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# Rural research methods

## *Lincoln, June 15, 2016*

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Mansholt chair for Rural Development

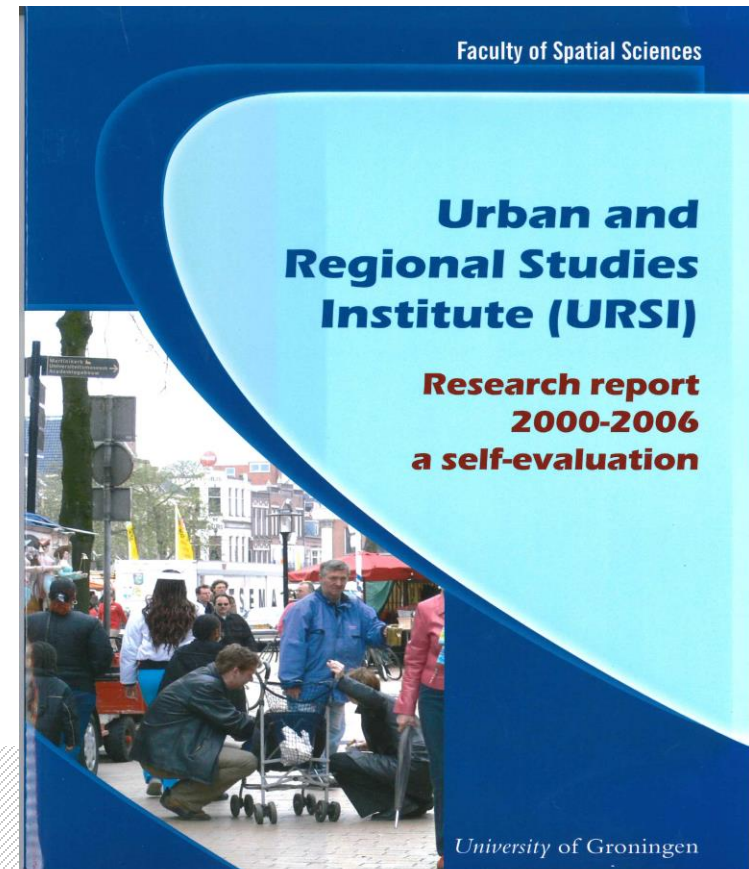
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# A short story about quality assessment

- › 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**

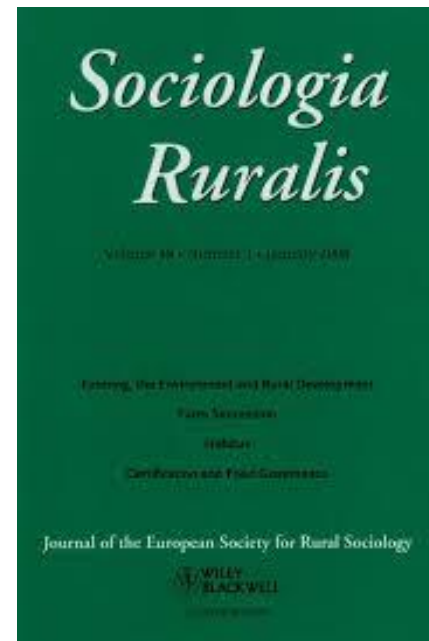
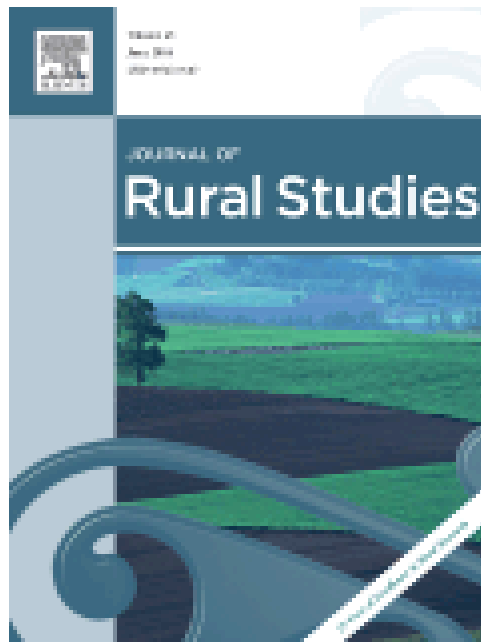
- › Useful concept when conceptualizing the rural
- › But ... not so useful when it comes to descriptive approaches
- › As Woods states: *Neglects the material dimensions of the rural condition with impact on rural people*
- › For quantitative research a descriptive definition of the rural is almost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





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# Qualitative vs. Quantitative in journals

	<b>Journal of Rural Studies</b>		<b>Sociologia Ruralis</b>	
	Qualitative	Quantitative/both	Qualitative	Quantitative/both
2006	24	10	17	1
2016	52	27	24	5



# 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





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# Mixed methods

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

- › .. not yet visible in our key journals



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# Mixed methods

- › Maybe not in journal articles, but at least in larger projects, at least in Groningen



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## **Migration to less popular rural areas**

The characteristics, motivations and  
search process of migrants

**Rixt Bijker**





# Quantitative, questionnaire, 664 cases Logistic regression

Journal of Rural Studies 28 (2012) 490–498



Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Journal of Rural Studies

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud)



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

Rixt A. Bijker\*, Tialda Haartsen, Dirk Strijker

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:**  
Counterurbanisation  
Rural idyll  
Periphery  
Population decline  
House prices  
Return migration

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 in-migrants 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, referring in most cases to the availability of a specific house, is





# Qualitative, diary approach, in-depth interviews

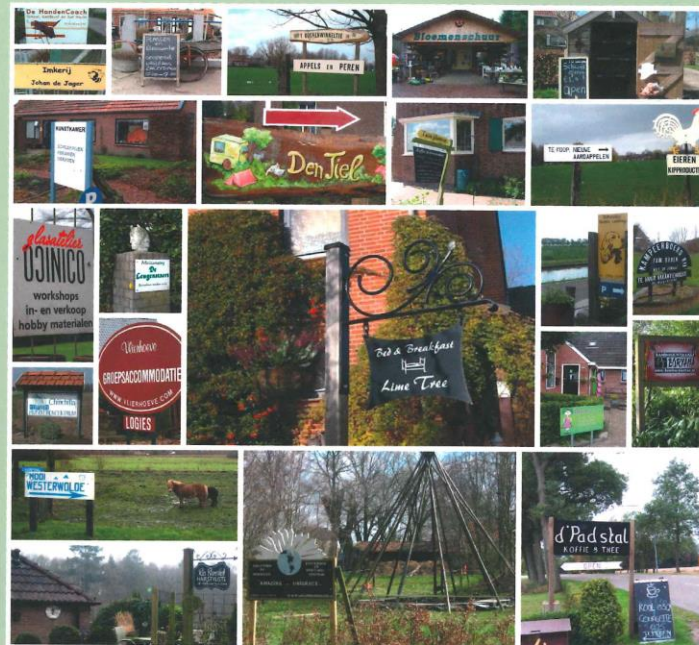




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## SIDE ACTIVITIES BY NON-FARMERS

In search of personal and rural development



Marianna Markantoni





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# Qualitative, 15 in-depth interviews

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**Journal of Rural Studies**  
Volume 28, Issue 4, October 2012, Pages 507–516  
Growing Old in Rural Places



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**Integrating 'invisible' side activities to light. A case study of rural male entrepreneurs in the Veenkoloniën, the Netherlands**

[Gianna Markantonis](#)  , [Bettina van Hoven](#) 

Department of Cultural Geography, Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, Landleven 1,  
7 AD Groningen, The Netherlands

Available online 23 September 2012

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10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.05.006 [Get rights and content](#)

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## 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 revitalization has focused on farmers and their wives. However, it is useful to examine side activities run by non-farm women which have slowly emerged in the last few years. In view of discussions about rural decline, the value of such activities should be looked at in a new light. Although these activities may not significantly reverse unemployment trends, 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



JSBED  
20,3

584

## 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 revitalizing rural areas.

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

**Paper type** Research paper

12/1/22



And also in most of the papers



# Quantitative, in-depth, website analysis, observation, mapping

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 **Journal of Rural Studies**   
Volume 26, Issue 2, April 2010, Pages 163–172

**Rural youth culture: *Keten* in the Netherlands**

Tialda Haartsen  Dirk Strijker  
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doi:10.1016/j.jrurstud.2009.11.001 [Get rights and content](#)

**Abstract**

A remarkable present-day phenomenon in rural areas in the Netherlands is that young people, mostly males, often meet in small groups in self-built or at least self-fitted out sheds or caravans (*keten*). At first glance, these *keten* seem to be substitutes for more official entertainment sites in the relatively sparsely populated parts of the Dutch countryside, and male rural adolescents, especially, seem to use them as places to drink a lot of alcohol. The drinking image of *keten* has recently been strongly emphasized and perhaps exaggerated by the popular media. This study intends to find out whether this first impression is true, by examining other activities performed in and identities attached to *keten*, primarily by using a quantitative approach. The paper shows that an important aspect of the *keten* culture is that *keten* provide their members with a place of their own, where they can do whatever they want without having to consider the rules of parents and other educators. The key differences between *keten* and other hang-outs are that *keten* are located in private space, relatively close to the parental gaze, and that they are almost exclusively accessible only to friends and acquaintances.

**Keywords**  
Rural hang-outs; Symbols; Identities; Place attachment





# Interviewing on the spot ...





# Questionnaire, interviews, mental maps

## JOURNAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 2016

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?



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# Rural businesses in our key journals

	<b>Journal of Rural Studies</b>		<b>Sociologia Ruralis</b>	
	Businesses	Total	Businesses	Total
2006	0	34	1	18
2016	6	79	0	29



# 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



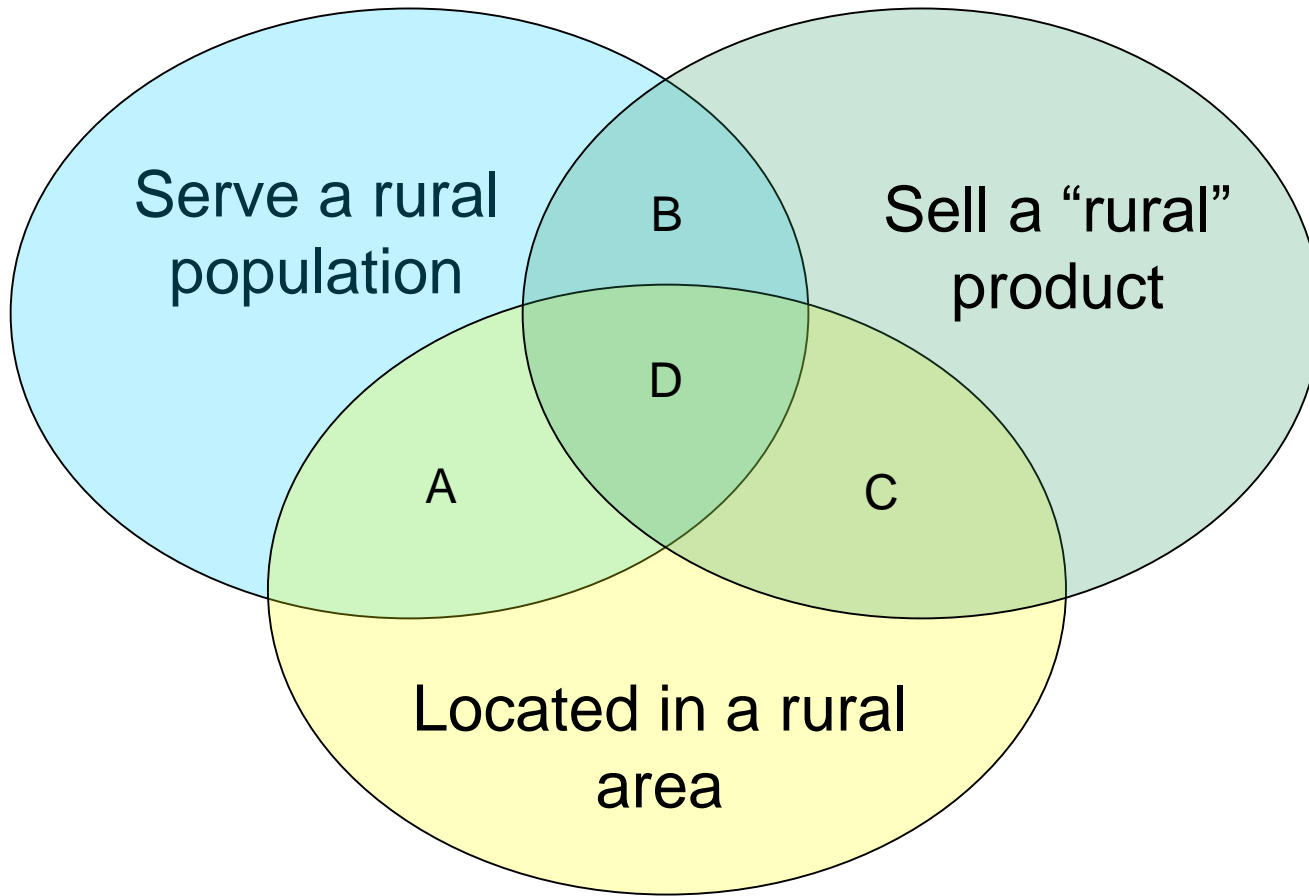


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# Rural business

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







# 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 preferring to join ..



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