



“Stepping up to the Call:” A Historiographical Analysis of Gender in 1930s Soviet Russia

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In 1986 Joan Scott published “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” an article examining the disconnect between the way in which gender is explored within the scholarship and gender history itself. In her work Scott operationalized gender as a framework. Utilizing Scott's framework, this historiographical analysis explores the question of gender as an analytical tool within the scholarship on 1930s Soviet Russia. Works produced prior to and post Scott's “calling” are categorized based upon a gender-based spectrum. Works are categorized as being: descriptive history exploring women; women's history; beyond women's history but short of gender history; and gender history. Situating the scholarship of 1930s Soviet Russia alongside Scott's conception of gender history allows for exploration of the evolution of gender—as an analytical tool utilized in the scholarship. Contrasting Scott's conception with scholars' usage of gender alludes to why gender, as a lens, is often overlooked.

Introduction

Scholars of 1930s Soviet Russia utilize a multiplicity of lenses to better understand this historical time period. Commonly, class-based analysis is used as a framework. Yet, the lens of gender is often overlooked. This paper aims to provide a historiographical analysis of gender in the scholarship on the 1930s in Soviet Russia.

It is important to note that there is a significant definitional distinction between “gender” as discussed in the works explored and gender as a framework utilized. For the purpose of this paper, Joan Scott's understanding of gender will be used as the framework for what is considered “gender history.” In turn, the works explored will be analyzed in reference to Scott's definition. While many of the works explored explicitly reference

gender; that alone will not be considered as a viable measure or “label” of gender history. All the works explored will be taken as a part of the literature on “gender,” yet their effectiveness as gendered history will be examined based upon Scott’s framework.

As such, this paper will outline Scott’s conception of gender history. Following that, works on gender prior to Scott’s call will be discussed in order to provide context. These works will then be contrasted with the scholarship on gender post Scott—which is the main concern of this paper. I aim to map out the various ways in which scholars have approached and interacted with gender history post Scott’s calling. The historiography of gender can be understood as being spectrum based; meaning, the scholars have engaged with Scott’s call to doing gender history by producing works that fall into various categories of history. The categories that the works fall into range as follows: descriptive history exploring women; women’s history; beyond women’s history but short of gender history; and gender history.¹ These categories are the basis for the historiographical analysis of gender in the 1930s. To conclude, I will analyze whether certain types of histories (i.e.: social, political, etc.) are more suited to produce gender-based histories.

Scope, Limitations, and Methodology

Selecting works concerning gender is a difficult process as gender means different things to different scholars. As such, I chose to limit the works selected to those explicitly referencing gender and/or focusing on issues specifically concerning men and/or women. Furthermore, scholarship focusing exclusively on the family was excluded.² However, issues pertaining to the family are considered relevant when found within the scholarship on gender- so long as they are secondary to gender.

Another area deemed out of the scope of this research is the scholarship on the unveiling campaigns in Uzbek. Although the unveiling campaigns are a part of the scholarship on gender, they are a separate field of study on their own, as they are a unique subset of Soviet history. My primary focus is on the “mainland” of Russia as an area of concern. Also, the distinction in understandings of gender based on an urban and rural divide will not be explored as the literature does not permit for this type of analysis.³

Joan Scott’s Call

In 1986 Joan Scott wrote an article titled “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis.” Scott establishes the basis of a disconnect between “gender” as explored by the scholarship and gender history. She states that the word “gender” itself is more often than not used as a synonym for “women” and that, in turn, the scholarship has simply “substituted ‘gender’ for ‘women’ in their titles.”⁴ Also, she highlights how the term gender was introduced into women’s studies as a way to address the fact that the scholarship focused on women separately—as a sphere of history that is external to political or economic history.⁵ As such, the term gender was utilized as a rhetorical device by the

scholarship, rather than an analytical lens. In turn, she states that this usage of gender by historians results in scholarship that is either descriptive or causal and that lacks nuance.⁶

After addressing the issues within the scholarship, Scott calls upon historians to properly utilize gender as a way of doing historical analysis. She provides a multilayered approach to gender history. For Scott gender can be understood as “a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and...a primary way of 'signifying relationships of power.'”⁷ Gender is then constituted of four main elements, being: cultural symbolism or imagery that evokes multiple representations; normative concepts regarding being male and female (or masculinity and femininity) expressed in social, legal, and political doctrines; an inclusion of political, and social institutions as being relevant into the realm of gender relations; and subjective identity.⁸ The aforementioned elements provide a framework as to how one can understand how gender manifests and its significance.

Scott’s framework for gender history will be the measure by which all the scholarship of “gender” in 1930s will be analyzed. Also, it is important to acknowledge that the spectrum identified for understanding how the scholarship grappled with gender is influenced by Scott. The areas she identifies as faulty analyses of gender history, which constitute the base of the spectrum along with her conception of gender history, are “description” or descriptive history and women’s history.

Before Joan Scott’s (1986) Call

The scholarship produced prior to Scott’s call help contextualize the chronological evolution of how historians utilize gender as a lens for analysis. The scholars that produced works on gender in the 1930s prior to Scott’s call are Tova Yedlin, Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, and Janet S. Schwartz.

In 1977 Yedlin published an article titled “Women in the U.S.S.R.: The Stalin Era.” Yedlin expresses a strong focus on women and women’s roles.⁹ She explores how women are situated within politics, and industry.¹⁰ Also, she explores the relationship between men and women in the workforce.¹¹ Yedlin draws on formalized doctrines to support her positions. She references common pamphlets, and speeches. She utilizes these sources in order to draw inferences about commonly held attitudes and vice versa.¹² Yedlin’s approach can be best categorized as a form of women’s history. While she draws upon the social and political context she isolates women’s roles socially and politically from the broader historical context. Furthermore, her exploration of gender, being men and women, is rudimentary. Men are explored only in so far as they exist in relation to women, rather than being explored as active subjects. As such, even when power relations are explored the gendered analysis lacks nuance.

Following Yedlin, Gail Lapidus published a book titled *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development and Social Change* in 1978. Her work explored the changes in women’s role, especially as relating to female emancipation under Stalin.¹³ While Lapidus’ work was gender specific, focusing on women, it was not gendered history. She employed the lens of “economic development” as a primary method of analysis.¹⁴ Lapidus managed to consider general social phenomena; however, gender was not considered as an actual lens of

analysis. Her work was more or less a form of descriptive history focusing on women. The descriptive nature of her work can be attributed in part to her also being a political scientist. Despite the fact that Lapidus is specialized in “Soviet society,”¹⁵ it is clear that her methodology is different than that of a social historian like Yedlin. Her background may indicate her concern with the relaying of facts in a way that privileges political and economic lenses over that of gender.

Janet S. Schwartz produced the article "Women under Socialism: Role Definitions of Soviet Women." in 1979. Schwartz explores the question of women’s equality in the USSR in ideology versus reality¹⁶ and examines how women fare socially in relation to men.¹⁷ Although women remain the main focus of Schwartz, her analysis of men is incomplete in the sense that they are utilized only so far as they work to show how women fare. Even when she examines men as active subjects in the historical narrative, it is utilized to further explorations of women’s status in society.¹⁸ Essentially, she conducts an analysis rooted in one-sided understandings of gender. However, she accounts for male-female sex role socialization, and the role of ideology and institutions.¹⁹ As such, Schwartz’s work can be considered to be “beyond women's’ history but short of gender history.” Following Scott’s definitional framework, it can be stated that Schwartz builds a foundation for gender analysis by considering ideology, institution, and the correlation between males and females.

The aforementioned works show a spectrum in the understanding of gender-based history prior to Scott’s call. All three works occupy different positions on the gender-history spectrum. This establishes the fact that there is an ongoing conversation in the scholarship regarding how gender is explored. Also, the aforementioned works serve as a point of comparison to the works following Scott’s call.

After Joan Scott’s Call:

Descriptive History Exploring Women

Descriptive history exploring women refers to a type of history wherein information of gender is relayed without an explicit focus on how gender itself structures the historical context explored. This type of history is situated at the beginning of the gender history spectrum. The three scholars whose work can be situated within this category are Thomas G. Schrand, Choi Chatterjee and Amy E. Randall.

Thomas Schrand published two articles examining women’s roles in Soviet Russia in the 1930s. In 1998 he published "True Mistresses of their Homes: Rehabilitating the Housewife for Soviet Civil Defense" which addressed how the role of housewives as a social category shifted due to the regime’s needs.²⁰ Schrand referenced a Marxist framework throughout his work.²¹ This framework is in part due to his desire to consider ideology. However, whilst he actively utilized this framework he failed to provide a gender-based analysis. Schrand references “gender tension” and “gendered assumptions”²² yet he fails to provide any context as to what that means. Gender specific language is present yet it does not serve to develop any analysis. However, his work thoroughly describes the ways in which women's roles shift,²³ as such, situating it as a part of the “descriptive history.”

Schrand's primary article was followed by "Soviet 'Civic-Minded Women' in the 1930s: Gender, Class, and Industrialization in a Socialist Society" in 1999. This article is a study of the *obshchestvennitsky's* ("civic minded women" or "female activist") role in industry in the 1930s.²⁴ This article, like "True Mistresses of their Homes" only considers gender as a secondary concern. The lens of class is utilized thoroughly throughout the article.²⁵ Like Scott's critique of the earlier literature prior to her call, Schrand utilized the word "gender" to describe issues facing women. Also, Schrand references gendered language without exploring the context, meanings, or implications associated with it. He cites the issue of women's "double burden"²⁶ while neglecting to show how it manifests culturally, socially, or politically based on gendered relations. Furthermore, when accessing avenues that can allow for gender analysis, it is not done; however, nuance is applied to the class-based analysis.²⁷ This suggests that the sources utilized by Schrand could have potentially contributed to a gender-based analysis.

Choi Chatterjee published *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910-1939* in 2002. Chapter six, "The public identity of Soviet women", addresses how narratives, symbolism, and imagery used to represent Soviet women shift in the 1930s.²⁸ This type of history shows a shift in the scholarship of "descriptive history" focusing on women. Unlike Schrand, Chatterjee attempts to explore one aspect outlined by Scott, being, symbolism and imagery. Chatterjee's use of symbolism and imagery as a framework is significant as it shows a transition in the way history itself is done. However, beyond utilizing different frameworks, Chatterjee's work has much in common with Schrand. Chatterjee's work could have lent itself to a gender analysis but it was not done. She examines the construction of Soviet heroines in popular culture and states that they challenged a male sphere of influence,²⁹ yet, she fails to expand on how this was done. Also, she attempts to show the difference in the ways in which men and women were portrayed in propaganda,³⁰ however, her work fails to situate this comparison within the larger social or political context. As well as that, her work focuses almost exclusively on women, exploring "Stalinism and the woman question," the proliferation of imagery of women, and the "surrogate family".³¹ Yet, she fails to expand on the implications and consequences of these phenomena. Rather, her work lists or describes history pertaining to women. Interestingly, Chatterjee's areas of focus are cultural studies and gender history.³² This focus on gender history may explain why there was a potential for a gender analysis in her work- although it is also ironic as she was quite far off from doing gender history.

In contrast to Schrand and Chatterjee, Amy E. Randall takes a top down approach in her work. Rather than focusing on women as subjects within the broader context, Randall explores the context and then situates women within. Her article "Legitimizing Soviet Trade: Gender and the Feminization of the Retail Workforce in the Soviet 1930s" was published in 2004. It focuses on how policy and discourse operates and assigns meanings in relation to female retail workers.³³ When discussing Randall it is important to note that she is the first to analyze women in the retail sector in that time period.³⁴ Randall being the first to do so is significant because it dictates, in part, the nature of the history conducted. Randall's work being the first of its' kind necessitates the use of "descriptive history". That is not to say that her work was predetermined to be solely descriptive; however, it just so happens that her work did not go beyond that. Her article explores the feminization of the retail workforce and how the concept of "feminine qualities" was used by the regime.³⁵ However, she does not address the implications or the broader social and political

consequences of this process of feminization. Furthermore, while she employs gendered language to an extent, it is understood through a framework or lens of industrialization.³⁶ This highlights the fact that gender is understood as being a concern with “women” subjects rather than an actual framework to conduct history by.

Evaluating Schrand, Chatterjee, and Randall’s work helps identify common trends or characteristics of descriptive history (exploring women). The aforementioned works reduce gender to an understanding of femaleness and the use of gendered language sans context is common throughout. Schrand employs Marxist frameworks and class-based analysis while Randall uses the framework of industrialization as primary methods of analysis. On the other hand, Chatterjee utilizes what may be categorized as a constructivist approach, focusing on imagery and symbolism as a method of analysis. In all four cases it is clear that gender is examined as a secondary concern.

Women’s History

Women’s history is a type of history that is centred on women’s unique roles within the historical narrative. Women’s history is often considered a reactionary history in so far as it is a field that has emerged as a “reaction” to the omission of a nuanced understanding of women within the general discourse of history. Women’s history surpasses being “descriptive history” on women as it goes beyond description; instead, it focuses on how social and/or political context shapes history. However, women’s history is typically focused solely on women as subjects, rather than exploring gender relations as a whole. The scholars conducting women’s history explored are Wendy Goldman and Thomas Ewing.

Wendy Goldman authored two pieces of work examining the role of women in Soviet Russia in the 1930s. Goldman’s first work was an article published in 1991 titled “A ‘Non-Antagonistic’ Contradiction? The Wage and Unwaged Labor of Soviet Women.” In this article Goldman explores the question of women’s liberation.³⁷ She explores the concept of waged and unwaged labour; comparing women’s wages to that of men’s.³⁸ However, despite the fact that Goldman had a basis for exploring gender relations, it is not undertaken. Goldman’s comparison of women’s wages in relation to men’s only serves to reinforce the positionality of women overall. She partially addresses the social context for the wage gap;³⁹ nevertheless, she does not go beyond exploring how the social context impacts women. Goldman’s strict focus on the role of women, while often undermining the active role of men in shaping the social context, results in her work unsurprisingly being “women’s history.”

In 2002, Goldman published *Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin’s Russia*, a book addressing the role of women. Alike her first publication, this book also remains within the realm of social history.⁴⁰ She explores women’s role in the period of industrialization in the 1930s, focusing on gender-based hierarchies in the workplace.⁴¹ Goldman successfully explores the issue of class in her work when considering women;⁴² yet, she does not explore class when relating to gender. She utilized language and rhetoric implying gendered understanding, yet she only focuses on women devoid of the larger context. She wrote an entire chapter titled “Gender relations in industry” focusing on the obstacles facing women in industry, discrimination, and the existence of a “gender

hierarchy” in factories.⁴³ While Goldman’s work had the potential basis for an exploration of gender relations, the way in which she structured her work only allows for a nuanced explanation of women in industry while failing to produce that same nuance when referencing men. Nonetheless, it is important to note the evolution in Goldman’s work. In contrast to her first article, Goldman’s book at least moves towards a more thorough exploration of men⁴⁴ even if it does not successfully explore gender. While her work shows potential progress is moving towards this call to doing gender history, Goldman’s book can also be seen as regressive. In her introduction, Goldman states that her book is based on new archival material.⁴⁵ Access to new material implies more historical context to work with. Yet, despite the additional material available, her work still does not even create a basis for gender history. The failure to engage with gender history may be attributed in part due to Goldman’s focus on political, social and women’s history.⁴⁶ The type of history undertaken by Goldman predetermines what she explores and how she does it.

Thomas Ewing, a historian with a focus in public, women, and gender history, published an article in 2004 titled "A Stalinist Celebrity Teacher: Gender, Professional, and Political Identities in Soviet Culture of the 1930s." He explores the cases of women celebrity teachers, especially the case of Olga Fedorovna Leonova.⁴⁷ Right away, this shows a preoccupation with women as the sole focus on his work. In fact, he does not even explore the role of men in relation to women. He explores concepts such as the role formation of the “mother-teacher” and the “woman-teacher.”⁴⁸ His use of “gender” is synonymous with woman- following in line with Scott’s critique of historians of women’s history. For Ewing, gender is understood through the lens of women’s appearance and respectability politics undertaken in the role formation of women as teachers.⁴⁹ Ewing’s work seems to suggest that he utilizes a constructivist approach to understanding women. While he does explore how women’s roles as teachers fit into a “general culture,”⁵⁰ the focus remains on the women’s roles as teachers rather than gender itself. As such, it can be stated that Ewing’s work is women’s history. He explores the positions and roles that women occupied in the 1930s. His exploration of gender does not go beyond how the gender of teachers impacted their treatment in society.

Goldman and Ewing employ different approaches to understanding the role of women in Soviet Russia in the 1930s. However, the commonality among all three works explored is the narrow focus on women in history—either completely devoid of the exploration of the role of men, or devoid of a nuanced exploration of the role of men. The lack of engagement with a more holistic understanding of gender, being of men and women, can then be viewed as being a characteristic of women’s history.

Beyond Women’s History but Short of Gender History

Some of the historical scholarship produced does not fit neatly along a gender history spectrum. The category of “beyond women’s history but short of gender history” is one way to group scholarship that borders along multiple distinct categories. This category includes work that surpasses the aforementioned characteristics recognized for women’s history, yet, falls short of what Scott defines as being “gender history.” The scholars who undertake

work categorized as being within this category are Victoria E. Bonnell, Susan E. Reid, and Rebecca Balmas Neary.

In 1993 Victoria Bonnell published an article titled “The Peasant Woman in Stalinist Political Art of the 1930s” where she focused on the symbolism in posters of peasant women in the 1930s.⁵¹ Bonnell analyzed posters on the basis of the prominence of women, the subjecthood of women in posters, the roles women were represented in, and the way in which women were represented.⁵² Bonnell explores imagery and symbolism, a key component of gender history as defined by Scott. However, her analysis is largely focused on women.⁵³ Her exploration of men is pre-defined, as she only explores men in posters when they show women as being “subordinate” in relation.⁵⁴ As such, all her exploration of imagery and symbolism can be understood as being rooted in women’s history. However, Bonnell’s work also bordered on gender history in other regards. She explicitly notes the fact that posters were created by men more often than not.⁵⁵ By referencing the production of posters and subjecthood, Bonnell ties the specific imagery and symbolism to a larger cultural context rooted in gender. Yet, despite having this basis for gender history, she does not further develop this idea. Bonnell also grapples with the difference in state response to men and women resisting collectivization.⁵⁶ An examination of the larger social context and the differential treatment men and women received could have served as a basis for gender analysis; however, she failed to further develop this section. Also, she notes the emergence of a “new image of the female peasant” as being complex and multilayered.⁵⁷ Yet, her examination of the imagery of the female peasant more so delves into ideology, rather than gender. Furthermore, throughout her entire work it is clear that the primary focus of her work is women. Nevertheless, Bonnell’s work does create a basis for gender history—even if it is not achieved. As such, her work goes beyond “women’s history” but falls short of “gender history.”

Like Bonnell, Susan E. Reid also explores the role of women in Soviet art. In 1998 she published “All Stalin’s women: Gender and power in Soviet art of the 1930s.” Reid examines how women were represented in Soviet art during the second and third Five-Year Plans.⁵⁸ Reid cites previous scholarship, mainly Gail Lapidus and Victoria Bonnell.⁵⁹ Citing Bonnell is logical as they study the same realm of history, and conduct the same types of history. However, using Lapidus is interesting as it shows how “descriptive history” can be utilized to further develop more nuanced understandings that are further along in the gender-history spectrum. Reid analyzes the representation of women through the frameworks of “conventional gender codes and hierarchies,” subordination, and the state.⁶⁰ The frameworks utilized adhere to the frameworks proposed by Scott regarding gender history. However, Reid’s focus is mostly on women in art—although she does discuss the role of men.⁶¹ Also, she does not delve into the larger social or political significance of the art itself. Rather, her approach is based upon situating the art within the larger social and political cultures. One way by which she could have undertaken a gender-based analysis in her work is by furthering developing her argument regarding the role of women as content creators. She explores women’s marginalization as content creators in art;⁶² however, she does not situate this information within the larger context. As such, her argument bears no significance in relaying an understanding based on gender; rather, it just details factual information. Since her work is primarily focused on women then it can be understood as a women’s history. Yet, her work moves beyond women’s history. She makes many attempts

at gender history- though unsuccessfully. For this reason Reid's work can be categorized as being beyond women's history but short of gender history.

Following Reid's work, Rebecca Balmas Neary published an article in 1999 titled "Mothering Socialist Society: The Wife-Activists' Movement and the Soviet Culture of Daily Life." Neary's work follows a completely different framework. Neary's focus is political which may be why her work does not adhere to the same format as the aforementioned articles. She explores the *obshchestvennitsa* movement or wife-activist movement, arguing that it served as an attempt to reinforce gender roles into daily culture.⁶³ Her approach was constructivist as it emphasized how the movement shaped daily life both socially and politically.⁶⁴ Neary explored the role of the wife-activists as biological, and social mothers.⁶⁵ Her approach showed how gender roles are transferred from a small scale in homes to a mass scale into industry. For example, she discussed the idea of having "meal preparation" at home become transitioned into cafeteria checks at factories.⁶⁶ Furthermore, she explored how the idea of "maternal" focus in the *obshchestvennitsa* movement is not exclusive to Soviet Russia.⁶⁷ Focusing on the generality of the maternal focus is important as it goes it highlights the process of the construction of gender roles. Although it is not explicitly mentioned, by focusing on the globality of "maternity" Neary brings the Soviet understanding of women's gender roles into a larger historical conversation. Neary's exploration of gender roles, although rudimentary, establishes a foundation for gender analysis. However, her focus is strictly on women, meaning that her understanding of gender is not comprehensive- as outlined by Scott. As such, Neary's work is beyond that of women's history but short of gender history.

Bonnell, Reid, and Neary's work all portrayed similar identifiable characteristics of this category of history. All three scholars choose to primarily focus on women. As a result, their works end up being within the realm of women's history. Without a conscious effort at exploring the roles of men in a nuanced way these works cannot fully transcend "women's history." Also, although all these works show a basis for gender history, it is incomplete. The incomplete nature of these works may be in part due to the fact that there is no nuanced understanding of men's roles included.

Beyond Men's History but Short of Gender History

Similarly to the aforementioned category of history, "beyond men's history but short of gender history" also does not fall within a clearly distinct category along the gender history spectrum. This category is unique in the sense that there really is no field clearly delineated as being "men's" history. However, the same methodology applies. In this case, "men's history" will refer to history focused exclusively on men. This category will then refer to history that is beyond men's history but falls short of gender history. The two scholars that have contributed to this area of history are Lilya Kaganosky and Thomas Ewing.

In 2008 Lilya Kagaonsky published *How the Soviet Man was Unmade: Cultural Fantasies and Male Subjectivity under Stalin*. Kaganosky employs the use of body politics to understand the larger social and political context. She utilized the lens of heteronormativity, deviance, patriarchy, psychoanalysis, Freudian analysis, and theories of sexualities⁶⁸ in order to draw meaning to her findings when connecting it to the larger social context. Kaganosky

discusses the concepts of “classical masculinity” and “female masculinity” within Stalinist culture.⁶⁹ The differentiation in masculinities serves as a basis for gender history. If developed further, and in a more explicit manner, it may have been the case that Kaganosky’s work could have been considered as “gender history—” even without the consideration of women themselves. However, this was not done; as such, Kaganosky’s work is beyond “men’s history” yet short of gender history.

Following Kaganosky, Thomas Ewing authored an article titled “‘If the Teacher were a Man’: Masculinity and Power in Stalinist Schools” in 2009. Ewing’s work explores the experiences and identities of male teacher in 1930s.⁷⁰ He undertakes a constructivist approach, analyzing the ways in which authority and power help create gender identities.⁷¹ Interestingly, Ewing states that “gender has meaning even where female actors cannot be found.”⁷² Ewing’s statement is significant as it shows that he understands gender as being a correlation between men and women or masculinity and the femininity- falling in line with Scott’s conceptualization of gender. Also, the aforementioned statement highlights Ewing’s view that gender history can be conducted without the presence of female actors. However, the latter statement does not fall in line with Scott’s definition of gender history. Interestingly, Ewing repeatedly points out that teaching is a profession categorized as “women’s work.”⁷³ This point on the gendering of work could have been utilized as a basis for a gender analysis yet it was not. Ewing discusses “male power and privilege” based on “gendered expectations” and “gendered interests.”⁷⁴ Yet, there is no mention as to how this power and privilege arises or wherein these gendered expectations or interests originate. The lack of context provided may be in part due to the omission of women from the discussion on gender. Also, Ewing examines how power is gendered based upon political structures and social imagery, while male bodies were simultaneously vulnerable.⁷⁵ The examination of masculinity and men serves as a basis for gender history. However, the explicit omission of femininity and women undermines this basis. The strict focus on men places Ewing’s work within “men’s history;” yet, the basis for gender discussed above furthers his work along the gender history spectrum, placing it somewhere beyond men’s history but short of gender history.

Gender History

Gender history marks the final category on the spectrum introduced for the purpose of this paper. It outlines Joan Scott’s definition and framework for conducting a gender analysis within the field of history. The definition relies upon an understanding of gender itself as being a relationship between the sexes. The framework proposed suggests an exploration of symbolism and imagery, normative ideals regarding masculinity and femininity and/or men and women, an analysis of the social and political institutions, and a focus on subjective identity. The two Scholars that have answered Scott’s call are Thomas Schrand and Zhanna Chernova.

Thomas Schrand published a chapter titled “Socialism in one gender: masculine values in the Stalin revolution” in *Russian masculinities in history and culture* in 2002. In this chapter he explores how the introduction of women into the workforce affects men and masculinity.⁷⁶ This is consistent with Scott’s understanding of gender a relationship between

men and women and/or masculinity or femininity. Although his focus is on men, he provided a nuanced understanding of the roles of women,⁷⁷ and how these roles shape the roles of men in turn. In his words, gender is to be understood as an equation wherein change in one side directly affects the other.⁷⁸ Schrand examines the ways in which ideology impacts gender politically and socially.⁷⁹ Schrand's examination is consistent with Scott's call to examine the role of political and social institutions in shaping gender. Furthermore, he also explores gender identity, gender norms, and imagery in his work.⁸⁰ He examines androgyny as being "an impulse to erase the feminine" and deconstructs its role in eliminating the "women's question."⁸¹ This examination is significant as it shows how Schrand navigates the spaces existing within the gender spectrum. Also, it shows a consideration of how masculinity and femininity is reproduced in all normative, social, and political arenas. His analysis of androgyny as a response to femininity and masculinity in public culture shows a critical engagement with gender. Furthermore, he illustrates how the personal and public are gendered. He shows that gender hierarchies are reproduced through the reenactment of gender roles.⁸² As well as that, he successfully establishes a bilinear correlation between how culture shapes gender and vice versa. Schrand illustrates this connection in his exploration of the symbolic role of Stalin as a father figure as a response to the social issue of absent fathers and women's double burden.⁸³ He also articulates the ways in which gender manifests in everyday activities. He explores this through the cases of how hyper masculinity manifests in drinking and sexual behaviour.⁸⁴ As well as that, he further explores how male hegemony was constructed in response to militaristic threat.⁸⁵ His exploration of male hegemony connects gender behaviour and identity to the larger social and political context, highlighting how gender is constructed and reenacted throughout the 1930s.

Schrand's chapter is consistent with Scott's understanding of gender history. Yet, it is important to note that Schrand had previously published two other works in 1998 and 1999 that were categorized as "descriptive history focusing on women." This shows a potential evolution in Schrand's work over time. However, it does not seem to be the case that Schrand's work was a result of newfound material;⁸⁶ meaning that the groundwork for gender history was always available for historians to utilize. However, the fact that Schrand's work is published in a book that operationalizes gender may have contributed to the refinement of his framework.⁸⁷ Overall, it is not wholly clear as to why only some of Schrand's work was successful as gender history, while the remainder of work his failed to do so.

Following Schrand, the second scholar that correctly does gender history, as defined by Scott, is Zhanna Chernova. Like Schrand, Chernova's work is focused on masculinity. In 2012 she published her article "The Model of 'Soviet' Fatherhood" exploring Soviet hegemonic masculinity, traditional gender roles, and the process of men's self-actualization in the public arena.⁸⁸ Chernova examines the reproduction of masculinity in social and political realms and the policing of gender norms through the lenses of social acceptability, deviance, and the state.⁸⁹ Chernova's framework adheres to Scott's proposed framework of gender history. The framework produced critically examines gender itself, as well as situating gender within the larger social and political context. While Chernova's work focuses on masculinity, she does not omit women and femininity from the discussion. She examines what she coins as the "gender triangle:" how the state, men, and women shape

Soviet fatherhood.⁹⁰ While Chernova’s gender analysis is not as nuanced as Schrand’s, she still employs the framework successfully.

Conclusion

When examining the aforementioned categories on the gender history spectrum it is important to note the scholars’ backgrounds. As explored above, scholars have backgrounds in many different kinds of histories. The question at hand is whether certain types of historical backgrounds are better suited to produce a gender history. Comparing social and political history there is no clear pattern suggesting that either type of history is better suited to conduct gender history. Works by social historians fall under various categories within the gender history spectrum. While Schrand’s work mostly falls under the label of political history, the type of history he explores does not seem to affect whether or not his work is more suited to conducting gender history. Schrand’s earlier work, “True mistresses of their homes” and “Soviet ‘Civic minded’ women” were also political histories; however, they were aligned with “descriptive histories regarding women” on the gender history spectrum. This indicates that there is no inherent correlation between political history and gender history.

The two main patterns observed are: that works focusing on “women’s history” generally tended to fall within that category or “beyond women’s history” and that historians with a focus in “gender history” did not end up doing gender history. For example, Choi Chatterjee’s focus is cultural and gender history; yet, her work was truly descriptive history in essence. This discrepancy suggests that historians, like Chatterjee, diffuse the meaning of gender; using the word gender as a substitute for “women.”

Interestingly, it appears that the basis for gender history is present all throughout the scholarship. Even prior to Joan Scott’s call to gender history, there were multiple ways in which historians engaged with the question of gender history. However, there is no clear answer as to why so few historians undertake actual gender history. Perhaps women’s history as a field contributes to a reductionist understanding of gender. Or it may be the case that the persistent understanding of gender as a dichotomy undermines gender history, although Schrand utilizes this dichotomy to explore the role of androgyny and other gender nonconforming identities. Nonetheless, the fact remains that 30 years post Scott’s call there is still an ongoing debate in the scholarship.

NOTES

¹ Note that the spectrum also included “descriptive history exploring men” and “men’s history” for the sake of balance but none of the works explored fell into these categories.

² For reference see Sheila Fitzpatrick’s “Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary life in extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s”. This source explores the gendered issue of the wife-activist movement

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in the 1930s but it is labelled under the “family”. As such, it is explored exclusively through the lens of the “family” which is out of scope.

³ There are some works that exclusively focus on gender in rural Soviet Russia, however, there are not enough sources all around to make this kind of comparison. The only two sources exclusively focusing on this rural gender divide in 1930s are Bonnell (1993) “The Peasant Woman in Stalinist Political Art of the 1930s” and Buckley (2001), “The soviet ‘wife-activist’ down on the farm”. Bonnell’s work will be utilized in this paper, however the focus will not be on how it views gender in rural settings, rather, how gender is explored as a whole.

⁴ Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986), 1056.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1054-5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1055-6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1067.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1067-8.

⁹ Tova Yedlin. "Women in the U.S.S.R.: The Stalin Era." *Atlantis: Critical Studies In Gender, Culture & Social Justice / Études Critiques Sur Le Genre, La Culture, Et La Justice* 3 no. 1 (September 1977): 22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24; 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹² See Yedlin, 29-30 on Stalin and the cultural environment. Specifically, the statement that "there are three things no woman can do: understand Marx, play chess and fold a newspaper" and how Stalin was brought up into a time where women were commonly regarded as being subordinate to men.

¹³ Gail Warshofsky Lapidus. *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development and Social Change*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 95-96.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Janet S. Schwartz. "Women under Socialism: Role Definitions of Soviet Women." *Social Forces* 58, no. 1 (September 1979): 67.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 82. Schwartz explores the question of whether there was a change in men’s role but only as relating to women’s involvement in private and public spheres.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 68; 71.

²⁰ Thomas G. Schrand. "True Mistresses of their Homes: Rehabilitating the Housewife for Soviet Civil Defense." *Soviet & Post-Soviet Review* 25, no. 1 (April 1998): 31-2.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 32; 36.

²³ See Schrand, 32 on how the Bolshevik party addressed women in the 1930s for reference.

²⁴ Thomas G. Schrand, "Soviet ‘Civic-Minded Women’ in the 1930s: Gender, Class, and Industrialization in a Socialist," *Journal Of Women's History* 11, no. 3 (September 1999): 127.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 128.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 130.

²⁷ Schrand discusses “cultural hegemony” and applies the analytical lens of class (p.139). Based on Scott’s framework this could have also been analyzed from a gender based lens yet this was not done. This may be in part due to a different framework being employed to mean “gender”; being, gender as just exploring men or women’s issue.

²⁸ Choi Chatterjee. *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910-1939* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002): 135.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 147.

- ³¹ Ibid., 139; 141; 147.
- ³² As stated in Melanie Ilic, *Women in the Stalin Era*, (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2001), ix.
- ³³ Amy E. Randall, "Legitimizing Soviet Trade: Gender and the Feminization of the Retail Workforce in the Soviet 1930s," *Journal Of Social History* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 965.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 966.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 970.
- ³⁷ Wendy Z. Goldman. "A "Non-Antagonistic" Contradiction? The Wage and Unwaged Labor of Soviet Women." *Gender & History* 3, no. 3 (November 1991): 338.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 338; 340.
- ³⁹ Goldman, 340. See section on “housework and childrearing”.
- ⁴⁰ In Goldman’s “A ‘Non-Antagonistic’ Contradiction” most of her sources are from “soviet sociology” (344). In her book “Women at the Gates”, she is identified as being a social historian (see intro page 1). Also, it is noted that “Women at the Gates” is the first social history of Soviet women in the 1930s (see intro page 1).
- ⁴¹ Wendy Z. Goldman, and Inc Ebrary. *Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin's Russia*. (Cambridge, UK and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.
- ⁴² Goldman and Ebrary *Women at the Gates*, 51-56; 88. See chapter on “The Struggle over working-class feminism”, and section on how women fit into the larger picture of the “new working class”.
- ⁴³ Goldman and Ebrary, *Women at the Gates*, 207; 212-19.
- ⁴⁴ In Goldman and Ebrary’s *Women at the Gates*, 225-6, they explore “[g]ender segregation and conflict”, examining how men and women viewed policy. While this does not produce any analysis of gender itself, it does show a more balanced approach in considering men and women in comparison to Goldman’s article “A Non-Antagonistic Contradiction”.
- ⁴⁵ Goldman and Ebrary, *Women at the Gates*, 1.
- ⁴⁶ Ilic, *Women in the Stalin Era*, ix.
- ⁴⁷ Thomas Ewing, "A Stalinist Celebrity Teacher: Gender, Professional, and Political Identities in Soviet Culture of the 1930s," *Journal of Women's History* 16, no. 4 (2004): 92.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 97-103.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 93.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 92.
- ⁵¹ Victoria E. Bonnell, “The Peasant Woman in Stalinist Political Art of the 1930s,” *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 1 (1993): 58.
- ⁵² Ibid., 59, 63.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 59. In her guidelines two out of the three conditions focus on posters exclusively showing women. She considers posters with men within her framework when these posters show women as being subordinate to men.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 59.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 65.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 66.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 67.
- ⁵⁸ Susan E. Reid. "All Stalin's women: Gender and power in Soviet art of the 1930s." *Slavic Review* 57, no. 1, (Spring 1998): 133.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 135-6.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 133, 135.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 138; 148.
- ⁶² Ibid., 158.
- ⁶³ Rebecca Balmas Neary, "Mothering Socialist Society: The Wife-Activists' Movement and the Soviet Culture of Daily Life," *Russian Review* 58, no. 3 (July 1999): 396-7.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 397.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 399; 401.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 399.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 400.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 3; 7-9; 14.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 8; 154.

⁷⁰ Thomas Ewing. "If the Teacher were a Man': Masculinity and Power in Stalinist Schools." *Gender & History* 21, no. 1(2009), 108.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 107.

⁷³ Ibid., 108; 110.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 108-9; 118-9.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 109.

⁷⁶ Thomas G. Schrand, "Socialism in One Gender: Masculine Values in the Stalin Revolution," in *Russian masculinities in history and culture*, ed. Barbara Evans Clements, Rebecca Friedman, and Dan Healey. (Palgrave MacMillan UK, 2002), 194.

⁷⁷ Ibid. See how he links women's double burden to the elevation in status of men.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 194.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 195.

⁸⁰ See Schrand, 201-203 on the masculinization of "Skills" in industry, gender hierarchies, the gendered imagery of the wife-movement, and the symbolic role of Stalin as a father figure.

⁸¹ Ibid., 196.

⁸² Ibid., 201-2 on the wife-movement.

⁸³ Ibid., 203.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ He cites Lapidus "Women in soviet society: equality, development, and social change" (1978), Bonnell's "The peasant woman in stalinist political art of the 1930s," and other works exploring gender in the 1920s (In Schrand "Socialism in One Gender", 206-9). Also, it is mentioned that an earlier version of this essay was presented in 1997 (In Schrand "Socialism in One Gender", 206).

⁸⁷ In *Russian masculinities in history and culture*, the book Schrand's chapter is in, Barbara Clements operationalizes gender. She conceptualizes gender as being a "relational concept" between masculinity and femininity (men and women). Also, she states that gender is socially constructed in the economy, the home and through sexuality and gender norms (see page 3).

⁸⁸ Zhanna Chernova, "The Model of "Soviet" Fatherhood," *Russian Studies In History* 51, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 38.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 38-40.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 43.