

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A 20/01/2026) - IRSA 02 - THE RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE: LIVING CONDITIONS, WELL-BEING, WORK AND VITAL TRAJECTORIES IN RURAL AREAS

WHEN THE HOE BECOMES HEAVY: MANAGING AGING IN RURAL CONTEXTS

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This study addresses aging as a continuous, relational, and socially situated process in rural contexts, focusing on the experiences of women family farmers engaged in agroecological production. In rural territories marked by historical gender inequalities and the accumulation of physically demanding labor throughout the life course, aging is often naturalized, silenced, or interpreted through urban-centered or biomedical frameworks that fail to capture its lived, territorial, and productive dimensions. The research investigates how women farmers experience, perceive, and manage aging along their productive trajectories, considering bodily transformations, reorganization of work, intergenerational relations, and territorial conditions. It adopts a qualitative, participant-oriented approach, with phenomenological and dialectical inspiration, grounded in prolonged engagement in the field. The empirical context is located in agroecological cooperatives in the Baixada Cuiabana region, Mato Grosso,

involving women from different age groups, with particular attention to those aged 60 years and older. Data production includes semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and thematic workshops, initially tested through a pilot study aimed at refining methodological and ethical procedures. Rather than treating aging as a process of decline or loss of productivity, the study approaches it as a dynamic process of adaptation, negotiation, and reorganization of work, time, and bodily limits within collective productive arrangements. Agroecology emerges as a privileged empirical field in which aging becomes visible through diversified production systems, networks of cooperation, and intergenerational practices that may support autonomy, health, and well-being. By centering women's narratives and everyday experiences, the study contributes to academic debates on rural aging, gender, and work, while also informing institutional practices and public policies related to agroecology, rural development, and the management of aging in rural territories. The research is ongoing and seeks to open analytical and dialogical spaces for future discussions on aging, labor, and territory.

Palavras-chave: aging; rural women; agroecology; family farming; work and territory.