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Women in Soviet Rural Management

If one examines the role of women in rural areas in different countries of the world, varying styles or patterns of development can be observed. A particular style found in socialist countries has been described as the "feminization of agriculture."¹ This pattern, prevalent in East European countries and especially in the Soviet Union, is largely a function of rapid industrialization and the demographic changes necessary to support development. In the Soviet case, for example, the absolute size of the rural population has been declining mainly because of rural-urban migration.² Furthermore, this migration has been dominated by youth, a trend which, in combination with losses of males from the war years, has resulted in a rural population whose average age and proportion of women is rising.³

Given these conditions in a society long committed to very high rates of labor force participation, one would expect women to assume an increasing share

1. This expression is derived from a recent seminar report of the Agricultural Development Council (see Gella T. Castillo, *The Changing Role of Women in Rural Societies: A Summary of Trends and Issues* [New York: Agricultural Development Council, 1977]). The most comprehensive treatment of women in the Soviet labor force can be found in Norton T. Dodge, *Women in the Soviet Economy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966). For a discussion of the rural labor force, see Norton T. Dodge, "Recruitment and Quality of the Soviet Agricultural Labor Force," in James R. Millar, ed., *The Soviet Rural Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), pp. 180-213; Norton T. Dodge and Murray Feshbach, "The Role of Women in Soviet Agriculture," in Jerzy F. Karcz, ed., *Soviet and East European Agriculture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 265-302; Robert C. Stuart, "Structural Change and the Quality of Soviet Collective Farm Management, 1952-1966," in Millar, *Soviet Rural Community*, pp. 121-38; Michael Paul Sacks, *Women's Work in Soviet Russia: Continuity in the Midst of Change* (New York: Praeger, 1976). For a comparison of the role of women in Soviet and American industrial management, see Kathryn M. Bartol and Robert A. Bartol, "Women in Managerial and Professional Positions: The United States and the Soviet Union," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 28, no. 4 (July 1975): 524-34. For a general discussion, see Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970).

2. In 1950, the Soviet rural population was 109,133,000, or 61 percent of the total Soviet population; in 1975, the Soviet rural population was 100,151,000, or 40 percent of the total Soviet population. The average annual net increase in urban dwellers from rural-urban migration over the period 1950-73 was over 1.6 million. For a survey of these data, see *Naselemie SSSR* (Moscow, 1975). For an analysis of migration patterns, see Robert C. Stuart and Paul R. Gregory, "A Model of Soviet Rural-Urban Migration," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 20, no. 1 (October 1977): 81-92.

3. For a useful survey of the characteristics of rural-urban migrants in the Soviet Union, see David E. Powell, "Rural Youth Migration in the Soviet Union," unpublished manuscript, 1975. For a survey of the Soviet rural labor force, see Norton T. Dodge, "Recruitment and Quality of the Soviet Agricultural Labor Force," in Millar, *Soviet Rural Community*, pp. 180-213; for a recent survey, see Murray Feshbach and Stephen Rapawy, "Soviet Population and Manpower Trends and Politics," in United States Congress, Joint Economic Committee, *Soviet Economy in a New Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 114-54.

Table 1. *Soviet Rural Top Management, 1956-76*

1956						
Position	Number in the position	Higher or specialized secondary education (%)			Female (%)	
Sovkhoz Director	5,098	90.3 ^a			....
Kolkhoz Chairman	84,800	37.1			1.5	
1976						
Position	Number in the position	Higher or specialized secondary education (%)	Agronomy	Animal Specialty	Technical Specialty	Female (%)
Sovkhoz Director	18,876	98.1	50.7	23.8	12.5	1.6
Kolkhoz Chairman	27,737	92.5	50.5	12.0	7.5	1.9

^a Refers to sovkhozes organized under the Ministry of Agriculture, or roughly 80 percent of all sovkhozes.

Sources: Compiled from *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1975 g.* (Moscow, 1976); I. M. Volkov, ed., *Razvitie sel'skogo khoziaistva SSSR v poslevoennye gody* (Moscow, 1959), pp. 514 and 531; Robert C. Stuart, *The Collective Farm in Soviet Agriculture* (Lexington, 1972), p. 164; *Sel'skoe khoziaistvo SSSR* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 460 and 462.

of work in rural areas and, in particular, to gain the education and experience necessary to assume managerial responsibilities. However, although the "feminization of agriculture" is a fact in the Soviet countryside, women have occupied a minuscule portion of top management positions, that is, as directors of sovkhozes or chairmen of kolkhozes. This fact is especially noteworthy given the expanded role of women in the educational process and their substantial participation in lower-level managerial positions in the rural sector. The purpose of this paper is to examine why women in the Soviet Union do not become high-level farm managers.

Individuals in top positions in both state and collective farms enjoy considerable respect and power, though the managerial selection process in each is rather different, at least in theory. The management of the sovkhoz is selected as it would be for an industrial enterprise, that is, through appointment by superior administrative organs. In the case of industrial management, technical background and party standing have been important characteristics for top managers, considerations that might well affect the rural selection process. The selection process in the kolkhoz, where the chairman is in theory "elected," is substantially more complex.⁴ Historically the elective process has been of minimal

4. For a discussion of managerial personnel, characteristics, and selection procedures in kolkhozes, see Robert C. Stuart, *The Collective Farm in Soviet Agriculture* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1972).

importance, however, and in most cases the party route of selection, that is, through the *nomenklatura* procedure, has prevailed.⁵

In a society where power is relatively centralized and where the state and/or the Communist Party can exert major influence over the process of selecting top management, the resulting managerial profile should tell us something about the sorts of priorities that prevail and how these priorities have changed over time. In order to assess the role of women in rural and especially top rural management, I shall examine managerial and specialist positions over the past twenty years. And to assist in understanding why women do not become top managers, I shall examine the routes to top management and the characteristics of those already in the position. The latter will help us discover the magnitude of the pool from which female managers might be drawn; the former will help us understand why they do or do not get drawn from the available pools.

The actual role of women in the Soviet rural managerial structure must be examined in the context of the changes that have taken place. First, the number of top positions has changed dramatically during the past twenty years (see table 1). The number of sovkhozes has increased sharply while the number of kolkhozes has declined. There must have been a substantial number of new appointments during these years, a major source through which the managerial profile might be changed.⁶ Second, the quality of managerial personnel, as measured by the amount of formal education, has always been high for sovkhozes, and the level has risen substantially for kolkhozes. This fact suggests that the position is viewed by Soviet leaders as one of importance. Third, and most important for the present study, the share of women in the top positions has been and remains exceedingly small. However, the role of women in lesser managerial positions, such as brigade leaders and as staff specialists, should be investigated.

The figures in table 2 suggest several relevant observations. In regard to kolkhozes, the lower the managerial position, the larger the woman's role in the hierarchy, a brigadier being a substantially higher and more important position than that of a link leader. Moreover, in all cases for which there is evidence, the role of women has increased, although the increased role remains relatively small for the important middle position of brigadier. Women also play a relatively greater role as specialists than as middle-level managers, notably in the case of zootechnicians or animal specialists. The picture is different for sovkhozes. In

5. While party membership is restricted to roughly 10 percent of the Soviet population, it should be emphasized that party control over personnel matters is pervasive. The *nomenklatura* is basically a personnel list of possible candidates for certain positions. For a detailed study of the Communist Party, see T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the U.S.S.R.: 1917-1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

6. The nature of the structural changes is discussed in detail in Stuart, *The Collective Farm*. As I shall note later, structural changes in terms of presenting new opportunities for aspiring managers could be both positive and negative. Obviously, the expansion in the number of sovkhozes brought new openings. On the other hand, the sharp contraction in the number of kolkhozes must have meant the abolition of many top management positions. At the same time, where kolkhozes were eliminated by means of converting them to sovkhozes (a popular approach), one might expect many of the previous kolkhoz managers to retain their positions in the new sovkhozes.

Table 2. *Soviet Rural Middle Management and Specialists, 1959–76*

Position	Percentage of Women	
KOLKHOZES		
	1959	1976
Brigadier, field brigade	8.3	9.9
Head, cattle brigade	12.7	28.5
Link leader	87.3	....
Agronomist	....	28.6
Zootechnician	....	58.9
SOVKHOZES		
	1959	1976
Brigadier, production brigade	9.8 ^a	17.8
Head, cattle brigade	19.3 ^b	40.5
Agronomist	....	28.7
Zootechnician	....	45.6

^a Estimate, refers to field brigades only.

^b Estimate.

Sources: Compiled from *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1975 g.*, pp. 444 and 446; Stuart, *Collective Farm*, chapter 8; *Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda, SSSR* (Moscow, 1962), tables 47–48.

all cases, women play a greater role in middle management than in equivalent kolkhoz positions and a similar and quite substantial role as staff specialists.⁷

An interesting question emerges from the data. If women play an important and generally increasing role at lower levels of the rural managerial and staff specialist hierarchy, and if experience and education are important qualifications for top managers, why do these women not make it to top-level positions?

There are, of course, many reasons, some legitimate others less so, for the failure of women to capture top rural managerial positions. But as there is a good deal of statistical information (though imperfect in some dimensions) about those who occupy top positions and about the composition of the Soviet rural female population, it is possible, and appropriate, to analyze the relationship. Although this approach does not say very much about discriminatory practices at top management levels. Thus, if training, say as an agronomist, is crucial to upward mobility, one would expect women to be restricted if they lack adequate training. This approach, however, does not explain why women did not receive this training in the first place. It is therefore an imperfect approach to a complex question, but one which can nevertheless yield a useful profile of prevailing trends.

To characterize top rural management, I have selected three specific criteria: party status, educational background by amount and type, and age. In addition,

7. This comparison should be made with caution. For example, one cannot make a direct comparison between say a brigade in a kolkhoz and a brigade in a sovkhoz. Moreover, both have changed over time. The internal organization structures of the two types of institutions are different. Furthermore, they differ significantly in size and therefore presumably in managerial responsibility.

I propose to look at some less measurable but possibly important sociocultural characteristics, such as family status, work patterns in rural areas, managerial selection patterns, and so forth.

Top management in the Soviet Union, whether industrial or agricultural, is overwhelmingly reserved for members of the Communist Party. Although the data on party membership of farm managers is spotty, as far back as 1956, 90.5 percent of all collective farm chairmen were members of the Communist Party, and the figure rose to 95.3 percent by 1960. This information is seldom published in Soviet statistical handbooks, but it was made available in a special agricultural statistical handbook published in 1960.⁸ This source indicated that for 1959, of the fifteen union republics, all but three had party membership for kolkhoz chairmen higher than 90 percent, and the three other republics were not far below.

Along with emphasis on party membership, the recruitment process for management is largely a party function through the *nomenklatura* system. Thus, even in the kolkhoz, where the manager is elected, candidates are "suggested" to the kolkhoz by regional party authorities.⁹ The names of these candidates are derived from the *nomenklatura* list and include those who, in one way or another, have come to the attention of local party authorities, especially by successful completion of some administrative task.

Over the past twenty years, women have typically accounted for about 20 percent of Communist Party members.¹⁰ Women's relatively minor role in the party, vis-à-vis the very important role of the party in top management, may well be a factor inhibiting the upward mobility of women. The reasons why women are not members of the Communist Party are less obvious. Indeed, the direction of causality is not clear: women may not become top managers because they are not party members. On the other hand, they may not be party members because for other reasons they do not make it to top management positions where party membership is important. The former hypothesis seems more plausible, but the latter should not be ruled out. Indeed, the relatively low representation of women in the party and in management may be attributable to some other unidentified factor.

Obviously, education is an important characteristic of Soviet top managers. The educational quality of rural managers, as measured by the level of education attained, has increased dramatically in the last twenty years, especially in collective farms. Soviet statistical handbooks have recently published data on the type of education that managers receive, and a profile of the educational background of the typical farm manager can now be assembled.¹¹

First, as indicated in table 1, well over 90 percent of sovkhoz heads, even in the 1950s, had higher or specialized secondary education (complete or incom-

8. *Sel'skoe khoziaistvo SSSR* (Moscow, 1960).

9. See the discussion of the selection procedure in Stuart, *The Collective Farm*, chapter 8.

10. On the Communist Party, see Rigby, *Communist Party Membership*. See also Ellen Mickiewicz, "Regional Recruitment in the CPSU: Indicators of Decentralization, Power, and Policy," *Soviet Union*, 5, part 1 (1978): 101-25.

11. The only systematic presentation of data on educational background of Soviet farm managers by type of education of which the author is aware was in *Sel'skoe khoziaistvo SSSR* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 460-62.

Table 3. *Soviet Rural Educational Levels and the Participation of Women as Specialists in the Economy and on Farms, 1959–76*

Sex	Percentage of Rural Dwellers 10 Years or Older Who Have Higher or Secondary (Complete or Incomplete) Education		Students Enrolled in Higher Education (Agriculture)		Students Enrolled in Specialized Secondary Education (Agriculture)	
	1959	1970	1960/61	1970/71	1960/61	1970/71
Male	29.8	37.8	73	70	62	63
Female	22.5	29.6	27	30	38	37

Position	Percentage of Women			
	USSR 1959	USSR 1970	Kolkhoz 1976	Sovkhoz 1976
Agronomist	40	35	28.6	28.7
Zootechnician	44	45	58.9	45.6
Veterinary Doctor, Veterinary <i>feldsher</i>	30	31 ^a	30.7	37.5
Engineer	...	...	2.0	7.4

^a Veterinary doctor only.

Sources: *Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1970 goda* (Moscow, 1972), vol. 3, table 3, vol. 6, table 18; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1975 g.*, pp. 444 and 446; *Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka i kultura v SSSR* (Moscow, 1971), p. 186.

plete). In kolkhozes, the proportion of chairmen with this level of education was relatively low in the 1950s (37.1 percent in 1956) and increased to 92.5 percent in 1976. It is clear that higher or specialized secondary education is crucial to obtaining top positions. Second, for recent years, the data on the type of education are revealing. For the early 1970s, 87 percent of sovkhov directors were either agronomists, zootechnicians, or engineering (technical) specialists. In the case of heads of kolkhozes, the same educational specialties accounted for 70 percent of all positions. It is notable that, in both cases, by far the most important type of education is that of agronomist, which accounts for approximately 50 percent of the educational background of both kolkhoz chairmen and sovkhov directors.

What are the implications of this educational picture for the upward mobility of women? A comparison over time of the number of top management "openings" with the availability of male and female candidates (with the appropriate educational background) would be desirable. Unfortunately, a more general, but nevertheless useful, picture must suffice.

First, in terms of general educational background (see table 3), at a level appropriate to top management, women lagged behind men in both the 1950s and the 1970s, though both gained during the intervening period. Thus by this criterion, the female pool was smaller than the male pool, though not radically so, during both periods. Undoubtedly, there may have been other important differences, for example by region, by farm type, and so on.¹²

12. Such differences should not be understated. For example, the role of women in middle-level kolkhoz management positions in the republics of Central Asia is much smaller than elsewhere. There are also substantial differences in the family and other functions of women in kolkhozes and sovkhovs.

Second, a breakdown by sex of those with the desired agricultural training and on farms (agronomists, for example) is available for recent years, but for earlier years it is more speculative. The problem is the following: in looking at the availability of women with appropriate training (say as agronomists), should we look at the proportion of all agronomists in the Soviet Union who are women, or should we be more restrictive and look only at those who have positions as agronomists on farms?¹⁸ Given what we know about recruitment patterns, the latter approach would appear to be more sensible, although the relevance of the former, especially for women trained as agronomists, cannot be completely ruled out. The role of women among those with the appropriate type of education varies, as the evidence in table 3 suggests.

In the important position of agronomist, women are clearly "underrepresented," with approximately 28 percent in both kolkhozes and sovkhozes. On the other hand, they are more than adequately represented (compared to the proportion of women in the rural population, for example) among zootechnicians and especially among all such specialists. The only area substantially underrepresented is the technical area, but this is a relatively unimportant sort of training for top agricultural management. Thus, while in general women are underrepresented by type of education, surely these numbers would not suggest that women account for less than 2 percent of top farm managers.

One might look at the statistical evidence in another way. In 1976, women were underrepresented (relative to their share in rural population), with only 28.7 percent of agronomists working in sovkhozes. But, for that year, there were 18,876 sovkhoz directors and 43,375 agronomists (working in sovkhozes). The absolute size of the pool of agronomists from which a sovkhoz director could be drawn (not to mention those agronomists working outside the farms, say in the agricultural administrative apparatus) is therefore large relative to the number of top management positions. Furthermore, it is probably very large relative to the number of vacant top management positions.

Another relevant background characteristic is age. It has been argued that because of the migration of youth from Soviet rural areas, the rural population and labor force have become increasingly old and female. Could this pattern have an impact upon the upward mobility of women, and if so, in what direction? As with other characteristics of top management positions, it would be helpful to relate the "required" characteristic (in this case age) to the pool from among which the candidates for top positions might be drawn. With the characteristic of age, however, this can only be done imprecisely.

The age requirement of top rural management is a statistic that must be found by examining the age distribution of those in the given position. While this is a reasonable proxy for an age "requirement," it nevertheless neglects an important consideration of age at entry into the position. Thus, while there may be substantial numbers of managers presently in their forties, this age may be

13. In the 1950s, Khrushchev stressed the need for specialists to work on farms rather than as bureaucrats in the administrative machinery. Decrees were enacted to achieve this result. Thus specialists now work on farms, though there are many who work elsewhere, and to further complicate the problem, there are many who, though educated in a particular specialty, do not work in that specialty. These complications make interpretation of the data particularly difficult.

far too late for entry into the position. Unfortunately, this facet of the selection process must be neglected since data are unavailable. However, a related aspect can be mentioned. The available data do suggest that the turnover of top managers has declined in the past twenty years, a factor that would make entry for new aspirants more difficult.¹⁴

In 1959, 87.4 percent of kolkhoz chairmen (including assistants) were in the 30–54-year age bracket.¹⁵ For the same year and farms (kolkhozes), 86.1 percent of female heads were in the same age bracket. Interestingly, in 1959, 47.5 percent of the aggregate kolkhoz population fell in the 30–54-year age bracket, while 53.4 percent of the female kolkhoz population fell in this age bracket. Thus the age distribution of kolkhoz chairmen does not represent the underlying age distribution of the kolkhoz population. But, for those who make it to these top positions, there seems to be no age distinction between males and females, and indeed, a relatively small distinction from the overall kolkhoz population.

It is, of course, somewhat unreasonable to compare the age distribution of top managers with the age distribution of all kolkhoz members, for the latter could only achieve upper-level positions with a substantial time lag during which they would obtain education, experience, party status, and so forth. However, the basic age distribution does not change sharply during a twenty-year period. Moreover, the age distribution of say, agronomists, is unavailable, and consequently, for this important source of top managers, it is impossible to determine if age is a constraint discriminating against women.

There is another background characteristic closely related to education, namely experience. Although there is no statistical evidence on the matter of administrative and other sorts of experience, it is apparent that this is an important criterion in the selection process. To capture this element as a component of (and proxy for) education, it is possible to study the age distribution of middle- and lower-level managerial personnel, positions where appropriate administrative experience would be gained. In examining these positions one important fact must be taken into account, that is, the structure of intermediate managerial positions (mainly the brigadier, the head of a unit such as a *ferma*, and a link leader) have changed substantially between the 1950s and the 1970s. It is difficult, therefore, to make precise comparisons between the two periods.

In 1959, 87.4 percent of all kolkhoz chairmen were in the 30–54-year age bracket, 72.3 percent of all field brigadiers in kolkhozes *and* sovkhoses were in the same age bracket, while 61.1 percent were animal brigadiers, and 70.7 percent

14. Soviet statistical handbooks have typically reported the proportion of given farm managers (for example, sovkhos directors) who have been in position for selected periods of time. Unfortunately, most of these data probably refer to time as director of *any* sovkhos, rather than a particular sovkhos. For our purposes, the latter is more interesting and is reported in *Sel'skoe khoziaistvo SSSR* (1971), pp. 460 and 463. These data, referring to stage of work on a given farm generally suggest increasing longevity, presumably *decreasing* the number of openings that would arise annually, thus tending to preserve the status quo in terms of the representation of women. To the extent that age is a proxy for experience, this pattern might suggest that the importance of experience has been upgraded as a criterion for top farm management.

15. These data are discussed in Stuart, *The Collective Farm*, chapter 8. Unfortunately, the data lump together the kolkhoz chairman and assistants, although it is unlikely that this would introduce any serious distortions for our purposes.

were *ferma* leaders.¹⁶ Hence, the age characteristics of middle-level managers do not appear to be a barrier to upward mobility, although the more important the middle-level position (the important position being that of brigadier), the smaller the role of women and thus the smaller the absolute pool from which women can be drawn.

Thus far some of the characteristics of top-level farm managers have been examined, and an attempt has been made to determine whether women with such characteristics are in fact available. The general conclusion is that although women are less "available" than men for these positions (in terms of our selected characteristics), women are nevertheless much more "available" than their representation in top management would suggest. Why is it women do not make it to the top?

In addition to the factors considered above, there are other, possibly less measurable though nevertheless potentially very important, causes. First, the nature of the rural family unit and the role of women in that unit, a factor stressed by Stephen Dunn and Ethel Dunn, probably mitigates against the upward mobility of women.¹⁷ Time-budget studies, especially in Russian areas, have shown a preponderance of family units with a very traditional structure, with male heads but with women doing the bulk of the housework.¹⁸ In addition, women are the primary component of the work force in the private sector, a sector that over these years has accounted for at least one-third of aggregate rural family income.¹⁹ These factors are exacerbated in the kolkhozes, because the level of services to assist with household chores is substantially lower in kolkhozes than in sovkhoses.²⁰ A second factor is the recruitment method for top managerial personnel, a factor briefly mentioned above. The criteria for those who have made it has been noted, but the *path* upward should be examined.

First, there is some evidence from the 1960s that there has been a tendency to recruit kolkhoz managers from outside rather than promoting, say a brigadier, from within.²¹ To the extent that this is true, it would necessitate looking at a completely different and largely unknown pool of prospective managers. Indeed, in cases where limited statistical evidence is available, it appears that, for managers recruited from outside the farm, party status and technical competence—both of which would discriminate against women—were very important characteristics.

Second, the period under study has been one of important and continuing structural change in the rural sector. The implications for top management of the sharp decline in the number of kolkhozes over the past twenty years should be explored. Because of the amalgamation of kolkhozes (and this was a major thrust of the program), the position of the kolkhoz chairman has increased in

16. Ibid.

17. See, for example, the discussion of upward mobility in Stephen P. Dunn and Ethel Dunn, *The Peasants of Central Russia* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), chapter 3.

18. For a study of this subject, see Sacks, *Women's Work in Soviet Russia*.

19. The authoritative work on the private sector is Karl-Eugen Wädekin, *The Private Sector in Soviet Agriculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

20. This point is emphasized in Sacks, *Women's Work in Soviet Russia*.

21. This evidence is cited in Jerry F. Hough, "The Changing Nature of the Kolkhoz Chairman," in Millar, *Soviet Rural Community*, pp. 103-20.

importance. Moreover, it must have been possible to select the heads of amalgamated farms from among the best of previous managers. However, to the extent that very few women were top managers in the 1950s, this could only mean that very few women would become top managers after the amalgamation. This argument could also be made for the brigade structure, since the number of brigades has declined sharply over the years, and the importance of the brigade as a production unit has increased substantially.²²

With one possible exception, organizational changes in the Soviet rural sector do not seem to have substantially increased the role of women in rural management. The role of women in livestock brigades has increased in kolkhozes and is quite high in sovkhoses. This is a positive sign for an expanded role for women insofar as the livestock sector of Soviet agriculture has been neglected in the past and is now in many respects a priority sector.

Third, the educational process may limit the upward mobility of women. Although the picture of the path to top management in the rural sector is less than complete, the movement upward for an agronomist (working as a farm specialist) or a brigadier is typically through further specialized training. The additional training can be a brief six-month course or it can be a longer two-year course after which the trainee may move up to head a farm.²³ However, the upward mobility may not be on the farm from which the trainee has come or indeed within the farm system at all. One might suspect, that because women in the Soviet rural family play a major role in the household and in raising children, the freedom and desire to enter this channel of upward mobility is limited.

In this paper I have selected and focused upon a rather limited though interesting facet of the role of women in the Soviet rural sector—their role in management, and especially top management, that is, as heads of kolkhozes or sovkhoses. I have noted the qualifications of those who hold these top positions, examined the paths by which they achieved power, and then compared these characteristics with the women available for employment to see if women have been held back for reasons other than these characteristics. The investigation was limited to national trends using what data could be found.

In the past, the role of women in rural management has been inversely proportional to the importance of the position. Thus women have been most prevalent in the lowest and least important managerial positions. To some degree this pattern has changed in the last twenty years, although one fact still stands out: women do not attain top positions, representing, at best, only 1–3 percent of the top managers. The role of women in agricultural management is even less than their limited role in industrial management.²⁴

22. Although the internal organizational arrangements of sovkhoses remain to be studied in detail, the evidence for kolkhozes suggests that the number of production brigades has declined along with the number of kolkhozes. The net result is roughly the same number of brigades per kolkhoz, but as with the kolkhoz itself, the brigade represents a sharply increased volume of resources (land, labor, and capital) and hence a sharply increased task for the brigade leader. In sum, the present brigadier faces a task not unlike the task faced by a kolkhoz manager of thirty years ago.

23. This pattern is examined in Stuart, *The Collective Farm*, chapter 8.

24. See the concluding comments in Bartol and Bartol, "Women in Managerial and Professional Positions," pp. 533–34.

For the characteristics that have been examined, it seems that, in terms of age structure, education, and participation in lower-level management, women should play a much greater role than they do in the top management positions. At the same time, party status and the socioeconomic structure of the rural family both seem to limit the upward mobility of women.

What about the future? It is difficult to believe that there will not be an increase in the slow rate at which women have come to participate in Soviet top rural management. Their expanding role at lower levels will, it would seem, lead to this result, though probably very slowly. Furthermore, the rural family will undergo change, and the industrialization of agriculture will change the nature of rural management. The major unknown factors are the potential for an increasing role for women in the Communist Party and the extent to which Soviet leaders may recognize and attempt to change the current limited role for women as heads of Soviet farms.