

GENDER

COD/SOC 574
Applied Rural Sociology
Class Discussion

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Rural Women: New Roles for the New Century?

- **Research show less changes in rural women's actual work and activity over the last century and 21st century**
- **Traditional occupations and positions**
 - Household and workplace
 - Family and community
 - Domestic and public

Little changes in positions

They occupied positions in:

- Mining
- Farm operators
- Union organizers
- Agricultural scientists

Changes

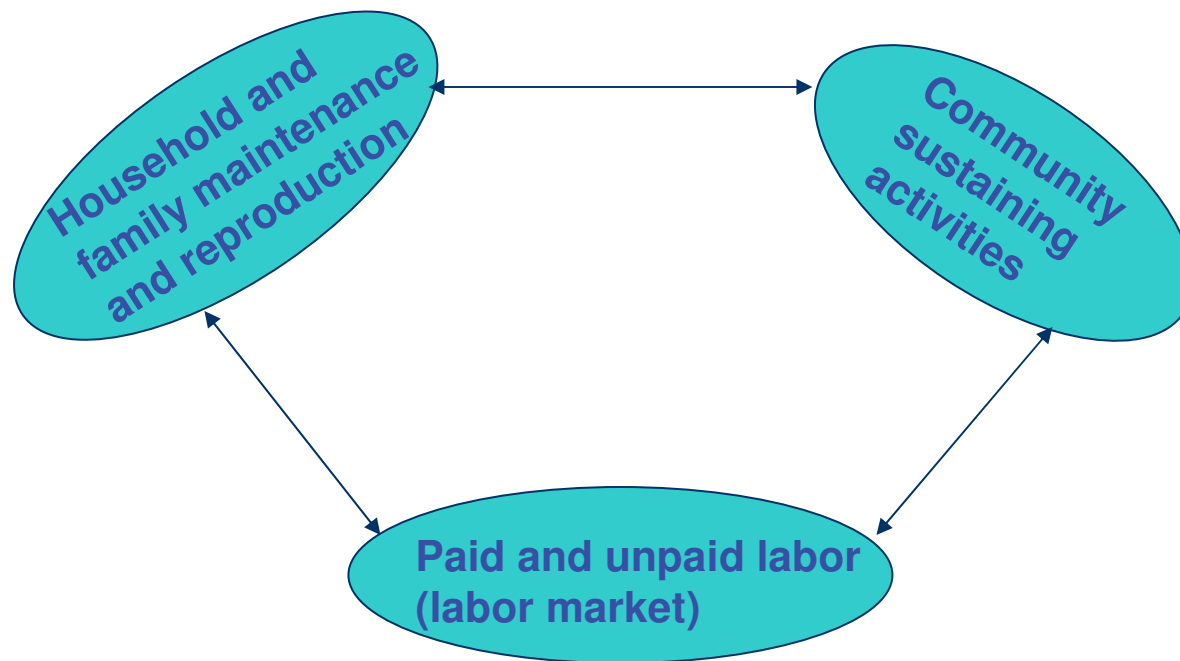
- *Economic changes*
 - Rural women's entry in paid labor force
- *Social-demographic changes:*
 - Family restructured:
 - Single Households
 - Single-parent households
- *Political changes*
 - Activism
 - But lagging behind

Dilemmas: Choice between the old and the new roles

- Household and family maintenance and reproduction
- Community-sustaining activities
- Paid and unpaid labor (labor market)

Dilemmas: Choice between the old and the new roles

Triple dilemma



Consequences:

- Demands on time
- The pressure of choices
- Are they really choices?
- Or additional roles?

Similarities in rural communities, by Region

- Economic constrains
- Economic adaptive mechanisms for Survival
- Attachment to family, community and land/home

Region	Dilemmas			Emotional attachment and commitment to
	Activity decline	Constraint	Adaptive mechanism	
Appalachia	Coal mining	Job loss & layoffs	Creation of home-based jobs	Family Community Land
Pacific Northwest	Logging industry	Decline in timber supply Pressure from environmentalists	Integration of outside employment into home routine	Family Community Land
Midwest	Farming	Debt Loss of land	Reduction of family consumption Off-farm employments	Family Community Land

Diversity in rural communities: Race and ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity/ Class	Constraints	Emotional & strong loyalty	
African American women	Race hierarchy => limited to worst low-wage sector jobs	To: Family Community Land	Discourage migration to better opportunities
Latino women	Manual labor in agriculture	Tied to rural lands for survival	Emotional distress

Questions for discussion

1. What is gender?
2. What attitudes do you have toward the concept of gender?
3. What the following saying means: “Behind a successful man, there is a successful woman”?
4. What were traditional gender-based roles in rural communities and how are they divided in modern rural communities?
5. What are the factors that influenced change of rural women roles?
6. How is household labor measured and what is its contribution to the economic growth? (community, region, and national)
7. Compare rural and metropolitan women’s roles.