

ter, women who left the farms of their youth but rediscovered their love of the land explain the benefits of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to consumers and producers. They demonstrate how women who lack the capital to invest in large, commercial operations can be successful by tapping into local markets. Jack finds that female mentorship is the cornerstone of the CSA movement and is actually vital to women in agriculture more generally, as demonstrated through discussions about the Women, Land, and Legacy project, sponsored by the Iowa-based Women, Food, and Agriculture Network.

In the final chapters, Jack considers rural-to-urban migration as he discovers hidden “farmerettes” addressing poverty and nutrition through organizations devoted to urban gardening. What is most striking about Jack’s observations of contemporary farm women is that some of the most outspoken “ag-vocates” were actually products of the farm crisis whose families lost their farms during the 1980s. They reflect on the resulting hardship and family discord and on their commitment to correcting many of the problems related to modern, industrial agriculture.

The Midwest Farmer’s Daughter offers an engaging, optimistic, and much-needed glimpse into the evolution of women in agriculture and popular discourse over the past century. Jack’s family stories enhance the narrative by clearly illustrating the changing options and attitudes among mothers, daughters, and subsequent generations. Historians might be disappointed by Jack’s cursory engagement with the wealth of secondary literature on the work lives of midwestern farm women. They might also miss a deeper exploration of popular depictions of farm women before 1960. On the other hand, scholars are just beginning to grapple with the experiences and fallout of the farm crisis. Jack lends welcome insight into how this period has shaped contemporary female farmers. Because women now own half of Iowa’s farmland, this study will help break new ground in our understanding of women’s contributions to agriculture.

A Midwestern Mosaic: Immigration and Political Socialization in Rural America, by J. Celeste Lay. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012. x, 224 pp. Tables, graphs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper.

Reviewer Mariana Medina is assistant professor of political science at Iowa State University. Her research and writing have focused on immigration policy.

In *A Midwestern Mosaic*, J. Celeste Lay addresses a very important question: What is the impact of ethnic diversity in rural areas? Other

researchers, notably Robert Putnam, have looked at the impact of ethnic diversity in urban communities, but little is known about its effects on rural areas, even though many rural towns are now more ethnically diverse than before because of immigration flows. This book focuses specifically on the impact of ethnic diversity on the “social capital” of rural communities.

Social capital has received increased attention in the social sciences recently. Many definitions exist, but we can think of it as the links, understandings, and shared values in communities that allow diverse individuals to trust each other and work together. Communities with higher levels of social capital are likely to have less crime, better education, better health, and better-functioning governments and institutions.

This book focuses on five Iowa towns: Perry, Storm Lake, Boone, Carroll, and Harlan. In 1990 these towns looked very similar in terms of population and ethnic composition. In the past couple of decades, however, Perry and Storm Lake have undergone significant demographic shifts because of changes in the meatpacking industry, the largest employer in both towns. When plants in both towns were bought by IBP, which then merged with Tyson, starting wages were reduced and immigrants and refugees from Asia and Latin America were hired. Unlike Storm Lake and Perry, the rest of the towns continued to be mostly homogeneous.

The focus on these five towns allows the author to conduct what some social scientists call a “natural experiment,” in which an observed phenomenon approximates the properties of a controlled experiment: the five towns looked alike in 1990, and the difference between them now is that Storm Lake and Perry have experienced an increase in immigration. So, if Storm Lake and Perry have different degrees of trust and social capital than Boone, Carroll, and Harlan, it is likely because of a different level of ethnic diversity. One could argue, however, that people choose where to settle, so perhaps those who choose to live in more diverse towns are different from those who would rather live in a homogeneous community. To make sure that did not affect the results of her research, Lay interviewed high school students in the five towns who did not choose to live there; their parents did.

Lay’s findings are interesting. First, young people in diverse communities are more likely to have warmer feelings towards immigrants than their counterparts in homogeneous towns. The more interesting results, however, are about civic engagement. Although high school students in Storm Lake and Perry were less knowledgeable about current political officials and the American political system—factors that political scientists traditionally use to measure political knowledge

—and had lower levels of generalized trust, they were more likely to participate in school activities, such as band, athletics, or science clubs, and in the community, and as likely as those from the other towns to intend to vote when eligible. This indicates higher levels of social capital, not less as some would expect. Furthermore, the results were even stronger in Storm Lake, where immigration took place earlier than in Perry, showing that any negative social consequences of diversity—such as lower generalized trust—are short-lived. Moreover, because rural communities have less residential segregation and social stratification, it is easier for people in places like Storm Lake and Perry to have contact with other ethnic groups and create social bonds, which increases the social capital of a community.

This book should be of interest to Iowans and people interested in rural communities in the Midwest. Some might fear that increased ethnic diversity in Iowa could undermine the quality of life and values of small towns. This book shows that, after a relatively brief period of adjustment, diverse communities have as much social capital or more than homogeneous communities. Even though it takes time to adapt to a “new normal,” increasing ethnic diversity in some communities is not necessarily cause for alarm.