# THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The economic status of women can be evaluated by reviewing the legal framework supporting the equality and economic independence of women, and their participation in all sectors of the economy, the political process, and the household. The legal framework, the network of constitutional guarantees, laws, regulations, and official policies, are a reflection of a society's attitude toward women and of women's position and status within society. In the Soviet Union, the constitutional framework supporting women's equality was instituted as a foundation for the emancipation of women, which would be fully realized when the following criteria were satisfied: equal participation of women in the economy and in the political and economic decision-making processes, and an equal distribution of the burden of housekeeping duties.

Although there are other criteria by which to evaluate the status of women, such as equality of opportunity, they will not be employed here.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the preceding criteria have not been satisfied and that many of the traditional divisions of labor and attitudes toward women and authority persist. As a result, the subordinate status of Soviet women is perpetuated.

As for the legal basis of women's equality, women are on an equal footing with men in all civil matters. All laws maintaining the inferior status of women were abolished following the October Revolution of 1917. Women are guaranteed equal pay for equal work, and are equal to men under all marriage, family, and education laws. This is not, however, a measure of the actual equality and economic standing achieved by women. One important measure is found in the pattern of women's employment in the economy.

## CHAPTER II

## WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

From a Marxist-Leninist perspective, in order to achieve complete emancipation and equality with men, women must participate equally in all aspects of society: the political process, the household, and the labor force.[1] It is not assumed that sex-based occupational distribution must be precisely equal in each and every occupation in order for the Marxist-Leninist assumption of equal participation in the labor force to be fulfilled; however, substantial differences in the basic occupational composition of the male and female labor forces reflecting wage differentials and the structure of authority clearly violate the equal participation criterion. The conclusions on equality and status drawn from the subsequent examination of women's participation in the labor force will be based on this Marxist-Leninist concept of equality.

The Soviet conception of citizenship includes not only the right, but the obligation of all capable citizens to work. However, the overriding factors behind the effort to attract women into the labor force have not been ideological in nature, but rather economic and

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[1] V.I. Lenin, O zadachakh zhenskogo dvizheniia v sovetskoi respublike, in Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, 5th ed., 55 vols. (Moscow, 1958-1965), 39:201, cited by Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 74.

demographic. The emphasis on rapid industrialization after 1917, particularly during the Stalin years of 1927-1953 required a tremendous influx of manpower into the labor market, a significant component of which was women. With the transfer of huge amounts of capital from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector, with an emphasis on heavy industry and the military, the attraction of women into the work force was of vital importance. In addition, demographic imbalances have greatly contributed to the frequent reliance on women to fill the demand for labor. From 1917 to the end of Stalin's regime, several events occurred which, taken together, resulted in a tremendous loss of manpower. As a result of war, civil war, collectivization, and purges, a deficit of males developed representing a severe imbalance in the structure of the population. By 1959, there were 20 million more women than men.[2] By 1960, the number of entrants into the labor force had fallen to less than one-third of the number five years previously.[3] Over time, of course, this differential between men and women has declined, but during periods of extreme labor shortages, intensive campaigns to recruit the one remaining untapped source of labor, women in households, have been successfully undertaken.

Partly as a result of such campaigns, the Soviet Union has the highest female labor participation rate in the world. Currently over

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[2]Donald R. Brown, ed., The Role and Status of Women in the Soviet Union, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), p. 12.

[3]Ibid., p. 13.

90% of Soviet women in the age group 20-49 are employed.[4] Women comprise 55% of the population between the ages 25 and 59, and 51% of the entire labor force.[5]

## Labor Legislation

Although the majority of Soviet women are engaged in unskilled physical labor, some of it extremely demanding, there is a great deal of labor legislation designed to protect women from dangerous and physically demanding occupations. Currently, statutes bar women from no fewer than 460 occupations considered too physically debilitating for women.[6] The rationale for protective legislation for women lies in the belief that equality between the sexes is not necessarily inconsistent with nonidentical treatment of the sexes. There are basically two reasons supporting the view that women should be protected by special labor legislation which is not extended to men, and they are biological and social in origin. These criteria will now be presented and analysed.

The biological rationale takes into account women's physiological limitations relative to men, and the social rationale relates to

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[4]Jerry G. Pankhurst, and Michael Paul Sacks, ed., Contemporary Soviet Society, Sociological Perspectives, (New York, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 228.

[5]Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 83.

[6]The Kansas City Times, 12 March 1982, p. A-9.

pregnancy and childcare responsibilities.[7] Legislation concerned specifically with this issue as it affects employment provides that women will not be penalized or demoted as a result of time off the job necessitated by pregnancy, childbirth or stipulated maternal leave following childbirth.

With respect to the biological rationale concerning the relative physiological limitations of women, Soviet law in general terms forbids women to engage in heavy or harmful labor. Women are not allowed by law to lift or carry loads heavier than 20 kg.[8] Women are restricted from working under extreme climatic conditions, or in any occupation in which a high risk of injury exists.[9] Occupations in which toxins are used or manufactured in the production process are forbidden to women. All physical work underground is off limits to women, although nonphysical work underground in the sanitation field and consumer services is allowed.[10] There are even restrictions on night work for women. According to the law, women are not allowed to work at night as part of their permanent occupation. Only in certain sectors of the economy where a great need for labor exists on a temporary basis can

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[7]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 125.

[8]Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 95.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

women be employed for nighttime work.[11] Other restrictions on female labor include prohibiting work which entails prolonged abnormal position of the body, or recurring pressure on the body from instruments of machinery parts.[12]

As noted previously, women are prohibited entirely from employment in 460 occupations considered too physically demanding or dangerous for a woman. Women are prohibited from entering many training programs and apprenticeship posts for skilled professions also. Of 1100 occupations for which professional or technical education is required, women are allowed to enter training programs for only 714.[13] More than one-third of these skilled occupations are designated unsuitable for women because their working conditions are considered hazardous in one way or another to women, but not to men.

The social rationale for protective labor legislation serves the purpose of encouraging pregnant women and women who wish to have children to enter and remain in the work force. This is accomplished by protecting their physical health during pregnancy in occupations in which they would normally perform very strenuous tasks, or in which any number of work conditions could clearly prove injurious to them or to their unborn children, and by protecting their current and future employment status and guaranteeing their income; in short, by minimizing

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

the costs and disadvantages associated with pregnancy and childcare to a working woman.

Specific measures enacted to ensure these results include prohibiting employers from denying jobs to pregnant and nursing women for those reasons, or from firing them for the same reasons.[14] Employers are not allowed to cut the pay of pregnant or nursing women, and provisions can be made to transfer them, and women with children under one year of age, to lighter or easier work if they are engaged in physical labor, and if they choose to exercise this right.[15] This same category of women is prohibited from all work at night.[16] Pregnant women and women with children aged to eight years cannot be required by their employers to work overtime, although they may if they choose, and neither can they be required as part of their job to travel on business unless they voluntarily agree to do so.[17]

As for maternity leave, women are now allowed 112 days at full pay, along with the option of taking an additional 3 months of unpaid leave.[18] However, women who choose to remain at home after childbirth may leave

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[14]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 126.

[15]Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 95.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 126.

the work force entirely for one full year, at which time they may return to their original job with no loss of seniority.[19] The past few years have brought about not only more liberalized maternity leave provisions, but also allow women sick leave in order to care for children and other family members.[20] In addition, women who have just completed their education or training for a job, and who are pregnant or have children under one year of age, are now guaranteed work in their fields within the area in which they reside.[21] In practice, however, this guarantee appears to be widely ignored, as are many of these provisions.

The trend appears to be for further liberalization in the realm of socially inspired labor provisions.[22] For instance, nursing mothers are now entitled by law to a reduction in the number of working hours per day, and proposals have been made which would allow mothers of young children to take advantage of this provision as well, if they choose.[23] There are also proposals pending which would provide for this shortened work day to be ennacted without a corresponding loss of wages, and for further extensions of the maternity leave.[24] Other recommendations would make provisions for lost labor time necessitated by sick leave taken to care for children or other family members, and

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

for allowing more flexibility in scheduling vacation time, so that families could vacation together.[25]

Special labor provisions for women extend not only over a woman's working life, but to her retirement as well. The official age stipulated for female retirement is 5 years earlier than that for men: women blue-collar and white-collar workers retire at 55, collective farm workers at 60.[26] While men receive pension benefits after 25 years of work, women receive theirs after 20 years.[27]

There are several criticisms of both the effects of certain protective labor provisions, as well as their underlying rationale. First, although it is officially accepted that equality can evolve only when both men and women participate on an equal footing in the economy and in the household, men, unlike women, are provided no incentives (through employment policies such as paternity leave, for example) to undertake childcare responsibilities. Thus, while childrearing, like employment, is considered a social responsibility, there are no employment provisions which would accord fathers special treatment in order to contribute to the upbringing of their children. This omission indicates that the Soviet government is unwilling to adopt policies which would discourage the perpetuation of sexual divisions of labor which assign primary responsibility for the upbringing of children to women. In a society in which women constitute 51% of the work force, and over

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

90% of all women of working age are employed, retaining this inequitable structure has invited criticism.

Legal measures protecting pregnant and nursing women are consistent with the claim that such legislation protects women in employment matters while allowing them to fulfill the vital social function of childbearing. However, the measures which encourage women, by removing job related disincentives, to retain most of the duties, tasks and responsibilities of childrearing are positive steps to improve the position of women on a superficial and short-run basis only. In the long-run, reinforcing the notion that childcare is women's work serves only to justify and perpetuate logically indefensible labor divisions between the sexes. While some of the privileges women are guaranteed by these labor provisions are meant as compensation for the extra duties they perform in terms of childcare, the ultimate solution is not to attempt to compensate women for their heavier burden of duties, but to eliminate the unequal burden by distributing it as equally as is possible between women and men.

There is also a great deal of criticism concerning the legislation protecting women from heavy or dangerous work. For one thing, since the list of jobs women were not allowed to hold was first compiled in 1932 and subsequently revised in 1938, technological advances in production techniques, including mechanization within many industries, have so changed the nature of the work of some of the forbidden jobs that they are now by no means dangerous or physically hazardous to women.[28]

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[28]Ibid., p. 125.

Similarly, many different types of jobs have been created since the 1930's which are completely open to women, and some of these are of a nature no less physically demanding than those jobs forbidden women. Apparently, there has been no serious attempts to bring these standards up to date and impose some sort of consistency on them.

Another valid criticism is that women are protected from many physically demanding and dangerous jobs and work conditions which are equally harmful to men, to whom the protection does not extend. It is argued that it is unfair to extend protection and privileges only to women in situations which are equally harmful to men. It is unfair not only to men, but to women, as it promotes occupational segregation with no logical justification.

The final criticism is one mentioned previously, that of non-compliance with the protective labor measures. The history of non-compliance is in fact well known, although specific violations are fairly regularly brought to light and subsequent improvements occurring as a result. Generally speaking, however, the emphasis on rapid industrial growth, the high priority placed on programs designed to increase output, and the necessity for women workers to fill heavy labor positions, all combined to create a situation in which women are too integral a component of the labor force to be subject to the mitigating effects of protective labor legislation. With the emphasis that individual plants and factories must place on meeting quotas, abiding by the labor laws which restrict women's labor is frequently too costly.

As mentioned, the pattern of the recruitment of women into the labor force has primarily been determined by economic factors, and

intensified by demographic ones. Throughout Soviet history women have been a vital component of the labor force, and not simply an auxilliary source of labor. It is not surprising, then, that labor laws protecting women have often been ignored, particularly when they apply to high priority jobs which women are physically capable of performing. Soviet analysts have frequently criticized the tremendous disparity between the theoretical labor protection and privileges guaranteed women and their practical effects. In individual cases, this scrutiny has led to the eventual rectification of illegal labor practices, including the levying of disciplinary action against the employers. However, these cases are the exception and not the rule. Blatant violations of the labor laws occur frequently, with all concerned ignoring it. Among those concerned with this issue are those who are officially responsible for monitoring employers for violations and reporting the findings: trade unions, with assistance from factory committees and women's political groups.[29] Soviet law holds employers accountable for infractions, and occasionally the press or social agencies make public particularly conspicuous violations. However, the primary and official responsibility for ensuring the enforcement of these laws does lie with the labor unions, who are faced with conflicting obligations. On the one hand, it is their duty to protect the lawful rights of workers, and on the other hand, there being no such thing as an independent Soviet trade union, they must participate fully in meeting production quotas. Thus, it is not only employers but workers as well who share the

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[29]Ibid., p. 128.

objective of fulfilling production quotas. When the protection of workers' rights and needs substantially conflicts with the economic realities of production goals, it is in the interests of neither the employers nor the state labor unions to place top priority on the former.

An evaluation of the dispersion of women in varying occupations throughout the economy (horizontal integration), and of the representation of women in upper level positions of responsibility within occupations (vertical integration), begins with the fact that the majority of women are engaged in physical labor. The economic sector which creates the greatest physical demands is agriculture. This sector will now be considered in detail.

## Employment in Agricultural Sector

Although the proportion of women employed in the agricultural sector is declining, it remains the main sector in which women are employed. However, the proportion of women engaged in physical agricultural work has increased from 50% in 1926 to 56% in 1970.[30] The number of women engaged in this type of work has declined dramatically, though, by about 45% since 1926.[31]

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[30] Alena Heitlinger, Women and State Socialism, Sex Inequality in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, (London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1979), p. 99.

[31] Norton T. Dodge, Women in the Soviet Economy, Their Role in Economic, Scientific, and Technical Development, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 163.

Collective Farm Work

There are three significant categories of agricultural work: collective farm work, private subsidiary farming, and state farm work.[32] On a collective farm, the amount of pay each worker receives is based on the residual farm profit, while the status of state farm workers is comparable to that of any worker involved in industry or any other sector of the economy. They receive a fixed wage, their financial renumeration not being dependent upon the profitability of the state farm. Those engaged in private subsidiary farming are primarily members of collective farm and state farm families who, along with others who work in various different sectors of the economy, farm private plots in order to produce agricultural goods for private use and for sale in the market.[33] In these three categories, women comprise over 50% of collective farm workers, about 40% of workers and employees in state agricultural work, and about 90% of all workers on private plots.[34]

In the Soviet Union as well as other countries, the common pattern of industrial development produces a trend in which young people leave the agricultural sector for industry and other expanding sectors of the economy, while the older people remain in agriculture. Thus, women engaged in agricultural work are as a group older than women employed in other sectors of the economy; within the agricultural sector, female unskilled laborers (the vast majority) are older than female skilled

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

and semi-skilled workers and employees; and, in general, the women in the agricultural sector tend to be older than the men, although the highest percentage of men employed in agriculture is in the age group 60 and over, because by that age most women will have retired from state work and will devote their time to working private plots.[35] Another trend in the Soviet Union which is part of a pattern of development common to other countries is one in which men move into the more skilled positions opening up in the agricultural sector, positions which are better paid and are frequently mechanized, while women continue to be employed as unskilled workers, performing the heavy manual labor.[36]

Within the agricultural field, the distribution of women relative to men among the various occupations is indicative of the status of women in this sector. In the category of collective farm workers, over 95% of all women in this sector are engaged in physical labor, with the corresponding figure for men approximately 80%.[37] Among the women engaged in physical labor, over 80% are nonspecialized and unskilled, compared with under 70% of the men; these women are primarily employed in field work.[38] Of the total number of unskilled, nonspecialized

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[35]Ibid., pp. 163-164.

[36]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 176.

[37]Norton T. Dodge, Women in the Soviet Economy, Their Role in Economic, Scientific, and Technical Development, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 168.

[38]Ibid., pp. 168-169.

collective farm workers, over 65% are women.[39] Therefore, despite the fact that of the total number of collective farm workers a higher proportion are women, the comparative percentages indicate that women are over-represented in unskilled, nonspecialized physical labor positions. The other side of this disproportionality is, of course, the under-representation of women in skilled physical labor occupations and in managerial or white-collar work within the agricultural sector.

Further, those occupations placed under the general heading "skilled physical labor" vary greatly in the degree of actual physical labor involved. The distribution of men and women in agricultural occupations classified as skilled physical labor and specialized agricultural work demonstrates that the least physically demanding occupations have the lowest female participation rates. Not only do women constitute a disproportionately small percentage of workers in the general category of skilled and specialized occupations, with the trend most pronounced in those occupations which are the least physically demanding, but within this same category women outnumber men in several of the most physically demanding professions. For instance, women constitute a distinct minority in the occupations under the heading administrative and supervisory personnel: heads of livestock and poultry subfarms, under 20%; brigadiers (heads or foremen) of field brigades, under 10%; other brigadiers, again under 10%.[40]

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[39] Ibid., p. 169.

[40] Ibid.

Among occupations described as skilled work and junior supervisory positions only one occupation is composed in large part of women, that of field-team leaders, which is a foreman type position and is just under 90% female.[41] Of the other occupations in this category there is the typically small proportion of women: bookkeepers, under 20%; tractor and combine drivers approximately 1%; implement handlers and workers on agricultural machinery, under 5%.[42]

So far we have looked at eight occupations under the general heading collective farm workers employed in skilled and specialized predominantly physical labor. Of these occupations, women constitute a majority in just one. These findings are expected because women are underrepresented in this category, and although that is true, there are several more occupations under the subheading specialized agricultural workers in which women do constitute the majority of workers. The explanation for women comprising a majority in several occupations, which when combined with other occupations, comprise a general field in which women are extremely underrepresented, is found in large part in the degree of physical labor required for each occupation. The latest technological advances resulting in labor saving devices are not always implemented in these occupations, making some of them well known for the arduous labor involved. The degree of physical labor involved is frequently much greater than the same position entails in some Western countries which have put a higher priority on the development and

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

implementation of labor saving devices and other technological improvements in the agricultural sector.

Some of the specialized agricultural occupations in which women predominate are: workers in plant breeding and feed production, cattle farm workers, milking personnel, swineherds, poultry workers, and vegetable and melon growers.[43] The occupations within this category in which men predominate most conspicuously are: beekeeping, irrigators, orchard and vineyard workers, and stablemen and grooms.[44] Generally speaking, in agricultural occupations both skilled and unskilled women tend to be concentrated in those positions requiring the heaviest physical labor. The most striking feature of the participation of women in collective farm work is their concentration in unskilled manual labor, and their extreme underrepresentation in skilled labor occupations and managerial and white-collar positions.

State Farm Work

In the category of state farm work, women account for about 40% of all workers and employees. Included in this group are employees of government agricultural enterprises as well as the state farm workers themselves. In general, the status of state farm workers is higher than that of collective farm workers, and as noted, of the three significant categories of agricultural work, it is in this category only that women comprise a minority of all workers. Of all women employed

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

in the agricultural sector, approximately 5% fall in this category, compared with approximately 30% in collective farm work.[45] As in collective farm work, women in this sector are overrepresented in physical and unskilled labor. About 80% of all women employed in state agriculture are predominantly physical laborers, and about half are unskilled and nonspecialized.[46] Women make up about 60% of all workers in the latter category.[47] Again, women are a disproportionately small percentage of those employed as administrators and managers in those occupations requiring mechanical ability, and in those occupations long dominated by men which for some reason have resisted female integration. In the latter category an example is stablemen and grooms, which is close to 90% male.[48] As for heads of farms, field brigades and livestock brigades, the percentage of women in these occupations ranges from 9% to 25%; the percentage of women bookkeepers is under 30%; the percentage of tractor and combine drivers less than 1%; and that of implement handlers and mechanics about 5%.[49] As in the collective farm sector, the only occupation under the heading skilled workers and junior supervisory personnel in which women predominate is field team leaders, a profession subordinate to that of heads of field and livestock brigades.[50]

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[45] Ibid., p. 162.

[46] Ibid., p. 173.

[47] Ibid., p. 174.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

Combining the two sectors, collective farm work and state farm work, including state agricultural enterprises, about 80% of all women workers are unskilled. These women comprise over 65% of all unskilled workers, and of all those employed in administrative work, only 20% are women.[51] Soviet analysts have pointed out that, in general, "a peculiar division of labor has arisen between men and women: the sphere of mechanized work is a male privilege and that of manual labor is reserved to women."[52]

Private Subsidiary Economy

The third significant category of agricultural work is the private subsidiary economy, almost all of which is work in private plots, with an almost insignificant amount of handicraft work included. Although private garden plots account for only about 1% of cultivated land, they yield two-thirds of all potatoes and eggs and two-fifths of all meat and vegetables.[53] It is because of their significant contribution to total agricultural output that they are tolerated by the state. Despite the impressive share of total output attributed to the private subsidiary economy, the percentage of cultivated land held privately has continued

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 176.

[53] Stanley Rothman and George W. Breslauer, Soviet Politics and Society, (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1978), p. 97.

to decline over time, down from 6.4% in 1950.[54] Many collective farm and state farm workers are provided with small private garden plots, and about 90% of those who work the plots are women.[55] About 50% of all women in the private subsidiary sector are aged 55 and over, and many continue to work long after the normal retirement age.[56]

Reasons for Inequality

The pattern of male-female labor divisions existing in the agricultural sector in the Soviet Union today reflect the occupational stratification which existed in prerevolutionary Russian peasant communities.[57] A study of the sexual labor divisions in that time period indicates that women's primary responsibilities were household chores, feeding livestock and poultry, and working vegetable and fruit gardens; in addition, field work was divided between men and women, with women engaged mainly in the unskilled work, leaving most of the skilled labor to men.[58] Obviously, few substantial changes have occurred since then. The basic condition of the majority of women in agriculture has not improved significantly in this century, in terms

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[54]Ibid., p. 94.

[55]Norton T. Dodge, Women in the Soviet Economy, Their Role in Economic, Scientific, and Technical Development, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 173.

[56]Ibid., p. 172.

[57]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 177.

[58]Ibid.

of their relegation to the most physically strenuous, unskilled, uninteresting, and undesirable jobs, with the lowest status and pay. There are several factors which have contributed to the perpetuation of this situation in the agricultural sector.

One explanation for the perpetuation of rigidly defined sexual labor divisions in the agricultural sector, during a period in which women have entered many traditionally male occupations in other sectors of the economy, is that little has been done to train women in new skills, despite legislation designed to elicit equality.[59] Fewer than 10% of all students enrolled in agricultural technical-vocational schools are women.[60]

A Soviet study done in 1976 for a Soviet periodical, the results of which are confirmed by other research, asserts that "no rural women are trained for skilled jobs in the nonproduction sector."[61] The percentage of women learning skills in agricultural fields on the secondary level has declined over time, and about 32% of students at agricultural higher educational institutions are women, only a very slight increase since 1960.[62] Only a few fields, notably agronomy and animal husbandry, have experienced any significant increases in the percentage of highly skilled women.[63]

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[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., p. 179.

[62] Ibid., p. 180.

[63] Ibid.

This is partly explained by the fact that cultural biases regarding what is "men's work" and what is "women's work" go virtually unchallenged among rural people in this traditional sector of the economy. Another aspect of that rural bias includes the undervaluation of women's managerial skills and executive potential.

A Soviet analyst commented: "When candidates are advanced for posts of leadership, men are a majority, although there are no adequate grounds for this."[64] As a result there are many women occupying low level managerial and administrative positions, but unlike the men, they generally stay there. There is a tendency to keep women at entry level or other low level positions while the men move up through the ranks. Currently, 98.5% of all collective farm chairmen and state farm directors are men.[65] At an agricultural conference over twenty years ago, Khrushchev noted at a meeting for managers at which all present were men, "It turns out that it is men who do the administrating and the women who do the work."[66] This observation remains accurate today.

Another explanation for the sex-based occupational stratification in the agricultural sector is preference and differences in human capital. As was mentioned, a large majority of women engaged in physical labor are field workers. This work, planting, cultivating and harvesting, is chosen by many women for its seasonal nature. This allows them more time to attend to housekeeping duties, cultivating

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[64] Ibid., p. 179.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

private garden plots, and childcare responsibilities than nonseasonal work would. Anticipating the necessity of spending this time out of the work force on a regular basis tends to discourage women from acquiring the knowledge and skills required for skilled labor occupations. The implementation of an adequate network of state run childcare facilities in rural areas may result in an increase in the proportion of women seeking new job skills in nonseasonal occupations; however, it is likely that the traditional labor divisions which assign primary responsibility for the cultivation of private plots to women will continue to result in the preference of many women for the unskilled physical labor of seasonal work.

On the topic of private subsidiary farming, it should be noted that, although women's wage contributions to collective and state farm households are lower than those of men on average, the revenue from the private subsidiary sector to which women devote so much time must be included in an evaluation of women's total financial contribution to the household. In the private subsidiary economy, the high return on labor results in a substantial contribution to family income.[67]

The disproportionately large number of women engaged in unskilled physical labor and the disproportionately small number engaged in skilled physical labor and managerial and supervisory positions in the agricultural sector reflect the pattern of horizontal and vertical integration of women in the labor force throughout the economy (although

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[67] Ibid.

the horizontal occupational segregation is more pronounced in agriculture than in any other sector which, taken as a whole, is well integrated). While women are widely dispersed among varying occupations in all sectors of the economy, sometimes comprising large percentages of traditionally male occupations, some highly prestigious and desirable, others not, one of the most striking features of the pattern of labor participation of women is the existence of extreme inequalities in their vertical occupational distribution throughout the economy.

In fact, the wide, though very uneven dispersion of women throughout the economy, and the lack of substantial vertical integration in occupations together constitute two of the most relevant aspects of the Soviet pattern of female employment. Further proof of this is seen in an evaluation of women's employment in the industrial sector.

## Employment in Industrial Sector

### Manual and Unskilled Labor

Unlike the agricultural sector, the industrial sector offers varied and more widely available opportunities for career advancement for women. Women are extensively employed throughout the industrial sector, comprising about one-half of the entire industrial labor force.[68]

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[68]Ibid., p. 172.

The proportion of women engaged in manual labor is much higher than that of men, both in industry as a whole and in all but three separate branches of industry.[69] For example, in the building materials industry, 37% of all female workers perform manual labor, compared with 25% of all men; of all forestry workers, 69% of all women and 37% of all men are engaged in manual labor; in ferrous metallurgy the figures are 23% and 19% respectively; and in the peat industry, 56% and 10%.[70]

In industry as a whole, women constitute about 80% of all workers performing the secondary and auxiliary tasks requiring little knowledge, but generally demanding a great deal of physical effort.[71] Jobs in this category include sorters, packers, and unpackers, and the percentages of women performing them are 86%, 80%, and 98% respectively.[72] There is much less mechanization in these auxiliary types of work than there is in the main operations, so the pattern of the underrepresentation of women among those performing skilled tasks with the aid of mechanization is present in the industrial sector as well as in agriculture. According to Soviet data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, for example, about 60-70% of the main processes in machine construction are performed mechanically, with only about 25-30% of the auxiliary processes mechanized.[73]

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[69] Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 91.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

The Soviet Union does not provide a great deal of detailed information on the proportions of women among varying skill levels in industry. It is known, though, that women do predominate in unskilled, unmechanized physical labor, and that, to an extent, women are increasing their proportion in middle and high level skilled occupations. However, the results of several small-scale studies of industrial occupations show that in the two lowest levels of skill classifications, women comprise about 70-80% of all workers, and about 5-10% of all workers in the two highest skill level classifications.[74] One study showed 94.5% of all female workers concentrated in the three lowest classifications, with the comparable figure for men being 47.8%.[75] In another study there were no women at the higher skilled levels at a majority of factories surveyed.[76] A larger, more detailed study done in Moscow showed that in the lowest two skill classifications women outnumbered men five to one while men outnumbered women by the same margin in the three highest skill groups, and that 8.5% of the women, compared with 43% of the men, were in the higher earnings categories.[77]

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[74]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 182.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Ibid.

Increasing Participation of Women in Industry

Figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics indicate that the number of women employed in almost all branches of industry is increasing.[78] Throughout Soviet history, the demand for additional workers in the industrial sector has been to a great extent filled by women who previously had been employed in agriculture. Except for the postwar period, over one-half of the increase in the labor force resulting from increased labor participation in industry has been comprised of women.[79] According to an analysis by Soviet researchers of female participation in the industrial labor force, there are several factors which explain the increased influx of women in this sector over the past 10-15 years. The primary reason is the expansion of "branches of industry related to technology (electronics, electro- and radiotechnical industry, instrument-making, chemicals, etc.) and, second, in the consumer-goods industry (light industry, food industry, printing, etc.)."[80] The authors list several other general factors explaining this trend. They include the fact that during this period, the demand for additional industrial workers exceeded the expansion of the work force, a situation caused not only by the demographic features of the population, but by a reduced rate of growth in productivity between 1959-1965.[81] Other reasons for

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[78]Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 94.

[79]Ibid., p. 93.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Ibid.

the significant increases in female industrial employment in recent times include the restriction of work in the private subsidiary economy (through the reduction of the amount of cultivated land available to this sector), the expansion of state pensions, the raising of the minimum wage and pay rates, and the increased demand for material needs.[82]

There are several branches of industry in which the growth of female workers has been especially great. These are the chemical industry, which has more than doubled the number of female workers; the oil-prospecting and oil-processing industries, with 1.7 times more women; electrical engineering and machine building, 1.5 times more women; and the sewing industry, 2.6 times more women.[83]

## Concentration of Women in Particular Branches

While there is female representation in all branches of industrial employment, the bulk of female employment is unevenly distributed among branches. Around 70% of all women industrial workers are concentrated in just three branches, machine building and metal working, light industry, and the sewing industry.[84] The chemical industry, with approximately half a million women workers, comes in fourth in the number of females employed.[85]

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[82] Ibid., p. 94.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

Though women continue their numerical predominance in specific industries traditionally considered female, and in fact still constitute a majority in the textile, garment, fur, leather, footwear, and food industries, women are also fairly well represented in many traditionally male industrial occupations. By the 1960's, for example, about 30% of all construction workers were women, and women constituted much higher percentages of several specific construction occupations.[86] In the area of public transportation women comprise high percentages of subway, trolley and trolley-bus drivers, and of the conductors on these vehicles, although only a tiny fraction of automobile and truck drivers are women.[87] Women comprise surprisingly high percentages of such occupations as forge and press operators and other machine tool operators.[88] A substantial share of production personnel in steel foundries are women, and the same holds true of many other industrial occupations which in most Western countries remain male dominated.

Furthermore, the Soviet Union provides no official statistics on the female participation rates in certain occupations, such as mining, steel smelting, whaling, and lumberjacking, in which many women have been and continue to be employed, as protective labor legislation forbids women to engage in these types of heavy labor occupations.[89] These

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[86]Norton T. Dodge, Women in the Soviet Economy, Their Role in Economic, Scientific, and Technical Development, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 177.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid.

[89]I.A. Kurganoff, Women in the U.S.S.R., (London, Ontario, Canada: S.B.O.N.R. Publishing House, 1971), p. 63.

occupations are required by law to be composed entirely of men, but sizeable numbers of women are employed in them nonetheless.

## White-Collar and Management Positions

As women in blue-collar industrial occupations are concentrated in the lowest skill level categories, so white-collar women employed in the industrial sector are largely concentrated in junior and low level positions, and are significantly underrepresented in middle level and particularly in upper level managerial and executive posts. However, the proportion of women white-collar workers is much greater than is the proportion of women who are skilled blue-collar workers. As one would expect in an expanding sector of the economy, there is a much higher proportion of white-collar women in industry than there is in the agricultural sector.

However, women white-collar workers are still a disproportionately small number of the middle and upper level managerial and executive class. For example, among the occupations involving enterprise management in industry, construction, agriculture, forestry, transportation, communications, and their structural subdivisions, in 1970 only 16% of those employed in management positions were women.[90] The percentage of women enterprise directors was just 13% in 1970, though this is an

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[90] Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 184.

improvement on the 1% figure in 1956, and 6% in 1963.[91] Those figures include women directors of state farm enterprises, however, and excluding them and looking only at industrial enterprises, by 1975 only 9% of all those in this category were women, and just under one-fourth of all heads of production-technical sections and subgroups were women.[92] Of all the foremen, heads of shops, sections, and departments, about 15% were women.[93] The lack of women managers is particularly noteworthy in that almost 65% of the key administrative age cohort are women.[94]

As noted, women constitute a much higher proportion of white-collar workers than of skilled manual workers. As in all industrial societies, the distinction between blue-collar and white-collar occupations becomes less clear cut, more ambiguous, and the predominance of women in white-collar professions is associated with this trend.[95] Furthermore, this trend has been particularly notable in the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries where nonmanual labor had traditionally enjoyed an extremely high status.

According to the United Nations survey of European incomes, by the early 1960's a narrowing of the income differentials between white-collar groups and blue-collar groups in the Soviet Union had occurred,

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[91] Ibid., p. 183.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

and skilled blue-collar groups "had actually overtaken the lower white-collar employees."[96] Studies of occupational prestige in the Soviet Union and Soviet-bloc countries indicate that "skilled manual positions enjoy higher social standing than do lower white-collar positions-a reverse of the situation prevailing in the pre-socialist period."[97] In all the studies of occupational prestige, the following picture of the social rewards hierarchy attached to broad occupational categories appears as follows, from high to low: 1) white-collar intelligentsia (the professional and managerial class); 2) skilled blue-collar work; 3) low level white-collar work; 4) unskilled blue-collar work.[98]

Therefore, the relative status and income of manual labor, particularly skilled manual labor, has increased, and that of low level white-collar work has declined, while the average level of education has remained higher for the latter group. Because women comprise a majority of the low level white-collar class and are a disproportionately small number of the skilled blue-collar class, the erosion of the relationship between education, status, and income affects women most detrimentally.[99]

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[96]Frank Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order, (London: MacGibbon & Kee Ltd., 1971), p. 144.

[97]Ibid., p. 147.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 184.

For example, a Soviet study of the occupational structure of one Soviet factory in Sverdlovsk found that 6% of blue-collar workers and 27.7% of white-collar employees fell into the lowest wage category, while 41.1% of the former group and 0.6% of the latter group fell into the highest wage category.[100] Ninety-five percent of the white-collar employees were women.

Another much more detailed study of occupational stratification in Soviet industry is one which looked at machine-building enterprises in Leningrad in 1965.[101] In the study, the labor force was divided into eight categories: (1) managers and organizers of production; (2) skilled scientific and technical personnel; (3) skilled nonmanual workers; (4) skilled workers combining manual and nonmanual functions; (5) skilled manual workers; (6) skilled machine-tenders; (7) other nonmanual workers; and (8) unskilled manual workers.[102] Indicators of social position, including average level of education and income, were assigned to each of the eight categories. As this study was not concerned with and therefore did not supply data on sex-based occupational stratification, the 1970 census for the Russian Republic was used to estimate the percentage of women in each of the categories.[103]

The resulting information augments preceding evidence concerning sex-based occupational segregation and substantiates the fact that

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[100] Ibid., pp. 184-185.

[101] Ibid., p. 185.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

women are the most adversely affected by the erosion of the close relationship between education, status, and income.

In the Leningrad study, the highest proportion of women were found in category number seven, (other nonmanual workers), who are defined as "mental workers of middle-level skills (inspectors, sorters, accounting personnel)."[104] In this category, women comprise 90% of the workers, the educational level is in the middle range relative to all the other categories, and the income level is the lowest of all the categories. Category number eight, (unskilled manual workers), has the lowest level of education yet a higher income level than category seven, and is 34% female. Category number three, (skilled nonmanual workers), such as technologists and bookkeepers, has the second highest proportion of women, 87%. The educational level in this category is in the upper range, and the income level is in the lower middle range; furthermore, two of the three categories of skilled manual labor have higher income levels and of course significantly lower educational levels than category three; finally, of these three categories of skilled manual labor, the only one with a lower income level than category three (skilled nonmanual workers), is category number six (skilled machine-tenders), which of the three has the highest proportion of women (30%, compared with 10% and 8% for categories five and four respectively), and all three categories have virtually the same levels of educational attainment. Category number one, (managers and organizers of production), has the second highest level of educational attainment, by far the

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[104] Ibid., p. 186.

highest income level, and is 16% female. The final category to be mentioned is number two, (skilled scientific and technical personnel). In this category alone, in which women comprise almost half of the total, do education, status, and income levels roughly correlate. The educational and income levels are each the second highest of the group.

The implications of these patterns are that only in professional careers, requiring university degrees rather than training provided by secondary schools, are women being equitably rewarded for their educational attainments.

## Reasons for Inequality

Although Soviet studies do not directly address the sexual aspects of occupational structure, it is clear from the results of their research that there are pronounced differences in occupational distribution by sex. Clearly, women are overrepresented in nonmanual industrial occupations characterized by low status and pay, and are underrepresented in skilled manual labor positions which have attained a higher degree of status and higher wages.

As in the agricultural sector, a distinction must be made between discrimination and preference as explanations for differential occupational distributions in the industrial sector. One theory suggests that as women enter the labor market for the first time, they tend to choose occupations which most resemble their traditional role in the household, hence women's dominance of the consumer goods sector, including light industry, the food and sewing industries, and

services.[105] If this is true, then this pattern, established during earlier stages of economic development, has continued into the later stages.

Role identification, the theory that a woman's choice of occupation is influenced by her assumption of the traditionally female housekeeping and childcare responsibilities, could also explain sex-based differences in occupational distributions.[106] For instance, role identification could discourage women from choosing occupations requiring extended training or education. It could also induce women to seek jobs with fewer hours, part-time work, or work close to home.

Additionally, the intermittent nature of a woman's lifetime employment in the labor force owing to childbirth and childcare may influence her choice of occupation. Occupations which involve fewer skills may be chosen in order to minimize the depreciation of human capital during periods spent out of the labor force.

All these factors involve a deliberate choice by women to limit the investment in their human capital in order to assume household and childcare responsibilities while making financial contributions to the household through employment. This could account in part for the preponderance of women engaged in unskilled physical labor and low level

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[105] William Mandel, Soviet Women in the Work Force and Professions, American Behavioral Scientist 15 (November-December 1971): 255-80. Cited by Ibid., p. 175.

[106] Barry R. Chiswick and June A. O'Neill, ed., Human Resources and Income Distribution, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), p. 29.

white-collar work, and for their underrepresentation in skilled occupations and managerial positions.

Women are, however, better represented in the managerial and professional class in industry than in agricultural because industry is an expanding sector of the economy to which the planners' preference of a command economy has always attached the highest priority. As a result, women are more widely dispersed in occupations throughout this sector, including all skilled occupations.

Specifically, women constitute a much higher proportion of skilled white-collar workers in industry than in agriculture because in the Soviet Union an engineering background is an extremely important criterion for the attainment of higher occupational positions of authority in industry. The Soviets have put a high priority on training large numbers of people, male and female, in engineering fields as industrial technicians and specialists. Thus in this area the Soviets have created a pattern of female employment which greatly differs from that of other industrial countries. Although proportionally women are still the minority in the field of engineering, they now constitute 40% of all engineers, and this proportion has shown a steady increase for the past 40 years.[107]

As for women's concentration at the lower levels of the industrial managerial class, a partial explanation is that women's entry in this field in numbers beginning to rival men's was relatively late, and

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[107] Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 182.

evidence indicates that in recent years more women are entering the ranks of upper level managers; however, it is clear that women have not moved into higher level positions of responsibility and authority in numbers corresponding to the number of women qualified for such work, based on their education, training, work experience, and the existence of large industries dominated by female labor.[108]

At this point, the participation of women in professional occupations throughout the economy will be examined.

## Employment in Professional Occupations

As mentioned previously, the employment pattern of Soviet women is characterized by a wide dispersion of women among all sectors of society. This dispersion is quite uneven, however, and the pattern of substantial horizontal integration is matched in significance by the universal lack of substantial vertical integration. These characteristics are repeated in another category of employment, professional occupations, or specialists. As the proportion of women engaged in unskilled physical labor is one of the most striking aspects of the labor force participation of Soviet women, no less so is the high proportion of women specialists. In the mid-1970's, women constituted 59% of all specialists with higher education and special secondary education, a figure which has remained relatively stable for 20 years.[109] Because women's access to

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[108] Ibid., p. 183.

[109] Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 112.

professional occupations is predicated on their access to higher education, we will look first at the overall participation of women in educational institutions, and at the specific fields women enter most and least often.

Participation in Specialized Secondary and Higher Education

By 1977, 51% of all students in higher educational institutions were women.[110] Only one other country in the world, Finland, has a higher proportion of women enrolled in higher education.[111] The fields with the heaviest concentration of women are: teaching, the arts, and cinematography, 68% female; economics and law, 62%; and public health, physical culture, and sport, 57%.[112] Forty percent of all students in industry, construction, transport, and communications fields are women, and just 32% of all students in agricultural fields in higher education are women.[113] In special secondary schools, about 53% of all students are women.[114] Here, women are even more heavily concentrated in the same three fields in which women predominate in higher education: public health, physical culture, and sport, 88% female; economics and

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[110]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 150.

[111]Ibid., p. 155.

[112]Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 113.

[113]Ibid.

[114]Ibid.

law, 84%; teaching, the arts, and cinematography, 81%.[115] There is also a relatively high proportion of women in special secondary schools for industry, construction, transport and communications: 40%, the same as in higher education.[116]

## Access to Higher Education

Although the high percentage of women in higher educational institutions appears to suggest that women have equal access to education, the high degree of female concentration in particular fields suggests that, among other things, sex-stereotyping persists. The fact that women continue to be heavily concentrated in certain occupations and sectors cannot be overlooked in terms of its effects on wages in these predominantly female occupations. This issue will be discussed later.

These different preferences displayed by male and female applicants to higher educational institutions may have the effect of limiting women's access to education. For instance, at the University of Novosibirsk, chemistry, history, economics, cybernetics, biology and linguistics are all fields dominated by women, and are therefore considered "feminine" fields.[117] This sexual differentiation of fields, combined with the admissions process itself, can result in "a lower ratio of acceptance of female students...if the ratio of applicants

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Gail Warskofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 151.

to places is greater in fields and institutions in which women applicants predominate,... even if the selection process was not explicitly discriminatory."[118] A Soviet study seems to bear this out. Research conducted in Leningrad in 1968 found that there were twice as many female applicants as male applicants at five major higher educational institutions.[119] Sixty percent of the women and just 30% of the men applied to study in the humanities. Of all the applicants accepted to study in the five institutions, approximately 50% were male and 50% were female; however, fully one-half of the male applicants were admitted compared with just one-fifth of the female applicants. A Soviet author made the point that "a certain portion of the places in special academic institutions are intended for the study of specifically "masculine" occupations. Regardless of the reasons for this, it is necessary to acknowledge the reality of the fact that even though a woman in a large town realizes her equal right to education, she achieves it through additional personal effort as compared with a man."[120]

These differential preferences exhibited by men and women are the result of a process of socialization which exposes children at a very early age to culturally defined male and female roles. The function of schools in this process appears very important. Soviet researchers

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[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

[120] E.K. Vasil'eva, Sotsial'no-professional'nyi uroven' gorodskoi molodezhi, (Leningrad, 1973), p. 73. Cited by Ibid., p. 152.

have not conducted any in-depth studies of sex-role orientation within the educational system, so the evidence for the contention that the school system presents and reinforces sex-role stereotyping is found in the content of children's text books, school curricula which differ for boys and girls, the relatively few Soviet journal articles which criticize sex-role stereotyping in schools and the failure of the educational system to alter its pattern of reinforcing traditional preferences,[121] and Soviet studies which indicate that by the eighth grade, Soviet children have formed strong biases on the subject of "masculine" and "feminine" occupations.[122]

Women's access to higher education can be limited, therefore, without the presence of explicitly discriminatory admissions policies. However, in some cases their presence is noted. Evidence points to the conclusion that overtly discriminatory admissions practices do exist. A Soviet author wrote in Literaturnaia gazeta, "for young women, it is harder to gain entrance to higher educational institutions, even though they study and pass examinations just as well as young men."[123] In the newspaper Komsomol'skaia pravda, a writer criticized the fact that medical institutes set higher admissions standards for women than for men, writing "it is unfitting to conceal

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[121]Ibid., p. 144.

[122]Ibid., pp. 144-145.

[123]S. Berezovskai, Literaturnaia gazeta, January 22, 1969. Cited by Ibid., p. 150.

this, ...(that men) are accepted to medical institutions with a lower average than girls."[124]

Another important aspect of higher education in relation to women is in the area of graduate training. Although in absolute terms the number of women graduate students has increased greatly over time, their proportion has not. In 1931, 23% of all graduate students were women, and while their percentage increased to over 43% by World War II, it thereafter declined until by 1960 it had returned to 23%.[125]

Again, we see the concentration of women graduate students in particular fields, as we did women students in undergraduate programs, and women workers and employees in the economy. Approximately 60-70% of women graduate students are in the fields of public health and education.[126]

As noted, the number of women graduate students has increased greatly, particularly since 1950. In 1976, the number of women holding the degree Candidate of Science, roughly equivalent to the American Ph.D., was eight times the number in 1950.[127] This is a percentage point increase of just 3.1%, however, from 25% of the total number of degree holders to 28.1%.[128] As for the degree Doctor of Science, an attainment signifying great scholarly accomplishment which is usually

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[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., p. 155.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., p. 156.

[128] Ibid.

granted no less than a decade after the Candidate of Science degree, since 1950 there has also been an eight-fold increase in the number of women holding this degree; this is a percentage 1.9 times the 1950 level: from 7.2% to 13.8%.[129]

A partial explanation for the considerably lower percentage of women advanced degree holders compared with men is concerned with family responsibilities which are unevenly divided between men and women. Along these lines, one of the most important considerations is that, according to complaints reported in the Soviet press, "educational officials are frequently insensitive or even hostile to female students' special needs,"[130] which refers to the fact that female students are not automatically granted but must officially request maternity leave, which requires an extension of the deadline on their program of study.[131] Evidently these requests, left to the discretion of educational officials, are sometimes denied. This reason and other family considerations are not meant to be presented as a comprehensive explanation for the disproportionately small percentage of women graduate students. Much more information than is provided by the Soviet Union on graduate applications, admissions policies, and on the special problems encountered by women in graduate training is needed in order to evaluate the degree to which family responsibilities create obstacles for female graduate students, and to define and measure other variables

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., p. 158.

[131] Ibid.

contributing to the low proportion of women pursuing advanced academic degrees.

## Concentration of Women in Particular Professional Fields

Lack of vertical integration. More than eight and one-half million of all women specialists had completed a technical secondary education, and about five and one-half million more had received at least one degree from a higher educational institution.[132] Among the professional occupations, those fields with the largest numbers of women are teaching, engineering and medicine. Of these three, the two fields with the highest proportion of women, teaching and medicine, demonstrate the typical pattern of female employment in the professions: as the level of responsibility and status rises, the proportion of women declines. Women constitute 70% of the entire teaching force, 79% of teachers of grades one through eleven,[133] and 87% of primary school teachers.[134] There are very few separate primary schools, as the most common organizational unit is the 8-year or 10-year school, both of which include the primary department. The percentage of women among directors of

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[132]Alena Heitlinger, Women and State Socialism, Sex Inequality in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, (London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1979), p. 100.

[133]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 186.

[134]Alena Heitlinger, Women and State Socialism, Sex Inequality in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, (London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1979), p. 103.

8-year and 10-year schools is 33% and 30% respectively.[135] Predictably, there is a higher percentage of women among deputy-directors in these schools, as it is a subordinate position. Even so, women do not occupy deputy-directorships in proportions high enough to correspond with their predominance as teachers in these schools. Of all deputy-directors of 8-year and 10-year schools, 60% and 66%, respectively, are women.[136]

In the field of medicine the pattern is basically the same. Seventy percent of all physicians are women, but men comprise fully 50% of all chief physicians and supervisory personnel.[137] Referring to physicians and medical institutions, an author in Literaturnaia gazeta criticized this situation, writing: "Even given an equal level of professional preparation...(men rather than women) as a rule hold the managerial posts. In the overwhelming majority of cases, it is men who head departments, enterprises, and administrative agencies."[138] Further, women physicians are frequently assigned the less desirable positions. For instance, the majority of physicians assigned to rural practice are women; also, of the women assigned positions requiring administrative responsibilities, as a rule they are at the lower end of the scale in terms of status, authority and income. The most prestigious medical assignments, particularly those in urban areas, are occupied in far

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[135] Ibid., p. 104.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 188.

[138] Ibid.

higher proportion by men. Additionally, within the field of medicine women physicians tend to be represented in the greatest numbers in specialties generally regarded as the least prestigious. Women tend to be concentrated in internal medicine, and more than 90% of all pediatricians are women.[139] Women are very poorly represented among surgeons, one of the most prestigious specialties in medicine, constituting just 6% of the total.[140] Though women constitute a majority of physicians, a profession requiring high educational attainment, a look at the hierarchical structure of authority, responsibility, and status indicates that not even by comprising a majority in a profession are women necessarily able to alter the power structure.

Another profession in which women are well represented is scientific workers. Forty percent of all workers in this category are women. As the percentages of women holding graduate degrees is quite low, so is the proportion of women at the highest levels of scientific and scholarly rank. At the highest level of scientific rank, those designated Academician, Corresponding Member, or Professor, only 10% are women.[141] This figure has remained constant for over 10 years, and is just 3% higher than it was twenty-five years ago.[142] The next level is the rank of Associate Professor. In this category, 23% are women, a

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[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid., p. 156.

[142] Ibid.

figure which has actually declined from a high of 24.5% in 1973.[143] At the next level, Senior Research Associate, again 23% of the total are women, and again this shows a decline, this time from a high of 30% in 1950.[144] However, in this case, the downward trend has not been constant since 1950. The decline continued until 1973, when it reached 21%, but since then no clear upward pattern has been established.[145] At the lowest rank, Junior Research Associates and Assistants, we find the highest proportion of women. Over forty-eight percent of all workers in this category are women, a figure which has remained relatively constant for over 25 years.[146] It should be noted, though, that like advanced degree holders, in absolute terms the number of women in scientific work has increased greatly since 1950. Although the proportion of women scientific workers has remained relatively stable over time, in 1950 they numbered about 60,000 and by 1976 almost half a million.[147] In the Academy of Sciences, one of the most important and powerful governmental institutions under whose auspices most scientific research is conducted, as of 1977, 14 of the 749 members were women; only 3 women were full members, and 11 were corresponding members.[148]

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[143] Ibid., p. 157.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid., p. 156.

[148] Ibid., p. 189.

As noted previously, the high percentage of women specialists in the Soviet Union constitutes a pattern of women's employment quite different from any found in the West. No Western country even approaches the numbers of women employed in traditionally male professional occupations in the USSR.

For instance, the following fields are notable for the significant proportion of Soviet women and the small percentage of Western women engaged in them: engineers, architects, attorneys, scientific research personnel, doctors and dentists, medical administrators, and editors.

Although Soviet women are, on a comparative basis, at least relatively well represented in almost all professional occupations, women in the professions are concentrated in particular fields: education, public health, art, physical culture, economics, and law, to name the most common.

We have seen that, within the agricultural and industrial sectors, women also tend to be concentrated in certain types of work. It is this unequal distribution of women among various types of employment which, taken as a whole, constitutes the third relevant aspect of the Soviet pattern of women's employment: the concentration of women in low wage sectors of the economy.

## Employment in Service Sector

### Concentration of Women in Particular Fields

The service sector, which has enjoyed rapid growth in recent years, is now predominantly a female sector. Seventy-six percent of all workers

and employees in trade, public catering, material-technical supplies and marketing, and procurement are women, and this is one of three economic sectors in which the proportion of women has increased more rapidly than the overall proportional increase of women in the labor force.[149] The ratio of women in this sector to their proportion of the total labor force was 1.12 in 1940, and 1.49 in 1974.[150] The other two sectors are banking and state insurance, over 80% female, (this field has a great many low level white-collar employees who perform secretarial and bookkeeping work), and, also employing many clerical workers, governmental and economic administration, with women comprising 63% of the total.[151] The ratios of women in these sectors to the proportion of women in the labor force are 1.59 and 1.23 respectively.[152] The highest ratio, 1.66, is in the public health sector; the lowest, .47, in transportation.[153]

Also contributing to the widening gap between those sectors which are predominantly female and those which are not, is the fact that the rate of growth of female employment in two sectors traditionally dominated by men, transport and construction, continues to lag behind the overall rate of growth of women in the labor force.[154]

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[149] Ibid., pp. 171-173.

[150] Ibid., p. 172.

[151] Ibid., pp. 172-173.

[152] Ibid., p. 172.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid., p. 171.

Women continue their traditional predominance in the garment industry and textiles, and are 98% of all nurses, 98% of nursery school personnel, 95% of librarians, 96% of telephone operators, and 99% of typists and stenographers.[155] Ninety-one percent of all employees in trade and public catering alone are women.[156] Between 1959 and 1970, of the occupations which experienced the largest increases in female labor, only two were not occupations in which women were already greatly overrepresented. Those occupations with the largest influx of women were: engineering and technical operations; planning, bookkeeping, and accounting; food supply and public catering; scientific workers, teachers, and nursery personnel; machinery and metallurgy; and medical workers.[157] Of these, only the engineering and metallurgical fields were not previously, (and are not today), dominated by women. Despite the increases in female labor, 60% of engineers are men, and the overwhelming majority of workers in metallurgy are men.

Additionally, it has been roughly estimated that as many as 40-50% of all workers in the Soviet Union would have to change occupations in order to redistribute men and women in each occupation to reflect each group's proportion in the total labor force.[158]

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[155] Ibid., p. 173.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid., p. 174.

[158] Ibid.

## Wage Differentials

### Female Dominance of Occupations and Sectors

The rapid growth of the service sector in recent years, which has attracted a very high proportion of the new female entrants in the labor force, together with the large numbers of women entering professional and paraprofessional fields, has been responsible for the pattern of increasing male-female occupational stratification.[159] As a result of the observed patterns of both horizontal and vertical integration of female employment, there are significant wage disparities between men and women. The principle of equal pay for equal work has no bearing on that part of the male-female wage differential which results from sex-based differences in occupational composition. Although the Soviet Union does not publish data on the comparative wage structure of men and women based on identical levels of educational achievement, there is evidence which points not only to the existence of substantial wage disparities based on differential occupational distribution, but to a pervasive underutilization of female skills which results in lower wages despite equal levels of education.

As for horizontal occupational stratification, those economic sectors to which the most political and economic importance is attached are precisely the ones with the lower levels of female representation. These high priority sectors, such as heavy industry and construction, have labor forces in which women are underrepresented, while sectors

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[159] Ibid., p. 175.

in which women predominate, consumer goods and the service sector, have the lowest priority attached to them.[160] The wage structure of these sectors, starting wages, wage differentials and bonuses, is commensurate with the priority attached to them, and thus the importance and value assigned to the labor; therefore, as the sectors in which women are concentrated are regarded as being less valuable in general, its labor receives a correspondingly smaller renumeration.

For instance, comparing the wages of a chief engineer in various different sectors illustrates the differentials. A chief engineer in the following sectors, with identical training and functions, would earn greatly differing monthly wages: in the coal industry, 380 rubles (these figures are from the early 1970's); ferrous metallurgy, 270-320 rubles; machine-building, 260-300 rubles; light industry, 200-210 rubles; and in the food industry, 180-200 rubles.[161]

It has also been demonstrated that there is a high correlation between the wage rate of different economic sectors and their proportion of female employment. For example, the two sectors with the highest levels of average monthly earnings, construction and transport, with 176 rubles and 173 rubles respectively, also have the lowest female labor participation rates, 28% and 24% respectively (figures are from 1975).[162] Of fifteen sectors listed, the two with the lowest average monthly earnings, (the first sector is comprised of public health,

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[160] Ibid., p. 190.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid., p. 192.

physical culture, and social welfare, and the second is culture), have two of the four highest rates of female employment: for the former, the average wage is 102 rubles and 84% of the labor force, the highest of the fifteen sectors, is female; for the latter, the average wage is 92 rubles and 73% of the labor force is female.[163] The service sector, overwhelmingly dominated by women, has an average monthly salary of just 108 rubles.[164]

Looking at all of the fifteen economic sectors, a clear correlation does exist between the wage rate and the share of women in the labor force. Furthermore, the concentration of women in particular occupations and types of occupations within all economic sectors reflects the same pattern. The extreme underrepresentation of women in skilled blue-collar occupations, and their preponderance in unskilled labor and clerical positions, clearly signify the dense concentration of women in poorly paid, low status occupations within sectors and their substantial underrepresentation in the highly rewarded, high status occupations.

In "female" branches of industry, wage rates are generally beneath the average wage rate of industry as a whole. For example, in the textile industry, the average monthly wage is approximately 23 rubles below that of industry as a whole; in the sugar industry, the figure is almost

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[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

26 rubles, and in the meat industry about 20 rubles.[165] On the other hand, in branches of industry in which women comprise a very small percentage of the total work force, the average salary is much higher than the average salary of industry as a whole: in the coal industry, the average monthly wage is almost 89 rubles higher than that of industry as a whole, and in ferrous metallurgy it is about 22 rubles higher.[166]

We have already seen that the erosion of the relationship between education, status and income is most harmful to women, as the Leningrad study of occupational stratification in industry indicated. The study also indicated that only at the level of higher education, in professional occupations within the industrial enterprises studied, are education and wages roughly correlated. Outside of the professional occupations in industry researched in the Leningrad study, we find that the two professions most dominated by women, teaching and medicine, are also among the most poorly paid of the professions, and their wage increases continually lag behind the national average. In education, wages have increased only two-thirds as much as the national average over the past twenty years.[167] In medicine, an increase in pay in recent years has been attributed to the decline in the proportion of

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[165] Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 109.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 190.

women physicians, from 77% in 1950 to the current 70%.[168] It is reported that in the mid-1960's, admissions policies limited the proportion of women entering medical school to 65% of the total number, down from 85%.[169] Currently, approximately 54% of medical school entrants are women, the result of a deliberate attempt by Soviet officials to divide the medical profession evenly between men and women.[170]

As we saw earlier, these two professions dominated by women, medicine and education, have a higher proportion of men at the upper levels of the hierarchy. The higher level managerial and administrative positions, which have much higher salaries, have a disproportionate lack of women. The argument that women are underrepresented in upper level executive positions in all professions, even those in which women now comprise at least half of all those in the field, as a result of the time lag associated with past educational disadvantages and lower rates of participation, is an argument which may be applied to many professions, but medicine and education are not among them.[171] Since the 1930's there has been a high proportion of women in both fields with a specialized secondary or higher education.[172]

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[168] Ibid., p. 188.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid., p. 189.

[172] Ibid.

Other Reasons for Male-Female Wage Differential

Other reasons for the lower wages in female sectors and in female occupations are, as mentioned, the lack of women in highly skilled labor throughout the economy, combined with their limited mobility and lower seniority: a Soviet study of women working in various enterprises in Odessa reported that the level of men's work seniority was 1.5 to 2.0 times higher than women's.[173] Also, with upper level management remaining a male preserve, very few women have the chance to earn the bonuses available to management, with which to supplement their income.

Another familiar aspect of women's employment which evades the benefits of the equal pay for equal work doctrine is the fact that many women are employed in positions for which they are overqualified. It is reported that a great many women specialists are placed in jobs for which the actual qualifications required are much lower than their education and training have prepared them.[174] It has been observed by many Soviet writers that one way in which women's employment differs greatly from men's is that women simply have fewer jobs to choose from, and surveys bear this out. Responding to these surveys, twice as many women as men reported that they were "holding their present jobs because no other, more suitable ones, were available to them."[175]

Despite the fact that neither a husband nor a wife has the legal right to dictate that the family's place of residence will be where his

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[173]Ibid., p. 191.

[174]Ibid., p. 192.

[175]Ibid., p. 191.

(or her) job is, the long held custom of the husband's employment opportunities determining the place of residence continues, thereby further limiting the employment opportunities of married women.

In fact, studies have shown that the major complaint women have about their jobs is the "distance of the place of work from home."[176] That was found to be the primary complaint of women participating in a study by A.G. Kharchev and S.I. Golod.[177] The second most frequently observed complaint was inconvenient shifts, and the third, poor pay. This study, along with a great deal of sociological research, has confirmed the fact that the main reason family women work is to earn money to supplement the family income. Most Soviet families cannot manage financially with only one income, so women are compelled to work. Although in the Kharchev study, 75% of the women questioned professed themselves satisfied with their work, the degree of satisfaction increased as the level of skill and qualification increased. Just over 80% of skilled women workers reported that they found their work rewarding and satisfying, and about 69% of unskilled women workers reported the same.

In another study conducted by two other Soviet researchers, the situation of being "forced intermittently to interrupt work constitutes

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[176]Feiga Blekher, The Soviet Woman in the Family and in Society, (A Sociological Study), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1979), p. 111.

[177]A.G. Kharchev and S.I. Golod, Professional'naya rabota zhenshchin i sem'ya. Sotsiologicheskoe iss6dovanie (The Professional Work of Women and the Family (A Sociological Study)), Izdat. Nauka, Leningradskoe Otdelenie, Leningrad, 1971, pp. 42-43. Cited by Ibid.

a 'female problem.'"[178] Fifty-four percent of the women involved in the study reported that they had to quit working periodically, while only 10% of the men did so. The reasons men and women gave for being forced to stop working were also different. The reason given most often by the women was to look after children, while the most frequent response from the men was that suitable work was unavailable. Only a tiny fraction of the women, 3%, responded that they had quit work because they were financially secure.

As mentioned, most Soviet families do need two incomes, and Soviet economic writings routinely refer to the secondary, or woman's, income amounting to two-thirds of the primary, or man's, income.[179] The Soviet Union publishes no national data on male-female income differentials, so it is impossible to calculate precisely the ratio of average female earnings to average male earnings for the economy as a whole. Some income differential statistics are published, although they are very limited, usually being the results of studies of specific types of enterprises in one area only.

One study of this type which examined factory workers in the mid-1960's reported that on the average, women earned 69.3% of what men earned.[180] Another study, this one of 15,000 workers in light industry in Kiev, found that the average wage of women ranged from 83%-90% of

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[178] Ibid.

[179] Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 194.

[180] Ibid., pp. 192-193.

men's.[181] Although a Western study in 1974 estimated that the per capita female income in the Soviet Union was approximately 87% of the per capita male income, this figure underestimates the differential.[182] Both the wide wage disparities reported between male-dominated and female-dominated sectors of the economy, and the male-female wage differentials within each sector, based on the differing types of occupations in which men and women tend to be concentrated, indicate that women's wages fall too heavily at the lower end of the scale for women to earn on average 87% of what men do.[183]

Additionally, published Soviet data "point to female earnings which fall between two-thirds and three-fourths of male earnings."[184] There is also the previously noted acceptance of the ratio of the secondary income to the primary income within a family observed in Soviet writings. And finally, at least as a means of comparison, statistics based on comprehensive national income data for Soviet-bloc countries in 1973 indicate a similar range of male-female wage differentials for the economy as a whole. In Czechoslovakia, average female earnings were 67% of men's, in Poland they were 66.5%, and in Hungary 73%.[185]

The reasons for the continuing pattern of occupational stratification, both horizontal and vertical, are varied. The educational lag

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[181] Ibid., p. 193.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid., pp. 193-194.

[185] Ibid., p. 193.

has already been mentioned as a partial explanation for the notable lack of women at the managerial and executive level, but which cannot be applied to all occupations and does not fit all circumstances.

Again, preference plays a role which affects occupational composition. Many women choose not to acquire the training and education required for managerial positions and other occupations because they want to invest less time in their jobs and more in their families.

Furthermore, as some women withdraw periodically from the labor force, they will have accumulated less experience on the job than men whose lifetime work experiences indicate greater continuity. Certainly part of the male-female wage differential can be explained by the deliberate choice of some women to limit their training, education, experience, and lifetime attachment to the labor force, all of which affect productivity.

One important variable to be considered is the "differential aspirations"[186] of men and women themselves. A recent opinion survey reported that while over one-half of the men questioned indicated that they would like the chance to improve and increase their job skills, only one-third of the women did so.[187] The survey also found that, when the respondant was questioned about his (or her) interest in a career, rather than a job, a smaller proportion of women than men indicated that their preference would be a career.

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[186] Ibid., p. 194.

[187] Ibid.

As discussed earlier, it is important to evaluate the possible reasons for women's lower career aspirations. Lower career aspirations by women probably reflect their greater burden of housekeeping and childcare responsibilities, which, by substantially reducing their leisure time relative to men's, limits the amount of time available to pursue career aspirations, improve job skills, and create and take advantage of career opportunities. In addition, women's lower aspirations may also reflect the acknowledgment of a lower "return on investments of additional time and energy."[188] There is no doubt, however, that the "double burden" of women, their workday on the job and their workday in the home, substantially reduces their leisure time relative to men's. This is best illustrated by a Soviet study of time budgets of male and female workers.[189] In the category of "working time," the ratio of time spent by females to time spent by males is .96; in the category of "housework," (which includes shopping, food preparation, care of the household and possessions, and direct physical care of children), the ratio is 2.37; and in the category of "leisure time," the ratio is 0.62.[190] Women average approximately twenty-eight hours per week on housework, compared with twelve hours per week for men, with the figures for leisure roughly the reverse.[191]

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[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid., p. 271.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid., p. 270.

As the level of wages is maintained at a low rate, necessitating two incomes in most households, many women are not free to choose not to work; therefore, as women continue to bear primary responsibility for the household and childcare duties, they are forced to reduce their commitment to both spheres, work and home.

Another variable to be considered for its contribution to differences in occupational distribution is the "differential valuation of occupations."[192] As was mentioned previously, sex-based differences in the evaluation of occupations is evidenced in early childhood, and the educational process appears to reinforce cultural stereotypes of "male" and "female" occupations. A study conducted in Leningrad of secondary school graduates asked that they rank forty occupations in the order of their attractiveness.[193] The choices of the men and those of the women closely followed the patterns of male and female participation in the labor force. The women consistently ranked all teaching, medical, and cultural professions as the most attractive, while the men's highest choices were engineering, and other skilled technical occupations. It is further notable that the occupations chosen as the most attractive by the men are the ones for which the material rewards are the greatest.

Finally, a variable which influences the pattern of women's participation in the labor force, and thus contributes to both horizontal and vertical stratification, is one dealing with prejudice and

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[192]Ibid., p. 194.

[193]Ibid., pp. 194-195.

discrimination. A study of the prevailing attitudes toward the capabilities of men and women on the job, the results of which were published in Literaturnaia gazeta, found that both men and women believe that women have less initiative, are less creative, and are by nature less qualified to fill managerial positions and other positions of authority than are men.[194] Another study reported that both men and women "expressed a preference for males in superordinate roles, with women preferred by both as subordinates."[195] The stereotypical equation of men and authority is wide spread and entrenched, and contributes to the pervasive employment pattern wherein the proportion of women steadily declines as the level of authority, responsibility, and prestige rises.

This pattern applies not only to women's employment, but also to female participation in the political process.

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[194] Ibid., p. 195.

[195] Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

## WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

The extent to which women are involved in political decision-making on all levels is a reflection of their status and position in society in general. The patterns of female representation in the political process reveal the persistence of traditional sexist attitudes toward women and authority, and demonstrate the very small role played by women in formulating political and economic policies.

### Membership in Communist Party

Because membership in the Communist Party is a prerequisite for advancement through the political ranks, the share of women among Party members will be looked at first. At present, approximately one-quarter of the sixteen million Party members are women.[196] Although an intensive effort to recruit women has been in effect since the mid-1960's, and which has resulted in a 5.2% increase in the share of women Party members since 1961, women remain extremely underrepresented among Party members relative to their share in the population as a whole.[197] Only

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[196] Ibid., p. 211.

[197] Ibid., p. 210.

3.7% of all women aged 18 and over are Party members, while the corresponding figure for men is 14.1%.[198]

Although it is argued that the disproportionately small number of women Party members is a function of educational lag, the degree of Party saturation among men and women relative to each other is remarkably similar for all levels of educational achievement: at the lowest level, (primary or incomplete primary education), approximately 7-8% of all men and 1.4-1.8% of all women over age 30 are Party members; at the highest level, (complete higher education), approximately 54% of all men and 13.6% of all women over age 30 are Party members.[199] Clearly, higher education is of much greater benefit to men relative to its effect of improving the chances of attaining Party membership, and the educational lag is not a valid explanation for the significant underrepresentation of women among Party members.

## Female Representation in Government

Next we will look at the level of female representation in the legislative and executive branches of government; these are the state, not the party, organizations. These elected assemblies, called soviets, and their executive branches, play a very limited role in the actual formulation of fundamental policy. Their role is very much secondary to that of the legislative and executive bodies within the Communist Party itself. Furthermore, the popular election of the membership of

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[198] Ibid., p. 214.

[199] Ibid.

the soviets is not the result of a competitive electoral system: the candidates on the single electoral slates are chosen at high levels of the political system, and thus the actual composition of the soviets is determined at this level.[200]

The soviets are divided into four levels of government: the local level, the regional (oblast) level, the Union (and Autonomous) Republic level, and the All-Union level, called the Supreme Soviet. The major function of the Supreme Soviet is to "legitimize and propagandize policies made elsewhere,"[201] and although in recent years attempts have been made to provide for some participation by the Supreme Soviet in the policy making process, the level of participation remains extremely limited.

The highest percentage of women delegates is found on the local level, and declines on each successively higher level. On the local level, approximately 48% of all members of soviets are women; on the regional level, 44%; on the Republic level, 39% of the Autonomous Republic and 35% of the Union Republic soviets are women; and in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 31% of its members are women.[202] The directing bodies of the Soviets are their executive committees. Committee members are elected by the members of each Soviet. Women are more poorly represented in the executive committees of the soviets than they are in the soviets themselves, and those women who become

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[201]Stanley Rothman, and George W. Breslauer, Soviet Politics and Society, (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1978), p. 196.

[202]Tova Yedlin, ed., Women in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, (New York, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 154.

members of the executive committees generally do not attain higher level positions, but are concentrated in the least powerful and lower level positions. Unfortunately, the USSR has not published comprehensive data on the gender composition of executive committees since 1961, but evidence indicates that the distribution of women among positions of authority has remained at least relatively constant.[203] In 1961, 40.7% of all members of local soviets were women, and of all executive committee members, 24.4% were women; within the executive committees, only 15.4% of all chairmen were women.[204]

With the absence of recent comprehensive data it is impossible to predict the stability of the patterns of authority within the local executive committees. However, the composition of the executive committee of a single Leningrad soviet was published in 1970 and revealed a similar pattern in which women were most poorly represented among the highest level positions of authority, (chairman, deputies to chairmen), while constituting a majority among the lower echelons, the specialists (instructors, inspectors) and the clerical personnel.[205] The data revealed that of the group comprised of the chairman, deputies to the chairman, and secretary of the executive committee of the Leningrad soviet, fewer than one-quarter were women; of the second highest group in terms of authority, (directors and deputy directors

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[203]Ibid., pp. 157-159.

[204]Ibid., p. 158.

[205]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 207-209.

of divisions), 40% were women; and of the last two groups, the lower echelons comprised of specialists and of the clerical personnel, 93% of the former and 100% of the latter were women.

The composition of the executive committee of the Supreme Soviet, called the Presidium, is about 11% female, a total of four women.[206] Although members of the Presidium are elected by the Supreme Soviet, the actual decisions on who will be elected is made at the highest levels of the Communist Party. The chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is generally referred to as the president of the USSR.

Approximately three-fourths of the deputies of the Supreme Soviet are members of the Communist Party.[207] However, almost 90% of the male deputies are Party members, while fewer than 41% of the female deputies are.[208] This is just one way in which the average profile of women deputies differs from that of men deputies in the Supreme Soviet. Another difference between men and women deputies is the types of occupations in which they are engaged. The membership of the Supreme Soviet is largely comprised of deputies who have professional political careers, i.e. high government and party officials.[209] The majority of

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[206] Tova Yedlin, ed., Women in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, (New York, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 157.

[207] Stanley Rothman, and George W. Breslauer, Soviet Politics and Society, (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1978), p. 192.

[208] Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 207.

[209] Ibid.

women deputies are collective farmers, doctors, and teachers.[210] Another difference is the higher turnover rate for women deputies.[211] From 1966 to 1970, the overall rate of re-nomination, and thus re-election, to the Supreme Soviet was 43.4%; while over 50% of the men were re-elected, just 15.3% of the women were.[212] These differences affect not only the chances of promotion through the Party ranks and the potential efficacy of women deputies in relation to men, but also influence the participation of women toward particular issues.

As mentioned, Party membership is a prerequisite for promotion to political positions of true authority; therefore, as fewer women deputies than men are Party members, election to the Supreme Soviet alone is generally less of an asset to women than it is to men in terms of furthering a political career. Although the political impact of the deputies is extremely limited for institutional reasons, the fact that women have a higher turnover rate than men diminishes whatever effectiveness they might have.[213] And finally, some evidence reveals that the educational and occupational orientations of women deputies tend to channel their participation toward their own fields, (health, cultural affairs, and public welfare), and therefore away from economic planning, budgetary matters, and foreign affairs.[214] For example,

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[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Ibid.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid.

between 1966 and 1973, women deputies participated in debates in the Supreme Soviet in proportion to their membership only on the topics of health and education policy, marriage and family law, and labor legislation.[215]

The assembly responsible for administering all public activities, defined by the constitution as the "highest executive and administrative organ of state power in the USSR," is the Council of Ministers.[216] It is the major source of governmental legislation and the most powerful organ of state administration, although it is accountable to the Central Committee Secretariat and the Politburo.[217] There are approximately 100 members on the Council of Ministers, and although this number changes fairly frequently, if any women at all currently number among them, they are very few.[218] The Council of Ministers also has a Presidium. It has about twelve members, the number of which fluctuates, and the names of all its members are known only to the Kremlin.[219] Almost surely there are no women among them. As for the ministeries themselves, since World War II only two women have held ministerial positions on the all-union level, one a Minister of Culture until

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[215] Ibid.

[216] Stanley Rothman, and George W. Breslauer, Soviet Politics and Society, (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1978), p. 197.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid., pp. 197-198.

[219] Ibid., p. 198.

her death in the early 1970's, the other a Minister of Health in the mid-1950's.[220]

## Female Representation Within Party Organizations

As for membership in positions of authority within the Communist Party organization, who comprise the political elite, the presence of women is negligible, and at the upper reaches of the hierarchy, non-existent. Women are best represented in positions of authority in Party organizations at the lowest levels. At the local level, approximately one-third of all first secretaries of primary Party organizations are women; of all urban and district Party secretaries, under 4% are women; and of all regional Party first secretaries, few women have ever been known to hold this position.[221] On the national level, the Central Committee, the legislative assembly officially charged with directing the party and which is comprised of the political and administrative elite of the USSR, has 426 members of whom 14 are women, or 3.3% of the total.[222] At the top of the hierarchy is the Politburo, the principle decision-making body of the USSR. The Politburo is comprised of about 22 members, although this number may fluctuate. There

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[220] Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, Equality, Development, and Social Change, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 217.

[221] Ibid., p. 216.

[222] Ibid., p. 217.

are no women in the Politburo, and only one woman was ever a member, and she for just three years.[223]

In a society in which the political and economic policies result from a highly centralized process, very few individuals are responsible for the actual formulation of policy. Therefore, the measure of power and influence of those involved in the political process has its primary application only at the highest levels of the hierarchy. As we have seen, women are virtually absent at these levels, and the relatively high participation of women on the lower levels only serves to highlight the fact that the chances of moving up through the political hierarchy are very unequal for men and women.

Therefore, as one measure of the status and position of women in Soviet society, the absence of women from the political and economic decision-making processes at the highest levels, which alone determine to any significant degree the fundamental domestic and foreign policies to be implemented, is a reflection of the lack of power and of the subordinate position of women in general.

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[223] Ibid., p. 216.

# CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the pattern of female employment reflects basically the same situation: in all sectors of the economy, women are extremely underrepresented in management and administrative positions. Even the two professions dominated by women, medicine and education, have a disproportionately small number of women in these managerial positions. In all sectors of the economy, the pattern of female employment is clear: the proportion of women declines dramatically at each successively higher level of the hierarchy. This is true not only of the occupations in which women predominate, but also of entire sectors in which women constitute a majority of the labor force. The lack of vertical integration is all the more striking as women are so widely dispersed throughout the economy, and in view of their participation in many traditionally male occupations which have in a relatively short time attracted significant numbers of women. A wide dispersion, however, does not imply an equitable dispersion, and the continuing existence of "female" sectors, and of "female" and "male" occupations within sectors account in part for the disparity between average female wages and average male wages. And although a notable feature of women's employment in the Soviet Union is the high proportion of women among all specialists, that is, those engaged in professional

occupations requiring a high level of education and training, it is equally notable that for every woman pursuing a career, many more are engaged in unskilled physical labor or in the least desirable occupations within a sector dominated by women, and which is characterized by low status and pay.

A most important characteristic affecting the status of women in Soviet society is the double burden of women: the workday on the job, and the second workday in the home. These added duties leave women with far less leisure time than men, and thus the amount of time women may spend on furthering employment opportunities and on involvement in political activity is greatly diminished. Men, on the other hand, freed from many household burdens, may as a group have higher career aspirations and political ambitions partly as a result of their significantly greater amount of leisure time in which to pursue them.

These criteria, the participation of women in the labor force, the political process, and in the home, together provide an evaluation of the economic status of women in Soviet society. Women do not enjoy equality in any of these areas nor is there any likelihood of equality in the foreseeable future.

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# THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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The economic status of women in the Soviet Union can be evaluated by examining the role and status of women in the labor force, in the political process, and in the household. Although on a legal basis Soviet women are on an equal footing with men, women remain in a position subordinate to men in all aspects of society.

On the subject of female participation in the labor force, several factors are evaluated. The first is labor legislation guaranteeing equal treatment, and protective labor legislation for women.

Other factors evaluated include the role of women in the agricultural sector, which remains the main sector in which women are employed. Here, as in the economy as a whole, the majority of women are engaged in unskilled physical labor in all three of the major categories of agricultural work: collective farm work, state farm work, and private subsidiary farming. Women are overrepresented in low paying unskilled physical labor, and underrepresented in higher paying skilled labor positions and in white-collar management positions.

In the industrial sector, the pattern is very similar. Most women perform manual labor and unskilled labor, and while the participation of women in the industrial sector has been growing rapidly, the growth is largely in a few branches of industry in which women are heavily concentrated. Again as in agriculture, few women hold middle and upper level management positions. Many factors contribute to this pattern of sex-based occupational stratification in both the industrial and agricultural sectors, and which is also seen among the professional occupations.

Another important characteristic of women's labor participation is the significant proportion of women engaged in professional occupations, requiring a specialized secondary or higher education. Women comprise about one-half of all students in higher education, but are concentrated in particular fields; therefore, women professionals are also concentrated in particular fields. Again, a notable lack of vertical integration exists in professional occupations, with the proportion of women declining as one rises through the hierarchy of authority, prestige and power.

The pattern of women in the labor force also shows the concentration of women in the service sector, which is dominated by women. In this sector also there is a great deal of occupational stratification, with women constituting overwhelming majorities in many occupations, while men still dominate in some traditionally male, high paying fields. Wages in the service sector are generally much lower than in other sectors of the economy, and the overall male-female wage differential is significant, according to several different estimations. The many factors involved in this differential are discussed, including sociological studies of time budget analyses, which demonstrate that women spend considerably more time on household and childcare duties than do men.

Finally, the participation of women in the political process mirrors the observed pattern of women in the labor force: lack of vertical integration. Membership in the Communist party is a prerequisite for advancement through the Party ranks, and only one-quarter of all members are women.

As for membership in the legislative and executive bodies, which have very little true power, and in the much more important and powerful Party organizations as well, women are best represented on the local level, with their proportions declining at each successively higher level. At the highest levels of authority, where all significant political and economic policies are formulated, women are virtually absent.

With all these factors evaluated, including the role of women in the labor force, the political process, and in the household, the subordinate nature of the role and status of Soviet women is clear.