

A STUDY OF WOMEN IN VIRGINIA POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare the attitudes of women in Virginia politics with the women state legislators studied by Emmy Werner relative to their reasons for entering politics and their attitudes about the assets and liabilities of women in political life.

The literature was surveyed, including a detailed discussion of Emmy Werner's study which was used in designing the questionnaire used in this study. The questionnaire was sent to 156 women involved in Virginia politics. It was closed-end and consisted of four parts. The first part dealt with their motivations for entering politics. Part two concerned the assets of women in politics. The liabilities of women in politics were contained in the third part, while part four contained biographical questions.

Biographically, the Virginia women did not differ significantly from the women legislators in Werner's study. Most of Werner's categories of motivations, assets and liabilities held for women working on a political level lower than the state legislature. The support given each category differed but all received some agreement. Thus, it was shown that the classification of attitudes developed by Werner's study can be successfully applied to at least Virginia and, consequently, perhaps also to women in other groups and places.

A STUDY OF WOMEN IN
VIRGINIA POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, the reasons for entering politics and the assets and liabilities of women in public office will be examined, based on the assessments of various women in Virginia politics. A similar study covering women in all the state legislatures was published in 1968 by Emmy E. Werner (University of California, Davis). Her broad-based paper provided the direction for this study of women at numerous levels of the political scene in Virginia. The purpose of this comparative study is to see if Werner's categorizations of motivations, assets and liabilities apply at a more localized level of political activity. This paper is based on the opinions and attitudes of women activists in Virginia. No other study on the attitudes of politically active women on a comprehensive state and local level has been done.

Although only a small percentage of women have joined America's political elite, "woman power" is making headway in areas traditionally dominated by men. More women now hold top decision-making jobs in the Federal Government and more women have been named to presidential commissions.¹ In the 1972 Democratic National Convention

¹ "Women in Government," U. S. News and World Report. LXXII (January 17, 1972), p. 62.

40 percent of the convention delegates were women. Since they comprise 52 percent of the nation's population, this was a dramatic increase over their 13 percent representation in 1968. Not only were they present as delegates, but they also appeared in positions of power, for example, on the Credentials, Rules, and Platform Committees.² The Republican National Convention also found women filling roles they had never filled before,³ including the first woman to give a keynote address at a major national political convention.⁴

Political activity is being undertaken by a growing number of women on all levels of politics. Many are becoming active in partisan politics at the local, state, and national levels. Others are participating through service, often nonpartisan, on local boards and commissions. Others work for private nonpartisan organizations, such as the League of Women Voters.⁵

Partisan political activities on the part of women are no longer unacceptable to the majority of the population. In August, 1971, a

² "Eve's operatives: women delegates of the Democratic convention," Time, C (July 24, 1972), p. 25.

³ "Campaign '72: women's struggle for larger role," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXX (April 22, 1972), p. 884.

⁴ "How to de-radicalize: Republican National Convention," Time, C (September 4, 1972), p. 18.

⁵ Reyna Weisl, Jane Fleming and Mary Janney (ed.), Washington Opportunities For Women (Washington, D. C., 1967), pp. 36-40.

Gallup Poll indicated that 66 percent of the voters would vote for a qualified woman for president. This figure had increased from 54 percent in 1969 and 31 percent in 1937.⁶

Since women are taking a more active interest in politics and in the use of political power, a review of much of the literature providing a historical background and showing how some political scientists have interpreted this growth is warranted.

In her book, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies, Julia Spruill points out that in the early seventeenth century women participated in the founding of the colonies. Their numbers included not only wives but many single women who came on their own ventures to settle and establish plantations. Among these single women and those who came to satisfy certain desires of the male settlers (providing comfortable homes and bearing children) the most energetic were also involved in public affairs. An example is the wife of Thomas Nuice of Jamestown, who was commended by the Virginia Company in London for her strenuous efforts in behalf of others. However, these women were usually trying to protect their private estates or were acting in behalf of relatives or friends. Thus, they did not deliberately set out to champion the cause of political rights for women.

⁶ "Women's Political Caucus: what it is, what it wants," U. S. News and World Report, LXXI (August 16, 1971), p. 67.

By the late seventeenth century, all such female business enterprises and independence in practical and public affairs was totally discouraged. Spruill points out that the education of women in the eighteenth century led to the development of passive rather than active qualities and thus a decline in their self-reliance and influence in public matters.

Although women were encouraged to display their patriotism and do their public duty during the Revolution, and were praised for their exertions (articles of this nature appeared in the Virginia Gazette), the status of women was not permanently affected by these events. Certain exceptional women were interested and exerted some influence in public affairs but the founders of the republic were no more ready than were the founders of the colonies to recognize women's leadership in public affairs as a permanent phenomenon. It was tolerated only in the most extraordinary situations.⁷

In viewing the struggle for women's suffrage in the nineteenth century it is pointed out in Female Liberation: History and Current Politics, edited by Roberta Salper, that most of the early leaders -- Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Sarah and

⁷ Julia Cherry Spruill, Life and Work in the Southern Colonies (New York, 1972), pp. 232-254.

Angelina Grimké -- were first involved in the antislavery movement. In fact, the women's movement was ignited by abolitionist activities: women were ridiculed and attacked for speaking out and acting on behalf of the slave, and finally barred as delegates to the antislavery conventions.⁸

In her work, Sex and Caste in America, Carol Andreas briefly discusses the social gains made by women who were caught up in the Age of Reform. Feminist activity seems to have occurred at those times when social changes outside the home drew men and women together in a common struggle. Women's productive activity revolved around the sharing of a difficult job with men. This led to the recognition of women's disadvantaged position. Collective activity for women's rights resulted from historical circumstances, as seen during the Revolution, the Civil War and World War I, giving women powers not previously experienced.

Thus, changes in productive relationships preceded each general social gain for women. The first gain was the Church's recognition of their souls which gave them a respect not known previously. Secondly, with the recognition of their brains they gained admittance to institutions of higher learning. Finally, the recognition of their

⁸ Roberta Salper (ed.), Female Liberation: History and Current Politics (New York, 1972), p. 6.

political equality gained them the right to vote and dissolve marital ties.

Feminist activity fell off after the 1920s, until women began asserting themselves collectively in the 1960s. As this was also an era of political radicalism and changes in economic relations, it seems that only at times of general social ferment do large numbers of men and women realize the inadequacy of the "dominance - dependence" relationship. Having had their grievances brought into sharper focus women "en masse" have felt justified in demanding their "rights" and independence.⁹

In viewing the current situation Andreas and Eleanor Flexner, in separate studies, give evidence of discriminatory practices against women in business as well as in politics.¹⁰ Certain state and local laws restricting hours and working conditions for the purpose of protecting women can, in actuality, limit their freedom and ability to compete with men for better positions. Andreas feels that the passage of an equal rights amendment would improve the situation for both men and women. However, to be really effectively enforced, certain directional and attitudinal changes would be required of today's labor

⁹ Carol Andreas, Sex and Caste in America (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1971), pp. 117-120.

¹⁰ Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1959), p. 329.

unions -- and such changes do not seem forthcoming.¹¹

Andreas and Flexner also note that the legalization of women's suffrage has done little to increase their participation as equals with men at any level of government.¹² Andreas attributes such restrictions on the political opportunities for women to the "modesty" derived from the woman's traditional role and to their lack of finances, but particularly to the systematic discrimination practised in both of the major parties.¹³

In her book, The Silenced Majority, Kirsten Amundsen conducted an extensive study of the role of women in the power structure in America. On the federal level, a mathematical interpretation shows that in proportion to their numbers in the population at large, women have only 4 percent of their due representation in the House of Representatives. Of these women very few have attained the longevity in office or the committee assignments and chairmanships one needs to be an effective legislator. The resulting lack of seniority means that women are excluded from consideration for party floor leadership positions. Finally, congresswomen are not invited or welcomed to participate in the informal relationships on which much successful congressional power play seems

¹¹ Andreas, pp. 103-104.

¹² Flexner, pp. 325-326.

¹³ Andreas, pp. 105, 113-114.

to rely.¹⁴ The state of Virginia has sent no congresswoman to Washington and no Virginia woman sought election to Congress in 1972¹⁵ or 1974.

Women are virtually absent from top-level decision-making positions in the executive and judicial branches of the federal government, not even matching their poor record of sharing legislative power. Obviously, women have not made a breakthrough on the federal level of the political power structure.¹⁶

Frieda Gehlen has some interesting observations about the eleven women in the Eighty-eighth Congress in her article "Women in Congress". Her study does not question the proportion of women in the Congress. Her specific concern is with their leadership roles as congressional members. In previous years women had been disproportionately assigned to "lesser-status" committees, specializing in social issues. In the Eighty-eighth Congress, however, women were fairly represented on "higher-status" committees, including Rules, Ways and Means and Appropriations. Seventeen committee assignments and twenty-two subcommittee assignments were held by these eleven women. No committee and only six

¹⁴ Kirsten Amundsen, The Silenced Majority (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1971), pp. 62-72.

¹⁵ "Women office-seekers: this year, more than ever," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXX (October 28, 1972).

¹⁶ Amundsen, pp. 73-75.

subcommittee assignments were particularly related to the so-called feminine interests: Consumer Affairs, Housing, Hospitals, Special Education, National Parks, and possibly Indian Affairs.

Gehlen did not see much difficulty in women attaining committee chairmanships since this was based on seniority. A committee or subcommittee chairman can wield a great deal of influence since leadership is partly a matter of personality. However, women probably face their greatest obstacle in being elected to the party floor leadership. Gehlen's sample recognized this and felt that even with qualified women it would be one of those things that would happen only "some day" in the future. Gehlen found the men of the Eighty-eighth Congress even more negative.

To have a fruitful and active career, informal relationships play a significant role. Gehlen's evidence indicates that this is a problem for Congresswomen. When men meet informally in their offices, at local establishments or at home, women are usually neither invited nor welcome. However, the women define the political value of these relationships very narrowly and feel they can influence legislation just as effectively in the cloakroom, by sitting with the men on the floor of the house and by knowing the men's wives.

An interesting point of Gehlen's is that those women most accepted were those who were the most rational, articulate, and intelligent. They were not emotional and not too prudish. Their behavior fitted

a pattern more nearly like that of men. Judging by committee assignments and other honors, these were the women who demonstrated the greatest competence. It is evident, then, that the men did not have to alter their behavior to accommodate the women; instead it was the reverse situation.¹⁷

Recruitment for Congress poses some interesting questions since almost as many women come to fill vacancies caused by the deaths of their husbands, 41 percent, as those who have survived a November general election, 45 percent. Charles S. Bullock, III and Patricia Lee Findley Heys, in "Recruitment of Women for Congress", studied the differences in the intensity, duration, and direction of the political ambitions of both widows and of the "regularly elected" (those chosen for the first time in a November general election). The regularly elected have an advantage in launching their campaigns whenever they consider conditions favorable, but widows have an advantage in having greater voter recognition and some sympathy vote.

In their study of seventy-seven women in Congress from 1917-1970, Bullock and Heys found the regularly elected generally better educated than the widows, more having had professional careers as opposed to being simply housewives. As compared with congressmen, the majority of whom were connected with the law, most congresswomen, especially

¹⁷ Frieda L. Gehlen, "Women in Congress," Trans-action, VI (October, 1969), pp. 36-40.

widows, were teachers. Only 20 percent of the regularly elected had legal experience. The regularly elected were found to be more politically involved, having had office-holding and party work experience. In fact, such political experience appears more crucial for women than men since more freshmen women had it than did first-term congressmen. The regularly elected were more likely to offer themselves for reelection than widows since they were more likely to view Congress as a career. However, the rate of reelection victories for congresswomen is below that for all House members. Bullock and Heys felt this may be further evidence of prejudice against women entering politics.¹⁸ Since women tend to win more nominations for marginal seats, those thought to be a certain defeat for example, than for safe seats, they are more likely to lose at subsequent elections.

Returning to Kirsten Amundsen's study, the situation of women on the state level is not much improved over the federal level. Those positions (such as Secretary of State, Treasurer and Auditor) in which women have made the most advances have little or nothing to do with real political power or policy-making. Even in those areas of employment where women workers far outnumber men, women most often do not hold the key positions. Superintendents of public instruction are a

¹⁸ Charles S. Bullock, III and Patricia Lee Findley Heys, "Recruitment of Women for Congress: A Research Note," Western Political Quarterly, XXV (September, 1972), pp. 416-23.

case in point. Although the great majority of teachers are women, most state superintendents are still male. In the state legislatures the number of women holding seats generally amounts to only 4 percent of the due representation of women. In many states women have no representation in the upper house. Amundsen found this to be the case in 1967 in two states considered to be among the most progressive, New York and California. Among those women within the state legislatures few have been advanced to any formal positions of leadership in the power structure.¹⁹

In the state of Virginia, although there have been no women elected to the Senate, this is not the case in the House. The first women delegates, Sarah Lee Fain and Helen T. Henderson, were elected in 1923 to serve in the 1924 legislature. There was at least one woman representative in every session of the legislature from 1924-1932.²⁰ As Werner noted, the most rapid influx of women in state legislatures was just after the passage of the nineteenth amendment -- the 1920s.²¹ For the next twenty years there were no women in the Virginia General

¹⁹ Amundsen, pp. 75-78.

²⁰ E. Griffith Dodson, The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1919-1939 (Richmond, 1939).

²¹ Emmy E. Werner, "Women in the State Legislatures," The Western Political Quarterly, XXI (March, 1968), p. 43.

Assembly.²² Then, in 1954, women entered the legislature again and have remained there through the 1972 session.²³ (No data was found on the 1964 session.) Table I (page 15) lists the number of women legislators in the Virginia House from 1924-1972. The total number of delegates in the house is 100, and in the Senate, 40.

In her thesis, "Personality Patterns Among Freshman Members of the Virginia General Assembly: A Testing of the James D. Barber Typology", Sue Whitley states that the turnover of Virginia delegates is lower than the national average. Whereas a 1963 study shows a 33 percent turnover nationally, Virginia seems to have less than 25 percent turnover, except in years of reapportionment.²⁴ Of the fourteen women delegates almost 75 percent served no more than two terms (five served once and five served twice). Of the remaining four, two held office for three terms, one for four terms, and one for five²⁵ (Table 2, page 16). Thus, the turnover rate in Virginia is higher for women than for men.

²² E. Griffith Dodson, The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1940-1960 (Richmond, 1961).

²³ General Assembly of Virginia: Manual of the Senate and House of Delegates (Richmond, 1962, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972).

²⁴ Sue C. Whitley, Personality Patterns Among Freshmen Members of the Virginia General Assembly: A Testing of the James D. Barber Typology, Unpublished M. A. thesis in Government, College of William and Mary, 1968 pp. 13-14.

²⁵ Dodson, 1919-1939, Dodson, 1940-1960 and Manual of the Senate and House.

TABLE I

 NUMBER OF WOMEN IN THE VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE, 1924-1972

Year	Number	% Out of 100 in the House of Delegates	% Out of 100 in the House of Delegates and Senate
1924	2	2	1
1926	2	2	1
1928	4	4	3
1930	1	1	<1
1932	1	1	<1
1934-1952	0	0	0
1954	1	1	<1
1956	1	1	<1
1958	3	3	2
1960	3	3	2
1962	1	1	<1
1964	-	-	-
1966	4	4	3
1968	2	2	1
1970	1	1	<1
1972	4	4	3

TABLE 2

TENURE OF WOMEN IN THE VIRGINIA HOUSE

Terms Held	Number of Women Who Held These Terms
1	5
2	5
3	2
4	1
5	1

Although Republicans are making some gains in western urban areas and in northern Virginia, the legislature is still largely composed of Democrats. Whitley states that "Republicanism" tends to be associated with anything "strange" in the state. As of 1968, the date of her study, the Democrats held well over 75 percent of the seats in the house and senate.²⁶ The women delegates fit this pattern. With the exception of two, they are all Democrats. There was one Independent in 1972, Mrs. L. O. Scott, who represented Dinwiddie. The only Republican, Mrs. Charlotte Giesan of Radford, was elected to the General Assembly in 1957 and re-elected in 1959. She was defeated in 1961. Having served on the Radford city council beginning in 1954, she was subsequently re-elected to it in 1962.²⁷

Whitley also points out that many of the women legislators in Virginia have come from the populated, urbanized areas of the state, including Portsmouth, Richmond, Fairfax and Alexandria.²⁸ In her national study, Werner found that more women legislators are found in the less populated and less industrialized states.²⁹ However, she

²⁶ Whitley, pp. 21-23.

²⁷ Martin Gruberg, Women in American Politics: An Assessment and Sourcebook, (Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 1968), p. 173.

²⁸ Whitley, pp. 16-17.

²⁹ Werner, State Legislatures, p. 43.

does not indicate the type of districts within the states from which the women in her sample come.

Of the fourteen women delegates who have served in the Virginia General Assembly, twelve were married. Seven were teachers and five were housewives at the time they entered the legislature. Eleven had attended college and at least six completed degrees. Two acquired post-graduate degrees. Most were active in community affairs. The average age at the time they first entered the legislature was 49, (which was greater than for men.) The range of ages for women was 30 to 69.

The only data available from 1924-1932 on the committee assignments of these women delegates is from the 1928 and 1930 sessions. All four of the women delegates in 1928 were assigned to the Committee on Schools and Colleges, as was Mrs. Emma Lee White in the 1930 session. Other committees popular for women legislators were Counties, Cities and Towns, Library, Asylums and Prisons, Immigration, and the Chesapeake and its tributaries. Only one woman, Mrs. Sarah Lee Fain, achieved enough tenure (three sessions) to be assigned to the Appropriations Committee in 1928.

From 1954-1972 two women gained chairmanships. Mrs. Kathryn H. Stone was chairman of the Committee on Public Institutions in 1960 and 1962, and Mrs. Marion G. Galland was chairman of the Committee on Interstate Cooperation in 1966. Mrs. Dorothy S. McDiarmid was assigned to the very important Appropriations Committee in 1972 after

serving three sessions. Some of the more popular committee assignments for women include Education, Health, Welfare and Institutions, Agriculture, Finance, Claims, Enrolled Bills and Library.³⁰

The only important state executive office in Virginia filled by a woman is that of Secretary of the Commonwealth, an appointive office. Mrs. Thelma Y. Gordon held this office from 1947-1952. Miss Martha Bell Conway held it from 1954-1968. From 1970-1972 Mrs. Cynthia Newman held this position. The current Secretary of the Commonwealth is Mrs. Pricilla Perkinson. Also, Mrs. Joan S. Mahan became the Secretary of the State Board of Elections in 1972.³¹

Although women have made much greater progress nationally on the city and county level, Amundsen emphasizes that this is in terms of numbers. In 1966 there were 100 women serving as mayors, and reportedly thousands of women in city and county posts. In 1964 the Governor's Committee on the Education and Employment of Women in New York reported a 37 percent increase of women officials and administrators in the preceding decade. However, the kinds of positions held and the political power entailed hardly amounts to a breakthrough. In fact, women's relative status is just as low in local politics as it is on the

³⁰ Dodson, 1919-1939, Dodson, 1940-1960 and Manual of the Senate and House.

³¹ Gruberg, p. 200.

state and federal level. There is no woman mayor of a major city. Women's representation on city councils and on boards of supervisors in metropolitan areas is no more proportionally, than it is in Congress and the state legislatures. Women have generally moved into local government as library board members, treasurers, treasury clerks and finance commissioners.

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In his book, Women in American Politics: An Assessment and Source-book, Martin Gruberg illustrates with several examples what success women have had in local politics in Virginia. Recently, some communities, such as Washington, Virginia, have turned over local affairs to their women. In Winchester, Virginia, Mrs. Dorothy G. Allen served as vice-mayor for at least six years beginning in 1956. In 1962, Mrs. Eleanor P. Sheppard was elected mayor of Richmond, Virginia by the city council on the twenty-fifth ballot. She was the first woman elected to the Richmond city council, in 1954. In 1960 she turned down the mayor's job and was named vice-mayor. Mrs. Sheppard, a Democrat, was a delegate in the 1970 and 1972 Virginia General Assemblies.

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What limited success there has been for women on the local level Amundsen attributed to the frequent part-time and low-paid characteristics of local positions, as well as their relatively nonpartisan nature,

³² Amundsen, p. 79.

³³ Gruberg, pp. 203, 208-209.

both of which make such offices more "suitable" for women. Yet, as school board members, a field of policy-making considered "suitable" for women, they amount to less than 10 percent in the nation. Women have very little say in shaping the formal education of their children.³⁴

Gruberg concludes that a larger proportion of women have attained legislative, executive, and judicial offices in local government than at the state or federal level. Yet, relatively few women are elected to policy-making positions. They are more likely to be elected to clerical posts. Although women are more willing to participate at this level because of the supposedly non-partisan character of certain positions (for example, the school board), they have still not achieved anything resembling parity in local government.³⁵

In trying to explain women's lack of representation in governmental councils, Amundsen turned to party politics and campaign activities. Here women's efforts are so evident that she concludes that the present party structures would likely approach collapse without the women who maintain the volunteer organizations and throw themselves into the everyday activities of campaigns. Thus, women are encouraged and relied on at this level, but any ambitions beyond that are met with resistance. Prejudice among the male power-wielders can be blamed

³⁴ Amundsen, pp. 79-80

³⁵ Gruberg, pp. 218, 308.

for the lack of women's representation in elective offices. However, Amundsen does not overlook the partial responsibility of the political socialization process which has produced inhibitions and a lack of political consciousness and group cohesion among women. This too must be changed for women to gain a greater share of the decision-making positions.³⁶

Women and the Public Interest by Jessie Bernard deals with the socialization process and the resulting sex-typing. The notion that certain occupations belong to one sex appears to be acceptable by the time a particular generation reaches the labor force. By this point it does not even occur to many women to think of entering the so called "men's" jobs. Their school counselors did not steer them in that direction nor did they advise the girls to take courses that could lead to such jobs. Everything in their socialization seemed geared to preparing girls for supportive-type jobs and not those demanding drive, competitiveness and leadership. Bernard states that one reason for the persistence of sex-typing is employer attitudes. It is easier to judge employees on the basis of sex rather than studying the individual. Consequently, it is easier to promote on the basis of sex rather than competence. It is this type of inertia, along with its potential for exploitation, on which sex-typing feeds.

³⁶ Amundsen, pp. 82-85.

Although sex-typing is enhanced by employers, Bernard states that the socialization process is the biggest cause of sex-typing. The situations in which it puts women forces them to make impossible choices. They are forced to choose between intellectual achievement and a high creativity level or society's established role -- the supportive function -- of pleasing men and taking care of household duties. Society punishes women for intellectual success by limiting their occupation and advancement and so, in encouraging the support role, actually teaches women to fail. Thus, women are expected to live up to society's expectations and yet not live up to their own standards of performance. Teaching women to fail is certainly not in the public interest, Bernard concludes. A reexamination of the socialization and education of girls is most necessary and should lead to more flexibility and matching of jobs and talents.³⁷

Bruno Bettelheim, in his article "Growing Up Female", continues along the same line of thought. Very young girls are taught that they are different from little boys, but then they are given the same educational opportunities as are boys, opportunities which set out to prepare boys for independent responsibility and competition. Girls have the chance to develop their minds and initiative and to share social and

³⁷ Jessie Bernard, Women and the Public Interest (Chicago, 1971), pp. 108, 126-132.

political interests, but then society insists they "fall in love" and actually love giving up their career or intellectual ambitions. After years of apparent equality it becomes clear that men are really more equal. Although schools do socialize girls into supportive roles with such things as secretarial and home economics courses, women are ostensibly prepared for a type of liberated marital and occupational life. Then they are expected to fit into an antiquated form of marriage. Some women justifiably resent this but most seem able to accept it. Bettelheim thinks that perhaps they were made aware very early that their role in society was, in fact, to be very different from that of the boys they knew. But they must undergo the same training as a precaution in case they are failures, by society's standards, and do not attain marriage and motherhood. Thus, socialization is a dominant factor in explaining the comparatively minor role women have in the political power structure, and in the occupational power structure in general.³⁸

Kate Millett, in her book, Sexual Politics, also views the socialization process as a contributing factor to the current position of women. She defines politics as power structured relationships in which one group controls another. In our society every avenue of power (industry, science,

³⁸ Bruno Bettelheim, "Growing Up Female" (This Great Argument: The Rights of Women, ed. by Haig and Hamida Bosmajian, Reading, Massachusetts, 1972), pp. 105-106.

political office, finance, etc.) is in male hands. This situation of sexual politics is supported through consent. The consent is obtained through the "socialization" of both sexes. Most of the "so-called" distinctions of role, temperament and status are essentially cultural, not biological. They are learned differences. Throughout development, what is "appropriate" to each gender is implicit in all learning relationships. This value system is then reinforced after childhood by economic, educational, and psychological discrimination. ³⁹

Besides Werner's paper, the only other recent study of the attitudes of politically active women is one by Earl R. Kruschke, "Level of Optimism as Related to Female Political Behavior". The level of optimism is one of the variables regarded as constituting an element of political personality. Kruschke sent a mail questionnaire to two samples -- political and apolitical women -- and conducted a personal interview with each of the political women studied. He found, when controlling for education, sex, and marriage, that politically active married women were more optimistic than equally educated apolitical married women. He also controlled for income, age, religion and party affiliation. Politicals in the upper income ranges, who were under forty, and were Protestant, tended to be more optimistic than simi-

³⁹ Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (Garden City, New York, 1970), introduction.

lar apoliticals. Party affiliation had no apparent bearing.⁴⁰ This suggests a positive correlation between politics and optimism.

⁴⁰ Earl R. Kruschke, "Level of Optimism as Related to Female Political Behavior," Social Science, XLI (April, 1966), pp. 67-75.

EMMY WERNER'S RELATED STUDY

In her paper "Women in the State Legislatures" (1968), Emmy Werner set forth four specific purposes. The first was to review the trends in women's representation and their party affiliation. This was to include women in both state legislatures and Congress from 1920-1964. Secondly, Werner set out to discuss the impact women have made in state legislatures, taking into account the effects of geography. Her third purpose was to examine a sample of 185 women in the 1963-1964 state legislatures in terms of their background and political experience. Finally, she proposed to report their reasons for seeking political office and what they considered to be women's assets and liabilities in political life.

In reviewing the trends in women's representation and party affiliation, Werner found that the growth in the number of women legislators (who were predominantly Republican) had been very gradual and had in fact begun to slow down. While women in state legislatures were a larger percentage than women in Congress in 1964, the slowdown in growth was on both the state and national level. Actually, the number of women in Congress had dropped sharply from a high of nineteen in the

Eighty-seventh Congress to thirteen, less than there were a decade before.

Since 1920 women in state legislatures have been affected by trends that are characteristic of American history. At times of economic, political, and social unrest their number has dropped; as during the depression years and shortly before and after World War II. The five years after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and the years during World War II and the Korean War were marked by a sharp increase of women in the state legislatures. Thus, women's political leadership opportunities appear related to their ability to participate in the economy. This appears to fit Carol Andreas' hypothesis that changes in productive relationships precede social (and apparently political) gains.

Werner's investigation of the geographical effects on the impact made by women in the state legislatures in 1963-1964 reveals some interesting relationships. The numerically small states were the ones with a relatively large number of women in their legislatures. Vermont, New Hampshire and Connecticut, whose total population equaled 3-1/2 million, had almost 50 percent of the women state legislators nationwide in their legislatures in 1963-1964. Four other states with a high proportion of women legislators were Oregon, Arizona, Colorado and Washington. The total population of these four states was only 7-1/2 million. The percentages of women in these state legislatures are as follows: Vermont (17.8), New Hampshire (14.6), Connecticut (14.6), Oregon

(10.0), Arizona (8.3), Colorado (7.0), and Washington (6.8).

By contrast, Werner found few women in the legislatures of the most populous, highly urbanized and industrialized states. In 1963-1964 California had one woman representative out of 120 and a population of 18 million. New York had three women representatives out of 208 and 17 million people. Pennsylvania with 11-1/2 million people had eleven women representatives. There were five in Illinois, whose population equalled 10-1/2 million. Finally, Ohio with a population of 10 million had only eight women representatives.

Werner concludes that the majority of potential women candidates and certainly the majority of voters reside in the populous, urbanized and industrial states. Women, however, have little representation in their legislatures. This situation is further compounded by the fact that the legislative concerns of these states are those which have been considered "suitable" for women: education, social welfare and family life. Women's greatest influence lies in states with less rapid urbanization and population growth. Contributing to this is the relative ease of accessibility to grass roots and the voters in the "oversized" New England legislatures. The cost of campaigning is also reduced by this situation.⁴¹

In studying the background and political experience of her sample

⁴¹ Werner, State Legislatures, pp. 40-45.

of women in state legislatures, Werner was extending a similar study she did in 1966 about "Women in Congress: 1917-1964". As was anticipated, the biographical data on seventy women serving in Congress suggested that they were an elite group. Not only did the majority have college degrees but they also had considerable professional training and experience. This was chiefly in the areas of teaching, law, communications and the applied social sciences. Most had been married and many were either appointed to their husband's seat after his death or had shared a successful political partnership with their husbands.⁴² This biographical data is in general agreement with that presented by Bullock and Heys in their study of recruitment, particularly with regard to the "regularly elected", who made up a plurality of those studied.⁴³

In the first half of the twentieth century the traditional road of congresswomen was that of the "widow's succession". But in the two decades since 1949, Werner found that the number of women elected by popular vote has increased. By 1963, thirty-four congresswomen had been elected, and of the thirty-six appointed congresswomen, twelve were subsequently reelected. Their length of tenure in office also in-

⁴² Emmy E. Werner, "Women in Congress: 1917-1964," Western Political Quarterly, XIV (March, 1966), pp. 18-28.

⁴³ Bullock and Heys, pp. 417-423.

creased. Less than one-fifth who served in the seven congresses through 1963-64 were affected by turnover. Of all congresswomen, more than half were reelected for a second term. Over a third were reelected twice and served six years or more.

Many of the women in Congress had entered politics before with service in state legislatures and party organizations on local, state and national levels. This was usually after their child-bearing and rearing years were over. Werner also notes that the overwhelming majority of these women continued their public service in executive and leadership positions in the federal and state governments after leaving the Congress.⁴⁴

In her sample of women in state legislatures Werner found many similarities between them and the women in Congress. Most of these women were or had been married and had reared children. On the average, most were elected to the state legislature for the first time in their late forties. The majority had some form of post-high school education, but unlike the women in Congress, less than half had graduated from college. Most had worked in one or more occupations, the most common areas being business and public relations and teaching. A minority had been involved in the mass media, in law, or in social service. Most had previously been engaged in

⁴⁴ Werner, Congress, p. 29.

political activities such as service in the local party organization and government and in the state party organization.

Werner found that over half the women in her survey had served up to four years in the state legislatures. However, only a third had served from five to ten years, and less than ten percent had up to fifteen years or more tenure. This short tenure is largely a result of being members of the minority party (Republican). This factor also makes for limited access to the chairmanship of important legislative committees. More susceptible to losing reelection, Republican women legislators cannot build up the necessary seniority. Also, most of the women state legislators were in the lower house, which probably reflects the relative ease at reaching constituents and the larger number of representatives elected to that house as opposed to the Senate.

Werner's final goal was to report the motivations of these women for entering politics and their feelings about women's assets and liabilities in political life. After questioning her sample about their reasons for entering politics, Werner grouped their responses into five categories. The most frequent response was that which reflected a sense of moral commitment. Another frequently mentioned one was their encouragement by community, family and relatives. Experiences of a semi-political nature were mentioned by some. Constructively filling time was the reason some women gave. Finally, college-

educated women commented on the influence of their "learning experiences" (Table 3, page 34).

Concerning the assets of women in political office Werner has again grouped the comments of the women legislators into five categories. Some women stressed women's social conscience as a major asset. Others felt that women had an asset in being relatively free from moral, political and financial pressures. Others pointed to the constructive methods women can turn to in solving legislative problems. This includes such things as a willingness to hear both sides and to compromise and cooperate with the opposition for a worthwhile cause. Others singled out the personality characteristics that they considered helpful. Others stressed what they termed the "unique role" of the woman politician; since she is setting an example for others to follow, people tend to be more attentive and are more likely to give her ideas some consideration (Table 4, page 35).

Werner devised five categories for the responses of the women legislators regarding the liabilities of women in political office. Those liabilities concerned with adverse public opinion were the most frequently mentioned. Related to these were the liabilities of social custom, which refer mainly to the inability of women to interact with their male colleagues on an informal level. Some women pointed to the extra demands made on women politicians and to emotional

TABLE 3

MOTIVATIONS FOR ENTERING POLITICS

1. A sense of moral commitment
2. Encouragement by community, family and friends
3. Experiences of a semi-political nature
4. Constructive use of time
5. The influence of school and traveling

TABLE 4

ASSETS OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

1. Women's social conscience
2. Freedom from outside pressures
3. Methods of solving legislative problems
4. Personality characteristics
5. The "unique role" of the woman politician

characteristics, such as impatience, defensiveness, and a tendency to be too intense, which could hinder them in political office. Others stressed physical liabilities, including the rigor of campaigning, not being as forceful as men and having less stamina. Finally, the conflicts between family and political duties were mentioned⁴⁵ (Table 5, page 37).

It is the last two sections of Werner's study which are of most significance to this paper. These include the section on the background and political experience of women legislators, and the section on women's motivations, assets and liabilities. A set of questions related to these subjects was presented to various women in Virginia politics, and their responses as compared with Werner's results make up the subject matter of the rest of this paper.

⁴⁵ Werner, State Legislatures, pp. 46-49.

TABLE 5

LIABILITIES OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

1. Adverse public opinion
2. Social custom
3. Extra demands and emotional characteristics
4. Physical liabilities
5. Conflicting duties to family and politics

METHODS USED IN THIS STUDY

For the purposes of this paper it was necessary to design a questionnaire to be sent to women active in Virginia politics. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. Each part contained a set of closed-end statements requiring only that the respondent check the appropriate box (see Appendix). This differed from Werner's study in that her questions were open-end, which allowed for few percentages and figures in her results.

Part one contained statements of political motivations. The respondents were asked to indicate whether each statement corresponded with their own reasons for entering into politics. Their choices of answers included yes, no, unsure and not applicable. These questions on motivations were based almost entirely on Werner's five categories of political motivations: moral commitment, encouragement of friends and family, semi-political experience, constructive use of time and "learning experiences". In her study Werner gave examples of her categories of motivations and it was from these that the statements for part one of this questionnaire were taken.

Statements about the assets of women in politics made up part

two of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate whether the statements corresponded with their own ideas about women's political assets. In this part the answers were agree, disagree, unsure and not applicable. Again, these statements were taken from the examples Werner gave to clarify her five categories (social conscience, few outside pressures, solving legislative problems, personality characteristics and women's pioneering role) which she devised to explain her collected data on the assets of women in political life.

In part three, women's liabilities in politics, the respondents were asked to indicate if the presented statements corresponded with their own views about the liabilities of women in politics. Again their choices were agree, disagree, unsure, and not applicable. Adverse public opinion, social customs, extra demands and emotional characteristics, physical liabilities, and conflicting duties -- Werner's basic categories of women's liabilities -- provided the direction for the statements in part three of this questionnaire. There were several statements taken from each of Werner's categories.

Part four contained a series of questions designed to provide certain biographical information. Most of these background questions were also close-end, but the set of choices of answers was different for each question. The women were asked the age at which they first became politically active, their marital status, the number of children, their race, level of education, occupation, extent of political exper-

ience, length of time they have held current position, party affiliation, and level of position held. One final open-end question asked for their major areas of legislative interest. The variety of answers required the elimination of this question from this study. There is some overlap in these background questions with those used by Werner; however, some deviations were necessary due to the differences among the women studied in both papers.

This questionnaire was sent to 156 women involved in Virginia politics. Included among these were members of the State Central Committees, county and city chairwomen, district officers, state officers, delegates and alternate delegates to the Democratic and Republican Conventions in 1972, party officers, elected delegates and candidates in the 1973 general election in Virginia.

Taking into account the overlap of several positions, the following is a breakdown of the positions held by the women who were sent the questionnaire. Fourteen were members of the Republican State Central Committee and forty-five were members of the Democratic State Central Committee. There were seven Republican county and city chairwomen and ten Democratic chairwomen. There were two district officers and one state officer -- the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Twenty delegates and twenty-one alternate delegates to the 1972 Democratic National Convention were sent questionnaires, as were seven delegates and nine alternates to the 1972 Republican National Convention.

Questionnaires were mailed to five officers of the Democratic Party and three officers of the Republican Party. There were four elected delegates and twenty-one candidates for the 1973 general election, (twenty running for delegate and one for lieutenant governor).

Ninety questionnaires were completed and returned. The information from these questionnaires was coded and analysed using The College of William & Mary Computer Center's IBM 360 Model 50 computer, and the SPSS computational system.⁴⁶ It was the writer's hope that through the systematic analyses of carefully classified data it might be possible to draw conclusions about the attitudes of women in Virginia politics with more certainty and confidence than was possible in earlier studies. The results might then be used to determine if Werner's categories of motivations, assets, and liabilities do, in fact, apply to women at different levels of politics.

⁴⁶ See Norman H. Nie, Dale H. Bent and C. Hadlai Hull, Statistical Package For the Social Sciences (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1970).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before any conclusion can be drawn concerning the attitudes of women in Virginia politics a brief and simplified reporting of the biographical data acquired from the questionnaire is necessary.

The data from part four of the questionnaire reveal that most of the 90 women respondents are Caucasian (80), are married (63) or have been married (11) and have children (65). Over half (54) of these women became politically active before the age of thirty, and another quarter (23) between the ages of thirty and forty.

Over half have completed college (54) and over half of these (34) have done post-graduate work. Ninety percent (80) had some post-high school education. The occupation most often listed was that of housewife (26). This was followed by business and public relations (20) and teaching (14). Only ten percent were involved in social service (4), law (3) and mass media (1). It should be noted that 22 of the women responded with "other" to this question.

Roughly half (46) of the respondents recorded over ten years political experience and almost a third more (29) have from five to ten years experience. Of those who currently hold a political

position (73), over half (44) have held it for two years or more. Seven of these have held their position from five to ten years and five for over ten years.

Almost two-thirds (56) of the respondents listed their party affiliation as Democrat and approximately a third (30) as Republican. Three listed themselves as Independent. Only 66 listed the level of the position they hold. Over two-thirds (49) of these were elected, the rest were appointed. Of those elected over half (28) are on the state level.

Comparing the biographies of these women active in Virginia politics with Werner's sample of women in state legislatures reveals some similarities. Most of the women in both samples are or have been married and have raised children. On the average, those in Werner's sample first reached the state legislatures in their late forties. However, most of these women had been active previously in political affairs. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that Werner's sample first became politically active at an age not too different from that of the present group. Over half (51) of the Virginia sample became politically active between the ages of twenty and forty.

The majority of both samples had some form of post-high school education. Close to half of Werner's sample graduated from college and over fifty percent of the Virginia sample completed college. A large number of the Virginia sample are currently housewives, but

those who are otherwise occupied generally work in the same areas as did the state legislators in Werner's sample. The largest number work in business and public relations. This is followed by teaching, whether in grade school, high school, or college. The mass media, law and social service occupied very few in either sample.

Party affiliation differed between the two samples. A majority of Republicans made up Werner's sample whereas a majority of the Virginia women questioned were Democrats. As stated earlier "Republicanism" is still regarded with a degree of suspicion in Virginia, thus accounting for the large number of Democrats in the Virginia sample. In explaining the Republican majority in her sample, Werner points out that almost fifty percent of the women in the state legislatures in 1963-64 were in New England states. Traditionally, New England has been a Republican stronghold. Table 6, page 45 shows the party affiliation of the women in the state legislatures in 1963-64 and that of the women in Werner's sample. The party affiliation of the women legislators in her sample closely paralleled women legislators nationally.⁴⁷

Although the majority of women in the Virginia sample are Democrats, party affiliation seems to have had little affect on the responses of these women. There is no significant difference in the way

⁴⁷ Werner, State Legislatures, pp. 43-45.

TABLE 6
PARTY AFFILIATION

Party	Women in State Legislatures %	Sample %
Republican	206 (58.7%)	101 (54.6%)
Democrat	141 (40.2%)	80 (43.2%)
Independent	4 (1.1%)	4 (2.2%)
Total (N)	351 (100.0%)	185 (100.0%)

Democratic women and Republican women in Virginia responded to the statements in the questionnaire.

Although the question of tenure was not concerned with the same office in each sample, the responses are similar. Whether a state legislator or some other state or local office holder the majority of women in both samples had held their office for a relatively short length of time.

Thus, it can be concluded that those women active in Virginia politics do not differ significantly from the women legislators in Werner's study. The rest of the discussion will involve a comparison of the attitudes of these two sets of women concerning their motivations for entering politics and their evaluation of women's assets and liabilities in political life. This section will also attempt to explain any differences that appear in this comparison of their opinions.

Motivations

Part one of the questionnaire dealt with the motivations or reasons why these women in Virginia became active in politics. The first category contains motivations expressing a sense of moral commitment -- the desire to improve government and to help meet human needs. These statements received a high degree of agreement from the respondents with several approaching 100 percent after the frequency had been adjusted to eliminate any non-yes or no responses (Table 7).

TABLE 7

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF MOTIVATION:
SENSE OF MORAL COMMITMENT

Part I Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
	Yes	%	No	%
1. I wanted to help improve Virginia's political picture.	80	98.8	1	1.2
3. The legislative process needs a woman's viewpoint.	77	97.5	2	2.5
8. I wanted to be in a strategic position to serve the public's needs.	56	80.0	14	20.0
11. I feel that the "survival of mankind" depends on legislative participation.	57	79.2	15	20.8
13. I thought the citizens had too little voice in state government.	60	78.9	16	21.1
17. I entered politics to represent the people in a governmental situation where interest groups have more than adequate representation.	36	61.0	23	39.0

Werner found that responses of moral commitment were those most frequently given by the women legislators in her study. Apparently the majority of women on any level of politics sense a moral motivation behind their political involvement. As the previously mentioned Kruschke article pointed out, this also suggests a sense of optimism on the part of politically active women. They believe the governmental situation can be improved, but only if more people become involved and take positive action, starting with themselves.

The second set of statements involved the encouragement of others. Very few of the respondents felt motivated by their husband's political career, their neighbors or work associates; and less than half felt any influence from the political environment of their childhood. However, 60 percent (adjusted frequency) of those who responded to the statement about the influence of the community (I-21) did agree with this as a political motivation (Table 8, page 49).

The encouragements of family and friends were very often cited in Werner's study as reasons for entering political life. Based on her findings one could say that there was more of a sense of deliberateness in the decision of many in Werner's sample to enter politics. On the other hand the Virginia sample seems to have a good number who possibly became active in local projects and just "fell" into politics through this community involvement. Although the above

TABLE 8

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF MOTIVATION:
ENCOURAGEMENT BY OTHERS

Part I Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
	Yes	%	No	%
6. I was influenced by my husband's political career.	7	10.9	57	89.1
14. The political environment of my childhood developed my political interests.	39	46.4	45	53.6
16. My neighbors thought I was qualified and encouraged me to go into politics.	24	31.2	53	68.8
19. My work associates urged me to join them in their political activities.	11	14.1	67	85.9
21. The community thought I would be concerned with its needs.	38	60.3	25	39.7

is speculation it might be possible to explain it in terms of occupation. Most of the women in Werner's group had been employed outside the home, while there were a number of housewives in the Virginia group who may have had the opportunity to become locally involved.

Those statements of motivation based on successful semi-political experiences generally corresponded with the motivations of a plurality of the Virginia sample (Table 9, page 51). In particular, over three-fourths of the women felt they had been influenced by the observation of semi-political activities related to interest groups and/or non-partisan organizations (I-4). These responses are not significantly different from those in Werner's study, although the responses of her group seem to indicate more influence due to participation rather than observation.

The section dealing with the constructive use of time as a motivation for becoming politically active was considered applicable by a large number of Virginia women (Table 10, page 52). Werner found that most of those who responded this way were women with grown children and free time. In this study, however, when given the opportunity to respond to such a statement (having time and energy for politics after the children left home, I-10) half of those who considered the statement applicable disagreed with it. Thus, while some women in the Virginia study feel they were motivated to enter politics by the constructive use of time, these women did not necessarily



TABLE 9
RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF MOTIVATION:
SEMI-POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

Part I Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)	
	Yes %	No %
4. Observing the activities of nonpartisan organizations and/or interest groups made me realize the need for participation beyond voting.	61 80.3	15 19.7
15. I have always been active in local political activities.	49 55.7	39 44.3

TABLE 10

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF MOTIVATION:
CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

Part I Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
	Yes	%	No	%
5. Politics is a constructive way for me to keep busy.	52	78.8	14	21.2
10. After my children left home I had time and energy available for politics.	19	47.5	20	52.5

correspond with those women who have grown children, as was the case in Werner's study.

The final motivation is that of "learning experiences" which include traveling and college courses. In Werner's study it was the college-educated women who mentioned this motivation. In this study most of the women who deemed the statements applicable disagreed with them (Table 11, page 54). This included almost 75 percent of the women who had completed college and had done some post-graduate work.

One other set of statements was added to the questionnaire. This included such motivations as money (I-7) and prestige (I-9) and the influence of the equal rights amendment (I-18) and the women's liberation movement (I-20). No was the answer most often given to the statements by the women in Virginia (Table 12, page 55).

Werner found no evidence that the women in her group were motivated by a desire for prestige and status or for money. This was largely true in the Virginia study also. Since Werner's study was done before the equal rights amendment and the women's liberation movement gained such importance, none of the women in Werner's group were motivated to enter politics by either of these. This is still true of the Virginia group. In studying the age most of these women became politically active and the extent of political experience they have had it is evident that most of these women were already

TABLE II
 RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF MOTIVATION:
 "LEARNING EXPERIENCES"

Part I	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
Statements	Yes	%	No	%
2. The government courses I took in college affected my attitude toward participation in political activities.	17	27.0	46	73.0
12. Extensive traveling heightened my concern with the problems and challenges of government.	25	36.2	44	63.8

TABLE 12

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF MOTIVATION:
PRESTIGE AND/OR MONEY AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Part I Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
	Yes	%	No	%
7. I need the money to help support my family.	1	1.6	60	98.4
9. I was influenced by the prestige connected with holding a political office.	12	16.2	62	83.8
18. The equal rights amendment sharpened my political interests.	21	26.6	58	73.4
20. The women's liberation movement motivated me to become politically active.	5	6.2	76	93.8

politically active in Virginia before the women's movement became prominent.

Assets

The assets of women in political life comprise the second part of the questionnaire. The first category concerns the asset of women's greater social conscience and interest in community related legislation. Most of the women in this study did agree with this, inferring that women indeed have a special concern and understanding of community interests and legislation revolving around the home (Table 13, page 57). This response is much like that in Werner's study.

The second category states that an asset of women in politics is their freedom from outside pressures. As in Werner's study the Virginia women agreed that the lack of financial pressure, based on not being the breadwinner and having more flexibility, can be an asset. Most of them also agreed that women are not easily swayed and that facing issues on merit rather than popularity at the polls can be an asset (Table 14, page 58).

However, the Virginia women did not agree with the statement about political pressure: "The pressures of political groups are less likely to affect women" (II-1). Although it is just a supposition, this statement may well be obscure in its presentation. This may be why it does not fit the pattern of the other statements on pressure. It

TABLE 13

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S ASSETS:
SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Part II	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
Statements	Agree	%	Disagree	%
2. Legislation revolving around the home is a particular concern of women.	61	75.3	20	24.7
11. Consumerism and other community interests are better understood by women.	51	70.8	21	29.2

TABLE 14

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S ASSETS:
FREEDOM FROM OUTSIDE PRESSURES

Part II Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)		
	Agree %	Disagree %	%
1. The pressures of political groups are less likely to affect women.	23	51	68.9
9. Women have more flexibility in confronting issues.	46	22	32.4
10. Ordinarily not the bread-winner, a woman has fewer obligations and more time than a man whose business future may be affected.	54	28	34.1
14. In matters concerning community well-being women tend to be fearless.	42	30	41.7
17. Women are not easily swayed from positions they consider important.	63	21	25.0

may be that the respondents have not done as asked, which was to state whether or not it is an asset to be less affected by the pressures of political groups. Possibly the women responded with disagreement as a rejection of the statement itself.

Along the same line it can be argued that the respondents answered the other statements (2-17) on the basis of agreement with the statement itself and not whether it was an asset or not. However there is no reason at this time to believe that any obscurity in presentation would have significantly altered the responses. Although an interesting bit of speculation, it is only that and cannot be carried beyond this point or be conclusively proven.

The third category of assets contains women's methods of solving legislative problems. This includes such things as seeing both sides of a problem, being aware of the practical and the possible, and being able to listen and compromise. Certainly not all the women in Werner's sample listed this type of asset. But given the chance to merely agree or disagree, just barely half the respondents in the Virginia sample agreed that these methods of handling problems could be considered assets (Table 15, page 60). Not having any percentages from Werner's study to compare with this data nothing can be concluded. One can speculate that the Virginia women consider such methods for solving legislative problems as not belonging exclusively to women but rather are shared, also, by men involved in politics.

TABLE 15

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S ASSETS:
METHODS OF SOLVING LEGISLATIVE PROBLEMS

Part II Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
	Agree	%	Disagree	%
3. Women are more apt to see both sides of a problem.	38	55.9	30	44.1
5. Going thoroughly into the issues, women are more aware of the practical and possible.	36	58.1	26	41.9
13. Women are more likely to listen and compromise in solving problems since they play such a role at home.	40	56.3	31	43.7

Personality characteristics is the fourth category of assets of women in politics. Although slightly over half of the respondents agree that it can be an asset for women to consider politics as a part time activity (II-4), most of the women disagree with the other personality characteristics considered helpful by many women in Werner's sample (Table 16, page 62). Being faced with such a statement as "Women's freedom to express emotions complements 'male rationality'" (II-7), the respondents may have disagreed with the question of whether it was an asset or not. It is equally possible that the responses to all the statements in this category (not just the one mentioned) may truly reflect an attitude that these personality characteristics have no place in politics and/or they are liabilities rather than assets. Again, this is all speculation.

The final category of assets concerns the pioneering role of women politicians. Most of the women in the Virginia sample agree that it is an asset that politically active women serve a unique role by setting an example and by getting their views considered (Table 17, page 63). There is one exception to a general agreement with the responses of Werner's sample. This statement refers to the novelty of the woman politician and how this makes the public more attentive to her (II-6). It seems unlikely that the respondents would not consider an attentive public to be an asset. Possibly some of those who disagreed were objecting to the use of the word novelty.

TABLE 16

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S ASSETS:
PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

Part II Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)	
	Agree %	Disagree %
4. Women consider politics part time rather than a way of life.	40 55.6	32 44.4
7. Women's freedom to express emotions complements "male rationality".	21 28.8	52 71.2
15. Character perception is much sharper in women than men.	30 41.1	43 58.9
16. In not taking defeat as hard, women have a stabilizing affect on their male colleagues.	22 33.8	43 66.2

TABLE 17

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S ASSETS:
UNIQUE OR PIONEERING ROLE

Part II Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
	Agree	%	Disagree	%
6. Because of the novelty, the public is more attentive to a woman in politics.	23	29.9	54	70.1
8. Politically active women set an example for others to follow.	79	95.2	4	4.8
12. If her colleagues respect her, a woman has an edge in getting her views considered.	47	54.7	39	45.3

Liabilities

The third part of the questionnaire is concerned with the liabilities of women in politics. The first section contains those liabilities of adverse public opinion, of both politicians and voters. This includes such statements as: women are helpless and muddled; their place is in the home; because they are different, they are resented and distrusted; women are not accepted by men's political organizations; they should campaign for men, not compete with them. These liabilities were those most often mentioned in Werner's study. And these liabilities were those most completely agreed with by the women in the Virginia study (Table 18, page 65). Numerous statements were presented and most received at least 75 percent agreement and all over 50 percent agreement.

The liabilities in the next category are the limitations of social customs. The women in the Virginia study did not seem much concerned with the limits of such customs as informal discussion (III-7) and night campaigning (III-1). Just over 50 percent agreed with one statement and just over 50 percent disagreed with the other (Table 19, page 66). Thus, about half the respondents view social customs as a liability and about half do not. It is difficult to compare this data with Werner's results even though the barriers of social custom were considered one of the greater liabilities by her sample. There are, however, no percentages available for comparison. Also, after making

TABLE 18

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S LIABILITIES:
ADVERSE PUBLIC OPINION

Part III Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)		
	Agree %	Disagree %	
3. Many people still consider women to be helpless and disorganized.	71	14	16.5
4. Decisions on party policy usually do not include women.	47	38	44.7
8. Because she is different the female politician is often resented by other women.	44	32	42.1
9. The woman politician is often distrusted by male voters.	41	31	43.1
12. Many still consider a woman's place is in the home.	79	5	6.0
13. Men do not want women competing with them.	59	14	19.2
14. Men's political organizations have not totally accepted women.	61	20	24.7
17. Men want women to campaign for them.	87	3	3.5

TABLE 19

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S LIABILITIES:
TRADITIONAL SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Part III Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)		
	Agree %	Disagree %	Adjusted Frequency %
1. Night campaigning is hard for a lone woman.	39	48.8	41 51.3
7. Much informal discussion is carried on in places where women cannot mix in crowds of men.	43	55.1	35 44.9

social limitations a separate category Werner then refers to it as an extension of the category of adverse public opinion.

The category of emotional liabilities and extra demands made on women politicians has two subdivisions. There is no significant "agree" or "disagree" response to the emotional characteristics by the Virginia sample. Half of the respondents agree and the other half do not (Table 20, page 68). However, there is strong agreement (over 85 percent, adjusted frequency) that the extra demands made on women (III-2) are, indeed, liabilities. From the response of this group it appears that two categories, one for emotional liabilities and one for extra demands, might be more accurate in classifying the data.

The next category, physical liabilities, found little support among the politically active women in Virginia (Table 21, page 69). Apparently, the majority of them feel that women can just as easily cope with stress and strain as can men. Thus, this category was generally disagreed with by women in Virginia politics. Although physical liabilities were not among the greater liabilities mentioned by Werner's group, the lack of any figures prevents a comparison of data.

The conflicts between family obligations and political duties is the final category of liabilities. Most of the Virginia women agreed that for a married woman this could present problems and prove to be a liability (Table 22, page 70). This was the general conclusion of Werner's study.

TABLE 20

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S LIABILITIES:
EMOTIONAL LIABILITIES AND EXTRA DEMANDS

Part III Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)			
	Agree	%	Disagree	%
2. To become an effective legislator a woman must work much harder and longer than male politicians on a comparable level.	71	85.5	12	14.5
10. Women can be too impatient about things they really believe in.	36	50.7	35	49.3
16. At times women can be too meticulous in considering issues.	34	49.3	35	50.7

TABLE 21

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S LIABILITIES:
PHYSICAL LIABILITIES

Part III Statements	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)	
	Agree %	Disagree %
5. Long legislative sessions can drain a woman's stamina, as can rigorous campaigning.	18	77.5
11. Not being very forceful, women can have difficulty in being heard over others in political groups.	11	87.4

TABLE 22

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS OF WOMEN'S LIABILITIES:
CONFLICTING DUTIES

Part III	Responses (Adjusted Frequency %)	
Statements	Agree %	Disagree %
6. The family duties of a married woman politician conflict more with political duties than is the case with a man.	50	32
15. A married woman often needs and wants to spend time at home, especially if there are children.	71	9
	61.0	39.0
	88.8	11.3

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to make a comparison of the attitudes of a sample of women in Virginia politics with a sample of women state legislators studied by Emmy Werner. The subject matter revolved around their reasons for entering into politics and their attitudes about the assets and liabilities of women in political life.

Both studies used similar biographical data. The women in both studies do not seem very different from the "average" woman in terms of such things as marital status and occupation. They do seem to be more educated and have more political experience than the average. They also became active at an early age. They are largely motivated by a strong desire to help the community, not by prestige or their husband's career. They see certain advantages in being a woman in politics, such as more flexibility. However, the disadvantages they cite go back to the old beliefs shared by many. These include the notions that women are helpless and disorganized, should not be included in informal discussion, and should stay in the home. While differing in some respects from the "average" woman, both sets of women are still hampered by the old stereotypes of women. Thus, these women were not socialized totally into the role of the housewife, but entered politics instead. However, they recognize that the same

stereotypes still exist within the socialization process and that these interfere with women being in politics.

There are differences between the two studies which allowed only a limited comparison. As noted, Werner's questionnaire was done with open-end questions and her results and discussion contained no figures or percentages. This study used a closed-end questionnaire. However, it was taken from Werner's results and yielded useful statistics.

The data show that most of Werner's categories do hold for women working on a political level lower than the state legislature. Some categories are more strongly agreed with than others but no category is completely unsupported. Thus, it is not possible to accept some categories and reject others.

Although Werner did not give any numerical data, in her conclusion she listed the two motivations, two assets and two liabilities most frequently given by the women legislators in her sample. It is interesting to note that only in the case of assets do they both agree with those considered most important by women in Virginia. Both groups were motivated by a strong sense of moral commitment, but few in the Virginia sample were influenced by family or friends. Both groups consider women's social conscience to be an asset, along with their relative freedom from outside pressures. Adverse public opinion ranks with both groups as a liability while the barriers of traditional

social customs find support only from Werner's sample.⁴⁸

It seems likely that the differences in motivation can be explained by the level of positions held by each group. Already having been active on the local level, it is only natural when running for a higher (state) elective office to be influenced by, and even seek out, the opinions and encouragement of others, especially friends and relatives. This situation is in contrast with that of the women in the Virginia sample. Most of these Virginia women held positions below the state level. Many of the positions are part-time, and a sizeable number of all the positions are appointive rather than elective.

The differences of the two groups concerning the liabilities of traditional social customs can also be attributed to level of position. Being on a more local level, the women in the Virginia sample are less affected by the informal relationships of their male colleagues. They have somewhat more influence and are a numerically larger group than the women state legislators. These legislators are such a small percentage of all the state legislators that they need to be heard by their male colleagues and have them consider their ideas if they expect to gain support and influence. Apparently the women in the state legislatures are not as confident of other means of influencing legislation (sitting with the men on the floor of the house and knowing their wives) as were the women of the

⁴⁸ Werner, State Legislatures, p. 50.

Eighty-eighth Congress studied by Gehlen.

In the following summary, is a brief listing of those of Werner's categories most acceptable and least acceptable to the women in the Virginia study. Of the five categories of motivations the ones most often agreed with are a sense of moral commitment, the observations of the activities of semi-political organizations, and the constructive use of time. The ones least often agreed with are the encouragement by others and "learning experiences".

The most acceptable assets are women's social conscience, the pioneering role of women politicians, and freedom from outside pressures. The least acceptable are the methods of solving legislative problems, and personality characteristics.

These liabilities most often agreed with are those of adverse public opinion and the conflicts between family obligations and political duties. Those least often agreed with are the limitations of social customs, physical liabilities, and emotional liabilities (excluding the extra demands made on women).

Thus, it can be concluded that the purpose of this study has been accomplished. The attitudes of two samples of politically active women have been compared. Taking into account certain differences, it has been shown that the classification of the attitudes developed in Werner's study of one group can be applied to another group and another place successfully.

APPENDIX

The following is a sample of the questionnaire sent to 156 women active in Virginia politics. This sample contains the data from all ninety returned questionnaires. (No data refers to those who responded with "unsure" or "not applicable".)

I. Motivations

1. I wanted to help improve Virginia's political picture.	Yes	80
	No	1
	No data	9
2. The government courses I took in college affected my attitude toward participation in political activities.	Yes	17
	No	46
	No data	27
3. The legislative process needs a woman's viewpoint.	Yes	77
	No	2
	No data	11
4. Observing the activities of non-partisan organizations and/or interest groups made me realize the need for participation beyond voting.	Yes	61
	No	15
	No data	14
5. Politics is a constructive way for me to keep busy.	Yes	52
	No	14
	No data	24
6. I was influenced by my husband's political career.	Yes	7
	No	57
	No data	26
7. I need the money to help support my family.	Yes	1
	No	60
	No data	29

8.	I wanted to be in a strategic position to serve the public's needs.	Yes	56
		No	14
		No data	20
9.	I was influenced by the prestige connected with holding a political office.	Yes	12
		No	62
		No data	16
10.	After my children left home I had time and energy available for politics.	Yes	19
		No	20
		No data	51
11.	I feel that the "survival of mankind" depends on legislative participation.	Yes	57
		No	15
		No data	18
12.	Extensive traveling heightened my concern with the problems and challenges of government.	Yes	25
		No	44
		No data	21
13.	I thought the citizens had too little voice in state government.	Yes	60
		No	16
		No data	14
14.	The political environment of my childhood developed my political interests.	Yes	39
		No	45
		No data	6
15.	I have always been active in local political activities.	Yes	49
		No	39
		No data	2
16.	My neighbors thought I was qualified and encouraged me to go into politics.	Yes	24
		No	53
		No data	13
17.	I entered politics to represent the people in a governmental situation where interest groups have more than adequate representation.	Yes	36
		No	23
		No data	31
18.	The equal rights amendment sharpened my political interests.	Yes	21
		No	58
		No data	11

19.	My work associates urged me to join them in their political activities.	Yes	11
		No	67
		No data	12
20.	The women's liberation movement motivated me to become politically active.	Yes	5
		No	76
		No data	9
21.	The community thought I would be concerned with its needs.	Yes	38
		No	25
		No data	27

II. Assets

1.	The pressures of political groups are less likely to affect women.	Agree	23
		Disagree	51
		No data	16
2.	Legislation revolving around the home is a particular concern of women.	Agree	61
		Disagree	20
		No data	9
3.	Women are more apt to see both sides of a problem.	Agree	38
		Disagree	30
		No data	22
4.	Women consider politics part time rather than a way of life.	Agree	40
		Disagree	32
		No data	18
5.	Going thoroughly into the issues, women are more aware of the practical and possible.	Agree	36
		Disagree	26
		No data	28
6.	Because of the novelty, the public is more attentive to a woman in politics.	Agree	23
		Disagree	54
		No data	13
7.	Women's freedom to express emotions complements "male rationality".	Agree	21
		Disagree	52
		No data	17
8.	Politically active women set an example for others to follow.	Agree	79
		Disagree	4
		No data	7

9. Women have more flexibility in confronting issues.	Agree	46
	Disagree	22
	No data	22
10. Ordinarily not the bread-winner, a woman has fewer obligations and more time than a man whose business future may be affected.	Agree	54
	Disagree	28
	No data	8
11. Consumerism and other community interests are better understood by women.	Agree	51
	Disagree	21
	No data	18
12. If her colleagues respect her, a woman has an edge in getting her views considered.	Agree	47
	Disagree	39
	No data	4
13. Women are more likely to listen and compromise in solving problems since they play such a role at home.	Agree	40
	Disagree	31
	No data	19
14. In matters concerning community well-being women tend to be fearless.	Agree	42
	Disagree	30
	No data	18
15. Character perception is much sharper in women than men.	Agree	30
	Disagree	43
	No data	17
16. In not taking defeat as hard, women have a stabilizing affect on their male colleagues.	Agree	22
	Disagree	43
	No data	25
17. Women are not easily swayed from positions they consider important.	Agree	63
	Disagree	21
	No data	6
<u>III. Liabilities</u>		
1. Night campaigning is hard for a lone woman.	Agree	39
	Disagree	41
	No data	10

2.	To become an effective legislator a woman must work much harder and longer than male politicians on a comparable level.	Agree	71
		Disagree	12
		No data	7
3.	Many people still consider women to be helpless and disorganized.	Agree	71
		Disagree	14
		No data	5
4.	Decisions on party policy usually do not include women.	Agree	47
		Disagree	38
		No data	5
5.	Long Legislative sessions can drain a woman's stamina, as can rigorous campaigning.	Agree	18
		Disagree	62
		No data	10
6.	The family duties of a married woman politician conflict more with political duties than is the case with a man.	Agree	50
		Disagree	32
		No data	8
7.	Much informal discussion is carried on in places where women cannot mix in crowds of men.	Agree	43
		Disagree	35
		No data	12
8.	Because she is different the female politician is often resented by other women.	Agree	44
		Disagree	32
		No data	14
9.	The woman politician is often distrusted by male voters.	Agree	41
		Disagree	31
		No data	18
10.	Women can be too impatient about things they really believe in.	Agree	36
		Disagree	35
		No data	19
11.	Not being very forceful, women can have difficulty in being heard over others in political groups.	Agree	11
		Disagree	76
		No data	3
12.	Many still consider a woman's place is in the home.	Agree	79
		Disagree	5
		No data	6

13. Men do not want women competing with them.	Agree	59
	Disagree	14
	No data	17
14. Men's political organizations have not totally accepted women.	Agree	61
	Disagree	20
	No data	9
15. A married woman often needs and wants to spend time at home, especially if there are children.	Agree	71
	Disagree	9
	No data	10
16. At times women can be too meticulous in considering issues.	Agree	34
	Disagree	35
	No data	21
17. Men want women to campaign for them.	Agree	82
	Disagree	3
	No data	5

IV. Background questions

1. Age at which you first became politically active:	Under 20	26
	20-30	28
	30-40	23
	40-65	12
	Over 65	0
	No data	1
2. Marital status:	Single	14
	Married	63
	Divorced	3
	Widowed	8
	No data	2
3. Number of children:	One	7
	Two	22
	Three	18
	4 or more	18
	None	23
	No data	2
4. Race:	Caucasian	80
	Negro	9
	Other	1

5. Level of education:	Did not complete high school	1
	Completed high school	8
	Post-high school	21
	Completed business school	5
	Completed college	20
	Post-graduate work	34
	No data	1
6. Occupation:	Business and public relations	20
	Mass media	1
	Law	3
	Social service	4
	Teaching - grade school	5
	Teaching - high school	7
	Teaching - college	2
	Housewife	26
	Other	22
7. Extent of political experience:	Under 1 year	2
	1-2 years	2
	2-5 years	11
	5-10 years	29
	Over 10 years	46
8. Length of time you have held current position:	Under 1 year	11
	1-2 years	18
	2-5 years	32
	5-10 years	7
	Over 10 years	5
	No data	17
9. Party affiliation:	Republican	30
	Democrat	56
	Independent	3
	None	1
10. Level of position held:	Elected	
	State	28
	City	7
	County	11
	Appointed	
	State	9
	City	1
	County	7
	No data	27
11. Major areas of legislative interest: (open-end question, not used)		

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