

Gender, Violence and Social Resources in Rural Producers' Economic Decisions  
and Integration in the Market

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**Abstract**

Studies in rural contexts highlight that gender roles determine social dynamics in rural productive units. The contribution of rural women to the economy of the productive unit is linked to the coverage of the family's basic needs of food and care, or to the offer of voluntary services to benefit the rural community, while men have the role of breadwinner for the household (Deutsch, 2007). Research suggests that female role functions are particularly affected by violence, which very often causes female rural producers to take on more tasks in addition to traditional ones. Following recent studies that report on the active involvement of rural women in the economy of the productive unit, this study seeks to understand how gender roles influence the economic dynamics of rural producers in Colombia and how violence in the context modifies these relationships. In this study we theorize about the relationship between traditional gender roles and differentiated economic alternatives through which rural producers integrate into the market. Considering the importance of social resources in rural communities, we validate that social capital resource leverage the economic activities of rural producers differently according to the performed gender role and the level of violence in the context.

For the purposes of this study, we used a sample of 1,680 Colombian rural producers, with 541 women as heads of productive units. The Colombian context provides contingencies related to

the violence and insecurity that challenge the use of social capital as a resource and incentivize women to lead their farms. The sample was gathered at the end of 2015 when the country was anticipating a peace agreement, which had motivated the decrease of violent actions in several municipalities, but not in all.

Theoretically, this study offers a new perspective for observing the functional role of rural women and men in traditional rurality. Results show that gender influences the type of economic decisions (valued-added and product diversification) with which rural producers integrate into the market. Social capital constitutes an important resource in these economic processes and rural producers, according to their gender and the level of violence in the context, leverage their economic decisions in different types of social capital resources.