

"This volume is necessary reading for anyone seeking to understand the contours of change in rural America over the past 50 years. It provides a masterful overview of key dimensions of social, economic, and environmental changes, offers theoretical tools by which to explain these changes, and raises provocative questions about the future of rural America."

Linda Lobao, *The Ohio State University, Columbus*

"In this fast-paced global environment, it is good to be reminded of the substantive contributions that rural people have made to the well-being of our world. Brown and Schafft pursue a balanced assessment of the problems that beset many parts of rural America today, and comment on the urgency of creating a national policy and mix of programs that build on the strengths of rural people and communities. Yes, rural America matters and, thanks to Brown and Schafft, we have important insights into the smart investments that must be made if we hope to ensure its long-term vitality and sustainability."

Lionel J. "Bo" Beaulieu, *Mississippi State University*

"Brown and Schafft detail the challenges of persistence and change facing rural people and places. Their call for a first-ever holistic, comprehensive rural policy for the United States should be, must be, a policy and political rallying cry for all concerned with the sustainable development of rural communities and regions in the twenty-first century."

Theodore R. Alter, Co-Director, Center for Economic and Community Development, *The Pennsylvania State University*

Rural people and communities continue to play important social, economic, and environmental roles at a time in which societies are rapidly urbanizing, and the identities of local places are increasingly subsumed by flows of people, information, and economic activity across global spaces. While the organization of rural life has been fundamentally transformed by institutional and social changes since the mid-twentieth century, rural communities have proved resilient.

This book examines the causes and consequences of major social and economic changes affecting rural populations during the first decades of the twenty-first century, and explores policies developed to ameliorate problems or enhance opportunities. Primarily focused on the U.S. context, while also providing international comparative discussion, the book explores socio-demographic and political economic aspects of rural transformation. It features an accessible blend of theory and empirical analysis grounded in real-life situations through the use of case-study materials.

*Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century* is intended for advanced undergraduate and graduate courses in rural sociology, community sociology, rural and/or population geography, community development, and population studies.

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