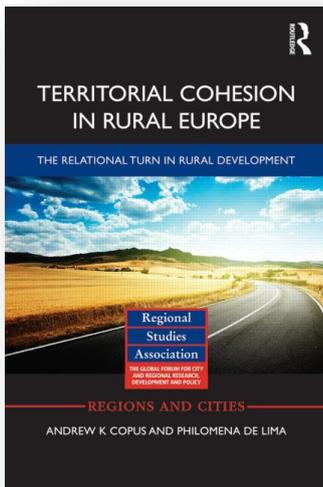


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This book reflects on how the economies, social characteristics, ways of life and global relationships of rural areas of Europe have changed in recent years. This reveals a need to refresh the concepts we use to understand, measure and describe rural communities and their development potential. This book argues that Europe has 'outgrown' many of the stereotypes usually associated with it, with substantial implications for European Rural Policy.

Rural structural change and its evolving geography are portrayed through regional typologies and the concept of the New Rural Economy. Demographic change, migration, business networks and agricultural restructuring are each explored in greater detail. Implications for equality and social exclusion, and recent developments in the field of governance are also considered. Despite being a subject of active debate, interventions in the fields of rural and regional development have failed to adapt to changing realities and have become increasingly polarized.

This book argues that rural/regional policy needs to evolve in order to address the current complex reality, partially reformulating territorial or place-based approaches, and the New Rural Paradigm, following a set of principles termed 'Rural Cohesion Policy'.

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