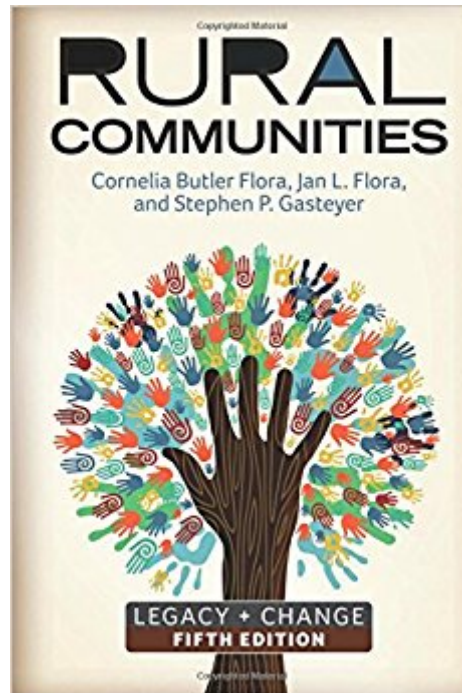




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Rural Communities: Legacy + Change



Synopsis

Communities in rural America are a complex mixture of peoples and cultures, ranging from miners who have been laid off in West Virginia, to Laotian immigrants relocating in Kansas to work at a beef processing plant, to entrepreneurs drawing up plans for a world-class ski resort in California's Sierra Nevada. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change* uses its unique Community Capitals framework to examine how America's diverse rural communities use their various capitals—natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built—to address the modern challenges that face them. Each chapter opens with a case study of a community facing a particular challenge, and is followed by a comprehensive discussion of sociological concepts to be applied to understanding the case. This narrative, topical approach makes the book accessible and engaging for undergraduate students, while its integrative approach provides them with a framework for understanding rural society based on the concepts and explanations of social science. This fifth edition is updated throughout with 2013 census data and features new and expanded coverage of health and health care, food systems and alternatives, the effects of neoliberalism and globalization on rural communities, as well as an expanded resource and activity section at the end of each chapter.

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Customer Reviews

Rural Communities: Legacy and Change is a well-organized, highly readable text introducing students to rural sociology. The use of personal vignettes to illustrate key concepts and the theoretical Community Capitals Framework to facilitate discussion of critical components of rural communities help students come to understand the dynamics of stability and change in those

communities. —Liza Kuecker, Western New Mexico University; a cogent overview of the theory, issues, and applications that drive current-day rural studies. The book is very readable, and provides adequate, thorough coverage. If [undergraduate students] engage the material they will find a wealth of stories and case studies that illustrate and highlight the issues facing rural communities today. —Ben Amsden, Plymouth State University; The Floras have provided creative and useful sociological analysis of rural populations and rural living which is deeply and convincingly argued. —Kathryn Hovey, New Mexico State University

Praise for the Previous Editions: This text contributes to pedagogical effectiveness, student learning and empowered community practice. The text is well written, clearly organized, engaging, insightful and readable for a wide range of audiences. —Teaching Sociology; I have used this book since the first edition came out. The key strength of that edition and each edition that followed has been the conceptual framework of community capitals that helps students understand the connectivity between social, cultural, economic, and political issues and how they relate to the built and natural environments. This framework allows students to comprehend the complexity of community and to identify strengths and weaknesses in their own communities that can be used in promoting purposeful and positive change. —Conner Bailey, Auburn University; Rural Communities is the most complete textbook that I know of for the social science approach to understanding communities. The Floras are successful in combining basic concepts and theories of community with practical examples that students and professionals can use for their work and in their own communities. The book challenges students to take a critical look at communities, including underlying processes and structures that exist in all communities. —Richard Maurer, University of Kentucky

"Rural Communities: Legacy and Change" is a well-organized, highly readable text introducing students to rural sociology. The use of personal vignettes to illustrate key concepts, and the theoretical Community Capitals Framework to facilitate the discussion of the different components of rural communities help students come to understand the dynamics of stability and change in rural communities. Liza Kuecker, Western New Mexico University

Communities in rural America are a complex mixture of peoples and cultures, ranging from miners who have been laid off in West Virginia to entrepreneurs drawing up plans for a world-class ski resort in California's Sierra Nevada. "Rural Communities: Legacy + Change," uses a unique Community Capitals framework to examine how America's diverse rural communities use various capitals—natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built—to address the modern challenges facing them. Each chapter in the text

opens with a case study of a community facing a particular challenge and is followed by a comprehensive discussion of the sociological concepts to be applied in understanding the case. This narrative, topical approach makes the text accessible and engaging for undergraduate students, while its integrative approach provides them with a clear framework for understanding rural society based on the concepts and explanations of social science. The fifth edition is updated throughout with 2014 census data and features new coverage of health and health care, the effects of income inequality and consumption on rural communities, as well as an expanded resource section at the end of each chapter. Cornelia Butler Flora is Charles F. Curtis Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State University and Research Professor at Kansas State University. Jan L. Flora is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology at Iowa State University and Research Professor at Kansas State University. Stephen P. Gasteyer is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University."

This book is a great introduction to the community capitals. While the examples sometimes feel like they're being hurled at you with little additional information, the reader must remember that it's an introductory book. If you want more depth, there are additional resources given in the book. This edition provides less detailed information in the "Social Capitals" chapter, which is a shame.

Excellent!

Here's an example of business butting heads with government; a rancher gets fed up with Colorado elk damaging his fences, but the state wildlife authorities always say the same thing; no shooting! He organizes a conference with the authorities, local hunters, ranchers, farmers, and whether they're invited or not, the "tree huggers." Both sides dislike each other; the ranchers think of environmentalists as a nuisance, and the environmentalists regard the ranchers as resource-raiders. They do have something in common, in that they both want the elk to live. Without the elk, there won't be any hunting. But at the same time, without the rancher's cows, there won't be any burgers, and the meat industry will lose jobs. The conflict between the rancher and the wildlife authorities is one of many examples that the author gives in his book. Rural Communities discusses how far flung and remote communities can collectively effect change, but it requires a great deal of grass-roots effort. Unenlightened about progressive ways, the

locals, whether rich or poor, can have a tough time working together to achieve goals. If a town depends on a coal mine for jobs, and the people want something done about pollution, there will be conflict. In the chapter Culture Capital and the Family, we see how the rural working class miners, loggers, and farmers clash with the educated residents. The working classes may view the more educated ones as an adversary, but at the same time, the farmers will suffer if mine tailings pollute the water. If the forest is logged down to stumps, there won't be any deer hunting. If the water is silted from strip mining, you can forget about fishing. Another issue in this book with regard to economics is the conflict between industry and education. Blue collar wages are often higher than those for teachers and office workers, so why go to school? If you can make \$45,000 a year in a coal mine and much less as a teacher, then why would a kid want to go to school? The author discusses how some towns invest in technical education, which benefits the industry, but labor skills can just as easily be learned on the job. There are links here to the world economy to world economy, such as tariffs on imported produce and coal. But even tariffs can't save a company town, because the demand for cheap furniture outpaces the need for quality. A furniture factory in the USA, with regulations on waste disposal and work hours, can't compete with a factory in China. For all we know, a Chinese factory could be using slave labor. There weren't a lot of surprises here, because I've seen country towns with municipal conflicts between all classes. Anyone who saw the 20/20 episode titled Hidden America: Children of the Mountains can see the problems with drugs, health, pollution, and crime that rural towns can have. But I thoroughly enjoyed the case studies that the author uses. He makes clear that when a town can't reach a consensus, everything stalls and there's no improvement.

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