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## A Political Profile of Utah Women

Ann Wassermann  
*Utah State University*

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A POLITICAL PROFILE OF UTAH WOMEN

By

Ann Wassermann

In Partial Fulfillment of  
Requirements of Honors Degree

Utah State University

1973

### Acknowledgements

I will forego the usual thanks to parents who supported me in my college days at USU, and to the various teachers and friends who have shown an interest in my work. Although I am of course indebted to them, there is really one person whom I would like to thank publicly. Dr. Dan E. Jones of the Political Science Department has spent many unpaid hours helping me in my college career, and serving as my thesis advisor. It was also mainly because of him that I regained the desire to complete my B.S. degree at Utah State. It is with much pleasure and gratitude that I thank a professor so dedicated to the career of teaching and his students.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper is a product of the desire to take advantage of the enormous amount of valuable data available in the files of the Bureau of Government and Opinion Research at Utah State University. The manpower and financial demands of doing the actual polling and getting the totals quickly to the public or private client make a detailed analysis of the conglomerate of studies a near impossibility.

It was my purpose to undertake a segment of just this type of research and integration of data. The increasing frequency with which women as a minority and voting group have been refferred stimulated many questions in my mind. Because of data and time considerations, I have limited my inquiry to a relatively narrow time span, that of the years 1970-1973. These same considerations dictated that I confine the scope of the project to women in Utah, their political power, voting patterns, and their placement on the political spectrum.

Three basic questions must be confronted in an analysis of this intent. First, what, if any, political power or influence in office do Utah women exert? Second, where do they stand on social and political issues? Third, how do they express their political leanings in the voting booth?

Only when Utah women have been ascribed a political characterization, founded in data of voting patterns and responses to public opinion questionnaires, can one begin the political speculation which is the eternal temptation facing a political analyst. (Indeed, it is a temptation to anyone who gets

bitten by the political bug). That temptation will not be denied in this paper, but it will be - hopefully - deferred until the concluding section.

It is my hope that this work will not of necessity be judged merely the completion of a degree in the Honors program at Utah State University, but will in fact throw new, relevant light on a matter of increasing political significance.

## I. WOMEN IN OFFICE

In terms of female elected officeholders on a state and national basis, the power of Utah women can be described in two words: almost nill.

Since World War II, not one national elective office has been held by a female Utahn. The picture on the state level is almost the same. Since 1965, the greatest number of women elected to the state legislature for any one session has been six; in that same span of time, not one woman has served in the Utah Senate.

Year	UTAH LEGISLATURE	
	Women	Total Legislators
1965	4	27
1967	3	28
1969	4	28
1971	5	28
1973	6	29

On a non-elective level, Utah women have fared much better, the apex of power being achieved by Jean Westwood in 1972 with her brief tenure as head of the Democratic National Committee.

## II. SURVEYS

In order to depict the characteristic Utah woman in a politically meaningful manner, it is necessary to both present her political and attitudinal nature in isolation, and then to compare this nature with that of her male counterpart.

A survey dated December, 1970,<sup>1</sup> queried Utahns on their opinion of the most important issue facing the Utah Legislature. Of those females giving an answer (31.4% responded "don't know"), the following results were obtained:

### MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE - FEMALE<sup>2</sup>

Drugs	13.8%
Pollution of Resources	11.0%
Taxes & Finance	10.7%
Education	9.7%
Other	8.6%
Welfare	7.2%
Crime	6.6%
Liquor	1.4%

A similar ranking of the male responses (20.1% did not know) reveals a much different ordering of priorities.

### MOST IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE ISSUE - MALE

Taxes & Finance	18.5%
Other	15.2%
Education	12.9%
Drugs	8.9%
Pollution of Resources	8.3%
Crime	6.6%
Welfare	5.9%
Liquor	3.6%

<sup>1</sup>All polls and surveys used here, unless otherwise noted, are the work of the Bureau of Government and Opinion Research, Dr. Dan E. Jones, Director, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

<sup>2</sup>More detailed charts of the surveys used in this paper can be found in the Appendix.

A slight variation of priorities between male and female on matters of national scope surfaces in a 1972 survey.<sup>3</sup>

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING UNITED STATES

FEMALE		MALE	
Other	16.3%	Economy	26.4%
Viet Nam	15.2%	Other	20.8%
Taxes	13.0%	Welfare &	13.4%
Welfare &	12.5%	Unemployment	
Unemployment		Vietnam	11.6%
Economy	12.0%	Taxes	6.5%
Crime	6.5%	Crime	6.5%
Environment	4.3%	Environment	4.6%
Don't Know	20.1%	Don't Know	10.2%

In comparison, the preceding two surveys pose some puzzling inconsistencies. On a state level, women are more concerned with social factors such as drugs and pollution than men. In a 1973 survey of legislative issues, the respondents were asked to rate drug control on a priority basis. The results follow:

	Female	Male
High priority	46.2%	32.2%
Low priority	53.8%	67.8%

Yet on a national level, the female concern for matters of finance is almost equal to that of the male's. Two possible explanations come to mind: one, that in the time span of two years (1970-1972) the economic factors became more of a pressing matter to both men and women, and two, that women regard the area of economics to be a national concern, and that the role of the state government is to monitor quite closely the social and physical environment. In other words, matters handled by the state government more closely approach the realm of a housewife or mother than do the affairs of national politics.

<sup>3</sup> Harris and Love, March 1972.



Women appear to frequently have closer ties to the line advocated by the L.D.S. church than do men. A 1970 survey dealing with the Sunday closing law revealed 45.4% of the women favored the law, while only 32.4% of the men did so. The gap between men and women in opposition was even wider: 37.9% of women opposed the law, as did 54.8% of the men.

The 1970 legislative issues survey indicated the widespread reluctance of women as well as men to raise taxes. Of the female sample, 24.6% felt a raise in taxes necessary, as compared to 67.6% in opposition. Men were a little more willing to raise taxes (30.8% in favor, 64.6% opposed).

A plurality of women (36.4%) in Utah would afford education most favorable financial treatment in state spending. The 1970 survey corresponds to the relatively high number of women citing drug control as the most important legislative issue; 26.5% of women polled would give drug control the most favorable financial treatment, with pollution control next (14.8%). Men agree with women on the importance of educational funding (35.4% rank it first) but reverse the order of pollution control and drug control--19.3% and 17.4%, respectively.

Women tend to take a harder line than men in educational affairs. When asked if they favor a teacher-school board arbitration agency, 51.9% of the women polled responded "yes". Men took a different view, perhaps reflecting a general dislike for arbitration agencies by the labor class. Only 43.8% of the men favored the agency.

Women also tend to give schools and teachers in general a mixed rating. A 1973 survey asked if the respondents believed the public schools in their

community are more effective, less effective, or the same as ten years ago.

Women gave the following vote:

More effective	45.8%
Less effective	18.1%
Same	17.7%
Don't Know	18.4%

When asked to rate teachers, 29.8% of Utah women cited them as giving great strength to the school system, while 14.7% listed them as the greatest problem facing the schools. Men were substantially in agreement.

The volatile issue of sex education was surprising in the overwhelming support it received. The following question was asked in April of 1973:

"Do you approve or disapprove of sex education being taught in public schools by qualified personnel?" Of those polled, 76.5% of the women voiced approval, as did 71.7% of the men.

Men and women were in almost total agreement on the confidentiality of press sources, with 54.2% of the women and 54.0% of the men supporting the right of confidentiality.

A May 1973 survey found that 65.7% of Utah women believed President Nixon was aware of the Watergate cover-up, and 45.6% voiced approval of the way he was handling his job. This coincided quite closely with national survey figures.

Through the preceding discussion, it becomes quite clear that Utah women deviate rather slightly in their political views from Utah men. However, no discussion would be complete without an investigation of public opinion on the then-proposed approval of the 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution,

the Equal Rights Amendment. Perhaps more than any other issue, the ERA uncovered interesting gulfs between the opinion of male and female voters. Of the women interviewed, 54.5% voiced approval, this in comparison to 66.8% male approval.<sup>4</sup>

The complexities of the situation are far too many for a report of this nature. However, for the sake of speculation, one additional breakdown is interesting. When those interviewed were cross-tabulated by religion, these results were obtained:

	L.D.S.	Protestant	Catholic	None
Favor	55.4%	72.7%	73.5%	78.8%
Oppose	36.0%	15.2%	14.3%	15.2%
Don't Know	8.6%	12.1%	12.2%	6.1%

Pairing up the figures, one arrives at the following:

	Women	L.D.S. (men and women)
Favor	54.5%	55.4%
Oppose	35.8%	36.0%
Don't Know	9.7%	8.6%

The available data can take one no further, unless it is to the treacherous grounds of second-guessing.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted here that, despite the obvious majority opinion, the ERA was defeated overwhelmingly during the 1973 Utah Legislative session. Somen were the most vocal opponents of passage of the bill.

### III. POLLS

A classification of Utah women by party labels indicates that there is little, if any, difference in party affiliation between male and female voters.

In a 1973 survey, the party breakdown for the total sample was:

Democrat	34.3%
Republican	33.3%
American Independent	1.2%
Independent	27.7%

A cross-tabulation of women voters in a 1971 survey produced almost the same results as above.

Democrat	36.6%
Republican	37.2%
American Independent	1.2%
Independent	24.7%

An examination of election-eve poll results from the 1970 and 1972 state and national elections points out some voting characteristics of the female population.

In 1970, 48.8% of the females polled in the First Congressional District favored Senator Moss, a Democrat, in his Senate re-election bid, while 51.2% of those same voters favored Richard Richards, a Republican, in the congressional race.<sup>5</sup>

In the Second District, 58.3% of the women supported Moss, although 55.2% favored Representative Sherm Lloyd, a Republican, in the congressional contest. This type of trend was continued in 1972; while 71.3% of Utah women supported Richard Nixon in his presidential re-election bid, 70.5% also supported Democratic Governor Calvin Rampton. The two Democratic

<sup>5</sup>This poll, dated Oct. 31, 1970, missed the last-minute shift of votes to the eventual winner, Gunn McKay.

Congressional candidates also won their respective contests.

It is impossible to make a definitive, fully explanatory statement of this type of voting behavior. The candidates were not elected by women alone, and neither were they running for office nor the voters making their decisions in a vacuum. However, it is valid to say that Utah can disclaim any label of being a solid party state; split-ticket voting and the swing of the Independents are of paramount importance.

One feature of the polls might be able to throw some light on these unpredictable trends. In all of the races mentioned above, the eventual winners (although in the McKay-Richards race Mr. McKay did not have a majority of female support on the day of the poll), all received a greater percentage of female support than of male support.

1970

	Male	Female
Richards (Rep.)	49.6%	51.2%
McKay (Dem.)	<u>38.4%</u>	<u>42.0%</u>
Lloyd (Rep.)	<u>53.3%</u>	<u>55.2%</u>
Nance (Dem.)	35.8%	33.5%

1972

	Male	Female
Nixon (Rep.)	<u>66.2%</u>	<u>71.3%</u>
McGovern (Dem.)	23.6%	21.3%
Strike (Rep.)	30.3%	25.8%
Rampton (Dem.)	<u>66.6%</u>	<u>70.5%</u>

In every instance, it may be noted that the candidate who received more female than male support was the eventual victor. Of course this can, by no stretch of the imagination, be taken as a foolproof guide. But in the case of

predicting a toss-up election, this pattern might be of more consequence than flipping a coin.

The voting pattern of women with respect to propositions on the election ballot is not conclusive, but there exist certain definite traits.

In the 1970 and 1972 elections, voting intentions on eight propositions were asked of respondents in election-eve polls. Women voiced support of four of the eight issues, but in seven out of eight propositions, the percentage of female approval was less than of the male voters. The one exception was the proposed fluoridation of water, which 51.2% females favored as compared to 45.9% males. In every case but fluoridation, at least a plurality of women agreed with the vote of the men. Fluoridation was also the only issue for which the percentage of "don't know" responses of women (11.6%) was less than that of the men (11.9%). In all other cases, the female "don't know" percentage was greater, sometimes by a margin of almost two-to-one.

## CONCLUSION

It is at times awkward to end a paper with the statement that the significance of the research was that there was no significance. In a way, this must be said of the preceding data. Although there were a few nuances of voting movements that could daringly be interpreted as significant deviation, a close examination of Utah women politically inevitably leaves one at the conclusion that there really is no difference between male and female voters. Perhaps aberrations of politics occasionally stir up unique female voting qualities (the ERA must be considered just such an aberration) but in the absence of such events, women as a voting group are virtually indistinguishable from men.

However, to put my first statement in a different light, there is something extremely significant about this lack of differentiation. The absence of voting differences between men and women has several political consequences. First, it is obvious that a possible motivation for getting women out of their traditional roles of housewives and mothers and into the political arena, the impetus which is derived from inadequate representation of political and social beliefs, simply does not exist in Utah. Utah women can be content with male elected officials because they represent the beliefs of both men and women. Dissatisfaction with a male elected official will probably be based not on views stemming from the female psyche, but from views shared by both sexes.

Second, any woman running for state and national office will do well to avoid a feminist campaign. Indeed, a feminist campaign, such as that

APPENDIX



TABLE 1

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES DECEMBER 1970

"Most Important Issue"

	Male	Female	Total
Pollution of Resources	8.3%	11.0%	9.6%
Drugs	8.9	13.8	11.3
Education	12.9	9.7	11.3
Welfare	5.9	7.2	6.6
Crime	6.6	6.2	6.4
Liquor	3.6	1.4	2.5
Taxes & Finance	18.5	10.7	14.7
Other	15.2	8.6	12.0
Don't Know	20.1	31.4	25.6

TABLE 2

HARRIS & LOVE SURVEY, 1972

"Most Important Issue Facing U.S."

	Male	Female	Total
Economy	26.4%	12.0%	19.8%
Taxes	6.5	13.0	9.5
Vietnam	11.6	15.2	13.3
Crime	6.5	6.5	6.5
Welfare & Unemployment	13.4	12.5	13.0
Environment	4.6	4.3	4.5
Other	20.8	16.3	18.8
Don't Know	10.2	20.1	14.8

TABLE 3

"Drug Control"

	Male	Female	Total
High Priority	32.2%	46.2%	39.2%
Low Priority	67.8	53.8	60.8

TABLE 4

"Sunday Closing"

	Male	Female
Favor	32.4%	45.4%
Oppose	54.8	37.9
Don't Know	12.9	16.8

TABLE 5

"Tax Raise"

	Male	Female	Total
Necessary	30.8%	24.6%	27.8%
Not Necessary	64.6	67.6	66.1
Don't Know or Undecided	4.5	7.8	6.2

TABLE 6

1970 LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

"Most Favorable Financial Treatment"

	Male	Female
Education	35.4%	36.4%
Drug Control	17.4	26.5
Pollution Control	19.3	14.8
Health	7.2	9.6
Welfare	10.5	7.6
Highways	4.9	1.7
Parks & Recreation	.7	1.0
Other	4.6	2.4

TABLE 7

1970 LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

"Teacher:School Board Arbitration Agency"

	Male	Female	Total
Favor	43.8%	51.9%	47.8%
Oppose	49.0	38.2	43.8
Don't Know	7.1	9.9	8.5

TABLE 8

"Effectiveness of Schools in Comparison to Ten Years Ago"

	Male	Female
More Effective	51.5%	45.8%
Less Effective	21.9	18.1
Same	16.3	17.7
Don't Know	10.3	18.4

TABLE 9

"Performance of Teachers in Public Schools"

	Male	Female
Strong	31.2%	29.8%
Not Strong	15.7	14.8

TABLE 10

"Teachers as a Problem of Public Schools"

	Male	Female
Problem	15.9%	14.7%
Not Bad	84.1	85.3

TABLE 11

KCPX APRIL 1973 SURVEY

"Sex Education Taught by Qualified Personnel in Public Schools"

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Approve	17.9%	15.8%	16.9%
Approve	53.8	60.7	57.3
Disapprove	17.9	13.9	23.7
Strongly Disapprove	8.0	7.6	2.2
Don't Know	2.3	2.0	

TABLE 12

"Confidentiality of Press Sources - Should Not Reveal Sources"

	Male	Female	Total
Agree	54.0%	54.2%	54.1%
Disagree	46.0	45.8	45.9

TABLE 13

WATERGATE SURVEY MAY 1973

A. "Nixon Aware of Bugging Plan"

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	45.8%	46.7%	46.3%
No	40.5	40.2	40.3
Don't Know	13.7	13.0	13.3

B. "Nixon Aware of Cover-up"

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	68.7%	65.7%	67.0%
No	16.0	23.7	20.3
Don't Know	15.3	10.7	12.7

C. "Nixon Job Approval"

	Male	Female	Total
Approve	43.5%	45.6%	44.7%
Disapprove	45.0	39.1	41.7
Don't Know	11.5	15.4	13.7

TABLE 14

"Approval of 27th Amendment"

	Male	Female	Total
Favor	66.8%	54.5%	60.7%
Oppose	25.2	35.8	30.5
Don't Know	8.0	9.7	8.8

	L.D.S.	Protestant	Catholic	None
Favor	55.4%	72.7%	73.5%	78.8%
Oppose	36.0	15.2	14.3	15.2
Don't Know	8.6	12.1	12.2	6.1

TABLE 15

1970 ELECTION POLL - 1st DISTRICT

A. SENATE

	Male	Female	Total
Burton	43.3%	44.4%	43.8%
Moss	47.8	48.8	48.3
Freeman	1.8	1.5	1.6
Undecided	7.1	5.4	6.3

B. CONGRESS

	Male	Female	Total
Richards	49.6%	51.2%	50.3%
McKay	38.4	42.0	40.1
Worthington	2.2	.5	1.4
Undecided	9.8	6.3	8.2



TABLE 16

1970 POLL - 2nd DISTRICT

	Male	Female	Total
A. SENATE			
Burton	38.1%	30.7%	34.5%
Moss	50.2	58.3	54.2
Freeman	4.6	3.1	3.9
Undecided	7.1	7.9	7.5
B. CONGRESS			
Lloyd	53.3%	55.2%	54.3%
Nance	35.8	33.5	34.7
Marsh	3.3	1.3	2.3
Undecided	7.5	10.0	8.7

TABLE 17

GENERAL ELECTION POLL - NOVEMBER 1972

A. PRESIDENT	Male	Female	Total
Nixon	66.2%	71.3%	68.7%
McGovern	23.6	21.3	22.5
Schmitz	5.7	3.3	4.5
Undecided	3.5	3.0	3.2
None	1.0	1.2	1.1

  

B. GOVERNOR	Male	Female	Total
Strike	30.3%	25.8%	28.0%
Rampton	66.6	70.5	68.5
Undecided	2.7	3.5	3.1
None	.4	.2	.3

TABLE 18

BALLOT PROPOSITIONS - 1970

A. PROPOSITION ONE

	Male	Female	Total
For	36.2%	31.1%	33.7%
Against	26.6	15.7	21.3
Don't Know	37.3	53.2	45.0

B. PROPOSITION TWO

	Male	Female	Total
For	53.2%	52.1%	52.7%
Against	13.4	12.9	13.2
Don't Know	33.4	35.0	34.2

C. PROPOSITION THREE

	Male	Female	Total
For	35.5%	31.1%	33.4%
Against	19.4	12.8	16.2
Don't Know	45.2	56.1	50.4

TABLE 19

BALLOT PROPOSITIONS - 1972

A. PROPOSITION ONE			
For	Male 43.4%	Female 33.5%	Total 38.4%
Against	27.5	20.1	23.8
Don't Know	29.1	46.5	37.7
B. PROPOSITION TWO			
For	Male 64.8%	Female 64.0%	Total 64.4%
Against	18.2	14.4	16.3
Don't Know	17.0	21.7	19.3
C. PROPOSITION THREE			
For	Male 48.4%	Female 43.1%	Total 45.8%
Against	24.2	22.6	23.4
Don't Know	27.3	34.3	30.8
D. PROPOSITION FOUR			
For	Male 60.5%	Female 57.1%	Total 58.8%
Against	16.4	12.6	14.5
Don't Know	23.0	30.3	26.7

TABLE 20

1972 ELECTION POLL

"Floridation"

	Male	Female	Total
Favor	45.9%	51.2%	48.5%
Oppose	42.2	37.2	39.7
Undecided	11.9	11.6	11.8