

# Agrarian Reform, Gender and Land Rights in Uzbekistan

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## Glossary of Terms

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>adyr arazi</b>            | non-irrigated land   |
| <b>agarot</b>                | plot adjoining house (Russian)                                   |
| <b>arenda</b>                | lease (Russian)  |
| <b>chek</b>                  | land plot for house  |
| <b>dekhhan</b>               | smallholder  |
| <b>dekret</b>                | maternity benefit  |
| <b>devzire</b>               | variety of rice  |
| <b>doppa</b>                 | traditional men's hats   |
| <b>gap</b>                   | women's rotating get-together, which also acts as a savings club |
| <b>hokim</b>                 | governor of province   |
| <b>hokimiyat</b>             | governorate  |
| <b>ish hakki</b>             | remuneration for work  |
| <b>kolkhoz, pl. kolkhozy</b> | collective farm (Russian)  |
| <b>mahalla</b>               | neighbourhood  |
| <b>mardigor</b>              | casual labourer ( <i>yallama</i> in Khorezm)                     |
| <b>mihnat shartnamesi</b>    | labour contract  |
| <b>nikoh</b>                 | Muslim marriage  |
| <b>oblast</b>                | province (Russian, <i>viloyat</i> in Uzbek)                      |
| <b>oila pudrati</b>          | family leasehold ( <i>arenda</i> in Russian)                     |
| <b>oila pudratchisi</b>      | family leaseholder   |
| <b>orakchi</b>               | labourer harvesting with scythe                                  |
| <b>pudrat</b>                | lease  |
| <b>selsovyet</b>             | rural administrative unit  |
| <b>shalpaye</b>              | paddy field  |
| <b>shartname</b>             | contract   |
| <b>shirkat</b>               | joint-stock company (former collective enterprise)               |
| <b>shirkat uyushmasi</b>     | association of shirkats  |
| <b>sotik, pl. sotka</b>      | one hundredth of a hectare                                       |
| <b>sovkhоз, pl. sovkhozy</b> | state farm (Russian)   |
| <b>sum</b>                   | Uzbek currency   |
| <b>talaq</b>                 | Muslim divorce   |
| <b>tamorka</b>               | private subsidiary plot  |
| <b>yagona</b>                | weeding of cotton  |

## **Acronyms**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>EESU</b>   | EUI/Essex survey in Uzbekistan  |
| <b>EUI</b>    | European University Institute   |
| <b>FAP</b>    | feldsher and midwife unit   |
| <b>FSU</b>    | former Soviet Union   |
| <b>GDP</b>    | gross domestic product  |
| <b>JSC</b>    | joint-stock company   |
| <b>MTP</b>    | machine-tractor park  |
| <b>SVA</b>    | rural ambulatory medical unit   |
| <b>TACIS</b>  | Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States, European Commission |
| <b>UNRISD</b> | United Nations Research Institute for Social Development                            |
| <b>UPK</b>    | Uchebnii Proevotsvini Kombinat (vocational school in Eski Kishlak)                  |
| <b>USSR</b>   | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics   |
| <b>ZAGs</b>   | civil registry office   |

## **Summary/Résumé/Resumen**

### **Summary**

This monograph, based on fieldwork carried out in the provinces of Andijan and Khorezm between 2000–2001, analyses the gender-differentiated outcomes of post-Soviet agrarian reforms in Uzbekistan. The first section situates the agrarian reform process in the context of the political economy of Uzbekistan, a country where cotton production for export accounts for a substantial proportion of gross domestic product (GDP), foreign exchange receipts and employment. The crisis in public finance following the break-up of the Soviet Union prompted a dual process of demonetization and reagrarianization in rural Uzbekistan, increasing reliance on household and subsidiary plots for self-subsistence and on off-farm and non-farm informal activities significantly. The simultaneous objectives of maintaining cotton export revenues and of providing a basic level of self-subsistence for rural workers acted to consolidate the division between a stagnating smallholder sector and the export sector, the two being mutually dependent upon one another. This study shows how a focus on gender can shed light on the nature and mechanisms of this mutual dependency.

The second section uses enterprise-level data to illustrate two pathways of farm restructuring. The shift from collective farms to joint-stock shareholding companies (*shirkats*) has resulted in a process of labour retrenchment that has affected women significantly. The liquidation of collective farms in favour of independent farms organized as Farmers' Associations has consolidated farm management as a male occupation. While the actual labour input of women into farming activities on household plots, private subsidiary plots and in cotton production has remained extremely high, they are increasingly incorporated into the workforce either as unpaid family labourers or as casual labourers earning piece-wage rates.

The final section analyses changing livelihood options for rural women. Non-agricultural occupations in health, education and rural industry were major casualties of the post-Soviet recession. Precarious forms of self-employment in informal trade and services remain the only avenues for alternative income-generation for many. However, there are increasing pressures on these occupational niches due to an oversupply of unemployed, low-skilled women, giving this type of diversification an involutionary character. The decline in women's opportunities for gainful employment is accompanied by an "informalization" of the marriage contract. The official registration of marriage and divorce are seen as costly obligations that can easily be dispensed with in favour of the *nikoh* and *talaq* (Islamic marriage and divorce). Although there have been no legal changes sanctioning polygamy or unilateral divorce, these may become widespread in practice. At present, the representation of landless or poor rural women's organized interests seems a remote possibility in a context where neither civil society organizations, such as NGOs, nor professional associations or political parties have any significant presence.

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## Résumé

Deniz Kandiyoti analyse ici les résultats, différenciés par sexe, des réformes agraires post-soviétiques en Ouzbékistan. Son étude se fonde sur des travaux de terrain réalisés dans les provinces d'Andijan et du Khârezm entre 2000 et 2001.

Dans la première section, elle situe le processus de réforme agraire dans le contexte de l'économie politique de l'Ouzbékistan, où la production de coton destinée à l'exportation représente une part non négligeable du produit intérieur brut (PIB), des recettes en devises et des emplois. Suite à l'éclatement de l'Union soviétique, une crise des finances publiques provoqua dans les campagnes un double processus de démonétisation et de retour à l'agriculture. Ceci accrut sensiblement l'importance portée aux parcelles de terre familiales et aux terres subsidiaires pour l'autosubsistance, ainsi qu'aux activités informelles non agricoles ou extra-agricoles. En voulant à la fois maintenir les recettes d'exportation provenant de la culture du coton et garantir aux travailleurs ruraux un niveau minimal d'autosubsistance, les décideurs ont accentué la division entre le secteur des petits exploitants, en pleine stagnation, et le secteur des exportations; tous deux dépendant l'un de l'autre. Dans cette étude, Deniz Kandiyoti montre comment une approche différenciée selon le sexe peut éclairer la nature et les modes de fonctionnement de cette dépendance mutuelle.

Dans sa deuxième section, l'auteur se sert des données recueillies au niveau des entreprises pour illustrer le processus de restructuration des exploitations agricoles. La conversion des fermes collectives en sociétés par actions (*shirkats*) a entraîné des compressions de personnel qui ont touché majoritairement les femmes. La liquidation des fermes collectives et leur remplacement par des fermes indépendantes, organisées en associations d'exploitants agricoles, ont renforcé la place des hommes dans l'exploitation agricole. De plus, si le travail des femmes compte toujours pour une grande part dans la culture des parcelles de terre familiales, des terres subsidiaires privées et la production de coton, elles le fournissent de plus en plus en qualité de travailleuses familiales non rémunérées ou de journalières payées à la pièce.

Enfin, l'auteur analyse l'évolution des moyens d'existence qui s'offrent aux femmes en zones rurales. Les emplois non agricoles dans les secteurs de la santé et l'éducation et dans les industries rurales ont beaucoup souffert de la récession post-soviétique. En dehors de l'agriculture, les seuls autres moyens qu'ont beaucoup de femmes de gagner leur vie sont des formes précaires de travail indépendant dans le commerce et les services du secteur informel. Cependant, ces créneaux professionnels sont de plus en plus saturés à cause du surplus de femmes peu qualifiées et sans emploi, donnant à ce type de diversification un caractère involutif. L'amenuisement des possibilités d'emplois lucratifs pour les femmes s'accompagne d'une autre tendance: le contrat de mariage perd de plus en plus son caractère officiel. L'enregistrement officiel du mariage et du divorce est considéré comme une obligation coûteuse à laquelle on peut aisément échapper en optant pour le mariage et le divorce islamiques (*nikoh* et *talaq*). C'est ce que font de plus en plus de gens, bien que la loi sanctionnant la polygamie ou le divorce unilatéral n'ait pas changé. A l'heure actuelle, il semble peu probable que les femmes pauvres ou sans terre en zones rurales réussissent à s'organiser pour défendre leurs intérêts

dans un pays où les associations professionnelles, les partis politiques et les organisations de la société civile telles que les ONG manquent encore de présence.

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### **Resumen**

En este documento, Deniz Kandiyoti analiza los resultados diferenciados desde la perspectiva de género de las reformas agrarias postsoviéticas en Uzbekistán. Su estudio se basa en el trabajo de campo realizado en las provincias de Andijan y Khorezm entre 2000 y 2001.

En la primera sección, Kandiyoti sitúa el proceso de reforma agraria en el marco de la economía política de Uzbekistán, país donde la producción de algodón destinada a la exportación representa un porcentaje considerable del producto interno bruto (PIB), los ingresos en divisas y el empleo. Tras la desintegración de la Unión Soviética, las finanzas públicas experimentaron una crisis que dio lugar a un doble proceso de desmonetización y de reagrarización en el sector rural de Uzbekistán, que aumentó considerablemente la dependencia de los terrenos domésticos y secundarios para la autosubsistencia, y de las actividades informales no agrícolas y ajena a la agricultura. Los objetivos simultáneos de mantener los ingresos procedentes de la exportación de algodón y de facilitar un nivel básico de subsistencia a los trabajadores rurales consolidaron la división entre un sector estancado de pequeños agricultores y el sector de la exportación, dependientes el uno del otro. En este estudio, Kandiyoti muestra cómo la distinción por género como tema central de estudio, puede ayudar a comprender la naturaleza y los mecanismos de esta dependencia mutua.

En la segunda sección, la autora maneja datos de empresas para ilustrar el proceso de la reestructuración agrícola. El cambio de granjas colectivas a sociedades por acciones (*shirkats*) se ha traducido en una disminución de la fuerza de trabajo que ha afectado considerablemente a las mujeres. La liquidación de granjas colectivas en beneficio de granjas independientes, organizadas como Asociaciones de Granjeros, ha consolidado la gestión agrícola como un trabajo concebido para hombres. Además, si bien el rendimiento laboral de las mujeres en los

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