GENDER

COD/SOC 574
Applied Rural Sociology
Class Discussion

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Rural Women: New Roles for the New Century?

- Research shows less change 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

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

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Dilemmas</th>
<th>Emotional attachment and commitment to</th>
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<td>Activity decline</td>
<td>Constraint</td>
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<td>Adaptive mechanism</td>
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<td>Appalachia</td>
<td>Coal mining</td>
<td>Job loss &amp; layoffs</td>
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<td>Creation of home-based jobs</td>
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<td>Pacific Northwest</td>
<td>Logging industry</td>
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<td>Pressure from environmentalists</td>
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<td>Integration of outside employment into home routine</td>
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<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Farming</td>
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<td>Reduction of family consumption</td>
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<td>Off-farm employments</td>
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Diversity in rural communities: Race and ethnicity

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<th>Race/Ethnicity/Class</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>Emotional &amp; strong loyalty</th>
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<td>African American women</td>
<td>Race hierarchy =&gt; limited to worst low-wage sector jobs</td>
<td>To: Family Community Land</td>
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<td>Latino women</td>
<td>Manual labor in agriculture</td>
<td>Tied to rural lands for survival</td>
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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.