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Review of Open Country, Iowa: Rural Women, Tradition and Change.

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exploited and economically cheated. Women, excluded via a patriarchal, male dominant value system from agricultural production as farmers, in a rural area where the opportunity structure is limited, are a potential low paid and part-time labor force. Everyone agrees that the opportunity structure in rural settings is limited and that young people must leave for access to a less restricted job market. Of course, farm wives cannot leave. Fink's concern is with the lack of equal opportunity for both women in nonfarm jobs and those women who may desire to farm.

While the difficulty faced by young women who wish to become farm operators is undeniable and unjust, Fink does not examine the ways farm women do act within the enterprise. There is a large body of data which suggests that although farm women do not become principal operators, they do play key roles in the enterprise and do not consider themselves exploited or without control over their lives. In part this omission occurs since she is less interested in contemporary coping mechanisms of women within the family held and operated agricultural enterprise and more interested in emphasizing the ways technological and economic factors have historically affected women's work. She also states she was not privy to data relating to family interactions.

Fink has attempted to integrate historical, demographic, social science survey materials with more intimate interview and observational data. She provides a good historical review of change at the macrosocial level. Through a case study of egg production, commonly held to be in the woman's sphere of commodity production, Fink illustrates how the extensive capitalization of egg production destroyed the small operations and decreased the economic autonomy of women. The incorporation of interview and observational material is less satisfying. Specific quotations are used to illustrate the personal dimension of social change, but one does not get a complete picture of the women who are quoted, the processes they and their families use to cope, or

Open Country, Iowa: Rural Women, Tradition and Change. By Deborah Fink. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986. Table of contents, introduction, notes, references cited, index. 275 pp. \$39.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

This book adds to a neglected area of research, rural women. Through the use of reminiscence, census data, agricultural surveys, interviews, and observations during a year of residency in a rural Iowa county, Deborah Fink examines women's experience as members of a rural social system in which farming has been, until recently, considered a viable and valued opportunity, albeit a gender restricted occupation.

The book views woman as wife through the lens of an explicit perspective. A wife who is dependent on a man is both personally

their interconnections and placement within a social system. What does not emerge is the very element anthropological participant observation can give to such a study.

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