporters, where although 42 percent of the men wanted very close links, only 27 percent of the women did - a difference that is statistically significant (p less that .01). The difference is in the same direction among non-Labor supporters (57 percent male, 50 percent female) but is not statistically significant.

The first glimmer of evidence to support the 'women are conservative' hypothesis comes concerning the question of China. 55 percent of women, and 51 percent of men, felt that we had a lot to worry about in regard to Communist China, while only 27 percent of women and 41 percent of men thought that there would be no problem. Non-Labor people are more concerned than Labor (63 percent to 42 percent respectively feel that we have a lot to worry about), and the difference between the sexes is significant (p less that .01) for both party groupings. It should be noted that so far, this issue has the highest proportion of people who say they have no opinion - 8 percent of men and 19 percent of women had no opinion. Perhaps this suggests that China is a less salient issue to the

81 Do you think Australia's links with the U.S. should be very close fairly close, or not very close? (Q 23)

82 Looking into the future, do you feel that Australia will have a lot to worry about in regard to Communist China, or do you feel that China probably won't be much of a problem for us?

83: Among the other questions discussed so far, only the one on employment or steady prices has more than only 2% or 3% of 'don't know' answers, with 8% of men and 9% of women saying this.
sample than are the other issues so far discussed. However, when we consider just those who have an opinion, the difference between the sexes is even greater.

With the next issue, that of foreign investment, we are back to the finding that more men than women support the conservative position, or at least the position of the Liberal-Country Party government. While the majority felt that Australia should be on its guard against foreign investors (60 percent of men, 61 percent of women), 28 percent of men and only 21 percent of women felt that we should welcome foreign investment. The difference between the sexes on this position is 10 percentage points among non-Labor supporters and 6 points among Labor. Both differences are significant (p less than .01).

The next three issues are social, rather than economic or overtly political, ones. On immigration, the respondents were presented with the following alternatives:
(A) Asians should be allowed to enter Australia as migrants just like people of European descent
(B) there should be a small quota of Asian migrants
(C) Asians should not be allowed to enter Australia as migrants
(D) we should only allow people from Britain and northern Europe to enter Australia as migrants
(E) we should not have any more migrants at the present time.
This question seems to be getting at racial attitudes rather than attitudes to migration as such, although alternative (E) could be interpreted either way. Taking the question as a measure of ethnocentrism, it is of interest to note that only 5 percent of men and 4 percent of women support statement (C). The least prejudiced view, statement (A), is supported by more women than men, while the men are more likely to want only a small quota of Asian migrants. Thus 27 percent of women and 20 percent of men support statement (A), while
40 percent and 43 percent respectively support (B). Statements (C) and (D) combined, which can be regarded as showing a relatively high degree of prejudice, are supported by 25 percent of men and only 17 percent of women. The difference between the sexes is significant (p less than .01), and we can conclude that yet again the evidence suggests that women are less likely to be conservative than are men.  

The next issue concerns abolition of the death penalty. If we regard advocating its abolition as the more humane and liberal view, then more women than men are seen to be humane and liberal. Over half the men (52 percent) want the death penalty kept, but only 39 percent of women do. Conversely, 50 percent of the women say it should be abolished, compared with 41 percent of the men. Non-Labor supporters are more likely to favour retention, but there is a large and significant sex difference (p less than .01). The difference is not so large, but is still statistically significant, among the Labor supporters (p less than .01). Eleven percent of the women and 7 percent of the men say they have no opinion. When these respondents are omitted, the difference between the sexes is even greater.

The final issue in this group is censorship. We find there is a significant sex difference only among Labor supporters. While 51 percent of the Labor men say there should be some censorship, only 45 percent of the women do (p less than .05). Among non-Labor supporters, 63 percent of each sex think there should be some censorship. Thus, for the whole sample, 41 percent of men and 43 percent of women advocate that one should be allowed to read what one likes. Only 2 percent of each sex had no opinion.

More women than men do support alternative (E), that there should be no more immigration at present. The proportions are 13% to 9% respectively. As it is not clear what meaning the respondent would have attached to this - either extreme ethnocentrism, or concern about Australia's population and resources - it cannot be taken to invalidate the conclusion.
The discussion of these three social issues confirms what was found for the previous issues. At this stage, only one issue of eleven gives any degree of support for the 'women are more conservative' hypothesis. And this issue - concerning Communist China - also has the highest proportion of 'don't know' answers. Thus the findings indicate that more women than men support policies that are liberal rather than conservative. If in fact women were more conservative than men, we would expect to have found differences in the opposite direction to those that we have observed.

The final group of issues - three questions relating to the power structure - do, however, provide evidence that could be seen as support for the hypothesis. But at the same time, two of these questions have a relatively high proportion of 'don't know' answers, and the third has a high number of respondents who are ambivalent.

Taking the last one first, the question asked was 'When you hear of a strike, are your sympathies generally for or against the strikers?' The answers were coded, however, to cater for those who said 'it depends', and 41 percent of the sample gave this unprompted answer. We could assume that if this alternative had been presented to the respondents, even more would have chosen it. However, another 41 percent said they were generally against strikers, while only 16 percent usually supported them. There is a sex difference in that 18 percent of the men and 14 percent of the women supported strikers, while the corresponding proportions of those whose sympathies were against strikers were 37 percent and 46 percent. The difference is significant (p less than .01).

The other two issues concern the relative power of trade unions and big business. The first was 'Do you think that trade unions in this country have too much power or not too much?', and the second was similarly worded, for big business. In keeping with the findings on strikers, we find more women than men saying that the trade unions
have too much power (59 percent to 49 percent respectively). Not surprisingly, there is a difference between the different party supporters - 70 percent of non-Labor supporters but only 34 percent of Labor supporters think that the unions have too much power. Further, within each group there is a significant sex difference (p less than .01), in both cases of 8 percentage points. There is also a sex difference in proportions who say they have no opinion, with 15 percent of women and 7 percent of men in this category. This indicates firstly that the issue is not as salient as have been some of the issues discussed previously, and secondly that more women than men do not see it as salient.

There are similar proportions of 'don't know' answers with the final issue, of the power of big business, where 16 percent of women and 8 percent of men gave this answer. The difference between the sexes also arises among those who did have an opinion. Thus while 59 percent of the men in the sample felt that big business has too much power, only 50 percent of the women felt this way. The difference between the sexes is again significant (p less than .01). As we would expect, there is a difference between Labor and non-Labor identifiers: 64 percent of the former say that business has too much power, compared with 47 percent of the latter.

While both issues, trade union power and business power, are related to party identification, it is not a simple matter of one being seen to have the power while the other does not. Less than half of those who gave an opinion on both issues see the situation in terms of a 'class struggle'. We can distinguish four groups, which for simplicity can be termed: the workers (trade unions do not have too much power, but big business does); the capitalists (vice versa);
the cynics (both have too much); and the optimists (neither group has too much power).  

We get the following distribution.

Table 13: Views of the power structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Labor</th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalists</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynics</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimists</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures also give some support to the 'women are conservative' hypothesis, as more men than women are 'workers', while more women than men are 'capitalists'. The largest proportion of women are cynics - 42 percent believe that both groups have too much power, although only 33 percent of men hold this opinion. Perhaps this indicates that if there is a difference between the sexes it is more of a difference in their views of the power structure of society, rather than a difference in degree of conservatism.

Another explanation as to why the last group of issues show that more women than men are conservative, in contrast to the findings on the previous issues, is that these three issues are the most directly related to the business world. We have seen that only a minority of the women in the sample are working full-time, so that the majority of women have no direct experience of trade unions or of big business. Indeed, even women who are working will probably have less involvement

85 Quite clearly, my value judgments are showing.

86 This finding gives some indirect support for the hypothesis that women have less of a sense of political efficacy than do men - an hypothesis on which we found some factual evidence in the overseas studies. The people who see both trade unions and big business as having too much power may be seeing this in relation to their own degree of power, or political efficacy.
than men have, with trade unions (fewer women belong to unions), and with the power aspects of big business. This lesser involvement on the part of women explains why the issues do not seem as salient to them. It can also explain the greater proportion of women supporting the conservative stands: having little or no direct experience from which to form an opinion, they are more likely to rely on the media, which tend to be conservative. At least, the media emphasise the disruptive effects of strikes and the corresponding power of trade unions, far more so than they mention the power of big business.

So what do we conclude, as regards the supposedly greater conservatism of women? We found that there was a significant difference in party identification, with more women than men supporting the non-Labor parties. If it is true that women are more conservative than men, this result on party identification would be expected. So we looked at some issues of public opinion to see if a similar pattern existed. Among 14 items, only one did not have a significant difference - on taxes versus social services. Another was too ambiguous to be meaningful (Government aid to schools). Four issues provided some degree of support, in that more women than men chose the conservative position. These issues concerned China, the power of trade unions and big business, and strikers. While the sex differences were statistically significant, none was large enough to indicate a

87 My thanks to Stephen Mugford for suggesting this point.

88 From this sample, the difference comes from support for the Liberal Party only; there is no difference in support for the Country Party or the DLP.

89 There is also no significant difference between the sexes for the total sample on both Vietnam and censorship. However, when we look at party groupings, there is a significant difference among non-Labor supporters on Vietnam (p less than .01), and among Labor supporters on censorship (p less than .05). Conversely, there is a significant difference on sympathy towards strikers for the whole sample (p less than .01), but not among the party groupings.
difference that would affect the majority of each sex. All four issues also had the greatest proportions of no opinion responses, and it is argued that fewer women than men regard them as salient to them.

The most important evidence, however, is that there are eight other items on which there was a significant difference, but the difference was in the opposite direction to that which we would expect. If we were to make any statement on the relative degree of conservatism of men and women from this somewhat arbitrary list of issues, it would have to be that it is the men who are the more conservative, not the women. However, as I have been arguing that it is incorrect to draw a conclusion concerning degree of conservatism from figures indicating incidence, and as there is so much uncertainty as regards the stability of opinions, all I am prepared to conclude from this discussion is that it has not been shown that women are more conservative than men. Although more women than men support the conservative parties, we have not shown that it is because women are more conservative. The explanation must be sought elsewhere. 90

3.6 Husband-Wife Relationships

One of the most pervasive (and subversive) claims concerning the political role of women, as it occurs through most of the studies we have discussed, is that women follow their husbands in political matters. Thus Duverger sees women having the mentality of minors because they accept paternalism from men, 91 while to Burns, women are

90 The simplest explanation is that the conservatism that attracts people to the Liberal Party, if indeed it is conservatism, is different from the conservatism as seen in relation to the issues we have discussed. Maybe all this indicates is that people do not maintain consistent stands, which is likely once we accept that many people do not have well-thought out ideological positions.

just 'mindless matrons' because they follow their husbands. At least some writers have seen the inherent contradiction with this claim and the one that women are more conservative - if the latter is true, then some women are not following their husbands. We have also seen from previous studies that while there is evidence that some women vote for a party because of the influence of their husbands, this is true for only a small minority.

The 1969 Australian survey did not ask any direct questions on husband-wife influence, but it did ask who the respondent talked to about the campaign, what was the most important source of political information for the respondent, and whether the respondent told anyone how to vote. From these questions we find little support for the hypothesis that women follow their husbands.

Firstly, we can find out to what extent husbands and wives vote the same way. In the survey, the spouse of the respondent was not asked directly how he or she voted, so the information is recorded for how the respondents think their spouses voted. This would, if anything, provide an overestimation of the number who claim their spouse voted the same way as they do. If this bias does exist, it is rather surprising to find that 25 percent of the married men in the sample, and

93 D. Rawson notes the contradiction in Australia Votes, 1961, p. 168. It is possible that the difference could come from unmarried people. But there seem to be no a priori reasons why single, widowed and divorced women would be more conservative than such men.
94 I have estimated the proportion to be between 4% and 10% of women from a U.S. study (see above, p. 14), and around 10% of women from a British study (see above, p. 36).
95 Social psychologists talk of the processes of assimilation and contrast: we tend to perceive similar objects as more similar than they in fact are, and different objects as more different than they are. In political science studies it is found that people ascribe ideas similar to theirs to people they perceive as being, to some degree, similar to them. See D. Sears, 'Political behavior', 1969
16 percent of the married women say they do not know how their spouses voted. There is, nevertheless, only a small proportion of married couples who vote for opposite parties. About 10 percent of respondents whose own party identification was non-Labor said their spouses had voted Labor in 1969. In keeping with the sex difference in party identification, we find only 7 percent of the non-Labor men had wives who supported Labor, while 13 percent of the non-Labor women had husbands voting Labor. But there is not the same difference among Labor identifiers, where 10 percent of both the men and the women had spouses who voted for non-Labor parties.

One could interpret the finding that more women than men know their spouse's vote as support for the hypothesis under discussion. If the women are simply being told how to vote, they would indeed know their husband's party preference. But it may also negate the hypothesis: if the men were telling their wives how to vote, one would assume that the husband would be able to say how his wife voted - unless he suspected that she may not have done as she was told! It is not clear, therefore, why the difference in knowledge of spouse's vote exists. Perhaps the early claim by Lazarsfeld et al - that men do not discuss politics with their wives, they tell them96 - has some truth in it. The husband expounds his views, but does not bother to listen to what his wife has to say. However, as the majority of married couples can say how their partner voted - or at least say how they think they voted - this claim, if true, would apply to only a small number of people.

A closer measure of the extent of personal influence comes from the questions in the survey that asked 'Did you talk to other people about the election?' and if so, 'Whom did you talk to about the

96 See above, p. 14.
Almost two-thirds of the sample said they talked about the election. The first three people that the respondents said they talked to were coded, and this gives the breakdown in the following table. It should be noted that the percentages add to more than 100 because some respondents talked to people from different categories.

Table 14: Discussions of the election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workmates</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked to no-one</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(898) (975)

There are clear differences between the sexes. While 28 percent of the women said they discussed the election with their husbands, only 18 percent of men said they discussed it with their wives. Women were also more likely to have discussions with other relatives - 24 percent to 15 percent. Conversely, more men than women said they discussed the election with people they worked with - 43 percent to 11 percent. This is obviously partly because more men than women work outside the home.

The lack of a difference is also worth noting: there is hardly any difference in the proportions of each sex who said they talked to friends. There is also hardly any difference in the proportions who discussed the election with their parents, both as between the sex of the respondent, and the sex of the parent.

97 Questions 5(a) and (b).
We are particularly concerned with husband-wife discussions and in light of the claims that women follow their husbands' decision or that men tell their wives how to vote, it is surprising to find that a large proportion of the sample do not discuss politics with their spouse: 62 percent of the married women in the sample, and 77 percent of the married men, did not discuss the election with their spouse. This may just mean, the persistent researcher would argue, that there is no need for there to be any discussion - the wife already knows her husband's views and will follow them without him having to remind her to do so.

But this is no more than speculation. The evidence cannot confirm that the wife is simply following her husband. A more reasonable conclusion is that while more women than men look to their spouses for political discussions, it is partly a question of access. Indeed, given that we found that half the women in the sample are not working it is surprising to find that only 38 percent of women report political discussions with their spouse.98

Even stronger evidence against the influence of the husband comes when we consider the relative importance of people and the media as sources of information about the election.99 Taking just those who talked to other people about the election, only 30 percent of the women and 25 percent of the men considered discussions with other people to be more important, while 62 percent of the women and 66 percent of the men claimed they found out more from television and

98 Katz and Lazarsfeld, in Personal Influence, 1955, note in relation to naming a person whom the respondent believed to be trustworthy and knowledgeable about matters of public concern, that 'considering the general availability of the husband, it is interesting to find almost as many neighbors as husbands among the married women's listings'. (p. 141)

99 Question 5(c): Do you feel you found out more about the election from talking to other people or from newspapers and TV?
newspapers. This finding contradicts the claim by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes that men act as political mediators for women, sifting through political information and passing on their decision to their wives. The women are doing their own sifting.

Finally there is a very direct measure of political influence. The respondents were asked 'Did you suggest to anyone how they should vote?' and if so, to whom. Only 12 percent of the sample said they did, and of these, 63 were men saying they told their wives, and 17 were women saying they told their husbands. This means that only 6 percent of the men in the sample - 9 percent of married men - admit to suggesting to their wives how to vote. If in fact men dominate over their wives in political matters, we could expect a few more men than this to admit it. But as with so many of the claims about women's political roles, the researchers who make such claims are doing nothing more than speculating.

To return to our building metaphor, speculation in the building industry has often paid handsome dividends. Some political scientists have also made much capital out of speculation in their building of an image of women's political roles. I have tried to show how faulty the construction is at all levels, from foundations, to mortar and structural reinforcement. Furthermore, when we come to reconstruct, at least in Australia, we find that we do not have as many factual bricks as we could have expected. I hope that this study will help towards ending the speculation. When large profits are being made, someone is being exploited. In this case it is the women who lose out.

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100 See above, p. 43.

101 Questions 7(a) and (b).
When this thesis was originally conceived, the intention was to show how the differences in socialisation of males and females produce differences in their political behaviour and attitudes. The focus changed once I started trying to establish what political differences existed, because, as demonstrated in the second chapter, the supposed differences are often supported by rhetoric, and rarely by reasoned argument based on clear statistical evidence. This led me to analyse a set of data to discover where the differences lay. It was still my intention to try to explain the differences that did exist by reference to differential childhood and adult socialisation.

This has not been done, for two reasons. The first is that after surveying the literature on political socialisation I felt that the research in this area is at this stage inadequate as an explanation of how people come to acquire adult political beliefs. Apart from the criticisms that childhood attitudes have not been shown to be meaningful or stable, and that they do not necessarily have a link with adult orientations, there is an even more serious omission. It is that the researchers in this area make little effort to incorporate the findings of the social psychologists on the topic of socialisation in general.

To understand why it is that sex differences in political behaviour exist, I felt it would be necessary to draw, from the field of social psychology, information on sex identification, sex role socialisation, the development of attitude systems, the interaction between general attitudes and specific political ones, and the relationship

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1 The criticisms are briefly discussed in the first chapter.
between personality and political outlook. It would also be necessary to draw on an area in which there is little research as yet, namely on the relationship between the socialisation process and the structure of society when the society is regarded as a patriarchal one. Such an integrated approach has turned out to be beyond the scope of this thesis.

The second reason for not developing an explanation of the sex differences in political behaviour is a simple one - that there is little to be explained. I had expected to find some degree of difference, firstly because of constant references to sex differences in the political science literature, as shown by the quotations given at the start of Chapter 2. Secondly, I expected differences because of the pervasive assumption in virtually all societies, that males and females are different, not only biologically, but also socially. This is reflected objectively in the structure of societies, particularly in the division of labour, and subjectively in our attitudes toward anything that is regarded as sex-specific.

But what do we find? From both a careful reading of past studies, and an analysis of data from an Australian survey, it seems that while some differences exist, they are never large enough for us to make statements to the effect that women (or most women) are different from men (or most men) in their political attitudes and behaviour. Once we start to use a balanced view that focuses on both the differences and the

2 The little work that has been done on this last topic tends to focus on national characteristics and political attitudes. There is also some work following on from one of the major studies in this field, namely Adorno et al, The Authoritarian Personality, 1950. See R. Brown, Social Psychology, 1965, Chap. 10, for a discussion of the area.

similarities, we are aware that there is a far greater degree of similarity between the sexes than there are differences. Thus while it is true to say that fewer women than men participate actively in politics, it is also true to say that few people participate actively in politics.

What we need to explain, then, is why the similarities exist, given that men and women are thought to be different. More correctly, given that there are known differences between the sexes in personality and in day-to-day living patterns and experiences, we can ask why these differences do not carry over to political behaviour.

The most obvious reason is one that has been touched on: that political behaviour can hardly be regarded as an important part of the lives of most men and women. In fact, politics hardly has a part at all, and it is almost being presumptuous of political scientists to think otherwise. That it has such a small part in people's lives is evidenced by the low levels of interest, of participation, and of knowledge, and also the low degree of stability of opinions. Admittedly, two-thirds of the Australian sample claimed to have discussed the election campaign, but an election seems to be the only time that people do become interested in politics. Even then, only a third of the sample claimed to have a good deal of interest in the election. And only one-fifth claim they have a similar degree of interest in politics generally.

4 The question of whether such differences are socially conditioned or innate is not relevant here. That they exist is well-known. A good discussion is provided by A. Oakley, Sex, Gender & Society, 1972 Chapter 2

5 There is both the difference created by the fact that most men work outside the home while many women work inside the home, and also the difference caused by occupational segregation for those men and women working outside the home: see M. Power, 'Women's work is never done - by men', 1974
Thus if politics is hardly an issue to four-fifths of our sample, is it any wonder that there is little difference between the sexes? We do not have to advance speculations about politics being a man's world: few men themselves see politics as their world.

Another reason for a lack of a difference between the sexes in political matters is that politics is not seem to be sex-specific. In other words, sex is not a social factor in the same way that other socio-economic variables are. This is quite plausible as where politics does impinge on people's lives, it is often in areas where men and women have similar experiences. Thus in Australia where voting is compulsory for all adults, male and female, participation at this level becomes the same experience for men and women. Similarly with television viewing: if there is little difference between the sexes in viewing patterns, which is what we would expect given that most viewing occurs when both sexes are at home, then we can expect there to be little difference in proportions who follow political news on television. And this is what we find, that two-thirds of both men and women say they followed the campaign through this medium.

The differences arise only when they relate to different life experiences of men and women. Thus it was suggested that as men are likely to read a paper on their way to work, this explains why more men than women follow political news in the papers. Again, as more men than women work outside the home, we would expect to find that men are more likely to discuss an election with their work colleagues, and this is what we found. There is no a priori reason why there would be a

6 As several of the researchers do. See footnote 109, p. 54, above.

7 This is so, at least in those areas where politics can be seen to be directly relevant to people's immediate environment. At more remote levels, from the choice of election issues to legislative processes, the differential treatment of the sexes - a subtle form of discrimination - could have a whole thesis written on it.
difference between the sexes concerning access to friends (or number of friends), so it is not surprising to find virtually no sex difference in political discussions with friends.

Yet some differences between the sexes do exist, that cannot be accounted for so simply. More women than men identify with the non-Labor parties, and when women are attracted to politics, they are more likely to join the Liberal Party.\(^8\) But this does not seem to be because women are more conservative than men, despite what the researchers say. If women were more conservative, we would have expected this to show up on the set of opinion questions that we looked at. But as we saw, if any conclusion could be drawn it would be that women are less conservative than men.

So what causes the difference in party identification? Is it that the Liberal Party attracts women, or that the ALP discourages them? No clear answer can be given, although perhaps it concerns the parties' images. Researchers have found that the image that the party projects can be an important factor in influencing people's party identifications.\(^9\) And maybe the ALP has projected an image of being male-dominated; this is quite likely as it is male-dominated.\(^10\) Even its name suggests that it represents the labour movement, which, because of the number of non-working women and the number of working women who are not members of a trade union, reinforces the image that it is a party for men. The Liberal Party on the other hand, while it does not project an image of being female-dominated, at least does not appear to be so male-dominated.

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8 In 1969 the three women members of Federal parliament were all Liberal Party senators.


10 There is a chicken-and-egg problem here. But the important thing is that once established as male-dominated, it will continue to be regarded as such and thus will remain as such.
If such an explanation is correct, then we will expect to see changes in women's participation in the ALP, because this party has begun to change its image. The change in its policies towards women has undoubtedly come about because of the influence of the Women's Movement, reinforced by the appointment of an adviser to the Prime Minister on women's affairs. The Movement has had an effect both through its radical branch - Women's Liberation - which has highlighted the inequalities, discrimination and even oppression that exists against women, and the reformist side such as Women's Electoral Lobby, which has lobbied for specific changes in legislation.

The Feminist Movement has had an even more direct effect on women's political roles, because more women are now taking a part in the institutional political processes, particularly through WEL. Also, more women are beginning to see their position in the male-dominated power structure, and to become aware of the other side of politics, the politics of oppression and liberation.

We do not know yet just how far the Women's Movement will go. We can hardly expect that a majority of women will become politicised. However, it would not be unreasonable to expect to find that the small sex differences that exist - in political interest, knowledge, and passive participation - will largely disappear. More importantly, one would hope that the large sex differences that exist in active participation, particularly at the levels of political power and leadership,

11 After the 1974 election there are now 5 women in Federal Parliament, 1 in the Lower House and 4 in the Senate. Three are ALP members, the other 2 are Liberal. The government has shown itself to be concerned with women's issues: for example, it has introduced maternity leave, a bill to establish more child-care centres, a scheme for retraining women, the establishment of women's health centres and refuges, and so on.

12 K. Millett, Sexual Politics, 1972, provides one analysis.
will also disappear. It is only when women have equal access to political power, and have such access in their own right, that there will start to be full equality between the sexes.
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