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*Women as Political Animals? A Test of Some Explanations for Male-Female Political Participation Differences**

While many suggestions have been offered to explain why American women tend to participate in political activities slightly less than men, seldom have these explanations been subjected to a rigorous examination. Here, three plausible explanations drawn from prior research are discussed: first, the political socialization process that discourages women from playing an active political role; second, the family responsibilities that keep some women at home and out of the work force (the "situational" explanation), and third, the overrepresentation of women in demographic groups that have low participation levels (the "structural" explanation). The latter two explanations are tested directly using data from the SRC election studies of 1952, 1964, and 1972. Once situational and structural variables are controlled, there are no systematic differences in levels of male-female participation. In light of these findings, the validity of the political socialization explanation is discussed.

An Overtime Comparison of Female and Male Political Participation

While current evaluations of sex differences in American political participation are contradictory,[1] the dominant finding over the years has been that women participate less in political activities than do men (Lane, 1959:

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[1] For example, Jaros (1973, p. 44) asserts that:

There is no question that in the United States women are less politically active, are less participatory than men. They vote less, join fewer organizations, do less party work, read less and care less about politics.

Yet Soule and McGrath (1974) find that "women participate in voting and other civic activities only slightly less than men."

209–215; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1964, pp. 255–261; Verba and Nie, 1972: Chapter 6; Milbrath, 1965, pp. 133–137). While these differences have been reasonably consistent, though in many cases small, explanations for the differences have been untested to a surprising extent (but see Andersen, 1975; Pomper, 1975). Two explanations have been prominent: first, that women are socialized into a more politically passive role than men (Campbell, et al., 1964; Lane, 1959; Greenstein, 1965; Bone and Ranney, 1971, pp. 23–24); second, that women have special family responsibilities that prevent their full participation in politics (Campbell, et al., 1964; Lipset, 1963, p. 206). A third and less frequently explicit explanation is sometimes offered. This structural explanation contends that women are less likely to be found in those sectors of society with structural characteristics that enhance political participation: particularly highly educated parts of the community.[2] These three explanations will be referred to as the political socialization, the situational, and the structural explanations, respectively (see Orum, Cohen, Grossmuck, and Orum, 1974, pp. 197–204). These explanations are neither contradictory nor mutually exclusive. All might be working together, or the situational variables may contribute to and perpetuate the distinct political socialization patterns. Further, socialization patterns that have nothing to do with politics directly may influence the educational or occupational choices of females and thus contribute to the sex differences in these categories which then allow for the structural explanation. Despite this, these explanations seem conceptually distinct and would have different policy implications if similarity in male-female participation is a desired end.

In this paper evidence pertaining to each of these possible explanations will be briefly examined. Using three SRC election surveys covering twenty years, an attempt will be made to assess further the validity of each possible explanation. This study will supplement previous studies by attempting to deal systematically with the three explanations, by using multivariate techniques to explore simultaneously the impact of a variety of factors on participation, and by examining a variety of types of political participation.

An Overview of Past Research

Political Socialization

The stereotype of the politically passive woman has persisted despite the fact that participation of women has never been found to be much less than

[2] While women have higher mean levels of education than men, men more often have attended or graduated from college (U.S. Statistical Abstract). For the effect of this on voting see Gerald Pomper (1965), pp. 67–71).

that of men; early voting studies found about a ten percent difference, and when education was controlled, even those differences decreased. The interpretation placed upon the slightly lower rates of participation by women has frequently been a psychological one. Campbell and his associates (1964:29) for example, argue that women have been socialized into a politically passive role: ". . . what has been less than adequately transmitted to the women is a sense of some personal competence *vis à vis* the political world." (see also Lane, 1959, p. 215; Bone and Ranney, 1971, p. 24). Jaros (1973, p. 44) summarizes the thrust of the political socialization explanation in concluding that the relative nonparticipation of women does not, in general, stem from restrictions imposed on women. It results in large part from a set of norms that women hold that they should not participate as much as men, that politics is a man's game. "There is a cultural tradition of feminine nonparticipation transmitted in childhood."

As evidence for this assertion, Jaros cites Greenstein, but obviously relies on a larger body of childhood socialization literature for such a sweeping statement. For example, in a large study of 5,000 school children, Hess and Torney (1967, p. 194) concluded that "boys consistently display more active involvement and politicized concern than girls, especially in partisanship and polarization on political issues. . . ." Their direct evidence is a 0–3 scale reporting three campaign activities showing that boys participate slightly more than girls in grades 3–5 (differences in means of boys and girls range from .13 to .16 on this four-point scale), but that by grades 6–8 the two groups are essentially similar (1967, p. 192).

Greenstein (1965, p. 126) argues that his data "cast particular doubt on theories which suggest that political sex differences will disappear in the near future . . . these differences emerge early in life." Yet the differences Greenstein found were very small. In contrast to these findings, another early socialization study (Easton and Dennis, 1969) concludes that "sex differences are too small to be of great consequence for the operation of the system." A recent study of over 2,000 Illinois school children in grades 4–12 finds few significant differences between boys and girls in political participation, political partisanship, or political affect. Orum and his associates (1974, p. 206) summarize their findings by stating that "the political differences between boys and girls uncovered in this study are, in general, minor."

The assumption, then, that adult male and female participation differences have their origin in the female's childhood socialization which leads her to have very passive expectations about her political role is only very weakly supported by the childhood socialization evidence; differences between boys and girls in their childhood political attitudes and participation are small and inconsistent, and in the most recent study, negligible. Certainly, the findings

do not seem to support a general argument that most girls are receiving different childhood political socialization than are most boys.

Another variant of the socialization explanation, offered by Campbell and his associates, may have more validity. They argue that males and females were socialized in different ways, but that this socialization experience has changed over a period of time. The Nineteenth Amendment, allowing women to vote, and much more recently the Women's Liberation Movement both gave stimuli to political participation by women. If the Campbell "vestigial sex role" explanation has merit, then we would expect to find that participation differences between males and females occur only for certain groups of females that are most likely to be influenced by the older socialization tradition, such as older and less educated women.

Research by Andersen (1975) supports the hypothesis that *adult* socialization experience may have a significant impact on female participation. Using SRC election studies from 1952–1972, Andersen examines male-female participation in eight campaign activities. Using as a dependent variable a summed score of participatory activities, she finds that the participation of women has increased more than that of men but that even in 1972 men still participated in more activities than did women. However, participation of employed women approached that of men in 1970 and surpassed them in 1972. Housewives, on the other hand, peaked in participation in 1960 and have decreased since then. The conclusions are provocative. However, differences among the various categories of women and changes over time were very small; and no tests of significant differences are provided. Nevertheless, the Andersen analysis provides some support for an adult socialization explanation.[3]

The Situational Explanation

The situational explanation has not been extensively tested. It was one of the suggestions offered by the authors of the *American Voter* to explain lower female vote turnout in the 1956 election. The situational explanation

[3] Another kind of evidence for the political socialization explanation might be those works that have shown different male-female participation patterns in minority subcultures. Pierce and his associates (1973, pp. 422–430) found that among one subcultural group females participate at about the same level as men–in voting, campaign-related activities, and protest acts. In another recent study of an ethnic minority group, Welch, Comer, and Steinman (1973) discovered that after controlling for age, education, and political attitudes, sex explained no variance in any of four forms of political participation among Mexican-Americans.

argues that traditionally women have been kept busy within the home taking care of husband and children. They have little time to participate fully in politics, as this would involve being away from home and neglecting their familial responsibilities. Furthermore, by not working outside the home, a woman has less opportunity to become interested in politics, to expose herself to political argument and discussion, and so forth (Verba, 1965, pp. 333–334).[4] Thus, this argument hypothesizes that it is the presence of children and the absence of an outside the home work role that inhibits women's political participation.

Pomper's (1975, p. 73) analysis finds that the presence of small children in the home depresses female participation in some cases. Andersen's (1975, pp. 447–450) study also provides some support for the situational hypothesis in that working women participate in campaign activities more than housewives. Yet, her evidence indicates that housewives participate more than some categories of employed women. She has not empirically separated social class/income effects from the effects of employment per se. At the least, however, she shows that outside the home employment stimulates participation among some categories of women.

In sum, if the situational explanation was ever valid for a majority of women, it would seem to be less relevant today. More and more women are heads of households, or if married have entered the full-time work force rather than limiting themselves to a housewife role. Still, because male-female differences in participation are so small, it may be that the situational explanation applies to enough women to cause diminished rates of female participation.

The Structural Explanation

There have been many partial tests of the structural explanation. As early as the *American Voter,* it was shown that controlling for education removes some of the differences between male and female voting participation rates; among the highly educated, little differences remained. Pomper (1975) finds that in 1972, Northern women under 35 generally voted at higher rates than did the corresponding group of men, women in the middle-age range voted slightly more than men if they were college educated, significantly less if they had only a grade school education, and women over 55 voted substantially

[4] In some contexts employment might be viewed as a structural variable. However, in this case it is very much a part of the situational cluster: whether women are fulfilling their "traditional" stay at home role.

less than men if they were grade school educated, but also less than men even if they had a college or high school education. Among Southerners, the trends were somewhat different, with only college educated women in the middle and older categories voting more than the corresponding male groups. Thus, Pomper found that participation rates were a function of region and age, as well as sex, and in many demographic categories women in fact participate more than males (see also Lansing, 1974). However, because his analysis was done solely with cross-tabulations, one cannot make precise estimates of the relative effect on participation of sex and other variables.

Other recent works that discuss male-female differences examine the structural hypothesis much more indirectly. After analyzing political participation in six categories of acts, Verba and Nie (1972, p. 101) conclude that "Men are somewhat overrepresented in the more activist groups but not to a very great degree." They find that the largest differences in participation are between those of different status groups, such as income and education. Since in the most active categories the underrepresentation of women is far less than the underrepresentation of lower education and income groups, the hypothesis that differences in income and education may explain most male-female participation differences is a reasonable (but untested) one. Based on a study of a different set of participation acts, Olsen (1973, p. 193) also has concluded that women have slightly lower participation rates, but that other characteristics are much more related to participation (see also Soule and McGrath, 1974). On the whole, sex differences in levels of participation have been small enough—and the relative effect of a variety of structural characteristics unexplored enough—that a thorough investigation of the impact of structural features on comparative male-female participation rates seems in order.[5]

Hypotheses, Data, and Methods

Our analysis of comparative male-female participation will explore, for a variety of political acts, three alternative conditions, or hypotheses.

[5] The same kind of analysis of black-white participation rates has recently been done. While early studies showed low participation among blacks, more sophisticated analyses that simultaneously control for education, income, and other structural factors find that blacks participate to a greater extent than do whites in almost every political act (Olsen, 1970; Orum, 1966; Verba and Nie, 1972).

Controlling for structural factors that are usual predictors of participation:[6]

1. Male and female participation are essentially similar. This condition would of course support the structural hypothesis. If it is true, then male-female discrepancies are due to the different distribution of males and females throughout age, regional, income, and education categories.

2. Male participation is higher than that of females, but when situational factors are controlled, male-female rates become similar. The existence of this condition supports the situational explanation: that family ties and home-boundedness limit female political participation.

3. Male participation is consistently higher than that of women, even controlling for situational factors. The existence of this condition would give support to a socialization explanation, through it does not prove it directly or suggest how this socialization is done, since the childhood results have been so minimal.

We will be examining the existence of these various conditions at three points in time. Thus we may find that valid explanations for differences in 1952 may not be true today. Further, we are exploring these conditions for a variety of political acts, so that explanations that seem to hold for one activity may not be valid for another. However, the hypotheses will serve as a guide for interpreting the analysis which follows.

Data and Methods

The basis for our analysis will be three SRC election studies: 1952, 1964, and 1972. These three were chosen in order to examine changes over time. They are relatively evenly spaced over the twenty-year period, and they reflect elections with Democratic and Republican victors. Thirteen forms of political participation are examined. Five deal with attention to and interest in political campaigns. The other eight are voting and campaign acts that a respondent could perform: registering to vote, voting, trying to influence others, writing a public official, giving money, going to a political meeting, working for a party or committee, belonging to a political club.[7] In each case,

[6] Here we include age, region, education, and income. For a discussion of the importance of these factors see Verba and Nie (1972), Lane (1959), or Lansing (1974).

[7] The wordings of the questions can be found in the election study codebooks of the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, or can be obtained from the author upon request.

these variables are dichotomized so that 1 = participation, 0 = no participation. We examined these forms of participation separately for two reasons. First, we felt that if male-female participation differences could be expressed in terms of differences in percent participating, or in probabilities of participating in each act, then the findings would be more readily interpretable and transferred to "real" situations. Thus we did not combine participation into clusters or scales, even though there is little doubt in our mind of the theoretical validity of such an approach. Second, by examining each form of participation separately, differences might emerge between the sexes in terms of kinds of political activities engaged in. Scaling might blur the differences that do occur. The thirteen participation types encompass two of the participation varieties conceptualized by Verba and Nie (1972), and a third type not dealt with by them, but suggested by Milbrath (1965) and Olsen (1973). Of the Verba and Nie dimensions, we have voting and campaign activities; registering and voting obviously belong in the former category, while trying to influence a vote, giving money, attending political meetings or rallies, doing work for a party, and belonging to a political club can be classified as campaign activities. Writing to a public official is ambiguous. It conceivably could be labeled either a "communal" or a "parochial" or a "campaign" act (Verba and Nie, 1972), but since we have no information about the nature of the communication, we will not classify it. For activities indicating interest and attention to the campaign, we adopted Milbrath's (1965) "spectator" designation. These are activities requiring only a passive interest in politics. Unfortunately, no protest or other "nonestablishment" activity was assessed over time, nor do we have good over-time measures of other nonelectoral political acts.

After examining the frequency of participation by males and females in each form of political activity, we regress each of these variables on controls of age, region, education, and income (structural variables) and on a dummy variable where female = 1, male = 0 (Cohen, 1968; Miller and Erickson, 1974; Walker and Lev, 1953). The standardized regression coefficient for the sex dummy variable is equal to the difference in percent of females and males participating in that activity, controlling for the structural variables. It may also be interpreted as the difference between the probability that men will participate in the activity and women will participate in the activity.[8] The

[8] If PR (A) = the probability of participation in a given activity, according to the structural explanation:

$$PR(A) = b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + b_5x_5 + e$$

closer the unstandardized coefficient is to zero, the less difference in female and male participation rates, and the more equal the probability that individuals of each sex will participate. The participation variables were also regressed on both structural and situational variables.

Regressions were run on males and females separately with both situational and structural variables entered into the equation. This procedure allows us to examine the conditions which inhibit or stimulate female participation, and to compare them with factors influencing participation of males. Three dummy variables were constructed to measure three situational factors: whether or not the respondent is employed outside the home; whether or not the respondent is married; and whether or not children are present in the home.[9]

Finally, since employment and education are so important in predicting participation (Andersen, 1975; Verba and Nie, 1972), interaction terms were created to classify the following: college educated employed females, college educated unemployed females, moderately educated employed females, moderately educated unemployed females, little educated employed females, little educated housewives. Similar employment categories were created for men.[10] Using the other situational and structural controls, mean participation levels were computed through dummy variables regression for each of these categories.[11]

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where x_1 = region; x_2 = age; x_3 = education; x_4 = income; x_5 = sex, where 1 = female, 0 = male. b_5 then is the difference between the probability that any given male will participate in the act and the probability that any given female will participate in the act. Or in an aggregate interpretation, it represents the difference in male and female mean participation levels in the activity. See Stokes (1966).

[9] For the purposes of this study, the "children" questions of 1952 and 1972 are less than perfectly satisfactory. The 1972 question asked only how many children between 5 and 18 in housing unit, while the 1952 question asked if the respondent had children in school. However, in 1964 information about the ages of the children was provided. For that year, an analysis using as a variable presence of children under 5½ produced no significantly different results than using children under 18.

[10] Almost all the jobless women were housewives. Jobless or unemployed will be used in the following text to mean unemployed outside the home.

[11] The mean scores were computed in the following way. Regressions were done entering the control variables and 11 dummy interaction variables. The dummy variable for employed less educated males was the omitted twelfth category. From the unstandardized regression coefficients of these dummy variables the mean participation scores for each category were calculated according to the following formula:

$$b_1 = (-1)\,[(b_2)\,(\text{prop}_2) + (b_3)\,(\text{prop}_3) + \ldots (b_{12})\,(\text{prop}_{12})]$$

$$\text{Adjmean}_1 = M + b_1 \quad \text{Adjmean}_2 = \text{Adjmean}_1 + b_2 \quad \text{Adjmean}_3 = \text{Adjmean}_1 + b_3 \ldots, \text{etc.}$$

Findings

Table 1 presents figures showing the difference (in percent) between male and female participation 1952, 1964, and 1972 in the 13 forms of political activity. In 1952 males participated more than did females in 11 of 12 acts, and significantly more in 8 of these. By 1972, males participated more in 11 of the 13 acts, 6 differences being statistically significant. Females have higher rates of participation in 2 of the campaign activities: working for a party or candidate and belonging to a political club.

The Structural Explanation

Table 1 also shows male female differences in participation when structural variables have been controlled. Males participated more than females in 1952 in 11 of 12 political acts, but only in 5 were the differences significant, and all but 3 of the differences were of less than 5 percent. In 1972, males participated slightly more than females in 11 of 13 activities, but in only 3 of these were differences statistically significant. Males were more likely than females to try to influence others to vote a certain way, to follow campaign activities on the radio, and to express a high or moderate interest in the election campaign. Women, on the other hand, are significantly more likely than men to belong to a political club. Other forms of activities display only slight differences between males and females.

Controlling for the structural variables does reduce male-female participation differences in most, if not all instances. The reductions, however, are generally small; this is not surprising since the original differences in most cases were also small.

Where b_2 to b_{12} are the unstandardized regression coefficients (b weight) of the 11 dummy variables entered into the question, b_1 is the adjusted b weight for the omitted category. Prop = proportion of cases scoring 1 on each dummy variable. $\bar{M}$ = grand mean of dependent variable. Adjmean is the adjusted mean of the dependent variable for each value of the dummy variable. Thus adjusted mean_1 would be the mean participation score of employed less educated males.

This is the procedure used in computing adjusted means in a Multiple Classification Analysis (see Andrews, Morgan and Sonquist, 1967) where the interaction and control variables are the predictor variables. The only substantive difference in the MCA and the dummy variable regression procedure is that in a regression, the control variables can be left as continuous variables instead of converted to ordinal categories. The procedure described above is also equivalent to the adjusting means procedure in analysis of covariance. See Walker and Lev (1953, pp. 397–398, also Cohen, 1968; Miller and Erickson, 1974).

In only a few cases do structural factors eradicate male-female participation differences, though in most cases they reduce the differences to statistical insignificance. After controlling for the structural factors, sex accounts for less than 50 percent of the variance in 33 of these 38 regressions with structural controls.

In sum, structural factors are important in explaining male-female participation differences, but do not account for the entire difference.

The Situational Explanation

Column III in Table 1 shows the difference between levels of male and female participation after controlling for both situational and structural variables. While the structural controls reduce male-female participation differences, adding the situational variables to the regression equation effectively eradicates them in 1964 and 1972. In 1972, for instance, differences in three of the thirteen forms of participation were statistically significant at the .05 level. Two show higher female participation, only one higher male participation. Males participate in spectator activities slightly more than females, but none of the differences are significant. Even in 1952, only 2 male-female participation differences were significant, though the direction of the signs clearly indicates a pattern of greater male participation. In 1964, there are also 2 significant differences, but for that year we see greater female participation in a number of activities.

In sum, when situational and structural characteristics are accounted for, by 1972 females participate more than males in 6 of the 8 activities, while slightly lagging behind males in 5 of 6 forms of attention to the campaign. The one activity where men participate significantly more than women is an interesting one: whether the individual has tried to influence another person's vote. In this one particular case, it does appear that women are indeed more politically passive than men, in that they are not as aggressive as men in trying to influence another person's vote. It could be of course, that they simply do not perceive and/or report themselves as trying to influence votes as often as do men, but that is a measurement problem beyond the scope of this paper. Those 2 activities where women participate more than men are equally interesting. Women more often belong to political clubs and do party work than do men. This finding should not be surprising, in that observers have often noted that women seem to be the backbone of many political campaigns, even though they are not found in the leadership positions.

The impact of situational factors was also assessed separately for each

TABLE 1

Male-Female Participation Differences

Voting and Campaigning	1952 I No Controls	1952 II Structural Controls[c]	1952 III All Controls[e]	1964 I No Controls	1964 II Structural Controls	1964 III All Controls	1972 I No Controls	1972 II Structural Controls	1972 III All Controls
Registering[a]	−.08*[b]	−.04*[d]	−.07	−.04*	−.04*	−.01	.03	−.01	02
Voting	−.10*	−.08*	−.08*	−.06*	−.06*	−.02	.06*	−.03	−.01
Influencing Vote	−.11*	−.10*	−.09*	−.10*	−.09*	−.05*	.09*	−.06*	−.05*
Writing Official	–	–	–	−.02	−.02	−.00	.03	−.00	.01
Giving Money	−.04*	−.03*	−.02	−.02	−.02	.02	.03	−.01	.00
Political Meeting	−.01	−.01	−.01	−.02	−.02	.01	.03*	−.00	.01
Party Work	−.02*	−.02	−.02	−.00	−.01	.01	.02	.02	.03*
Political Club	−.00	−.00	−.01	.00	.00	.02	.02	.03*	.02

Spectator Activities									
Interest	−.05*	−.02	−.01	−.02	−.01	.00	−.07*	−.05*	−.05
Newspapers	−.08*	−.06*	−.05	−.04	−.04*	−.02	−.06	−.04	−.00
Radio	−.04	−.04	−.04	−.04	−.07*	−.07*	−.09*	−.09*	−.07
TV	−.04*	−.02	−.01	−.03	.01	.01	−.04*	−.03	−.04
Magazines	−.03	−.02	−.04	−.04	−.05*	−.02	−.05	−.02	−.03

[a]These are the standard SRC participation items. Because of space limitations they could not be completely listed. See note 7.

[b]The figures represent the difference between the mean male and female participation rates. A negative sign indicates higher male participation. All participation variables have been made into dummy variables so the results can be interpreted in percents. For the interest variable, very or somewhat interested was coded 1, slightly interested (1964 alternative) and not interested coded 0. For the media variables, if the respondent indicated they used the media at all to follow the campaign, the coding was 1.

[c]Age, region, education and income.

[d]The figures represent the mean percent difference in participation rates after controlling for the demographic variables. This value is of course the unstandardized regression coefficient since all dependent variables and the sex variable are dummy variables.

[e]These are mean percent differences after both situational and structural variables have been controlled. Situational variables include employment, marriage, and children.

*Differences significant at .05 level.

sex.[12] The predominant pattern is that the situational factors of marriage and children (controlling for the structural variables) generally affect male and female participation in the same way. Marriage, in general, has a slight or negligible effect on participation in most forms of political activity. Where it does have effects, they are the same for both sexes. In only one instance does marriage seem to have contradictory effects. It slightly improves the likelihood of females writing letters to public officials, but slightly decreases the likelihood of males doing so. In no case does marriage produce a statistically significant increase in the participation of one sex and a statistically significant decrease in the other.

The presence of children in the home has even less effect on participation than does marriage. Again, most of the minimal effects have a similar impact on both men and women. The presence of children did diminish the propensity to vote by men in 1972, but had no effect on women in that year or on people of either sex in previous years. In 1964, women with children were significantly less likely to follow the campaign on radio and TV than those without children, but in 1972 the effect on these variables of having children was similar for males and females.

Contrary to the effects of marriage and children, the third situational factor, work outside the home, produces a dramatic increase in female voting and on other forms of activity (Table 2). The positive effect on participation of employment outside the home has increased over time. The effect was not as great in 1964, and in 1952, working actually diminished female participation slightly. The effect of employment on males, on the other hand, was small and insignificant. In 1964 and 1972, employment by males decreased their attention to the campaign, though it did not impede voting or other activities.

Two explanations seem plausible for the differential effect of employment on males and females. First, the woman who goes to work outside the household may be a more adventurous, self-confident person than one who stays at home, and this self-confidence could carry over into the political arena; or, conversely, the work experience itself may produce confidence which transmits itself into increased political efficacy.[13] For males, there may not be such a pronounced self-selection process. Second, it may be that for most males, unemployment is a temporary condition, such as short-term

[12] Because of space limitations, these tables are not shown. The author will gladly supply them on request.

[13] Andersen (1975) shows that working women have higher political efficacy than housewives.

TABLE 2

The Effect of Working Outside the Home on Participation

	1952		1964		1972	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Voting and Campaigning						
Registering	.01[a]	−.07*	.07	.06*	.04	.09*
Voting	.03	−.02	.02	.07*	−.01	.08*
Influencing Vote	−.03	.03	.08	.02	−.05	.07*
Writing Official	–	–	.01	.00	.01	.04
Giving Money	.05	.00	.04	.05*	.05	.01
Political Meeting	−.02	−.01	.07	.03	−.02	.04*
Party Work	.03	−.02	.01	.01	.03	.02
Political Club	−.02	−.01	.02	.03	.01	−.01
Spectator Activities						
Interest	−.04	.01	.01	.04	−.07	.01
Newspapers	.01	.01	−.07	−.01	.06	.10*
Radio	−.03	.03	−.06	.01	−.07	.09*
TV	.15*	−.01	−.05	−.03	−.11*	−.00
Magazines	.06	−.02	.10	−.05	−.10	.00

[a]See note to Table 1 for coding. All structural variables have been controlled. The figures represent the impact on percent participating of working outside the home. For example, working outside the home diminished female voting in 1952 by 2 percent, increased it in 1964 and 1972 by 7 and 8 percent, respectively. These figures are unstandardized regression coefficients.

loss of work, or a relatively new condition, such as retirement. Under these conditions, patterns of behavior learned while working may simply carry over to the unemployed stage. The unemployed woman, however, is almost always a housewife; a status that may provide a long-term set of behavior and attitudinal patterns.

We may understand these processes better if we look at the effect of work on participation of different kinds of people. For example, does outside the household employment make more of an impact on college educated women or those with little education, or does it affect both groups equally? To answer this we use the interaction dummy variables representing twelve combinations of the employment, education, and sex variables. We then obtain an unstandardized regression coefficient for each category on each participation variable, controlling for all other structural and situational

variables. Using these coefficients, mean levels of participation for each group were calculated (see note 11). Table 3 shows the results of this analysis for 1972.

In the employed category, college educated women participate more than college educated men in most activities. Exceptions include trying to influence the vote of someone else, and three of the spectator activities. Among employed high school graduates, women tend both to follow the media and participate in the campaign acts slightly more than males, though the differences are minute. The less educated employed males and females participate fairly equally in most activities.

The pattern among the unemployed group is more mixed. Part of the problem in interpretation is that in all cases the number of unemployed high school educated males is less than 50, and in some cases the number of unemployed college educated males is also less than 50. Despite this, some tentative conclusions can be drawn. Among the college educated, participation by the jobless of both sexes is almost as great as their employed counterparts. The unemployed high school graduates vote less than their employed counterparts, but in other types of participation they do not lag far behind (and in some cases exceed) those who are employed. Females among this group exceed male participation in 7 activities, and males exceed in 6. The females participate more than males in voting and campaign acts, where males are generally more active in 16 spectator activities.

It is among the jobless less educated group that the males clearly participate more than the females, though even here in 5 acts the two sexes participate at about the same rate. Here Campbell's vestigial sex role explanation may be applicable. Or, it may be that the situational explanation is valid: housewives with little education are likely to be those with little income, large families, and few resources to permit them to get away from their routine family obligations.

Discussion

Our analysis has shown that the stereotype of the politically passive woman simply is untrue. Women as a whole participate as much as men once structural and situational factors are considered. Among the unemployed low educated, males clearly exceed females in participation, but this is counterbalanced by the employed college educated group where the reverse is true. Women participate in the aggregate less than men not because of some belief that they hold about the role of women in politics, but largely because they are less likely to be found in those categories of people who participate in

TABLE 3

Mean Participation Levels of Various Categories of Respondents in 1972 Controlling for Age, Region, Income, Marriage, and Children (percent)

	Employed						Unemployed					
	College		H.S.		Less Than H.S.		College		H.S.		Less Than H.S.	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Voting and Campaigning												
Registering 80[a]	88[b]	96	77	88	72	73	(90)	82	(72)	80	83	65
Voting 72	84	89	77	80	64	61	89	86	(58)	69	73	55
Influencing vote 32	52	45	29	24	28	30	47	33	(25)	24	25	23
Writing Official 27	45	49	27	29	13	17	37	39	(29)	26	24	17
Giving Money 10	20	22	10	6	6	4	14	19	(2)	6	4	5
Political Meeting 9	16	22	9	11	7	6	14	13	(5)	8	13	7
Party Work 5	6	16	3	4	4	2	5	7	(0)	6	0	1
Political Club 3	3	8	3	4	2	2	4	9	(0)	4	3	4
Spectator Activities												
Interest 73	86	88	76	71	68	60	92	89	86	73	74	66
Newspapers 58	76	76	61	55	43	60	(79)	71	(29)	48	59	41
Radio 43	53	48	42	47	54	38	(52)	41	(39)	35	51	36
TV 88	92	89	87	89	82	81	(94)	88	(90)	84	100	88
Magazines 33	56	50	29	30	12	21	(76)	48	(32)	29	26	27

( ) less than 50 cases

[a]The figures following the row headings are the total percent of the sample engaging in each political act. For example, 80 percent of the sample has claimed to register, 3 percent to belong to a political club.

[b]These figures are adjusted mean percent participation for each group after controlling for structural variables, marriage, and children. See text and footnote 11.

politics: the employed and highly educated, in particular. The impact of marriage and children on political participation is practically the same for males and females. The situational variable of participation in the work force, however, does have an impact on participation, particularly on participation of the less educated. In fact, it is only among the less educated that women clearly participate less than males. For the college and high school educated, employment does not substantially improve female participation rates compared to males.

We did not directly deal with the validity of the socialization explanation. However, by showing that males and females are little different in their participation as adults, the socialization explanation becomes rather irrelevant, except for the one category of adults where women do continue to participate less than men. Even in 1952, the overall participation differences between males and females were very small in most activities, leading one to question whether the socialization explanation was valid even then.

Viewing the 13 activities categorized as "voting," campaigning, and spectator acts, we again see little to support the socialization explanation. Women may lag slightly behind in spectator or passive activities, but they are equals in voting and campaigning roles. The socialization explanation would certainly not predict this outcome. Why many political scientists favor the childhood political socialization explanation as a reason for so much of adult political behavior is unclear (but see Bourque and Grassholtz, 1974; Boals, 1975).

A subject we have not explicitly discussed is discrimination as a factor in male-female participation differences. We can see that in these routine political acts discrimination works mostly indirectly. Women may lag behind in participation because they have been discriminated against in terms of getting a good education or high paying job—factors that seem to propel one toward political activity, rather than because they are shut out of party headquarters because of their sex alone. On the other hand, when we examine a different form of political activity—such as running for office or directing a campaign—it is undoubtedly true that discrimination is more direct, though there too structural factors play a role. And examination of factors promoting or inhibiting female participation at that level of activity would seem a worthwhile next research step.

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