Agricultural reforms in Lithuania: implications for rural women, farmers and municipalities

Caroline Schipper-Peters
Iowa State University

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Agricultural reforms in Lithuania: Implications for rural women, farmers and municipalities

Schipper-Peters, Caroline, Ph.D.

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Agricultural reforms in Lithuania:
Implications for rural women, farmers and municipalities

by

Caroline Schipper-Peters

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ABSTRACT

Lithuania is confronted with a period of profound change in agricultural structures and rural society. Efforts to privatize agriculture, and to bring the existing enterprises in line with the conditions of the market economy, create new opportunities and constraints for all parties. This research directs attention to the role and activities of various types of farmers, municipal officials, and rural women in the transformation process.

Three different levels of change are taken into account: the macro level of the Lithuanian government's redefined role in economic and agricultural restructuring; the meso level of local and regional municipal officials' responses to the restructuring; and the micro level of strategies and responses by former collective or state and individual farmers.

The findings are presented in three separate papers. The first paper explores how the interests of regional and local municipal officials intersect with farmers. The data suggest that since the start of the decollectivization process, the adoption of various laws related to private ownership of land and assets and the creation of a support program for private farmers have created some new opportunities for farmers. The findings also indicate that local officials, due to lack of funds and know-how, are very limited in what they can do to assist farmers.

The second paper focuses on gender and restructuring. Through the use of a comprehensive theoretical framework, the effects of the restructuring process on rural women's lives, their role in the change process as well as their efforts to form networks or organizations of their choosing, are explored. The data suggest that women are not playing an active role in the change process and feel they cannot
spare the time to establish their own networks, even though they personally experience extensive negative effects from the transition process.

The third paper analyzes the changing relations between state and collective farms and new agricultural entrepreneurs. The findings suggest a strong resource-dependent relationship on the part of the newly started private farmers. In general, however, the linkages have a less competitive character than anticipated.
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Lithuania is currently engaged in a process of building a new normative order that may express novel conceptions of politics, power, and the values of collective life. As never before we are able to witness a process of social differentiation, both in rural-agricultural and in urban-industrial environments.

At this stage of development of agriculture, a private sector is emerging alongside public and individual sectors previously existing (Kazlauskiene, 1990). The number of private farmers is increasing and the first organizations expressing and defending the interests of rural people are being formed.

The main objective of this study is to analyze Lithuania's rural transformation process from the perspective of rural people. The study focuses upon the responses of former state and collective farmers and the initiatives of newly starting individual private farmers. Of special interest are the changes in the interfarm relationships, the relationships between farmers and local and regional municipalities, and changes in the lives, roles and status of rural women.

Various levels of change are taken into account: the macro level of the Lithuanian government's redefined role in economic and agricultural production, especially its role in issuing new laws related to farmer's rights, privileges and guarantees; the meso level of local and regional officials' responses to rural restructuring; and the micro level of collective or state and private farmer's strategies and responses to the restructuring process.
Theoretical Background

Throughout this study, actor-oriented perspectives are taken as major guidelines of the research. Over the years several versions of actor-oriented models have been developed such as decision-making, exchange and network models (see for example, Perrucci and Potter, 1989; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Cook, 1977, 1982, 1990; and Alexander and Sztompka, 1990).

As indicated by Giddens (1979), farmers and other social actors are, within limits (i.e., given the information and uncertainties that exist) "knowledgeable" and "capable." They devise ways of solving problematic situations they face, but are constrained by scarcity of resources, social commitments, differential power relations and cultural values. All social actors are conceived as "agents" empowered by access to resources of one kind or another. They vary in the extent of their control of social relations and in the scope of their transformative powers (or their perception of these powers), but all of them exercise some measure of agency in the conduct of their daily lives.

Another important feature of actor-oriented models is that, contrary to what is often supposed, they do not stop at the individual decision-making level. They also take into account of the ways in which interacting individuals and social groups have a mutual influence upon each other. This leads to consideration of "intermediate" level structures, such as social networks, farmers' organizations, systems of production tying the farmers to their institutional environment, and organized "interface" structures that constitute the regular modes of interaction between rural people and public authorities.

In the three articles that follow, several theoretical approaches are utilized to illuminate the responses and involvement of various social agents in the recent rapid
structural changes unfolding in rural Lithuania. In the first article, a social change theory developed by Alexander and Sztompka (1990) is combined with a "layer of activities" approach developed by Oksa (1991) to analyze how the interests of regional and local municipalities intersect with those of private and collective or state farmers. Although not developed specifically as an analytical tool for analyzing the Lithuanian rural transformation, Alexander and Sztompka's (1990:251, 253) ideas about agency, progress and changing theories of change are applicable to Lithuania. They conceptualize "agency" as neither individualistic nor collectivistic, but rather as a product of both actors and structures. "Structures" are defined as norms, values, rules, roles, institutions, ideas, beliefs, knowledge, communication channels, and patterns of inequality, all of which can advance or constrain actors' choices and strategies. "Progress," finally, is seen as the potentiality of the agency (that which the agency could accomplish, given the right circumstances).

The "layers of activities" approach is directed toward the analysis of "historical layers of activities" in rural areas involving state, regional and local policies. For Oksa (1991), a core rural development issue is the role of rural areas in the overall "societal division of activities." Rural change cannot be grasped by understanding it only as a change in distribution of people by industry or by occupation but should be viewed as "the combined result of several active agents and several structure conditions (1991:10, 11)." These may include local actors (households, enterprises, organizations), spontaneous markets, strong economic organizations (national and multinational enterprises, interest organizations, and public agents (local administration, state government and international organizations). For this paper the roles of only certain active agents in the change
press are analyzed, those of regional and local municipal officials, and those of former collective or state farmers and private individual farmers.

For the second paper, several theoretical perspectives are combined to examine the significance of the ongoing press of restructuring for rural women. A central perspective borrows from Collins (1990) who extrapolates from general themes of conflict theory and argues that where (new) kinds of resources become available, they will further the interests of some actors, who will use them to develop "networks" to further their own interests. These networks are power resources for human actors at all levels of society. Collins' perspective lays the groundwork for the development of propositions or hypotheses concerning opportunities enabling or preventing women from building or participating in newly emerging political, economic or information networks, and raises questions about the consequences of new modes of production and allocation of resources for women.

Finally, in the third article a combined approach is used again, to study interfarm linkages. At present, changing structural conditions allow farmers to shift their form of farming. They also pose certain constraints with which the farmers have to deal. To examine the socio-economic dynamics involved in this transition process and implications for the production relations between different groups of farmers, this study draws on transition theory outlined by Llambi (1990) and resource dependence theory developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978).

Llambi (1990) studied agrarian transitions to and within capitalism. He examined the restructuring of old agrarian labor processes, the emergence of new production and exchange forms, and the development of new technical and social links between farmers and between farming and other economic sectors. Llambi
(1990:177) stresses the importance of avoiding an unduly "agrarianist" approach when studying the agrarian dimension in overall structural change. Both markets and the labor process, as well as other allegedly non-economic dimensions such as legal and political conditionings, are considered important for explaining changes in production processes.

Such an approach is especially relevant to the agrarian transition in Lithuania. Legal and political conditionings are indispensable dimensions in the more macro-oriented analysis of the formation of linkages between the various types of farmers in Lithuania. Besides broad political and legal notions, past and present forms of cooperation and dependency between farmers are also expected to influence the links between individual private farmers and former socialized farms at the grassroots level. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) studied the benefits that organizations may derive from establishing linkages with one another. The "resource dependence" between organizations is an important dimension in the analysis of the ties between the newly starting agricultural entrepreneurs and the former socialized farms in Lithuania.

Methods.

In this study, the need expressed by Harper (1991) for more "full immersions in the field" by rural sociologists was taken to heart and a serious effort made to place oneself in the shoes, or behind the eyes of, the rural people of Lithuania. To increase the validity and utility of the research, a collaborative approach was essential. A preliminary research protocol was developed in cooperation with social scientists from the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics during a joint meeting at Iowa State University in April 1991.
A case study logic has guided the inquiry, congruent with that outlined by Yin (1989:23) who describes a case study as an empirical inquiry that (1) investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real-life context; when (2) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which (3) multiple sources of evidence are used. Case studies, like experiments and histories, seek to explain by focusing on "how?" and "why?", thereby tracing operational links over time, rather than enumerating frequencies or incidences. A case study is preferred when relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated, as they can be in experiments, and when investigating contemporary events (Yin, 1989:19). The case study adds direct observation and systematic interviewing to the historian's repertoire. According to Yin (1989:20), "the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence -- documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations."

Research methods employed in this study include individual and focused group interviews with women, and personal interviews with farmers (individual private farmers and directors of collective and state farms) and local and regional municipal officials. The interviews were conducted in August and September of 1991 and March and April of 1992. The interviews were supplemented with data on economic trends and state policies published in official Lithuanian reports, survey data, historical documents, and census materials.

Social life in this study is viewed as a "social process." This mix of methods is consistent with Harper's belief that a plurality of methods are needed to properly study social processes. Processes are particularly amenable to study through qualitative methods which provide deep knowledge of the research setting and uncover hidden variables. Also consistent with Harper, social groups are
understood as "coordinated lines of action," an approach which demands a dialectical approach of continuous observation, inquiring, and theorizing.

Two propositions guided the study from the time of its conceptualization in the spring of 1991. The first was the assumption that individual as well as collective decision-making processes would form an integral part of the Lithuanian rural transition process, and that the examination of these processes would reveal some of the core issues, ambiguities, uncertainties and dilemmas presently confronting rural people in Lithuania.

The second assumption was that during the period of transition to a market economy, the destiny of rural people would depend on already existing relations with neighbors, partners, relatives and friends as well as on the larger institutional context of collective and state farms and regional and local municipalities.

Case studies like experiments are generalizable to theoretical propositions, not to populations or universes (Yin, 1989:21). The case study does not represent a sample. The investigator seeks to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization), not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization).

Limitations of Study

After a long period of collectivized agriculture, Lithuania, as one of the new independent Republics, has begun a transition to a set of as yet unknown post-collectivist rural institutions. Time is needed for the structural void that has emerged to be filled. The directives of the reformist leadership have dismantled many of the existing vertical structures of the command-administrative system and planned to replace them with new horizontal structures, preferable evolving from below. But for now, the people of Lithuania are overwhelmed by the degree and range of changes taking place. People who are used to a particular way of organizing their
social life fear losing control of the production and reproduction of their social worlds; they feel alienated and insecure.

In this period of flux and all encompassing reforms it is difficult to isolate specific issues for research. Although the Lithuanian situation offers veritable "sociology in the making" it also poses some real limitations on what can be investigated.

Sociological data remain extremely limited in Lithuania, making generalizations across group or gender very difficult. Until recently, Lithuanian rural sociologists have tended to treat the family as the smallest unit of analysis. Statistical data on rural women are limited. As indicated by Budvytiene (1992), problems of rural women in Lithuania have never been taken seriously or investigated separately. For these reasons, the data presented here should be viewed as a qualitative "starting point" or "base line" for future studies and actions.

This approach proved even more vital when conducting research under difficult and rapidly changing conditions that characterized the Lithuania countryside during the time of this research. The reform, already begun at the time this study began, underwent rapid acceleration as a consequence of the disintegration of the Soviet Union in August of 1991 -- the exact same time at which the first series of interviews were being conducted.

Explaination of Dissertation Format

This research plan is set within a format that provides for the production of a series of papers, suitable for submission to professional journals, as a means of satisfying the requirements for the doctoral degree. Each of the three papers in this dissertation focuses on a single topic, but addresses various facets of the overall
research. Each paper is able to stand on its own merit; taken together they provide a more comprehensive investigation of the research area.

The advantage of such a format is that it enables the investigator to explore a broad range of related ideas using divergent research techniques and methods of analysis, thereby allowing a wider exploration of the topic. The approach adopted in this dissertation is designed to contribute to the sociological and organizational bodies of knowledge as well as to produce practical recommendations of potential benefit to policymakers in Lithuania.
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

At the moment few sources on the agricultural transformation processes, as they are presently enrolling in the former Soviet Republics, are available to guide research. However, some valuable studies deal with comparable processes of change. For example, Szelenyi's (1988) study of socialist entrepreneurs offers a detailed analysis of the agricultural transformation process in Hungary. Szelenyi discusses Hungary's "process of embourgeoisement." In the early 1970s some of Hungary's rural semi-proletarians began to exploit the liberalism of the regime and to orient themselves toward market production on their family minifarms. They ceased to be peasant workers and became "bourgeois" and by the early 1980s, somewhere between five and fifteen percent of the Hungarian rural households were operating highly specialized, primarily market-oriented, family agricultural enterprises. When they gained a significant proportion of their cash incomes (at least one-third or one-half of total family income) from agricultural production, they could be regarded as entrepreneurs.

The "process of embourgeoisement outlined by Szelenyi produced considerable changes in the Hungarian system of rural stratification. During the years of forced collectivization, the rural social structure was transformed into a single hierarchy in which power and privilege were determined exclusively by bureaucratic rank. But as the process of decollectivization gained momentum and the entrepreneurs emerged, a dual system of rural stratification gradually developed in which the previously dominant bureaucratic order was complemented or replaced by a market-based system of inequalities. What followed was not the restoration of capitalism but the birth of a rather new, state socialist type of mixed economy as different from laissez-faire or welfare state capitalism as from Soviet
redistributive state socialism. As Szelenyi indicates, the new Hungarian farmers were not real "capitalists." Most were part-time farmers who worked only for themselves and did not employ wage labor, or employed it only seasonally. In fact, they were hesitant to become full-time private farmers before a proper commercial credit system had been installed and all legal restraints on land ownership had been abolished. Today, a similar process of restructuring is enfolding in newly independent Lithuania.

In what is called "western modern market economies," exchange of agricultural products mainly occurs through a horizontal relationship between legally equal buyers and sellers at prices based upon mutual agreement, while redistribution takes place through the institutions of the welfare state or through private initiatives. But the former Soviet republics, in most cases, start from already highly regulated conditions, which are not only difficult to adapt to a changing reality but also accumulate increasing tensions insofar as they are unable to achieve their goals in conjunction with limited social inequality.

The emergence of a second economy is but one symptom that these societies outgrow the old top-down regulatory system (Mingione, 1991:264). According to Nee (1989), new socio-organizational combinations to replace the institutions of the old cadres will be formulated by political parties; they will also be articulated over the entire wide-ranging organization of social and economic life in forms of cohesion and tension, in the structuring of individual identity, and in the strategies of households, firms, kinship and friendship networks, communities and interest groups.

The core issue of this research is this process of the articulation of new needs and the building of new agricultural institutions by farmers and local and regional authorities.
AREA OF STUDY: THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Historical Background

Lithuania is one of three Baltic Republics. In terms of recent history in particular, these three republics have shared the experience of being battered by international forces over which until recently they had no control. Subjected to the Soviet Union as an outcome of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, they were occupied by the German army after the Germans attacked the Soviet Union in 1942, only to fall again into Soviet control when the Red Army repelled the Nazi invasion (Hernes and Knudsen, 1991). The return of Soviet rule was at first accompanied by promises of less severe policies (e.g., the peasants were to keep their land, if this did not exceed 30 hectares), but soon there were still more deportations, nationalization of virtually all private enterprise, and forcible collectivization of agriculture. Resistance lasted longest in Lithuania. Severe damage was done to national culture and traditions.

The republics were in effect cut off from the rest of the world, and had to follow Moscow's rules in all matters. Their institutions were altered to fit the Soviet pattern, and the Communist party, fully subordinate to the Central Committee in Moscow, was the only permitted political organization. Key positions in party and state were held by Baltic nationals who had lived long in Russia (Kalnins, 1990; Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1991).

Geography

The republic of Lithuania borders Latvia to the north, the Baltic Sea and the region of Kaliningrad (formerly East Prussia) in the Russian Federation to the west, Poland to the south, and Byelorussia to the east and south east. The country is
predominantly flat, part of the north-European plain, with the highest hill being under 300 meters. The lakes in the northeast of Lithuania occupy 880 square kilometers. A temperate climate is typical of the region with a January average of one or two degrees and a July average of around 20 degrees centigrade; average rainfall is around 60 millimeters per month.

Like Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania has very few natural resources other than agricultural land and forests. The total land area is 6.52 million hectares, of which 4.63 million hectares are used for agriculture, 1.45 million hectares are forested, and 444 thousand hectares are used for other purposes. Small volumes of oil and gas have been discovered in Lithuania but there are no economically significant metal deposits. The virtual absence of substantial primary resource inputs make Lithuania's industrial sector heavily dependent on imports (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1991; Kalnins, 1990).

Characteristics of the Agricultural Sector

Lithuania's most fertile soils are found in the elevated parts of the central Lithuanian lowland and also on the river-sides. Of the farming land, 25 percent was formed on sand, 33 percent on sandy loam, 34 percent on clay loam, 2 percent on loam, and 6 percent on peat. In general, soils are poor.

Before the Soviet period, in 1923, work in agriculture was the main source of living for 80 percent of the population; in 1939, for 77 percent. During the years of Soviet power the class structure of the population underwent radical change. The numbers of both workers and intellectuals grew at the expense of collective farmers, whose proportion decreased from 43.3 percent to 20.0 percent from 1959-79. The proportion of employed women of working age increased from 66.3 percent to 83.8 percent from 1959-79.
Until recently throughout the Soviet Union the land — its minerals, waters, and forest — was the property of the state. Agriculture was run along socialist lines with two basic forms of socialist ownership: collective farm and cooperative property and state property. During the Soviet regime, the Baltic ecology, including that of Lithuania was greatly damaged by the combined pressures of demography, agricultural specialization and rapid industrial growth. In Lithuania soils abound in nitrogen and heavy metals and industrial wastes are discharged into the rivers and the air, particularly in the most heavily polluted northwest area of the country (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 1992:8,9).

Throughout Lithuania, grain crops (in 1983, 50 percent of the republic's arable land), potatoes, vegetables, fodder crops, and garden plants are cultivated. Sugar beets are grown primarily on the fertile soils of the central lowland (Zinkus, 1986).

In contrast with the other republics of the former Soviet Union, Baltic agriculture, Lithuania included, has always produced enough animal products, cereals, potatoes, vegetables, apples and berries to meet domestic needs. Only citrus fruit, grapes, melons, early vegetables, oilseeds (soybean, sunflower), fodder grain and raw sugar have been imported. However, poorly organized purchases, processing and sale of food, as well as shortage of appropriate facilities led to huge losses every year. Many of Lithuanian farmers are dairy farmers. A large share of their products is still delivered to other former Soviet republics. In 1990 about forty percent of milk and dairy products and 21 percent of its meat went to Soviet Republics (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 1992:13,14).

Present Economic and Agricultural Situation

In the early post-war years of Soviet exploitation the economic results were grim, especially in agriculture. In particular Lithuanian farming was severely
damaged, not least by the deportation of most of the efficient farmers to break the opposition to collectivization. Even in 1955 farm output remained well below prewar levels; however, in subsequent years the situation improved and the level of productivity rose above the all-union average (Kazlauskiene et al., 1991).

Over the years the Lithuanian economy developed as a component of the Soviet economy, particularly the north-western region of the USSR, with which it was fully integrated in terms of transportation and energy. In common with the rest of the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian economy was more socialized than other eastern European economies. In 1988, only 0.9 percent of production was from the private economy (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1991). However, official data underestimated the size of the private economy by including private agricultural production from private plots with the collective farm sector when, as a matter of fact, this accounted for around 30 percent of agrarian production or approximately six percent of total output.

March 11, 1990 was a turning point in Lithuanian history. On this day Lithuania claimed independence and in August 1991 it was formally recognized as an independent republic by more than 40 nations. As a result of this fight for and eventual recognition of independence, numerous political and economic reforms were initiated. All sectors of the economy and agriculture are now affected by reforms in which government legislators, economists and leaders of agriculture and industrial enterprises are heavily involved.

The final goal is to move towards a market-oriented economy. The main steps of the reform process included, first, the establishment of individual farms; second, restitution to former owners of land and other nationalized and collectivized assets; and third, reorganization (or liquidation) of collective and state farms into
more efficient units based on private property. (See Appendix 1 for a non
exhaustive list of the main legislative measures adopted by the Lithuanian Supreme
Council according to the date of approval).

The most important law, the "Law on Peasant Farms" was issued July 4, 1989.
This law determined the economic, organizational and social conditions for private
farming (Kazlauskiene et al., 1991). On the basis of this law state, cooperative, joint-
stock, mixed agricultural enterprises as well as family farms all became legally
accepted forms of agriculture in Lithuania. It would permit not only long-term
leasing (arenda) of land both within and outside the collective and state farms to
individuals, but also the granting of individual possession (vladenie) of land. The
law did not permit the right to buy, sell or mortgage. It mainly granted kolkhoz
members and sovkhoz workers the right to leave the socialized sector and use land
allotted by collective and state farms for independent farming (Organization of

During the last years of Soviet rule the difference between state and collective
farms had gradually disappeared. The "election" of collective farm chairmen had
been largely guided from the outside, so there had been little difference from the
appointment of state farm directors. Collective farm members received a set
monthly salary that was financed out of a line of credit from the state banks
regardless of profitability (plus a bonus based on production), making their
remuneration essentially indistinguishable from that of workers of the state farms.
Private plots were allowed on both. Retired farmers on both collective and state
farms received state pensions (Prosterman and Hanstad, 1991).

In July 1990, another law was issued which allowed people to have personal
plots of 3 hectares instead of the original 0.5. At the end of 1991, the "Law on
Partnership" which outlined the regulations for stock ownership and limited or
general obligations was declared but still no permissions to buy, sell or inherit land
were granted.

In 1991, three important laws concerning land rights were adopted. First, in
June, the "Law on the Procedures and Conditions for Restoration of the Rights of
Ownership to the Existing Real Property" was approved. This law made it possible
for people to reclaim land or property if they were going to cultivate or make use of
it. Next, in July, the "Law on Land Reform" was approved. This law covered issues
related to sharing or privatizing land previously owned by the state. Finally, at the
end of July, the third "Law on the Privatization of Property of Agricultural
Enterprises" was adopted.

A recent report of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and
Development (1992:13) concerning agrarian reforms in the Baltic Republics
concludes that not all sectors have yet been positively affected by the reforms.
According to this report, the living standard of both the rural and urban populations
in all three republics has deteriorated in the last few years. Salaries have not kept
pace with soaring inflation.

Population Characteristics and Ethnicity

In 1990 Lithuania's population was 3.72 million, with a population density of
57 per square kilometer. A major shift of population from the rural to urban areas
occurred after the end of the second world war. In 1939, 78.3 percent of the
population was rural; this proportion had fallen to 61.4 percent in 1959 and 39.3
percent in 1979; in 1990 31.5 percent of the population lived in the rural areas. There
are five cities with populations over 100 thousand: the capital Vilnius, Kaunas (the
capital in the inter-war period), Klaipėda (the main port in Lithuania and one of the largest ice-free ports in the Baltic), Šiauliai and Panevėžys.

The female proportion of the population rose significantly during and after the second world war as a consequence of war deaths and deportations. In 1959, 54.1 percent of the population was female; this had fallen to 52.6 percent by 1990. The natural population growth rate has fallen continuously in the last three decades and was 0.48 percent in 1989; a birth rate of 15 per thousand and death rate of 10.3 per thousand. Infant mortality was 10.7 per thousand in 1989, although the methodology used to calculate infant mortality differs from that of the World Health Organization. The reported figure is expected to increase a little now that the authorities have adopted the standard methodology. The average age of the population has remained around 34 years of age during the last decade; in 1988/89, life expectancy was 72.4 years. The overall population growth rate has been boosted by a positive migration balance of around 20,000 people per year in the 1980s, mainly from the Russian Federation. (It is not clear as yet how the migration balance will be affected in the future by the recent recognition of Lithuania as an independent nation).

Lithuanians, the main and indigenous people of Lithuania, make up the majority of the population. In 1989, 79.6 percent of the total population were Lithuanians. Russians are second to Lithuanians in number. In 1989 their number amounted to 9.4 percent of the total population.

Of the total population, 31.2 percent live in the country. Of all the Lithuanians, 57 percent live in towns and 43 percent in the countryside; the latter are mainly collective farmers. Of all the Russians, 87 percent live in towns: 70 percent in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. In rural localities, the Russians make up only 1.5
percent of the population. Other groups that live in Lithuania are Poles (7.0 percent), Byelorussians, Jews, Ukrainians, Latvians, Germans, Tartars, Gypsies, and Karaites (together 4.0 percent) (Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 1991).
PAPER 1. NEW REALITIES
FACING LITHUANIAN FARMERS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS
ABSTRACT

At present, Lithuania's agriculture and its rural communities are being transformed. Alongside public and collective sectors, a private sector has begun to form. As a result, decades-long rigid administrative exchange relations between government officials, the countryside, regional and local municipalities and agricultural producers are being renegotiated. This paper investigates how the interests of municipal officials intersect with both new and traditional types of farmers. More specifically the paper poses the question whether the increased freedom of the local administration in relation to new state regulations is creating favorable conditions for individual farmers.
INTRODUCTION

The countryside has always played a special role in Lithuania. For a long time the majority of the population lived in rural areas. However, during the period of Soviet domination, in the general urbanization process, some of these rural areas became very depopulated, and has now become hard to find individuals who have the knowledge and the skills needed to farm. Although new laws permitting private farming have been adopted by the independent Lithuanian government, many economic, social and political factors are making decollectivization difficult.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the congruency between activities involving the restructuring of agriculture on collective, state, and private individual farmers, on one side, and important local public agents, the municipal officials, on the other.

A Framework for Analyzing the Rural Change Process

The collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union has been called the most radical institutional change in the economy undertaken by the various Marxist regimes (Pryor, 1991:22). The process required considerable coercion and violence, great administrative efforts, and enormous personal dedication on the part of the political leaders, all in the name of a formal doctrine that offered little justification for introducing such changes, particularly at low levels of economic development. In the view of several authors, decollectivization (the break-up of large-scale farms, organized either as cooperatives or state enterprises, into individually operated farms, general or limited partnerships, state joint-stock companies or private stock companies) may necessitate a complete make-over and require the development of a wholly new institutional structure (Szelenyi, 1988; Nee, 1989; Mingione, 1991).
According to Pryor (1991), considerable evidence suggests that
decollectivization may benefit farmers as well as regional and local authorities,
especially in the long run. At first, though, all parties are expected to be plagued by
great uncertainty. These parties include regional and local officials, and state or
collective and individual private farmers (who may belong to a collective but have
an individual right to land). New agricultural entrepreneurs doubt whether
property rights are "strong" or stable, if government commitments will be fulfilled
and whether others (suppliers and buyers) will take similar actions or
complementary actions (so that, for instance, alternative sources of agricultural
inputs will become available to them). Local officials, in turn, fear that their
communities may end up worse off, either economically or politically, and that as a
consequence they will lose status, thereby having reason to sabotage new programs.

To analyze how the interests of regional and local municipal officials intersect
with those of individual and collective/state farmers, a "structuralist" approach
which takes the qualities of human agency as the new criterion of social progress
will be combined with the image of "layers of activities" that change over time.

The structuralist approach was introduced by Alexander and Sztompka (1990:
255) to address agency and progress. Although not developed specifically as an
analytical tool for analyzing the rural transformation process in Lithuania, their
concepts are very much in concordance with the Lithuanian situation. In their view
"agency" should be conceptualized as neither individualistic, nor collectivistic, but
rather as a product of both actors and structures. Agency is conceived neither in
idealistic nor materialist terms, but rather as linking structural and natural (material)
resources with human knowledge, beliefs, reason, imagination, and expectations.
The idea of progress, finally, is seen as the potentiality of the agency (that which the agency could accomplish given the right conditions).

The "layers of activities" approach developed by Oksa (1991) was used to analyze historical layers of activities in rural areas involving state, regional and local policies. For Oksa, concerned with rural development, the central issue is the role of rural areas in the overall "societal division of activities." The term "division of labor" is used to extend the idea of spatial division of labor to include activities outside the sphere of production in the narrow sense of housing, social activities, public services and planning. He conceptualizes regional rural development as a series of historically-formed layers of activities where the mechanisms, conditions and significance of new layers in the division of activities are stressed. The rise of new layers is viewed as the combined result of several active agents and several structural conditions. The active agents include local actors (households, enterprises, organizations), spontaneous markets, strong economic organizations (national and multinational enterprises, interest organizations), and public agents (local administration, state government, international organizations).

For this paper the roles of only certain active agents in the change process are analyzed, those of regional and local municipal officials and those of former collective or state farmers and new private individual farmers. The central question is whether increased freedom of the local administration in relation to new state regulations creates favorable conditions for individual farmers.

Prior to the investigation it was assumed that, while both farmers and local and regional municipal officials would be heavily involved in Lithuania's rural restructuring process, each interest group would act within different frameworks and face different opportunities and constraints. It was also expected that as long as
a new functioning institutional structure in agriculture was not in place, individual farmers and local and regional officials would hold to old networks for support and information.

Previous Governmental Involvement with Municipalities

In the past the role of regional and local authorities in Lithuania was totally directed by the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR. Regional and local officials could only act with their permission.

Administratively, Lithuania was divided into 11 cities, and 44 rural raions (regional municipalities) subdivided into valscius (local municipalities). The scheme for the development of the raions dates back 1964 (Figure 1). Its primary goal was to improve the distribution of industry in the Lithuanian SSR, but the improvement of living standards and services to the population of cities and adjacent rural raions was also considered important. To improve services, populated places were ranked according to their potential to serve the rural population. A four-level system of service centers was envisaged in the scheme: a central settlement; a micro-raion center; a raion center; and an inter-raion or regional center (the larger cities).

Merchaytis and Vaitekunas (1987) use the term micro-raion to denote any basic sub-unit of a raion (either urban or rural). This meaning differs from the more common use of the term in Soviet city planning literature, as a complex of "super blocks" or high-rise apartment buildings within a larger city.

When the 1964 scheme was designed, primary attention was paid to the identification of networks of cities (regional centers) and their distribution, with the idea that these centers' zones of influence would encompass the entire territory of
Figure 1. Inter-raion systems of settlement in Lithuania, according to 1964 scheme: (1) centers of inter-raion systems, (2) raion centers, (3) boundaries of inter-raion systems (Merchaytis and Vaitekunas, 1987)
the republic. In addition to the five most industrially developed cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys), five new centers were incorporated in the scheme: Alytus, Kapsukas, Utena, Jurbarkus, and Plungė (and subsequently, in its place, Telšiai). The inter-raion centers were selected in such a way that their zones of influence encompassed an area representing one hour travel time -- a radius of roughly 50-60 kilometers (Merchaytis and Vaitekunas, 1987).

Later, more attention was paid to the development of the central settlements of collective and state farms. The development of their social infrastructures was promoted through the adoption of the 1978 Scheme for the Distribution of Rural Service Enterprises and Institutions in the raions of Lithuania. However, over time, the number of collective farms declined as a result of their consolidation (from 1,646 in 1946 to 741 in 1982), whereas the number of state farms over the same period increased from 266 to 311. This led to changes in the development of the network of central settlements. In the process of the consolidation of enterprises into central settlements, those settlements lacking favorable social, economic, demographic, geographic conditions for further development started to lag behind in service-level, a process which has continued.

For a number of years, in Lithuania, as in a number of other union republics, population growth rates supported the development of the schemes described above. Labor resources sufficed to provide for the necessary growth of cities without disrupting the emerging rural settlement network in the process. The village was a seemingly inexhaustible source of growth for old and new cities. But gradually the population growth became insufficient to support the functioning of the existing settlement network. As young people migrated to towns, the average age of the people who stayed behind increased until in some regions retired people made up
more than one fourth of the total population. In addition there were more men than
women. In some areas for every 1000 men there were only 500 women (Lithuania
Ministry of Agriculture, 1990:40). As a consequence of both the overall population
loss and the deterioration of the age-sex structure over large areas of the country, the
human migration resources of rural communities decreased dramatically and was
nearly exhausted (Merchaytis and Vaitekunas, 1987).
METHODS

To gather the data, a flexible set of research methods was used including personal interviews with key actors and informants. Interviews were conducted with directors of state and collective farms in the north, south, west and east of the country, and with representatives of local and regional municipalities from the Panevėžys region, the Kėdainiai region, from Ukmergė and from Trakai.

The interviews were conducted in August and September of 1991 and March, April, and November of 1992. All interviews were conducted in the meeting rooms of the farms and local and regional municipalities. The interviews lasted one and half to two hours without interruptions. All questions and answers were translated by a trained Lithuanian social scientist. They were dually transcribed but not tape recorded as a tape recorder was not well accepted. All generalizations in the paper are based on the dominant pattern of the clear majority of the respondents. When quotations from a particular interview are reported, they represent a common interview theme. Since the interviews were fluid and open ended, not all respondents volunteered all themes.

Background survey data collected in 1989 and 1990 by sociologists with the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics on rural socio-economic conditions were used to set the direction and themes of personal interviews.

The farm directors were asked about:

1. Size of their farm and type of crop or animal produced.
2. Decision processes employed.
3. Problems they were facing including land reallocation.
4. Changes they were expecting in the near future.
5. Their relationship with the nearest municipality.
6. Their relationship (level of support) with neighboring farms, including newly starting private farms.

7. The position of women on their farm and how the present changes are affecting women.

Regional municipality agents were asked about:

1. Their past role, as directed by the Party, and their present role, tasks, decision-making structure, constraints (budget related), etc.

2. Relationships with farms in the area, i.e. are the regional municipalities developing special ties with the various types of farms? Are they taking over certain functions from the farms?

3. Relationships with local municipalities as well as with the government. How have these relations changed and since when?

4. Possible effect of a new division of raions on their policies.

5. Changes in the training and salary of functionaries. Had they received any additional training and/or salary?

6. Interest of women in working for regional municipalities.

Local municipality agents were asked about:

1. Problems with the process of privatization.

2. Relationships with private or individual farmers. Do they have money to support them?

3. Relationships with the regional municipality. How dependent are they on the regional municipalities (financially and regarding decision-making)?

4. Representation by the local and regional deputies. Are they satisfied with its representation?

5. Decision-making structure. Have there been changes in the recent past? Who ordered those changes?
6. The boundaries of their role and functions. Where do the local municipalities' functions end and regional responsibilities start?

7. Relationships with collective and/or state farms. Do they still have a very personal character?

8. State of their infrastructure and the most urgent needs.

9. Preparation for new future tasks. Do they feel adequately prepared?

These data were supplemented with interviews with social scientists at the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics, the director of an agricultural school, an animal husbandry extension specialist, and documentation of state policy changes and the adoption of new laws related to farming.
RESULTS

New Roles and Activities of Regional and Local Municipal Officials

The fundamental changes taking place in all spheres of life in Lithuania were evident throughout the data collection process. Changes are felt at all levels of administration: at the level of ministries, and of regional and local municipalities. The desire for political democracy and privatization requires from the ministries a more western-oriented policy-setting role. In the future, they will have to trust the local level with more responsibilities and more funds. Before enacting these plans, though, the government has decided to reduce the country's number of raions so that the remaining ones will be fewer and larger. These larger raions will then be trusted with more financial and administrative leverage. To make necessary adjustments in the system of taxation, regional and local municipalities were asked to estimate the economic situation of their regions and to set priorities. In the future, they will be given more leverage, but will also be tied to a budget stating how the allocated funds will be spent (emphasis on production versus services).

When asked about the reorganization process and their past and present roles, municipal agents at regional and local levels seemed to regard the efforts of the new independent government to democratize and decentralize the administrative system as valuable. However, they also felt that while the government is busy attempting to change the whole institutional and personnel structure of government and the legal framework of social and economic activity, they at the regional and local level are very much left to their own devices. At the same time they experienced a great lack of confidence in their capabilities and resistance to change when initiated from their local level.
Their own organizational structure has remained very much the same. They continue to function with deputies, elected in local and regional elections, who are the decision-makers, and appointees who have to implement the decisions. However, many regional and local public agents feel they lack information as well as funds necessary to carry out their new responsibilities. "The organizational structure has not changed, but the responsibilities are more real now" is the reaction of the administrator of the regional municipality in Ukmergė interviewed in September 1991. "In the past our role was totally directed by the Communist Party and the central government. We couldn't decide anything ourselves. We were concerned about the problems in our area, but we couldn't do anything without permission from the top. Now we are tied to a budget of 40 million rubles per year. This year we had to evaluate the situation in our region. Presently, decisions are made by deputies but it is hard to decide on what sector to spend the money as all sectors have problems and need attention."

At the local municipality Seta in the Kėdainiai region the agents feel unprepared for the new tasks at hand. The head of the rural district of the municipality interviewed in April 1992 said: "We are at loss as we don't know how to solve our social problems, when there is no economic or financial basis for municipalities to solve their problems independently. The personnel should first be retrained, though independently." Many of the respondents did not think they were adequately prepared to carry out the new policies. At the regional municipality of Ukmergė, the administrator had received some training in Vilnius, but she did not find it very useful. She thought leadership training would be more helpful.

The privatization process, particular, with its accompanying transfer of land and property is causing many problems for municipal officials. At Trakai, the head
of the board of administration of the regional municipality interviewed in April 1992 criticized the way things were going. He considered the role of the municipalities in the transfer process as not clearly defined (especially as some laws had not yet been issued). As a consequence, he thought decisions on land claims were made rather haphazardly. In his view: "The privatization is being carried out without any special methodology."

For the Seta local municipality, the transfer of communal property proved to be particularly hazardous. The head of the rural district complained that nobody wanted to be responsible for public utilities as they were considered "unprofitable." Previously, they had been financed by the collective farms in the area but from now on the inhabitants of Seta would have maintain them. But neither the inhabitants of the area, nor the municipality, had the resources needed for this.

Changes in Farm-Municipal Relations

At the time of this study, the relations and the extent of commitment between municipalities and the farms in their areas varied from region to region. The regional municipalities communicated with farmers mostly through deputies chosen to be territorial representatives. Organizations could send delegates to the regional municipality to raise some issue or file a complaint. People could also approach municipal agents directly, although this did not seem to occur very often.

Local municipal agents appeared to interact more frequently and more directly than before with farmers since various laws involving the privatization of land and agricultural enterprises and the restitution of property had been adopted, and when in February a private farmers' support program was initiated with a total value of 0.8 million rubles (Appendix 1).
The money from the support program was designated for the construction and maintenance of roads in rural areas, the installation of electricity and telephone facilities, and the provision of loans for the construction of houses and barns. It further provides for loans for the purchase of agricultural machinery and pedigree animals. The support program also requires ministries, departments and committees to provide all the support necessary to enable private farmers to purchase fuel, machinery, fodder, seeds, etc.

To assure a gradual transfer of land and fixed assets, a totally new institutional structure was set up at four different levels. At the top level a Central Privatization Commission coordinates all activities of privatization institutions and controls the process of privatization. The next level constitutes the Commission for Agrarian Reform. This commission is responsible for carrying out proposals on implementation of the agrarian reforms. At the district level, a District Privatization Commission acts as a mediator between the government and local authorities. Finally, at the local level, the municipal Agrarian Reform Services (smallest administrative units in charge of three to four farms) actually has to implement the reforms and thus bears the brunt of all the policy changes.

The municipal services have the status of a legal person and their employees, unlike those of the other institutions, are full-time workers for the period of the reform. They are financed from the Central Agrarian Reform Fund. These organizations accept and process applications for land and honor claims. Once a claim is accepted, they provide claimants with certificates confirming land ownership rights. They also deal with applications for agricultural assets, organize auctions, share subscriptions, and reappraise unsold assets (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 1992:48).
The relationship between the remaining collective farms and the municipal governments appeared to vary from farm to farm. In Klausuchiai, for example, the chief of the collective farm interviewed in August 1991 was disheartened by governmental criticism and perceptions of "thievery." He described the mood of the workers as depressed and being misunderstood. He was also concerned about the growing power of the municipality to govern the reforms especially through its decisions on land claims. He argued that most deputies were from towns, and not sympathetic regarding agricultural interests. He also pointed out that often specially appointed commissions can make decisions while deputies only ratify. The municipality supported the school on the farm, and the farm in turn gave support to the municipality. Sentiment was expressed, though, that "sometimes money did not come back." They were paying more taxes to the state and local government than they received "services" in return.

In Rietavas, the director of a state farm and agricultural school, interviewed in August 1991, was positive about its affiliation with the town in the area and the municipal government. The farms in the area, three in total, sold meat to the town and had their milk processed at the local milk processing plant.

In Antashava, the chief of a collective farm of more than 5000 hectares, maintained the municipal government in their area had very little influence. He declared that the farm solved most problems by itself. At the Elmikinkai experimental station and experimental state farm near Kupiškis, 7300 hectares large, the director, interviewed in August 1991, indicated that the municipal government as yet had no influence at all. She said: "The municipality should take responsibilities in the future, but is at present only symbolic."
According to the local municipal government officials, their ties with the remaining collective and state farms had a rather personal character, something they sometimes regretted. The head of the executive body of the local municipality at Vepriai interviewed in April 1992 explained this as follows: "At present the collective farm in our area is still wealthier and more powerful. Our relationship with the farm depends completely on personal contacts. Fortunately, we have a good relationship with the farm. The farm helps the municipality where it can. It provided all social service buildings. The moving force, however, is money. When they have a larger budget (more income from taxes), they will have more power to set their own priorities. Even if the relationship is good, the director of the collective farm is aware of the changes ahead. In the future, the municipality will be the one with more leverage."

When the communist regime was still in power, a chronic problem for the collective and state farms was to obtain the proper equipment, inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilizers and insecticides, spare parts), and farm services (e.g., repairs, storage, or transportation) at the right time and in the right amount. The directors of these farms, therefore, devoted considerable energy to developing elaborate networks for solving such supply problems, especially since the Stalinist agricultural model featured the sales of such goods and services to the farms by large units which were usually urban based and far from the users. Many of these old networks have now disappeared and people cannot afford the labor to maintain networks that still exist.

The remaining collective farms and the newly starting private farmers in particular hope that regional and local governments will solve their supply problems. What they desperately need are independently run retail outlets to provide them with reliable and accessible sources of inputs. Unfortunately, these
depots are slow in coming. The municipal agents have enough "on their plate" already. In any case they lack the funds and have to restrict themselves to dealing with land claims and property transfers and issues related to health care, cultural needs, education, sewage and electricity. Their assistance is limited to helping the new agricultural entrepreneurs to market their products or, as the Seta local municipal official said "to support them morally."
CONCLUSIONS

At present, Lithuania's agriculture and its rural communities are being transformed. Alongside the public and collective sectors previously existing, a private sector has begun to form. As a result, decades-long rigid administrative exchange relations between the countryside and the central government and between regional and local municipalities and agricultural producers are undergoing extensive changes. Instead of just obeying orders from above, regional and local officials are becoming participants in the transition process. Although they reportedly did not receive any special training, they are the ones who are to implement the new policies designed to streamline the country's transition to a free market economy and to decide about land claims and public utility transfers.

The subject of this study were changes in the links between the various actors participating in this change process: the state government and its ministries, the regional and local governments and the new types of co-existing farmers. The question raised in this paper was if the increased freedom of local administrations had created favorable conditions for individual private farmers in relation to state regulation.

Since the start of the decollectivization process, it appeared that in some ways the conditions for farmers interviewed had improved. Especially, the adoption of various laws related to private ownership of land and assets and the creation of the private farmers' support program, having been largely implemented at the local level, had indeed opened up some new opportunities for farmers. It also became apparent, though, that local officials interviewed, mainly because of lack of funds and know-how, were very limited in what they were able to do to help the farmers.
The ties between municipalities and farmers, particularly at the local level, appear to be governed by three factors: size, personal contacts, and funds (although additional research is needed to further explore these factors). Newly starting private farms seem most dependent on and expectant of local officials, while large former collective or state farms are still able to solve their own problems. But even these larger farms are apprehensive about the future. Some suffer because of mistrust and accusations of "thievery" from the central government and many fear that land claims from people from outside the area will split up the collectively owned property.

All actors at all levels, municipal agents as well as farmers, report lack of funds and information. Municipal agents, in addition, accuse the highest level, i.e. the government and its ministries, of rigidity and lack of trust. But maybe this is only natural in that it took time and effort to built this extensive vestige of communist power, it shall take time and more effort to break it down.
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PAPER 2. AGRARIAN REFORM IN LITHUANIA AND THE ROLE OF RURAL WOMEN
ABSTRACT

A variety of reforms has recently been enacted by the Lithuanian government to guide the transition from a central-command to a market economy. The agricultural sector has been emphasized within this framework of overall reforms. This paper focuses on some of the consequences of these reforms for rural women. Through the use of several theoretical perspectives, possible changes in government policies and their effects on women's lives are explored. In particular, the question of rural women's own perception of their role in the change process and their options and efforts to organize themselves and form their own networks is addressed, leading to the conclusion that, until now, they have basically experienced serious negative effects from the change process without actually being involved. This article concludes with some recommendations as to how to mitigate some of the negative effects of the change process and turn rural women into more active participants.
INTRODUCTION

The Baltic States in attempting to reconvert their farm sector from the state of collectivization imposed by Soviet "management" have enacted a number of agricultural policy measures. These agrarian reforms are only part of more far-reaching economic measures designed to propel the republics from a centralized command system to a market-oriented economy. In Lithuania, the rapid pace of implementation of the reform has large consequences for all social groups involved in the change process.

This paper focuses on the implications of the agricultural and economic reforms for rural women. The reforms and related policy changes in sectors such as health and social services shall demand a response from local women. What lies ahead for them? Does history repeat itself, with women being subjected to an "assimilationist" strategy and view as a "resource" or are they actively engaged in the process of restructuring? What is their own perception of the consequences of this restructuring and their own role therein, and are they forming any voluntary organizations or networks to strengthen their position?

The paper is divided into three parts. The first addresses the situation of Lithuania's rural women before independence and their previous involvement in Soviet era voluntary organizations. The second describes some major structural changes, i.e., agrarian reforms, and their consequences. The third part depicts some of the current needs and aspirations of women in the countryside. The paper concludes with some remarks on their role in the reform process and some recommendations for ameliorating the position of rural women.
The Situation as it Was.

Since earliest times, Lithuanians have had a highly developed family structure and have held women (especially married women) in high esteem and honor. It has even been documented that "in prehistoric times Lithuania had a matriarchal culture, that is, the right of inheritance went from mother to daughter. The married woman owned and managed the family property and the welfare of the homestead and family was determined by her industriousness and talents" (Bindokiene, 1989:66).

During the long period of Soviet domination the position and status of Soviet women in rural areas changed dramatically. The Soviet government favored policies to promote female labor force participation because this was good for the economy. Since 1951 women have been encouraged to become active participants in agrarian production. Extensive maternity and childcare leaves, rights to return to employment after leave, and collective- and state farms' provision of daycare and kindergartens facilitated the employment of women with small children.

The main impetus for the incorporation of women into waged agricultural employment was the imbalance of the sexes produced by civil war, the Second World War, collectivization, and the demands of industrial growth. The very production of the nation's food stocks to feed an increasingly urbanized and industrialized work force required an increase in peasant women's labor input. Women thus comprised a large proportion of workers in all four sectors of the Soviet agricultural labor force: collective farms (56.7 percent), state farms (41 percent), individual peasant farms (65.2 percent), and private subsidiary farms (90.7 percent). Especially in agriculture, they worked the hardest and provided the heavier, less skilled, and non specialist types of work. Women were, for example, over
represented in dairy farming and field cultivation, two poorly mechanized areas (Croll, 1981: 375,376).

In Lithuania the situation was similar. In 1989, 45 percent of 600,000 able bodied rural residents were women. Rural women made up 43 percent of all rural employed people (527,000). Of the women who worked at collective or state farms, only ten percent were heads or specialists; 33 percent were engaged in field cultivation; 45 percent in animal farming; five percent in subsidiary occupations: and six percent in providing the social services (Būdvytiene, 1992).

Women's Involvement in Soviet Era "Voluntary" Organizations

During the period of Soviet annexation, women participated extensively at the local level, in the soviets, the trade unions, the commissions attached to both, and in other mass "social" organizations. Until recently, the political elite in the Soviet Union succeeded in including nearly every individual in the various organizations it created and controlled. Almost all Soviet employees were members of trade unions. Unless they were a member of a trade union, people were deprived of all benefits, such as sick leave, vacation, and so on. Thus everyone who joined the labor force automatically, without any special procedure, became a member.

The formation of the second largest organization -- the Young Communist League (Komsomol) was not very different from trade unions. The majority of Soviet Youth between the ages of 14 and 28 was a member of this organization.

The third most important social organization -- the Communist Party -- comprised 19 million people at the end of 1984, about one tenth of the adult population. In early 1989, Lithuanian membership in the Party was 70.7 percent. All
people holding a more or less important position, even at the district level, belonged to the Party (Girnius as cited in Vardys, 1990).

Women also had their own "women only" social organizations (the shenskie sovety), commonly known as the zhensovety. These were referred to as "spontaneous" independent organizations in which women worked on their own initiative (Browning, 1987:2). It was these organizations to which Gorbachev referred in his speech in June 1986 at the 27th Party Congress as a means of helping women: "Women's councils could help to resolve a wide range of social problems arising in the life of the country."

Structural Adjustment Policies and the Status and Roles of Rural Women

Over the years several authors have studied the effect of adjustment policies on rural women. In their study on farm structures and pluriactivity, the Arkleton Research Group (1987) stressed the importance of studying the changing nature of rural economies and the consequent changes in the role of women, including changes in their participation in the labor market. The concept of pluriactivity includes "work activities which may not necessarily be remunerated with cash income, but for which there is payment in kind, mutual labor exchanges and other 'informal' arrangements." As indicated by Bell et al. (1990), rural Europe is extremely diverse, and the strength of the various influences of the various influences on rural change, and rural households, varies markedly from place to place. Variations between areas and environmental conditions partly explain the different patterns, or strategies, of adjustment taken by women.

Elson (1992:26,7), in a critical evaluation of contemporary structural adjustment policies and their consequences for women, points out that "insofar as
development policymakers today pay any attention to the specificity of gender, they tend to conceptualize women as a resource for development. In the context of economic crisis and structural adjustment, women are particularly valued for their ability to devise and implement survival strategies for their families, using their unpaid labor to absorb adverse effects of structural adjustment policies." She concludes further than "during times of economic crises women will quite rationally focus their immediate and pressing practical needs, especially needs for resources to ensure household survival and a better future for their children."

Studies conducted by Wolchik (1989), Croll (1981) and Heinen (1990) more specifically deal the plight of Soviet women. According to Heinen (1990:40) until now, "women in the Soviet Union have been socially, occupationally and politically marginalized." With the exception of the early communist period, women's interests in the former Soviet Union have always been subjected to larger strategies of social and economic development.

Lapidus (cited in Wolchik, 1989) and Croll (1981) appear to agree with Heinen (1990). In their view, the long period of Soviet domination profoundly influenced the lives and opportunities of all women. With Lenin's initiative, in 1903, commitment to sexual equality became a formally declared policy of Russian Social Democrats, when at the Second Congress of the Party, the program was extended to include demands for equality in education and civil and political rights for women. However, in reality "policies toward women were determined not so much by an abstract commitment to equality as by larger strategies of economic, political, and social development." Lapidus (cited in Wolchik, 1989:56) labeled this the "assimilationist strategy of sex role changes."
Theoretical Considerations

Several theoretical perspectives form the building blocks for the comprehensive theoretical framework utilized to study the significance for rural women of the ongoing process of restructuring. A basic premise of the study is that the structural changes will create opportunities for rural women to form new networks to secure their daily needs. With these networks will come new social identities and new coping strategies. As the differences in political, social and ethnic outlook between women becomes more prominent, women will increasingly differentiate themselves by the types of networks or organizations. Some will choose to work within traditional organizations and adapt them to changing circumstances; others will want to establish new ones.

The first perspective utilized for this study is Murphy's (1988) theory of social closure through monopolization and exclusion. Murphy's comprehensive theory of stratification applies not only to the formation of classes based on private property, but also to closure based on political structures. His concept of "closure" refers to the degree of openness (or closedness) of political institutions such as the Communist Party for people from different class, gender, educational, or ethnic backgrounds.

In the closing chapter of her book "Women and Politics in the USSR," Browning (1987) deals extensively with this concept in relation to gender. She argues that the USSR has done much to show that women can be as political active as men by broadening the concept of what constitutes politics and by encouraging women to participate. She contends that a range of women's issues previously confined to the private sphere now exists in the public and that the number of women participating in community politics is increasing. IN reality, however, women did not gain access to those power positions which defined and prioritized
important social and political issues. As Browning (1987:126) indicates, "defining women as politically active by instancing their participation in production and the 'shensovety' obscured their absence from the policy-making political leadership." What happened, she argues, is that over time the traditional division between private and public was transferred virtually intact, to a division between "high" and "low" public politics. Women's issues met this barrier, just as women themselves did. The few individual women who managed to obtain positions of power were unable to challenge the male hegemony. The desire of women to participate in hitherto male domains of high politics conflicted with the demands made on them to raise the birth rate, and increase production (Browning, 1987).

The second perspective was developed by Collins (1990). Collins' synthesis of conflict perspectives and network analysis builds on Weber's (1922) notions of capitalism as a struggle over the appropriation of opportunities in the market, Braudel's conception of capitalism as a "series of layers, or markets of different extensiveness, with the more long-range markets capable of manipulating the local ones" (cited in Collins, 1990:81) and Skocpol's (1979) theory of revolutions in which geopolitical influences receive most of the attention, but domestic aspects of class relations are viewed as the final determinants of mobilized action over state power.

Extrapolating from these general themes of conflict theory, Collins (1990:82) argues that where new kinds of resources become available the will further the interests of some actors who will use them to developed "networks" to further their interests. These "networks" are power resources for human actors at all levels of society. He distinguishes two kinds of relationships in economic networks: networks of economic exchange in which the network brings together buyers and sellers and thus sets prices in an autonomously coercive fashion, above the wishes of
individuals, and networks of information. It is these "networks of information" and the new "opportunities" that become available for some actors but not for others which is relevant to the changes in the Republic of Lithuania.

Collins' perspective lays the groundwork for the development of propositions or hypotheses concerning opportunities enabling or preventing women from building or participating in newly emerging political or economic networks, and raises questions about the consequences of new modes of production and allocation of resources for women.

A fourth perspective utilized for this study is that of Hirschman (1970) who developed an "Exit-Voice Paradigm" based on three concepts: Exit, Voice, and Loyalty (EVL). He posits than an individual faced with deterioration in the quality of goods that he or she normally purchases, or in the performance of organizations to which or she or he belongs, can choose to respond by either objecting (voice), leaving (exit) or continuing on (loyalty). Hedlund (1989:122,3) further refined Hirschman's paradigm and applied it to the Soviet situation. He introduced the concept of "soft product exit" whereby people mentally leave the socialized and controlled sphere of society but continue to be productive. This contrast with a "soft unproductive exit" which involves activities such as drinking, slacking and general apathy not accompanied by any productive effort.

The fifth approach, the last building block of the theoretical framework, is social identity theory. The major premise of this approach is that people are motivated to maintain or achieve a positive identity. Extended to the group level, they are motivated to belong to positively evaluated groups with distinct identities. Social identity derives from a process of social categorization and social comparison. Social categorization is a tool that allows people to mentally order their world and
define their place in it. Through social comparison, individuals assess the relative status of their own group and the value that membership in that group confers. Social identity grows from the positive or negative value and emotional meaning attached to group membership. Social comparison may lead to social change only when alternatives are perceived (Taylor and Moghaddam, 1987).

What makes social identity theory relevant for this study is its emphasis on both the individual and the group. Social identity theory links individuals to groups and makes it possible to see groups or networks as mediating structures standing between the individual in his or her private life and the large institutions of public life. It also helps to illuminate the reasons why as a result of value changes individuals join certain groups or networks and abandon others.

Based on the foregoing, the following propositions were formulated and subjected to testing:

1. The present economic and agricultural restructuring process in Lithuania offers rural women the opportunity to form networks or coalitions of their own choosing to secure their daily needs.

2. The formation of these networks (interpersonal, community-based, or inter community) allows women to form new social identities, design coping strategies, and reduce environmental uncertainties.

Following an explication of research methods, this paper depicts some of the current needs and aspirations of women in the countryside. It concludes with some remarks on their role in the reform process and some recommendations for ameliorating the position of rural women.
METHODS

Data for this research were collected primarily through participant observation and personal and group interviews with 23 rural women. Rural sociologists from the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics assisted with identifying the rural women, provided transportation, and served as translators during the interviews. The exploratory nature and complex investigation demanded by this research required in-depth qualitative analysis of a limited number of interviews.

Themes for the focus group interviews with rural women:

1. At the level of government, regional, or local policy:

   Is there a legal framework for women's participation in farming? For example, is it possible that not only single or married women farm owners but also women who are wives of members of "collective" farms, if occupied professionally in agriculture, can be registered or collect a dividend?

   How are women affected by the dismantling of state or collective farms and how are they affected by efforts at mechanizing agricultural tasks?

2. At the individual or group level:

   What are some of the important needs, aspirations, and problems that rural women experience?

   Do they hold on to old networks to exchange goods and information or do they set up new ones?

   What strategies do they use to participate in, resist or deflect the changes being imposed on them from above?

In August and September 1991, three focused group interviews were held with an array of women holding different professions and representing different social classes. One group consisted of three teachers from Rietavas. A second group
consisted of three members from various health professions from Anykščia, i.e., a veterinarian, a physician and a dentist. The third focused group interview was held with five women who made packaging material at a collective farm near Ukmergė.

A focus group interview is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. It is conducted by a skilled interviewer. The number of group members may vary. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion. The ingredients of a focus group are: (a) people, who (b) possess certain characteristics, (c) provide data (d) of a qualitative nature (e) in a focused discussion.

During this same time period individual personal interviews were held with four individual woman farmers who lived, respectively, in Reitavas, in Vizyniai (Moletai region); in Seta (Kėdainiai region) and near Panevėžys (Panevėžys region), and with a female farm director from Anykščia.

To learn about effects of national, regional and local policy changes on rural women, seven additional interviews were held during the spring of 1992 with two women farmers from the Kėdainiai region, a female agronomist from the Kėdainiai region, a female chief of a rural district of the Trakai region (Trakai local municipality), a female administrator from the regional municipality of Ukmergė and two agricultural economists (one of them was also an individual farmer) from the Panevėžys region.

The interviews lasted from one-and-a-half to two hours. They were supplemented with data from the 1989 Census of Lithuanian Inhabitants (Būdvytienė, 1992). All interviews were dually transcribed but not tape recorded (the use of a tape recorder was met with suspicion and not well accepted). Two of
the group interviews were conducted in the living room of one of the respondents in
the group. The interview with the women responsible for making packaging
materials was conducted in the meeting room of the collective farm where they
worked.

There were no interruptions during any of the group interviews of personal
interviews. The individual interviews with the individual women farmers were
mostly conducted outdoors near their farm. In one instance the interview was
conducted at a cottage owned by the collective farm for which the woman farmer
worked part-time.

All generalizations from the interviews are based on the dominant pattern or
the clear majority of the respondents. When quotations are used, it represents a
common interview theme. Since the interviews were fluid and open ended, not all
respondents volunteered all themes.
RESULTS: CONSEQUENCES OF THE DECENTRALIZATION AND PRIVATIZATION FOR RURAL WOMEN

Since Lithuania has become an independent republic and its government is rapidly moving ahead with policy changes needed to propel the country into a transition to private ownership and market economy, much has changed for women in the countryside. While in the past the Soviet economy guaranteed employment, presently this is no longer the case. However, the Lithuanian government is expecting that, eventually, a well-run mixed economy will evolve and new job opportunities will arise for those thrown out of work. Meanwhile a number of measures have been adopted to cope with some of the transitional difficulties. These measures (in 1991) included compensation payments for households to ease the impact of the higher prices for consumer goods. Calculations or compensation have not been made by policy makers for additional time spent by women.

The government also planned to compensate income recipients for the anticipated higher inflation in the coming period, and to stimulate the establishment of labor exchanges to play an active role in helping those made unemployed to be retrained and find new jobs (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1991:65).

Nevertheless, the rising levels of unemployment appear to have serious consequences for women. In particular, social service levels are likely to be reduced as large-scale collective and state farms are replaced by new private and often smaller forms of farming, and the responsibility for social services shifts to regional and local municipalities who cannot afford to continue them at previous levels. Women (and their children) will be hit twice by this reduction as they are the ones who mostly benefit from these services. They are also the ones who mostly deliver these services and who thus will lose their jobs.
When asked about their present needs, aspirations and problems, many respondents expressed deep concern about the deteriorating employment situation of rural women. A female individual farmer from the Kėdainiai region reported: "To my mind, the fact that collective and state farms were dismantled badly influenced women's life. Many educated women became housewives, and have to do hard manual work. Women do not profit from the efforts to mechanize agricultural tasks."

A head of a rural district near Trakai interviewed in April 1992 also voiced her concerns: "Since the implementation of the agrarian reforms, women have a lot of problems. They are sacked from work and they have been forced to become housewives. They have had to look for work in Vilnius, 30 kilometers from here." Some farms appear continue to provide services, but have started to charge money for them.

At a collective farm near Ukmergė, five women, responsible for making packaging material, experienced this first hand. Although in general the living conditions on the collective farm where they were employed had improved somewhat and a start had been made to building more houses, they had been told that in the future, housing could not be provided free of charge and they would have to pay rent.

Another problem, or consequence, raised by many respondents was a tremendous increase in everyday workload. Most respondents found that the more the economic situation had worsened, the more their workdays had expanded and the harder it had become for them to provide food and clothing for their families. A female teacher from Rietavas described the situation as follows: "We work very hard. We are like squirrels in a cage."
A female individual farmer from the Kédainiai region interviewed in April 1992 characterized the situation of rural women as follows: "Women in the countryside are like in an ocean of troubles. Their salary is low, and the prices of goods are very high. Their everyday concerns are to clothe and to feed their families. And besides that they have a garden and animals."
CONCLUSIONS

Are Rural Women Forming Networks of their Own Choosing?

Based on the interviews, it appeared that most respondents tried to solve their problems through a continuous process of strategizing, changing their strategies as conditions changed or when new opportunities arose. When asked with whom they shared their troubles, most responded that they consult neighbors or relatives, when needed. Only a few were interested in setting up official organizations or networks to discuss the issues which concerned them. The ones who were interested in forming a women's organization stressed to have disliked very much the former women's councils set up by the Communist Party because they had been forced upon them.

Some respondents thought women did not have time for meetings. The woman farmer from Seta (Kėdainiai region) mentioned earlier thought women were too busy to set up organizations: "When women have to produce everything themselves, they don't think about meetings, women's circles, etc. The main goal of their lives becomes to accumulate what is needed for their children and for themselves. To my mind at present women can do nothing to change the situation."

Nevertheless, to avoid the ubiquitous queues and black markets, many women reported over the years to have developed elaborate informal networks to acquire the goods they need. In towns as well as in the countryside they constructed networks of mutual services sometimes covering the whole Republic and beyond.

When asked if women should take on leadership roles, only few respondents gave an affirmative answer. The woman administrator from the Ukmergė municipality thought women should take on such roles. She also felt a need for leadership training. Both the woman physician and veterinarian interviewed felt
women should take part in decision-making and become leaders, although they thought now they already had too much to do. The director of the Elminikai experimental station and experimental state farm, an unusual position for a woman, thought women should not take on leadership roles because "they tended to worry too much about making the wrong or right decision; men did not worry enough."

Despite independence and the adoption of many laws, including one that allows women as well as men to operate and own their own farm, most women who were interviewed thought the economic and agricultural transition process in Lithuania had some serious negative consequences for women such as increased unemployment rates and increased workload. Some of them also expressed strong feelings of helplessness, of powerlessness, and of feeling marginalized. As a reaction to the general state of decline, instead of organizing themselves, they opt for the "soft productive exist" as described by Hedlund (1989). At the present time they don't see any possibilities to actively engage in the Republic's transition process.

Do Rural Women Have a Role to Play in the Change Process?

Based on the data one may conclude that even in independent Lithuania, the interests of women still come last. Although structural adjustments are meant to produce a stronger economic system, they are biased to the extent that they ignore the impact on women's lives. For rural women the "assimilationist strategy" appears to be still valid. For them, paid work on individual farms or on the remaining collective farms continues to be contingent on the domestic labor needed for the family and the country's general employment situation. The climbing unemployment rates reveal that for them the labor market does not incorporate a mechanism of inclusion, but of exclusion.
Because of their earlier (forced) involvement in low-skilled work under Soviet rule (when the majority of women was assigned to do the "physical labor:" the heavier, less skilled, and non-specialist types of work) and on collective and state farms mostly engaged in dairy farming, vegetable cultivation, and seasonal field work, they are now not considered capable of taking on leadership roles. Most of them do not aspire to these roles. The threat of unemployment and diminishing social services have made life very hard for them and as the standard of living deteriorates, they are simply too busy bringing in some income and keeping their families fed and clothed to set up official women's organizations or to take on leadership roles.

With many women from the "Third World" they share too long an experience of being used by governments, agencies, or organizations for purposes not of their own interest or of their own choosing. As a result they tend to look with suspicion upon any political force or body that was not of their own making such as the zhensovety.

Nevertheless, some recommendations can be made to ameliorate the position of rural women and turn them into more active participants. Most importantly, social relations must be addressed and incorporated into the restructuring. The added burden of being placed on women in the private sector becomes invisible if one looks at changes occurring only in the public sector. Policies must address both women's practical needs and women's gender needs: women's responsibility of reproducing and maintaining human resources, women's subordination in the private and public spheres, an unequal distribution of resources within the home and in public employment, an analysis of male privilege, and devaluation of women's work.
At a more concrete level, their rate of unemployment could be reduced by speeding the decentralization of the processing industry and by creating jobs in small processing units in rural communities. Reviving an entrepreneurship movement that was started by Lithuanian collective farmers more than 10 years ago would be a complementary measure.

Another measure that would assist rural women in many ways, is partly a restoration of the past. Women in the countryside would gain tremendously if the schools, kindergartens, dining rooms, and cultural houses of the collective farms would be reopened, should there be no other affordable institutions to replace them.

Finally, even if their time is limited women themselves will need to learn to ally themselves more closely and effectively with other grassroots organizations without jeopardizing their own autonomy. A process of dialogue and working on joint programs is the only way to begin to build self-confidence and to gain respect for the strengths and capacities of others. Not only must they strengthen their own organizational capacity, but they must crystallize visions and perspectives that will move them beyond their present difficult situation.
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PAPER 3. CHANGING LINKS BETWEEN LITHUANIAN INDIVIDUAL AND FORMER COLLECTIVE OR STATE FARMS
ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of agricultural reforms and the restoration of private farming in Lithuania, new forms of cooperation and competition are developing between the former socialized farms and newly starting private farms. This paper explores the problems and pressures which are being encountered by the various types of farmers presently coexisting in Lithuania. Special attention is directed towards the character of the linkages between newly starting individual private farms and former socialized farms. An effort is made to determine if their relationship is mostly competitive or symbiotic in nature.
INTRODUCTION

Lithuanian rural society is rapidly changing. Many of the recently implemented policy reforms and other reforms still under discussion are intended to ease the country's transition to a market economy and to alleviate the economic problems in the current production and distribution systems. Some of these reforms deal with fundamental changes in the structure of the farming system, ownership of land and other resources, and management of the farm (Prosterman and Hanstad, 1991; Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 1992).

During the period of Soviet domination, many forms of linkages and interfarm exchanges between the "private" sector (mostly milk, meat, vegetables and fruit production personal plots) and socialized sectors of the Soviet agricultural economy existed (although they took place, for the most part, without being recorded in official statistical yearbooks, apart from those of Lithuania and Latvia). Private farms sold sizable quantities of meat and milk to public farms but in many instances these products were resold and registered as output of the state or collective farm (Wädekin, 1990a:248).

The volume of these interfarm exchanges probably exceeded the estimates of Soviet writers, but they were not wholly the result of the "free will" of private producers and public farm managers. Party and state officials allowed the interfarm exchanges and even encouraged them in recent years but at the same time were eager to control the forms and prices of such exchanges.

Against the background of the current changes of economic and agricultural policy and the adoption of new laws related to farming, this paper explores various forms of cooperation and interfarm exchanges between Lithuanian farmers. Since the introduction of agricultural reforms and the restoration of private farming in
Lithuania whereby farmers are permitted to actually own land, new forms of cooperation or competition are likely to develop between the former socialized farms and new entrepreneurs.

The central aim of this paper is to provide insight into the present opportunities and pressures or problems of former socialized farms and newly starting individual farms as perceived by the heads, directors or farm owners themselves. An effort is being made to arrive at a characterization of the various linkages which are being built between the shifting forms of farming and to examine the benefits (or drawbacks) the farmers derive from these linkages. The paper also explores whether the interfarm linkages are more of a cooperative or competitive nature. Due to the present strenuous conditions, the latter has been assumed to be closer to the truth.

The paper is divided into five parts. First, a theoretical approach is outlined followed by an overview of the agricultural situation before the recent reforms and the agrarian transition process which is presently being implemented. The research methodology is outlined in the second. This section is followed by a discussion of the changing agrarian conditions and the problems these have created for farmers. In the fourth part, the various forms of cooperation and interfarm exchanges between individual and the remaining public farms are explored. Some concluding remarks are offered in the final section.

Using a Combined Approach to Study Linkages

A widespread restructuring is currently taking place in Lithuanian agriculture, in the context of a broader transition from a centralized command system to a market-oriented economy.
This study draws on transition theory outlined by Luis Llambi (1990) and resource-dependence theory developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) to examine the socio-economic dynamics involved in this transition process and its implications for the production relations between different groups of farmers. Llambi (1990) studied agrarian transitions to and within capitalism. He examined the restructuring of old agrarian labor processes, the emergence of new production-and-exchange forms, and the development of new technical and social links between farmers and between farming and other economic sectors. Llambi stresses the importance of "building structural notions (such as the international economic order, national policies, or forms of production) as interlocking analytical categories into the analysis of agrarian transition processes. This will enable the researcher to identify directions of multiple causation and feedback loops (macro-micro and micro/macro) of the presses under scrutiny" (Llambi, 1990:174).

Llambi also makes an effort to avoid an unduly "agrarianist" approach when studying the agrarian dimension in overall structural change. Both markets and the labor press, as well as other allegedly non-economic dimension such as legal and political conditioning are considered important for explaining changes in production processes. Such an approach seems especially relevant for studying the agrarian transition in Lithuania. Legal and political conditioning are indispensable dimensions in the more macro-oriented analysis of the formation of linkages between the various types of farmers that now coexist in the newly independent Republic. Besides broad political and legal notions, past and present forms of cooperation and dependency between farmers are also expected to influence the links between individual and former socialized farms at the grassroots level.
Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), investigating the benefits that organizations may derive from establishing linkages with one another, found that linkages help stabilize the organization's exchanges and reduce uncertainty. Through negotiation and the arrangement of agreements with others, uncertainty is reduced. Especially when situations of exchange and competition are uncertain and problematic (a situation which is very true for Lithuania right now), organizations will attempt to form linkages with other organizations and use these to access resources, stabilize outcomes or avert environmental control. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978:45) also studied resource-dependency between organizations, a concept defined as "the potential for one organizations influencing another deriving from its discretionary control over resources needed by that other and the other's dependence on the resource and lack of countervailing resources or access to alternative resources."

According to Pfeffer and Salancik, there are two dimensions to a resource exchange: the relative magnitude of the exchange and the criticality of the resource. Criticality measures the ability of an organization to continue functioning in the absence of the resource. (The fact that a resource is important to the organization's functioning is, in itself, not the source of the organization's dependency. When the supply of a resource is stable and ample, there is no problem for the organization. The vulnerability derives from the possibility of an environment changing so that the resource is no longer assured.) Given the monopolistic supply system of goods and services which has been geared only to "big" customers, i.e., large collective and state farms in all former Soviet Republics including the Baltics for years and the recent severing of all relations with Moscow, resource criticality and discretion over its allocation and use are assumed to be crucial factors in this study of interfarm exchanges. The relative magnitude of an exchange is defined by Pfeffer and Salancik
(1978: 46) as the relative importance of the resource measurable by assessing the proportion of total inputs or the proportion of total outputs accounted for by the exchange.

Finally, Pfeffer and Salancik (1978:82) also mention "commitment to the past" as an important factor influencing one organization's dependency on another. They indicate that this commitment to doing things a certain way may pose a limitation on organizational adaptation. In this paper this "commitment to the past" was given a somewhat different interpretation. The Lithuanian farmers' commitment to the past was explored through the examination of their recollection of any "indigenous knowledge of farming" employed before the annexation by the Soviet Union, and their willingness to reemploy this knowledge (or farming skills) on their individual private farms. For the purpose of this study, "indigenous knowledge" was defined as knowledge or skills which formed an active component of the culture of the social group concerned and which was stored, communicated, and used by its members to serve some purpose in relation to productive activity within the society, in this case, agricultural productivity.

The Agricultural Situation Before Recent Reforms

Lithuania has a centuries old agricultural heritage. It has always been a farming country, known to have had the most productive land in the old Russian Empire. Nevertheless, when it became independent in 1918, as a consequence of the war, the agricultural sector was devastated and in a state of chaos. At that time a small nobility and land owner class possessed more than one third of Lithuanian lands, while 30 percent of the rural population owned no land at all. In 1923, about three quarters of the employed population worked in agriculture. Hard times forced...
many to leave the country; most emigrated to the U.S. This situation changed during the 1920's and 30's as a result of far-reaching land reforms and government-initiated efforts to modernize agricultural production. Considerable increases in the production per hectare of rye, wheat, barley, oat and potatoes resulted (Hernes and Knudsen, 1991).

In 1940, the Baltic States, including Lithuania, were annexed by the USSR and declared a Soviet Socialist Republic. The Soviet occupation and the subsequent nationalization of land holdings changed the course of agricultural development in the Republics and marked the beginning of the drive by the central communist government to transform the agricultural sector after the Soviet model. Multiple arrests and deportations of political and social elites followed, only briefly interrupted when, in July 1942, the Soviet Union was attacked by Germany and the Baltic countries came under German occupation. The first post-war years were marked by further deportations, particularly in connection with the collectivization of the agrarian sector. By the 1950s, the forced collectivization was almost complete.

The primary agricultural goal of the collectivization was to increase the surplus and use it to promote industrial expansion. Increases in agricultural production through productivity gains meant a decrease in agricultural employment and the transfer of labor to industrial production, specifically to those sectors given priority by state planning in the redistribution of available resources.

Two new production units were created and propagated. One, the state farm (Soviet Sovkhoz) was an agricultural enterprise owned by the state on which farmers worked as wage laborers. This type of production unit was considered the highest form of collective and received a disproportionate share of agricultural investment. The other, the collective farm (Soviet Kolkhoz) was seen as a transitional
form between the individual peasant plot and the state farm. In theory owned this was owned by its members. The collective was composed of a large area cultivated in common and small private plots controlled by separate households. Aside from access to the private plots, members were paid according to the type and amount of their work, depending upon the profits of the enterprise (Sokolovsky, 1990).

As noted earlier, during the last years of Soviet rule the difference between state and collective farms had gradually disappeared. The "election" of collective farm chairmen had been largely guided from the outside, so there had been little difference from the appointment of state farm directors. Collective farm members received a set monthly salary that was financed out of a line of credit from the state banks regardless of profitability (plus a bonus based on production), making their remuneration essentially indistinguishable from that of workers of the state farms. Private plots were allowed on both. Retired farmers on both collective and state farms received state pensions (Prosterman and Hanstad, 1991).

The advent of collectivization and its pursuit over the years had a profound negative effect on rural production and transformed rural areas. The introduction of the two new production units brought with them fully new "constructed villages" which were wholly alien in the rural landscape. The repair of earlier farm buildings was banned and new zoning regulations made it impossible to secure licenses for construction outside of new villages. This led to a radical change from situations characterized by high levels of support based on traditional community/household reciprocity in rural villages to a persistently contradictory and inadequate mix of wages and state assistance in both urban (increasing and generally more costly for the state) and rural (decreasing) settings. To make matters worse the state launched and financed extensive land-use projects in an attempt to improve crop output. This
resulted in the creation of large holdings unsuited to the land's natural conditions, the elimination of old farmsteads and forests, and the transformation of rivers into canals (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 1992).

Some independent individual farms survived forced collectivization. These tended to be on the periphery of collective or state farms, and on certain types of land (poorer land, less accessible, etc.) These numbers are much smaller and less significant than in Poland, however, where some attribute the more rapid privatization process to their existence.

Since Gorbachev's rural revolution, there has been a slow reemergence of individual farms, encouraged both by some at the center in Moscow and by the leadership in several republics and districts. Initially this reappearance of individual farms occurred without the benefit of supporting legal provisions. Starting in 1987, family teams sprung up and leasing contracts came into being. This novel emphasis on "small" and efficient and "family units of production," parallel to the large-scale production of the public farms was directed "to increase production and at the same time reduce costs as a result of more intensive and better work through self-control among the members of the unit" (Wädekin, 1990b:329).

Not much later, in December 1989, legal enactments by the central government and by several of the republics have begun to give the movement formal recognition. Three laws passed at the central government level -- the Law of Leasing, the Law of Property and, especially, the Law on Land, gave recognition and an increasingly (though not yet adequate) framework to the movement. Not only did these laws permit long-term leasing of land both within and outside and collective and state farms to individuals, they also granted individual proprietorship
(vladenie) over land. These proprietorship, or "vladenie" rights included perpetual, inheritable rights to work the land, but not the right to buy, sell or mortgage.

This set of central government laws also delegated important powers to pass additional laws on these subjects to the republics -- powers which were being used to pass laws that would provide essential detail and mechanisms for the legal process. In Lithuania, the laws soon went beyond what had been authorized at the Center on such vital issues as the right to buy and sell land. On July 4, 1989, Lithuania adopted the Law on Peasant Farms. This law (in fact, a whole legislative package), was based on laws passed at the central government level mentioned previously. They granted farmers rights to work the land but not to buy, sell, or mortgage. Kolkhoz members and sovkhoz workers now had the legal rights to leave the socialized sector and use land allotted by collective and state farms for individual farming.

Subsequently, following the struggle for economic and political independence, the Baltic Republics' Supreme Councils, including that of Lithuania, declared the collectivization of agriculture as imposed by force as an error politically, juridically and economically, and the methods of its implementation as illegal. Each republic started implementing land reforms aimed at rectifying property enfranchisement regulations so that ownership of land could be re-established and land declared private property again. The military coup of August 19, 1991, and the ensuing recognition of Lithuania's independence accelerated this agrarian reform process. On June 18, 1991, the Lithuania government adopted a law regulating the restitution of land to former owners and on July 25, the Law on Land Reform was adopted. The process of reform was further implemented by the
adoption of the Law on the Privatization of Property of Agricultural Enterprises on July 30, 1991,

The main thrust of all these agrarian reform laws was to regulate the gradual privatization of land and fixed assets and, hence, production. What it implied was a dismantling of the socialized farm system whereby the existing collective and state farms would be split into smaller productive units (crop productive units; livestock productive units, etc.). These smaller units were expected to be easier to manage and better capable of competing under market conditions. As was to be expected, the declared intent of dismantling the socialized sector was met with some strong opposition from "sovcolkhoze apparatchiks." Especially the members of well managed and highly productive state and collective farms opposed the changes. It was decided that they could keep their operations intact by transforming in so-called "share-holding" or "joint-stock: companies (Prosternan and Hanstad, 1991).

To ease the individual farmers' transition to producing for a market economy, besides issuing new laws, the Lithuanian government also adopted a private farmers' support program. This program was initiated in February 1992. The total value for 1992 amounted to 0.8 million rubles. The money from the support program has been designated for the construction and maintenance of roads in rural areas; the installation of electricity and telephone facilities and the provision of loans for the construction of houses and barns. It further provides for loans for the purchase of agricultural machinery and pedigree animals. It requires from ministries, departments and committees to provide all the support necessary to enable private farmers to purchase fuel, machinery, fodder, seeds, etc. (See Appendix 1, Lithuanian Government Decree No. 88, February 7, 1992). To assure the gradual transfer of land and fixed assets, the government set up a totally new
four-level institutional structure. At the top level, a Central Privatization Commission coordinates all activities of privatization institutions and controls the process of privatization. The next level constitutes the Commission for Agrarian Reform. This commission is responsible for carrying out proposals on implementation of the agrarian reforms. At the district level, a District Privatization Commission acts as a mediator between the government and local authorities. Finally, at the local level, a municipal Agrarian Reform Services (smallest administrative units in charge of three to four farms) implements the reforms and thus bears the brunt of all the policy changes.

The municipal services have the status of a legal person and their employees, unlike those of the other institutions, are full-time workers for the period of the reform. They are financed from the Central Agrarian Reform Fund. Their task is to accept and process all applications for land and honor claims. Once a claim is accepted, they provide claimants with certificates confirming land ownership rights. They also deal with applications for agricultural assets, organize auctions, share subscriptions, and reappraise unsold assets (OECD, 1992:48).
METHODS

A qualitative approach has been taken to study the changing relations between the formerly socialized farms and newly starting agricultural entrepreneurs. This approach made it possible to investigate the plurality and quality of the links between the various types of farmers, large and small.

Rural sociologists from the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics assisted in the selection of these farms. For representativeness, farms of varying size and specialty were selected which were situated in various parts of the Republic. Included in this study were two collective farms, two state farms, one agricultural school and state farm combination, and three individual farms.

The collective farm in Klausuchiai consisted primarily of a nursery of 4,000 hectares (485 in fruit orchard) and one very large farm near Kupiškis of over 5000 hectares (3900 in cultivation or pasture) which produced barley, grass for fodder, potatoes, dairy products, meat, and foxes for fur. Also included were an agricultural school and state farm combination in Rietavas (7200 hectares, with 1500 hectares in forest, producing meat and dairy products; mint and other others for baking and perfume; and grains — oats, barley and wheat) and two large state farms. One state farm stretched over 4000 hectares and produced a variety of crops and bred cattle. Two thousand hectares of this farm had been designated for privatization. The other farm was 7300 hectares in size (3300 cultivated, rest in forest) and produced potatoes, barley, wheat, rye, oats, peas for fodder, clover, herbs, rape seed, and cattle for milk and meat.

Three individual farms of varying sizes (in Raseiniai, in Vizyniai, and in Seta) were also included in the study.
Intensive personal interviews organized around a number of themes listed below were conducted with the private individual farmers and with the heads or directors of the various collective and state farms. The interviews were conducted in August and September of 1991 and March, April and November of 1992. Most of the interviews were conducted in the farms' meeting rooms. Sometimes the economist or the chief for social services was present during the interview. In two instances, the interviews were conducted outdoors on the farming grounds.

Interviews last from one and a half to two hours, without interruption. During the interviews, all questions and answers were translated by a professional Lithuanian social scientist. All interviews were dually transcribed but not tape recorded (the use of a tape recorder was met with suspicion and not well accepted).

All generalizations in the paper are based on the dominant pattern or the clear majority of the respondents. When quotations from a particular interview are used, they represent a common interview theme. Since the interviews were fluid and open-ended, not all respondents volunteered all themes.

Themes discussed included the following:

1. Crops, soil types, animal breeding.
2. Perception of the current situation and the agrarian reforms.
3. Problems and decision-making processes.
4. Possible support channels and representation for farmers.
5. Problem solving before collectivization, old farming practices still in use (indigenous knowledge) and the value of the old ways.
6. Expected changes for the future (related to the adoption of new laws or policies.
7. Relationship with municipalities.
8. Linkages with neighboring farms, individual or collective.

9. Prospects for individual farming and women's interest in starting an individual farm.

10. Special needs of women in the countryside.

Additional interviews about interfarm relationships and exchanges were conducted with the director and assistant director of the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics in Vilnius, and a dairy extension specialist who had been asked to start a "model" private dairy farm in order to obtain experience with farming in a market economy. The interviews were supplemented with data on economic trends and state policies as published in official Lithuanian reports.
RESULTS

Changing Structural Conditions: New Choices and Problems

As indicated earlier, new laws on peasant farming, issued first by the central government in Moscow and latter by the Lithuanian government, and the restitution of property to former owners made it possible to reestablish individual farms in Lithuania. Gradually, they began spreading over the country. In February 1991 there were about 7,000 applicants for individual farming and by September 1991, registered individual farms numbered 7,600. The average size of these farms was 17 hectares. By May 1992 the number of individual farms had climbed to 32,100. The average size of the farms had declined to 9 hectares, a size close to the land-use pattern in the pre-Soviet period, when it was 10.4 hectares.

As indicated in a report from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (1992:49), the Lithuanian Farmer's Union expects that when the conversion of former collective and state farms into smaller units is complete, the number of individual farms will increase further to about 300,000. The farm size will average ten hectares. Together these farms, which will mostly engage in crop and animal production, will occupy 50 percent of Lithuania's total area.

Although their numbers are rising, the individual farmers interviewed reported numerous problems. For example, they reported great difficulties in obtaining seeds and fertilizers. Because they need small quantities at low prices, western seed developers are as yet not eager to supply them with the newest varieties. They also have great difficulty delivering their products to the free markets due to a lack of transport facilities and an inefficient overall network. This often forces them to sell the bulk of their produce at lower-than-market price to collective
and state farms. These problems were confirmed by a dairy extension specialist interviewed in September 1991.

An even more serious obstacle is that few of the farmers have much or any recollection of the "indigenous knowledge" from before the annexation by the Soviet Union. ((Indigenous knowledge is defined in terms of socio-economic and spatial location. It is knowledge which is rooted and embedded in (indigenous to) specified social groups. To be indigenous, knowledge must be an active component of the culture of the social group concerned, being stored, communicated, and used by its members to serve some purpose in relation to productive activity within the society.)) When asked about this "indigenous knowledge" and the value of the old ways of farming, they reported that some skills had been kept alive by farming the private plot. This is still a far cry from being entirely dependent on one's own farming knowledge and abilities. As the director of one of the state farms with experimental fields reported in August 1991: "Lithuanian farmers used to be very good in hog breeding but nowadays only the older members of the farm remember some of the old practices, the younger generation is not so knowledgeable." This is why the staff of this farm pays regular visits to individual farmers in the neighborhood. They also offer special courses for farmers. These courses in which various specialists lectured, were attended by 30 private farmers.

The difficulty faced by private farmers in turning their farms into viable agricultural enterprises is illustrated by the story of a individual female farmer from Raseiniai, Rietavas (western Lithuania). Her parents were individual farmers. They owned 19.5 hectares. She thought they were rather good farmers, but taxes became so high that her parents were forced to become members of the collective. Everybody, including the children, started to work there. When she began working
at the collective farm, she and her parents were very poor. In a whole year she could buy only one dress. Her father died in a car accident when she was 17 years old.

Presently, she lives together with her mother and wishes to reclaim her parents' land. She is married and has two children, a married daughter and a son who is studying at the agricultural school where she is employed. Her husband is a tractor driver. She works at the agricultural school as a guard, so she will only be able to work on the farm part-time. Her son, who is 16 years old and studying at the agricultural school, assists her cultivating the land but there is no money for equipment. She would like to buy her own equipment instead of renting it from the collective farm but this is not possible at the moment. In the Spring of 1991 her salary was 130 rubles a month (soon to increase to 265 rubles). But even with her husband's salary, they are unable to afford a tractor. She also worries about tax increases on the land. Previously, the couple bought seeds from the collective farm but now they have built a storage room to store their own seeds. They have two cows, three calves and two hogs. They grow barley, oats and other grains. They recently bought a horse to plow and sow potatoes.

When asked if there is still value in the old ways of farming, her answer is yes and she mentions that they still apply field rotation as her parents practiced earlier. But she also would like to use fertilizers or herbicides should they become affordable and available.

Links Between New Individual Private Farms and the Former Socialized Sector

As noted, individual farms, albeit in small numbers, survived collectivization. A symbiotic relationship with large collective farms aided their survival. Collective farmers also maintained individual plots on collective and state farms. The
productivity of these plots and the degree of their contribution to the agricultural economy while significant may be overstated. Collective farms also assisted production of individual plots by helping to cultivate them; individuals are even reported to have taken (stolen) supplies from the state or collective farm.

Presently, many ties between the newly established individual farms and what still remains of the socialized sector are perpetuated. Although the newly established individual farms are formally and juridically independent, they continue to cooperate with and rely on the now mostly reorganized former collective and state farms. One of the reasons for this reliance, noted by a 1992 OECD report on agrarian reform in the Baltic states, is that individual farmers can purchase directly almost nothing (machinery, equipment, fertilizers, feed, pesticides and so on). They are forced to go through former collective and state farms which act as "middlemen." Even credit and land distribution are similarly "brokered."

An example of this brokerage is the acquisition of machinery and equipment (tractor, seed and fertilizer drills, plow, roller and so on), which in turn determine a farm's level of mechanization. Two markets exist in Lithuania, one for used and one for new machinery. Both are controlled by the socialized sector. Used supplies from kolkhozy and sovkhozy are the individual farmer's first source of mechanization.

Many on the directors of former collective or state farms interviewed were willing to sell or lease old equipment to newly starting farmers at very low prices. But when supply from the used equipment market proves impracticable (for example, because of its size), new agricultural entrepreneurs must buy new machinery, for which they usually have to pay a much higher price than former state farms would pay. This is why they frequently report buying a horse instead of a tractor to plow their land.
An alternative approach, available to some, is to rent machinery and equipment, especially the most expensive or difficult to find items. The collective and state farms first complete their harvest before renting out their machinery, and the wait is generally a long one, depending more on the good will of the kolkhoz or sovkhoz manager than on the availability of combine and driver. Huge crop quantity and quality losses can result.

Since the monopolistic supply system of goods and services is geared only to big customers, individual farmers are forced rely upon former collective and state farmers to purchase inputs. Entry access to markets for both used and new equipment depends on the good will of collective or state farm heads. Farmers must buy new equipment at a much higher prices that state farms. Due to government monopoly and shortages, prices are artificially inflated by the profit margins of middlemen, usually the heads of collective and state farms, brokering state supplies.

Good land, compact fields, credit, machinery, and produce marketing are all closely linked to the ties, past and present, between the new farmers and the collective and state farms. Farm capitalization (fixed assets, machinery and equipment) of the individuals who had not had or established good relations with the kolkhozy and sovkhozy was very low.

Access is not only a problem of supply of inputs but also of delivery to free markets. Lack of transport facilities on the farm and an inefficient overall network are the primary obstacles, although certain audits by local authorities make private trade very difficult. Peasant farms must therefore sell the bulk of their produce at lower-than-market price to collective and state farms. Other problems concern the quality (soil type, fertility) and site (distance from farm buildings) of the land-in-use-
grants. Applicants are often assigned marginal acreage from the collective and state farms, which attempt to give away the poorest fields first.

As the woman farmer previously described, new private farmers also need to retain their old jobs at former state or collective farms and can only work their own farms part-time. An good example of this is the situation at a large collective farm near Kupiškis. This farm is more than 5,000 hectares from which 2,900 hectares are cultivated, while the rest are pastures, forests and lakes. It produces barley, grass for fodder, potatoes, dairy products, meat (60 percent beef/40 percent pork), and foxes for fur. There are seven settlements, with 50 percent of the people living in the central settlement near the farm. Only three people are starting individual farms (averaging about 13 hectares). According to the director of this farm, besides running their private farms, these farmers plan to continue working at the collective farm for a while. The collective farm supplies them with a salary and equipment it no longer needs, and some time off.

A comparable symbiotic situation exists at the Rietavas Agricultural School and State Farm. This is a very large farm of 7200 hectares formed by the merger of a number of small farms. It produces meat and dairy products, mint and other oils (for baking and perfume), and grains (oats, barley and wheat). They have a big equipment yard with 90 tractors and 22 combines. They lost 2,000 hectares last year which the parliament decided to allocate for family farms. There are currently ten private individual farms neighboring this farm, ranging in size from 10 to 40 hectares. The director expects an eventual total of 20. This state farm supports the individual farms in a number of ways: giving them barns, selling seeds, feeds, and grain, and selling or renting equipment. In 1989 the agricultural school connected to
the farm became the first in Lithuania to offer special courses in individual farming. Unfortunately, most textbooks available are still written for old farming techniques.

A similar situation was found at the Elmikinkai Experiment Station and Experimental State Farm. This farm is 7300 hectares in size (3,300 cultivated, the remainder in forest) and produces potatoes, barley, wheat, rye, oats, peas for fodder, clover, herbs, rape seed, and dairy products. There are four individual farms ranging in size from 10 to 15 hectares in the neighborhood being developed on land that belonged to the parents of the new farmers. The state farm assists them with sowing and rents them equipment.

At one collective farm, near Klausuchiai, the head expressed some animosity toward newly started individual farmers. The year before this farm voted to change from a state to a collective farm (so as to avoid having to purchase the land), and the change had been approved by the government. This farm sized 10,000 acres (1200 in fruit orchard) consists primarily of a nursery. It produces vegetables and fruit -- berries, cherries, apples and pears -- which were also processed by the farm. Most of the produce was distributed regionally to Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. Perhaps because of its proximity to Vilnius, there was anxiety at this farm, more than at other farms visited, about who was to make land claims in the near future. They particularly disapproved of claims by "newcomers" from the towns who didn't have much farming knowledge. The head of the collective farm also expected it to be very difficult for former employees of former socialized farms to run their own private farms because they had become used to their "worker's status."

In this regard, some farm directors expressed the need for management training or leadership development. This need was confirmed by the director and
assistant director of the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics in Vilnius and a dairy extension specialist who had started a "model" private dairy farm.
CONCLUSIONS

Although generalizations from case-study material must be made with care, overall the linkages between newly started farms and former collective and state farms were found to be strong and less competitive (more symbiotic) than anticipated. Both forms of farming experience many problems related to the transition to a market economy and both continue to depend on each other, although the private individual farms appear to depend more on the former socialized farms for critical resources than the other way around.

In only one instance did we observe feelings of anxiety and animosity between long established farms and those who were viewed as "newcomers," i.e., farmers-to-be who did not previously work on state or collective farms, but came from towns to claim land belonging in their family prior to collectivization. Farmers who had cultivated the land for years felt resentment toward the claims of these people whom they considered "novices." Most of the time, however, the heads and directors of the reorganized collective and state farms reported positive linkages with newly starting individual farmers.

Nevertheless, a strong resource dependence relationship exists between new private farms and the reorganized collective farms. As the data indicated, the ties between the newly established individual farms and what remains of the socialized sector are still very strong. Individual farmers depend heavily on the (reorganized) kolkhozy and sovkhozy — a reliance that despite the individual farmers' formal juridical independence, creates a strong, and not merely economic, bond. The individual farmers rely on the former kolkhozy and sovkhozy for obtaining machinery and equipment, for market access and transport facilities, for the site and quality of soils and for information and training.
In more general terms, the linkages with the larger farms provide the newly established individual farms with some clear benefits. They enable them to access critical resources without which they would not be able to farm to survive. Those close ties with the larger farms also reduce some of the uncertainty they experience because of the accelerated transformation of the agricultural and economic sectors of Lithuania.

However, the considerable resource-dependency of the newly starting individual farmers on what remains of the socialized sector undoubtedly gives the latter a competitive edge, a situation which will probably continue indefinitely unless state agencies take specific steps to create the general structural conditions that individual farmers need to survive on their own and compete successfully in a free market. Although the government initiated a special support program to support private farmers, they still appear to lack the need infrastructure.

As indicated by Llambi (1989:771), in a transitory period the individual farm may be in a highly vulnerable and unstable position. At the "grassroots" level, a multitude of local and personal factors will affect their success as a farmer. All Lithuanian farmers, although sharing the same history of forced collectivization, differ in their access to natural and financial resources. They also possess different degrees of "indigenous knowledge" of farming from before the period of collectivization and they are endowed with different values. But despite these differences, they share a dependency on the success of broader economic issues over which they have little control including price and procurement reform, allocation of credit, currency convertibility, competitive markets for inputs, and marketing. It is clear that their prospects for individual private farming are closely tied to the success of Lithuania's micro- and macro-economic transition to a market economy.
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GENERAL SUMMARY

After a long period of collectivized agriculture, Lithuania, as one of the independent Baltic Republics, has begun a transition to a set of, as yet, unknown post-collectivist rural institutions. The agricultural sector and rural communities are being transformed. Alongside public and collective sectors, a private sector has begun to form.

The rapid transition process and its acceleration caused by the military coup in August of 1991 and the subsequent recognition of Lithuania's independence created many new opportunities for rural people. At the same time, however, the findings of this research confirmed the importance of the two propositions that guided the study, namely that the examination of such a rapid process of change as presently unfolding in Lithuania would reveal some of the core issues, uncertainties and dilemmas confronting rural people, and that during such a period of transition they would continue to rely on familiar relations with neighbors, partners, relative and friends as well as the remaining larger institutional context of collective and state farms. Despite new opportunities and formal decision making autonomy regarding production for a market-economy, people were hampered because they could only absorb and digest so much information and lacked the proper infrastructure to support them. Erratic changes such as presently taking place in Lithuanian can only lead to a gradual adaptation behavior and a gradual formation of new networks. (It is this human factor that forcibly slows the realization of effective privatization and the creation of new markets).

In three separate papers, the contribution of various actors to the change process is explored. The purpose of the first paper was to analyze the congruency between activities involving the restructuring of agriculture on former collective,
state and private farmers on one side and important local public agents, the municipal officials, on the other. More specifically, it posed the question whether the increased freedom of the local administration, in relation to new state regulations, is creating favorable conditions for individual farmers. To gather the data, a flexible set of research methods was used including personal interviews with key actors and informants. The interviews were supplemented by survey data and documentation on state policy changes and the adoption of new laws related to farming.

A structuralist approach guided the research, taking the qualities of human agency as the new criterion of social progress, combined with theory concerning "historical layers of activities" which change over time developed by Alexander and Sztompka (1990). Prior to the investigation, it was assumed that while farmers, as well as local and regional municipal officials, would be heavily involved in Lithuania's rural restructuring process, each interest group would face different opportunities and constraints. It was also expected that, as long as a new functioning institutional structure in agriculture was not in place, private farmers, as well as local and regional officials, would hold to old networks for support and information.

The findings suggest that, indeed, both the municipal agents and the various types of farmers have distinct problems to solve. The municipal agents complain mostly about lack of trust, funds, and information while the newly started private farmers wrestle mostly with lack of funds and lack of supplies. Although the municipal officials maintain they are assisting the new agricultural entrepreneurs as much as they can, their assistance has been limited mostly to legalizing land claims, and in some instances, to market their products, or "support them morally."

With regard to the second assumption, although many of the old networks had disintegrated with the demise of the former communist regime, few farmers had
the energy to develop new ones. The private farmers interviewed continue to rely heavily on the largely intact collective and state farms nearby.

The second paper outlined some of the consequences of the economic and agricultural transition process for rural women. Through the use of a comprehensive theoretical framework, the ways in which rural women are affected by the processes of agricultural and economic restructuring, particularly as some social provisions become unaffordable and unemployment increases, were explored. Important questions raised in this paper were whether history repeats itself and women again are viewed as a "resource," without being encouraged to take an active role in the process of restructuring, and whether they are forming information or economic networks of their own choosing to secure their daily needs.

The findings suggest that, besides taking the brunt of the restructuring process, women are not encouraged to fill leadership roles. Most of the women who were interviewed said not to aspire to these roles. The threat of unemployment and diminishing social services has made life very hard for them. Consequently, most women considered themselves too busy earning an income and keeping their families fed and clothed to establish organizations or to accept leadership roles.

In more abstract terms it appeared that even in independent Lithuania the interests of women still come last. Although structural adjustments are meant to produce a stronger economic system, they are biased to the extent that they ignore the impact of women's lives. For rural women, the "assimilationist" strategy continues to be valid. For them, paid work on individual farms or on the remaining collective farms continues to be contingent on the domestic labor needs for the family and the country's general employment situation.
The third paper explored the problems and pressures being encountered by
the various types of farms presently coexisting in Lithuania. Special attention was
directed towards the character of the linkages between newly started private farms
and former state or collective farms. To examine the socio-economic dynamics
involved in the economic and agricultural transition process and its implications for
the production relations between different groups of farmers, the study drew on
transition theory as outlined by Llambi (1990) and resource dependence theory as
developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978). A qualitative approach was used to study
the changing relations between the state and collective farms and new agricultural
entrepreneurs.

The overall linkages between newly started farms and former collective and
state farms were found to be stronger and less competitive (more symbiotic), than
anticipated. Both forms of farming experience numerous problems which are, in
many ways, related to the rapidity of the transition to a market economy.
Nevertheless, a strong resource-dependence relationship exists between new
individual private farms and the reorganized collective and state farms. Individual
farms depend heavily on the (reorganized) kolkhozy and sovkhozy -- a reliance that
despite the individual farmers' formal juridical independence creates a strong, and
not merely economic, bond. The new agricultural "entrepreneurs" lack investment
capital and are seldom able to employ wage laborers to assist them. They lack basic
resources such as machinery and building materials, credit, and a proper
infrastructure to support them still needs to be developed.

Neither a change of regime or government nor the decision to allow free trade
are by themselves enough to create the entrepreneurial climate the private farmers
need. At present, old forms of redistribution remain operative, even after
decollectivization -- as there are still few institutions to replace the directives of the cadres. Gradually the old cadres will be able to influence only a substantially smaller portion of the total household income of individual farmers and new, more democratic distributive institutions will be built.

Due to the lack of a proper infrastructure, the various types of farmers continue to rely on each other, although individual farms depend more on former socialized farms than the other way around. Further research is needed to find out how the various types of farms could properly be assisted in acquiring the resources and technical information they need to adequately manage their enterprises.

Recommendations

Some directions for future research as well as some policy recommendations can be offered. With regard to the first article on farm-municipal relations, the findings indicate that the ties between municipalities and farmers, particularly at the local level, tend to be governed by three factors: size, personal contacts, and funds. Additional research is necessary to allow for a more precise description of the nature of these exchange and/or dependency relationships, past and present.

The findings of the first paper suggest a need for clarification of policies from the ministerial to the local level. Municipal officials at local and regional levels are very uncertain about what tasks they have to fulfill to assist newly starting farmers and reorganize their own communities and districts. They do not feel adequately informed or trained. Consequently, they expressed an urgent need for more practical information and training. Some also expressed a need for leadership training.

The interviewed farmers offered a policy recommendation of their own. They feel that farming conditions will greatly improve when the municipal officials are
willing to increase their efforts to arrange the service sector (health and education),
better inform the farmers about new laws, and set up supply depots.

A start has been made in establishing a foundation for more in-depth research
into the ways Lithuanian rural women are affected by the general process of
economic and agricultural restructuring. Besides the gathering of vital statistics on
women's past and present contributions to the labor market, more research is
needed to investigate the effects of present and new social and economic policies on
rural women's employment- and other opportunities.

The strategies rural women use to cope with the present difficult situation in
Lithuania also need to be further explored. On the policy side, the findings
suggested that local as well as national policies urgently need to address both
women's practical and gender needs: their subordination in the private and public
spheres, the unequal distribution of resources within the home and in public
employment. At a more concrete level, rural women's increasing rate of
unemployment could be reduced by speeding the decentralization of the processing
industry and by creating jobs in small processing units in rural communities.
Reviving an entrepreneurship movement that was formed by the Lithuanian
collective farmers more than ten years ago would be a complementary measures.

Finally, although they are extremely busy, women will need to be actively
encouraged to form more formal networks and engage in collective action, i.e. to
seek engagement with local and national authorities in order to meet their needs. A
process of dialogue and working closely and effectively with other grassroots
organizations working on joint programs will increase their self-confidence and help
them to crystallize visions and perspective for the future. Leadership training
would be useful.
The research on changes in interfarm linkages reported in the third article reveals some aspects of the dependency relationship that exists between newly started private farms and former collective farms. Additional research will be necessary to learn how this one-sided dependency can be reduced and private farms made more self-reliant. Related to this is the need to further explore what infrastructure these farms require, as now they lack almost everything; seeds, fertilizers, proper equipment, storage facilities, supply depots, etc.

A policy recommendation offered by an extension specialist interviewed for this research was to revive and improve the formerly existing extension service. Although this service existed in the past it did not have any real meaning as the directors of the collective and state farms received most of their information and directions from the central government. Right now the new private farmers and the reorganized collective and state farms are in dire need of such a service to be able to orient themselves to producing for a market-economy.
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APPENDIX

MAIN AGRARIAN REFORM MEASURES ADOPTED
BY THE LITHUANIAN SUPREME COUNCIL 1989-1992

A non-exhaustive list of the legislative measures adopted by the Lithuanian Republic's Supreme Council, according to the date of approval:

1. Law on Peasant Farms (July 4, 1989)
2. Law on the Procedures and Conditions for Restoration of the Rights of Ownership to the Existing Real Property (June 18, 1991)
3. Law on Land Reform (July 25, 1991)
4. Law on the Privatization of Property of Agricultural Enterprises (July 30, 1991)
5. Law on Partnership (mentioned on page 12), 1991

Lithuanian Government's Decree No. 88
February 7, 1992
(Translated from Lithuanian by Vilija Budvytiene)

Private farmers' support program fund (value in 1992 - 0.8 billion rubles)

1. Source of funding: budget different support and charity funds, 5 percent of the income from agrarian reform fund.

2. Money to be kept in a special account at the agrarian bank. Ministry of Agriculture has the right to use this money. Precondition for the application is the size of the private farm (not less than 15 hectares of agricultural land).

3. The support is going to be provided for the following purposes:

a. to cover the debts related to work actually done before February 1, 1992

b. to finance farm electrification, communications, gassification, construction and maintenance of main roads, to compensate harm done by natural disasters

c. to cover part (up to 65 percent) of interest on long term loans, provided to the farmers by agricultural bank

d. to increase the main capital of the Commercial Bank and "Lietukus" Bank, providing each of them million rubles
4. Farmers can apply for the low interest loans for the following activities

   a. construction of farm house (loan up to 25 years, covering up to 80 percent of the construction value, but not more than 400,000 rubles)

   b. Construction of barns (up to 15 years, covering up to 80 percent of the construction value)

   c. Purchase of agricultural machinery (up to seven years, covering up to 80 percent of the market price)

5. The total size of the low interest loan should not exceed 1 million rubles per farm. Newly established farms have priority to get such kinds of loans.

6. Ministries, Departments and Committees are obliged to provide all kinds of possible support to private farmers in purchasing fuel, machinery, concentrated feed, etc.