

Abstract:

A common definition for rurality has evaded being pinned down. Researchers need a common definition of rurality so rural research can be compared. This paper compares the different definitions of rurality to serve as a means to compare existing research and help define a common definition of rurality. Self-reporting of rurality will be explored as a proxy to rurality when physical address mapping is not available. A survey of 1427 people from the Northeast includes both physical addresses as well as self-reported rurality. The Rural-Urban commuting codes developed by the Department of Agriculture provide the most specific physical address mapping. Self-reporting of rurality is as an acceptable proxy when physical address geocoding is not available. Although different government regulations require certain techniques to be adopted for their funding schedules, academia should adopt a common definition to strengthen the ability of rural research as a transdisciplinary science.