Rural research methods

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A short story about quality assessment

› Cultural geography, 2006
Rural studies

› For a long time dominated by the concept of social construction ...
› Also today (but less) still focus on conceptualizing ...
› Limited attention for quantitative research ...
› Limited attention for rural businesses ...
› No attention for mixed methods ...
Rural urban

› *Do away with the rural as a separate category* (as it is a gradient between urban and rural (Woods, p.15, referring to others)

› *Any attempt to ... (define the term rural) ... is likely to be doomed to failure.* The transition from urban to rural is a gradual ... one (Hodge, 1986, p. 271)

› Conclusion 1: the pure rural does not exist and does not make sense, but some places are thinner, sparser etc. populated than others
The rural as a **social construction**

› Useful concept when conceptualizing the rural
› But ... not so useful when it comes to descriptive approaches
› As Woods states: *Neglects the material dimensions of the rural condition with impact on rural people*
› For quantitative research a descriptive definition of the rural is almost inescapable
## Qualitative vs. Quantitative in journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Journal of Rural Studies</th>
<th>Sociologia Ruralis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Quantitative/both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mixed methods

› ... to tackle a research question from any relevant angle, making use where appropriate of previous research and/or more than one type of investigative perspective
Mixed methods

Mixed methods/triangulation
JRS2016 a few, but not convincing
SR2016 none

› not yet visible in our key journals
Mixed methods

• Maybe not in journal articles, but at least in larger projects, at least in Groningen
Migration to less popular rural areas
The characteristics, motivations and search process of migrants

Rixt Bijker
Migration to less-popular rural areas in the Netherlands: Exploring the motivations
Rixt A. Bijker*, Tialda Haartsen, Dirk Strijker
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ABSTRACT
Migration into rural areas is often explained in terms of the rural idyll, the attraction of the countryside with its less hurried way of life in a quiet, spacious and green environment. However, this migration phenomenon has mostly been researched in attractive, amenity-rich, popular rural areas. This paper investigates the characteristics and motivations of migrants to less-popular rural areas using survey data (N = 664) for four municipalities in the North of the Netherlands. Our study shows a young group of immigrants with relatively low incomes, but also a large proportion of working people and a considerable number of highly educated movers. Separating the motivations for choosing to live in a rural area in general from the motivations for choosing this specific rural area reveals that while the pull of the rural idyll is an important motivation for moving to a rural area in general, the reasons for choosing the specific rural area are a mixture of housing characteristics, the physical qualities of the environment, personal reasons and the low house prices in the area. Combining the motivations with the characteristics of the movers reveals the diversity within the movers group. Our analysis shows a group of movers motivated to live close to family and friends, consisting of return migrants, singles, the youngest and oldest age groups and also the lowest income group. The physical qualities of the environment attract a group of highly educated movers, people with high incomes and people aged between 35 and 64. The motivation of housing characteristics relates in most cases to the availability of a suitable house.
Qualitative, diary approach, in-depth interviews

Migration to less-popular rural areas in the Netherlands: Exploring the motivations

Rixt A. Bijker*, Tialda Haartsen, Dirk Strijker
Faculty of Spatial Sciences, Department of Cultural Geography, University of Groningen, PO Box 800, 9700 AV Groningen, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

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SIDE ACTIVITIES BY NON-FARMERS
In search of personal and rural development

Marianna Markantoni
Qualitative, 15 in-depth interviews

Journal of Rural Studies

Volume 28, Issue 4, October 2012, Pages 507–516
Growing ‘invisible’ side activities to light. A case study of rural male entrepreneurs in the Veenkoloniën, the Netherlands

Zanne Markantoni & Bettina van Hoven
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Available online 23 September 2012
Show more

10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.05.006

Abstract

Over the past 20 years, rural areas in Western societies have transformed from a production to a consumption space. Much research on rural diversification and localization has focused on farmers and their wives. However, it is useful to examine activities run by non-farm women which have slowly emerged in the last few years. View of discussions about rural decline, the value of such activities should be looked at in light. Although these activities may not significantly reverse unemployment rates, they have the potential to provide the social and emotional ‘glue’ to motivate a household to remain in declining areas as small-scale economic activities contribute to a
Quantitative, questionnaire, logistic regression, 260 cases

**Growth expectations for side activities in rural areas**

Marianna Markantoni  
*Rural Society Team, Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC), Edinburgh, UK,* and  
Dirk Strijker and Sierdjan Koster  
*Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, Groningen,*  
*The Netherlands*

**Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this article is to examine growth expectations and factors influencing growth of side activities in rural areas.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Data were collected in the rural areas of 36 Dutch municipalities by means of a detailed survey. This resulted in 260 response cases. The analysis consists of a descriptive account of respondents’ intentions to expand a side activity and a logistic regression explaining growth expectations of these activities.

**Findings** – The main conclusion is that although growth is not expected in a large number of side activities, there is a group of owners who clearly aspire to expand the scale of their activities. Their personal aspirations and aspirations for economic well-being are the most common motivations. These characteristics also have a bearing on the future growth of side activities and consequently their impact on rural development.

**Research limitations/implications** – Since this article examines growth expectations and not actual growth, the findings cannot be interpreted directly in terms of economic impact on rural development.

**Originality/value** – Scholars and policy makers have paid little attention to side activities in rural areas and specifically to their growth potential. This article enhances our understanding of the growth expectations of those who carry out side activities and shows the potential of such activities in diversifying and revitalising rural areas.

**Keywords** Side activities, Growth expectations, Rural small businesses, Rural development,  
The Netherlands, Small enterprises

**Paper type** Research paper
And also in most of the papers
Quantitative, in-depth, website analysis, observation, mapping
Interviewing on the spot ...
The role of change- and stability oriented place attachment in rural community resilience: a case study in south-west Scotland

Saskia Zwiers*, Marianna Markantoni and Dirk Strijker

Abstract
Although recent research into resilience acknowledges the importance of attachment to place and claims that place is often the basis for community development, this relationship has not yet been explored in great detail. We research the link between people, place, and community resilience by examining and unravelling the role of place attachment in rural communities. We address the gap in current research by conducting interviews and eliciting mental maps from residents in two -
Mixed methods

- Mixed methods is our standard for many years, no matter what assessment committees think about it ...
Quantitative? Data needed

› In many projects it is helpful to build a database with quantitative data
  • For own research use
  • To make yourself a preferred partner
  • Example: citizens initiatives on rural broadband
And now .. Rural businesses

› What do our ‘rural’ journals do about it?
Rural businesses in our key journals

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Businesses</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look also for other journals

› Business journals are busy ... tough competition
› Paper very conceptual: Sociologia Ruralis
› Paper focusses on rural: JRS
› Paper focusses on business: small business journals
Rural business

- More options (Bosworth)
  - Selling a rural product
  - Located in the rural
  - Serving rural population
Serve a rural population

Sell a “rural” product

Located in a rural area
Combining Bosworth and Woods...

› Rural business is a broad notion (Bosworth)
› Rural is even more a broad notion, there is a long gradient between urban and rural (Woods)
› Close to the rural: thin, less cases .... but there is a lot of rural

› This implies that researching rural businesses gives you broad opportunities
It all depends on the debate you are prefering to join ..
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