This study concentrates on the everyday life of women living in Finnish rural areas undergoing rapid changes. Who are the women living there, how are they coping and in which direction is their situation changing? Women's lives are analysed with the help of Thomas Höjrup's mode of life approach. The study looks at women's practises and attitudes concerning work, home, women's position and the countryside. Both qualitative and quantitative data are used, the emphasis being on women's thematic interviews from different rural areas.

The importance of waged work has grown during the past ten years. Women are also more mobile. A large part of them have actually moved to rural areas from elsewhere. The importance of the traditional agrarian modes of life is thus diminishing, and their place is increasingly taken by newer life-modes in which the educational and occupational backgrounds of the women vary. In addition to farmwomen, rural areas now have women working off-farm, career women and in-migrants from urban areas.

Different life-modes have different resources, needs, hopes and problems. The meaning of work, home, femininity and the rural, for instance, vary according to life-mode. The spheres of work and home, or public and private domains, which were intertwined in the life-modes of farmwomen and wage-working ex-farmwomen, are completely separate in life-modes with no agricultural roots. In such cases there is also growing dissatisfaction with the traditional domestic division of work. Career women's problems have to do with the combining of motherhood and career. Urban in-migrants have new ways of viewing femininity and work. They have often had difficulties in settling in small rural communities. The emotional and active approach to the rural environment of the agrarian life-modes is also changing. Home no longer includes the larger natural surroundings. Mobility and the separation of place and social networks are typical for career women and in-migrants. Farmwomen and ex-farmwomen are tied to local social relations.