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ABSTRACT
 A review of 178 sources (articles, books, and other sources from 1971 through 1980, and frequently-cited earlier sources) on rural sociology and rural mental health indicated 4 major categories of definitions of rural: not explicitly stated, verbal (qualitative), homemade quantitative, and external quantitative. Sources were summarized as to author(s), publication date, focus (rural-urban comparison, rural sociology, rural health/mental health, rural human services), basis for defining rural, statistics employed (none, narrative, descriptive, univariate, multivariate), and findings. An unstated definition was used by 43% (77 sources); 19% (33) used verbal definitions, 15% (27) utilized homemade quantitative definitions, and 23% (41) used external quantitative definitions. Of 101 sources which defined rural, 22 used multiple components, but only 5 sources using homemade quantitative and none using external quantitative definitions employed multiple criteria. Rural was defined in terms of population by 90 sources (verbal = 25, homemade quantitative = 25, external quantitative = 40), but with little consensus on population criteria. The most common quantitative external population definitions, both based on census data, were those of the Department of Commerce (Rural versus Urban) and Office of Management and Budget (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area). Other criteria included occupation (14 sources), socioeconomic information such as education and income level (19), values (7), isolation (5), and government (4). (MH)

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A Review of the Definition of Rural

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Sophistication in defining rural does not seem to have kept pace with increased interest in rural psychology and community mental health. A sample of the rural sociology and rural mental health literature was reviewed and analyzed to determine the state of rural definitions. This review of 178

sources indicated four major categories of definitions (a) not explicitly stated, (b) verbal, (c) homemade quantitative, and (d) external quantitative. It was concluded that there exists a need for more clearly delineated, multidimensional definitions of rural. Other results of the analysis and implications are discussed.

A Review of the Definition of Rural

Interest in rural psychology and community mental health has grown in

This review is based in part on the thesis of Jeanine Bosak. The authors would like to thank E. Alan Hartman for his assistance.

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207 A 56

recent years as evidenced by the Association for Rural Mental Health, *Journal of Rural Community Psychology*, Rural Interest Group of Division 27 (Community Psychology) of the American Psychological Association, and the *Handbook of Rural Community Mental Health* (Keller and Murray, in press). However, while attention paid to rural has increased, it seemed to the authors in their readings (see Table 1) that rigorous explorations of components and definitions of rural had not kept pace, that often there has been an assumption of generic rurality.

Ford (1966) called for a refined definition of rural to allow more precise classification and analysis. This is not an easy task as reflected in the work by Wilhite and Bealer (1967), who evaluated a composite definition of rural, using ecological, occupational and sociocultural variables at an individual and social level. They assumed that people and places differed in both number and amount of rural characteristics and concluded that being rural in regard to one component did not imply a high degree of rurality in regard to other components. Furthermore, their research indicated that breadth, power, and directionality of rural components were highly inconsistent. Their work underscores the complexities involved when attempting to define a rural area.

Detailed definitions of rural (delineating components and degree of rurality) would lead to better specification in the meaning of rurality, yielding more detailed and valid comparisons of different rural areas. The result would be more valid data and better information for understanding and application of this knowledge for public policy, models and delivery of health services, and distribution of government (federal, state, and local) funding for human services. To help achieve this goal this article presents an analysis of rural definitions.

Method

A sample of rural mental health and rural sociology literature was examined. The former was specified by a recent NIMH annotated bibliography of rural mental health literature (Flax, Wagenfeld, Ivens, & Weiss, 1979) and reading of relevant journals such as *Mental Hygiene*, *Community Mental Health Journal*, *Hospital and Community Psychiatry*, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, etc. The latter focused on the journal, *Rural Sociology*, and other publications discussed and referenced in it and the rural mental health readings. This literature was emphasized for review since it offered the best data source for application of rural definitions to community psychology and community mental health. The total review included articles, books, and other sources from 1971 through 1980 and earlier sources which were cited frequently. A rating form and four categories of rural definitions were developed and piloted on 40 references. The rural literature was summarized using (a) author(s), (b) date of publication, (c) focus of writing (rural-urban comparison, rural sociology, rural mental health, etc.), (d) basis for defining rural, (e) statis-

tics employed (none, narrative, descriptive, univariate, multivariate, and (f) findings. The four rural definitional categories were:

- 1 *not stated* the author(s) used the term rural without definition (e.g., that which is not urban, that which is not metropolitan, or not stated at all).
- 2 *verbal* a definition was employed which relied on qualitative criteria, rather than quantitative, such as type of predominant occupational, sociocultural, or value systems of a region. Although specific characteristics were described, amounts were not presented (e.g., a small town and surrounding farm area comprised the rural region).
- 3 *homemade quantitative* a definition included specific quantities of what was rural without reference to an external source (i.e., the definition was not cited as based on previously published work or data).
- 4 *external quantitative* a definition indicated specific quantities of rural, utilizing external sources such as census data or previously published research.

For purposes of this paper only the four rural definitional categories will be reviewed and discussed. Presence or absence of statistical analyses and type of analysis were included to determine if comparing data between studies was possible. Detailed examination of statistical procedures was not carried out by the authors nor was an analysis of significant findings addressed. This information was provided so that it could be utilized by readers in conceptualizing and summarizing rural issues and research.

Results

The categorization of rural definitions (see Table 1) showed that of 178 references reviewed, 43% ($N=77$) used a "not stated" definition of rural, 19% ($N=33$) used a "verbal" definition, 15% ($N=27$) utilized "homemade quantitative" definitions, and 23% ($N=41$) used "external quantitative" definitions. Of the 101 sources which defined rural, 22 (22%) used multiple components, however, only five sources utilizing homemade quantitative and none using external quantitative definitions employed multiple criteria. This is based in part on the authors' decision to categorize Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA) as a singular definition (population). Although (see below) it includes social and economic components, these are not explicitly defined in Office of Management and Budget (1975) data.

Table 1
Review of Rural Literature*
NOT STATED DEFINITION

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|--|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Altona S A | 1979 | rural urban comparison | | Descriptive | Rural origin does not inhibit adjustment of workers to structure organized around rigid rules of behavior |
| Auerbach A J In L H Ginsberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural urban comparison | | Descriptive | Found differences in population, sources of income, housing, transportation, use of leisure time |
| Bachtel D C & Molnar J J | 1980 | rural sociology | | | |
| Bacon L | 1971 | rural urban comparison | | Descriptive | Origin in rural south, more likely impoverished if never migrated, origin in rural north, poverty maximized if intra regional migration to another rural place |
| Bankston W B & Allen H D | 1980 | rural sociology | | Multivariate | High rates of lethal violence in some areas seem subcultural in others structural influences more important |
| Bealer R C | 1966 | rural urban comparison | | | |
| Bentz W K, Edgerton, J W & Hollister W G | 1971 | rural mental health | | | |
| Bentz W K, Edgerton, J W, & Kherlopian M | 1969 | rural mental health | | Descriptive | Education & income significantly related to tendency to identify cases as mentally ill |
| Bentz W K, Edgerton, J W, & Miller F T | 1971 | rural mental health | | Descriptive | Differences found between rural public & rural teachers in attitudes toward mentally ill |
| Blevins, A L Jr | 1971 | rural urban comparison | | Descriptive | Urban incomes higher than rural urban hold more prestigious jobs |

*The "Statistics" and "Findings" columns do not apply for literature with no data collection or statistics, and thus are left blank

Rosak and Perlman

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|---|
| Brown DL | 1978 | rural urban comparison | | Descriptive | Socioeconomic status is lower and racial disparity is greater in less urbanized counties |
| Carruthers G E Erickson F C & Renner K N | 1975 <i>Note 1</i> | community services | | | |
| Cedar T & Salasin J | 1979 | rural mental health | | | |
| Cohen J | 1972 | rural mental health | | Descriptive | Utilization rates for outpatient services dropped with distance from agency |
| Copp J H | 1972 | rural sociology | | | |
| Corney R T | 1968 | rural mental health | | | |
| Dolaney P I & Woods J | 1975 | community mental health | | | |
| Dunne I | 1980 | rural sociology | | Narrative | Rural young show substantial occupational stereotyping especially when educational aspirations are lower |
| Durant T J Jr & Knowlton C S In T R Ford (Ed) | 1978 | rural sociology | | | |
| Edgetton J W & Bontz W K | 1968 | rural mental health | | Descriptive | Most rural studied unaware of mental health facility available but seen as needed resource. Most tolerate mentally ill if not related |
| Eisenhart M A | 1978 <i>Note 2</i> | rural urban mental health comparison | | | |
| Eisenhart M A | 1979 <i>Note 3</i> | rural mental health | | | |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basics of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|----------------|--|----------------------|--------------|--|
| Eisenhart, M. & Ruff T | 1980 Note 4 | rural-urban mental health comparison | | | |
| van Es, J C. & Whittenbarger, R L | 1970 | rural sociology | | Univariate | Social participation is related to stratification position Within social strata, participation in formal political system is related to other forms of social participation |
| Featherman, D L | 1971 | rural-urban comparison | | Multivariate | Effect of paternal occupational status is most direct in the early years of a man's career |
| Flora, C B. & Johnson S In T R Ford (Ed) | 1978 | rural sociology | | | |
| Ford, T R | 1966 | rural urban comparison | | | |
| Ford, T R, & Sutton, W A, Jr In J H Copp (Ed) | 1964 | rural sociology | | | |
| Goldschmidt, W | 1978 | rural sociology | | Univariate | Support agrarian thesis that family farms are conducive to democratic rural communities |
| Grasmick, H G & Grasmick, M K | 1978 | rural urban comparison | | Univariate | Farm family background significantly effects moder- nity, even with control for other variables |
| Guttan, H | 1971 | rural mental health | | | |
| Hackler T | 1979 | rural urban mental health comparison | | | |
| Haga, W J & Folse, C L | 1971 | rural sociology | | Descriptive | Social boundaries differ from trade boundaries. As size of town decreases, number of retail items bought decreases, but affectional relationships per- sist. Greater number identify with smallest towns born near residence than those identifying with larger towns |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|--|
| Hanson, I R In E W Hassinger & L R Whiting (Eds) | 1976 | rural urban health comparison | | | |
| Hargrove, D S In P A Keller & J D Murray (Eds) | in press | rural mental health | | | |
| Higgins, W M In P A Keller & J D Murray (Eds) | in press | rural mental health | | | |
| Hinkle, J E. & Ivey A E | 1969 | rural mental health | Descriptive | | Rural attitudes of residents and community leaders toward mental health not found to differ much |
| Hobbs D J | 1980 | rural sociology | | | |
| Hollister, W G In L H Ginsberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural mental health | | | |
| Huessy, H R In H H Barten & L Bellak (Eds) | 1972 | rural mental health | | | |
| Hunter W F | 1973 Note 5 | rural mental health | | | |
| Jeffrey M J & Reeve R E | 1978 | rural mental health | | | |
| Johnson R L & Knop J | 1970 | rural urban comparison | Multivariate | | Community satisfaction is a multidimensional variable Urban residents more satisfied with shopping, medi- cal facilities, teachers, work opportunities, entertain- ment. Rural residents more satisfied with local demo- cratic processes, geographical milieu, salary scale |
| Jones J D Robin S S & Wagenfeld M O | 1974 | rural mental health | Descriptive | | Rural centers spend more time in outreach than urban. Staffing patterns differ. Community mental health ideology endorsed more strongly by rural staff |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---|
| Keller, P. A. & Prutsman, T. D., In P. A. Keller & J. D. Murray (Eds). | in press | rural mental health | | | |
| Korsching, P. F. & Sapp, S. G. | 1978 | rural sociology | | Descriptive | Official procedures used to estimate unemployment in rural areas lack validity to some degrees, & may underestimate the actual employment |
| Ladewig, H. & McCann, G. C. | 1980 | rural sociology | | Multivariate | Mass media score most salient social & economic characteristic influencing one's level of community satisfaction |
| Larson, O. F. & Rogers, E. M. In J. H. Copp (Ed.) | 1964 | rural urban comparison | | | |
| Lee, F. S. | 1972 | rural urban comparison | | Descriptive | Rural-urban differences in fertility rates are disappearing. In rural the lower the educational attainment the higher the fertility ratio |
| LeVeen, E. P. | 1979 | rural | | Descriptive | Imposition of Reclamation Act would benefit rural community |
| Lowe, G. D. & Pinhey, T. K. | 1980 | rural sociology | | Descriptive | Rural people in general or farm people in particular do not place lower value on formal education as compared to urban counterparts |
| Mermelstein, J. & Sundet, P. | 1973 | rural mental health | | | |
| Mermelstein, J. & Sundet, P. In L. H. Ginsberg (Ed.) | 1976 | rural social work | | | |
| Miller, M. & Ostendorf, D. In P. A. Keller & J. D. Murray (Eds.) | in press | rural mental health | | | |
| Morrison, J. In L. H. Ginsberg (Ed.) | 1976 | rural urban comparison | | | |
| Murray, J. D. & Keller, P. A. | Unpublished Manuscript 1980 Note 6 | rural mental health | | | |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|--|------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---|
| Nelsen, H M, Frost, E | 1971 | rural sociology | | Descriptive | Rural respondents more anomic Rural say schools worse than elsewhere Relationship between residence & success significant, with response "education" more common in rural |
| Nelsen, H M, Yokley, R L, & T W Madron | 1971 | rural-urban comparison | | Descriptive | Inverse relationship between residence and conservatism |
| Nelson, A D In E W Hassinger & L R Whiting (Eds) | 1976 | rural health | | | |
| Nelson, J I, & Grams, R | 1978 | rural sociology | | Univariate | Industrial homogeneity related to interaction |
| Ozann, L D, Samuels, M E & Biedenkapp, J | 1978 | community mental health | | | |
| Pahl, R E | 1966 | rural-urban comparison | | | |
| Perez, L | 1979 | rural sociology | | | |
| Price, M I, & Clay, D C | 1980 | rural sociology | | Multivariate | Migration is strongly associated with perceived problems in municipal service, education, social welfare, health care, recreation, & cultural activities |
| Riggs, R T, & Kugel, L F | 1976 | rural mental health | | | |
| Salcedo, R N, Read, H, Evans, J F, & Kong, A C | 1971 | rural urban comparison | | Narrative | Farmers significantly more favorable toward pesticide industry than city dwellers |
| Schultz, L G In L H Ginsberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural social work | | | |
| Schwab, J J, Warheit, G J & Holzer, C E | 1974 | rural urban, mental health comparison | | | |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|--|------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--|
| Smith, C L, Hogg, T C, & Reagan, M G | 1971 | rural sociology | | Descriptive | Economic development of Sweet Home |
| Southern Regional Education Board In L H Ginsberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural social work | | | |
| Steffensmeier D J & Jordan, C | 1978 | rural urban comparison | | Descriptive | Trends of rural female crime parallel urban female crime, except female levels of larceny theft are increasing faster in urban women |
| Stojanovic E J | 1972 | rural sociology | | Descriptive | Low-income rural were successfully informed of public program for aged |
| Tienda, M | 1979 | rural urban comparison | | Multivariate | Rural children more economically active than urban (Peru) |
| United States Department of Health, Education & Welfare | 1977 | rural urban comparison | | | |
| White House Conference Aging, 1971 In L H Ginsberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural sociology | | | |
| Wilson, V E In E W Hassinger & L R Whiting (Eds) | 1976 | rural health | | | |
| Wylie, M L In L H Ginsberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural social work | | | |

VERBAL DEFINITION

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|------|-----------------|--|------------|----------|
| Bealer, R C, Wilts, F K, & Kivleky, W P | 1965 | rural sociology | population, occupation, socioeconomics | | |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|------|-------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| Beers, H W In J B Guttler (Ed) | 1957 | rural sociology | population | | |
| Bentz W K & Edgerton J W | 1970 | rural mental health | population | Narrative | Community leaders & general public similar in attitudes toward mentally ill. Public more likely to ascribe illness to heredity, morality, organicity. |
| Berry B & Davis A f | 1978 | community mental health | population occupation | | |
| Bopegamage A & Kulahal, R N | 1972 | rural urban comparison | population socioeconomics institutions marketing | Descriptive | Urbanization has varying impact on different castes and occupations, with other factors influencing variation. |
| Buxton E B In E. H Gansberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural social work | population socioeconomics education politics | | |
| Copp J H In E W Hassinger & L R Whiting (Eds) | 1976 | rural health | location | | |
| Daniels D N | 1967 | rural mental health | population, isolation economics government | | |
| Fisdorfer, C Altrocchi J & Young R I | 1968 | rural mental health | population occupation density, income | | |
| England J J Gibbons W J & Johnson B I | 1979 | rural sociology | population occupation economics | Multivariate | Values best predicted by variables indicating position of respondent in class structure of community, maturity, stratification of community & rurality. Industrialization & organizational revolution contribute modestly. |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|------|-----------------------|---|--------------|---|
| Falk W W & Pinhev T K | 1978 | rural sociology | ethnomethodological | | |
| Fischer C S | 1980 | rural urban companson | population | | |
| Flax J W Ivens R E Wagenfeld M O & Weiss R J | 1978 | rural mental health | population socioeconomics, values | | |
| Ford, T R In T R Ford (Ed) | 1978 | rural sociology | population socioeconomics values, environment technology | | |
| Form W H | 1971 | rural urban | father's occupation | Descriptive | No differences in adaptation found between workers from rural & urban backgrounds within countries More urban workers skilled, & educational achievement higher in urban |
| Gecas V | 1980 | rural sociology | population | Multivariate | Structural obstacles have at least as much influence on motivational variables as the more commonly stressed family interaction variables |
| Hassinger E W In F W Hassinger & I R Whiting (Eds) | 1976 | rural health | population, occupation, socioeconomics, values, age distribution, isolation | | |
| Hollingsworth R & Hendrix F M | 1977 | rural mental health | population | | |
| Howell, F M | 1980 | rural | population, socioeconomics | Multivariate | Among women who marry soon after high school access to higher education has most influence on husband's occupational status Process of attainment in marriage differs for white & black women |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|--|-------------|---------------------------|--|-------------|---|
| Hunsey, H R In S E Gordon & C Eisdorfer (Eds) | 1972 | rural mental health | population, occupation, socioeconomics | | |
| Kraenzel, C F. & Macdonald, F H | 1972 | rural mental health | density | | |
| Larson O F In T R Ford | 1978 | rural-urban comparison | population | Descriptive | Activity & work/job attachment significantly higher in rural Rural more punitical & more religious |
| Mirande A M | 1970 | rural urban comparison | population | Descriptive | More rural dwellers visited relatives regularly Friendship participation more extensive in urban |
| Perry H L | 1980 | rural sociology | population | | |
| Schnore L F | 1966 | rural urban comparison | occupation industry | | |
| Sorensen J L. & Hargreaves W A In P A Keller & J D Murray (Eds) | in press | rural mental health | population | | |
| Streib, G F | 1970 | rural urban comparison | occupation | Descriptive | Farmers gave more traditional answers to inter generational dilemmas than urban males Dif ferences even greater between high socioeconomic status categories |
| Swanson B E. & Swan son E In E W Hoesinger & I R Whiting (Eds) | 1976 | rural health | socioeconomics | | |
| Tronel N In H Grunebaum (Ed) | 1970 | rural mental health | occupation socioeconomics values | | |
| Wedel H L | 1969 | rural mental health | population | | |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|--|-------------|---|
| Wilkinson K P In P A Keller & J D Murray (Eds) | in press | rural sociology | population so cioeconomics values spatial arrangement | | |
| Wilson W E | 1971 | rural medical health | population socioeconomics | | |
| Young R C & Larson O F | 1970 | rural sociology | population school district | Descriptive | Position in community structure limits social interaction. Structural position influences perception of community structure. Potential for interaction in creases identification & participation in community structure |

HOMEMADE QUANTITATIVE DEFINITION

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Baumheier F C Derr J M & Gage R W | 1973 | rural human services | population | | |
| Bischoff H G W | 1976 <i>Note 7</i> | rural mental health | population | | |
| Bokemeier J I & Tait J L | 1980 | rural sociology | population | Narrative | Women power actors have less community efficacy than men. Degree of community efficacy of women greater relative to socio expressive issues than to instrumental issues |
| Christenson J A | 1979 | rural sociology | population | Multivariate | Value based push pull forces seem to operate primarily on non metro to metro movers |
| Comnq A M | 1971 | rural sociology | population socioeconomics | Narrative | More differentiated community has higher rate of rural urban migration |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|------|---------------------------|---|--------------|--|
| Duncan, O D In J P Gibbs (Ed) | 1961 | rural urban comparison | population | Descriptive | Density declines with decreased community size Farming decreases as community size increases More males in farm & nonfarm than urban Elderly increase as size decreases, but farm, non-farm more like urban % high school graduates, white collar, & income decreases with community size |
| Haller, A O & Saraiva, H U | 1972 | rural sociology | isolation | Multivariate | An 8-item level-of-living scale is shown to be valid, reliable, & an economical indicator of the socio economic status factor measured by all stratification instruments used |
| Hassinger E W, Benson, J K, & Holik J S | 1972 | rural sociology | population (township size, largest place, density) | Descriptive | Church programs differ with size of township and church sect type |
| Hollister C D, Bast D & Dolezal, R In L H Ginsberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural sociology | population | | |
| Hougland J G, Kim K & Christenson J A | 1979 | rural sociology | population | Univariate | Socioeconomic status is positively associated with both general membership & the degree of participa tion in voluntary organizations |
| Müller M K & Crader K W | 1979 | rural urban comparison | population occupation, socioeconomics, isolation | Multivariate | Urban economic satisfaction higher than rural Im pact of residence on community satisfaction is main tained when controlled for personal characteristics |
| Molnar J J, Purohit, S Clonts H A & Lee V W | 1979 | rural sociology | population income education | Multivariate | Changes in satisfaction with individual services has little to do with changes in overall community satisfaction |
| Napier T L | 1973 | rural urban comparison | population | Univariate | Urban socioeconomic status higher Urban more committed to formal education Rural more moder nistic Urban more satisfied with community ser vices Urban more mobile Educational achieve ment, income, fertility ratio, & median age dif ferences are converging |

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---|
| Nelsen, H M Reed JP & Tish, R E | 1971 | rural urban comparison | population | Multivariate | Urban prisoners more likely to score high on Anti law Index |
| Nelsen H M & Yokley R L | 1970 | rural urban comparison | population | Descriptive | Rural less liberal on civil rights scale than urban Ministers more liberal than elders |
| Nelson, J I | 1973 | rural urban comparison | population | Narrative | Found moderate relationship between aspirations & community size |
| Ozarn L D | in press | rural mental health | population | | |
| Rogers D L, Pendleton, BF Goudy W J & Richards, R O | 1978 | rural sociology | population | Multivariate | Change in manufacturing & in levels of income are related when employment data used Population size & change, distance to SMSA, & type of in dustry does not effect relationship |
| Slesinger D P | 1981 | rural urban comparison | population | Multivariate | Mother's education, age number of children, & place of medical services for well care is significantly related to preventive scores |
| Swanson, L E, Jr Luloff, A E, & Warland, R H | 1979 | rural sociology | population | Multivariate | A large segment of nonmetro population is willing to move if given good employment opportunity |
| Tremblay, K R Jr Dillman, D A & Van Liere, K D | 1980 | rural sociology | population | Narrative | Nonmetro residence & single family home owner ship is preferred |
| Tremblay, K R Jr & Dunlap, R E | 1978 | rural urban comparison | population | Descriptive | Rural-urban differences stronger when concern is assessed for environmental problems at community, not state, level Urban more concerned with en vironment than rural farmers & non farmers |
| Wang, C S Y, & Sewell W H | 1980 | rural urban comparison | population | Multivariate | Influence of residential variables is to alter magnitude of effects of occupation on earnings |
| Warner P D & Burdge R J | 1979 | rural urban comparison | population | Univariate | With respect to perceived adequacy of community services, subjective & objective appraisals are con sistent, urban correctly perceive their services as more adequate, personal characteristics do not con tribute much |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|------|------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Wilhite, F. K. & Bealer, R. C. | 1967 | rural sociology | occupation socioeconomics, ecology | Multivariate | Being rural in regard to one component does not imply high degree of rurality in regard to other components. Composite definition with constant weightings of little use in understanding influence of components. |
| Woodrow, K. Hastings, D. W. & Tu, E. J. | 1978 | rural urban comparison | population | Descriptive | Urban average life expectancy at birth higher. Rural men younger, more likely to ever marry, & remain younger. Slightly greater likelihood of divorce in urban. |
| Zuches, J. J. & Rieger, J. H. | 1978 | rural sociology | population | Descriptive | Preference for rural area greatest among oldest cohort. Progressive increase in initial preferences for rural among more recent cohorts. Direct association between preferences & short & long term residential mobility. |

EXTERNAL QUANTITATIVE DEFINITION

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Beale, C. L. In T. R. Ford (Ed.) | 1978 | rural sociology | population (rural urban) | | |
| Beale, C. L. & Fugitt, G. V. In K. E. Taeuber, L. L. Bumpass & J. A. Sweet (Eds.) | 1978 | rural urban comparison | population (SMSA) | | |
| Blackwood, I. G. & Carpenter, F. H. | 1978 | rural sociology | population (rural urban SMSA) | Multivariate | Expressed concern for population size related to size of place preferences. Anturbanism related to migration potential of large city residents. Anturbanism important in determining preference for more isolated towns. |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Bridges, J. C. | 1972 | rural sociology | population (rural urban) | Descriptive | No support for idea that persons associated with native religion will be found in greater proportion in rural districts |
| Brown, K. M. | 1971 | rural-urban comparison | population (SMSA) | Descriptive | Urbanization gradients of 1960 data in same direction as those reported by Duncan, 1950 data, but degree of slope less |
| Butler, J. E. & Fuguitt, G. V. | 1970 | rural sociology | population (rural urban) | Univariate | Positive association between small town population change & distance to nearest large town when large town is slightly larger. If nearest large town much larger, then negative association. All small towns show tendency to grow when near large town, regardless of large town size |
| Clayton, T. | 1977 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | | |
| Cordes, S. M. In E. W. Hassinger & L. R. Whiting (Eds.) | 1976 | rural health | population (SMSA) | | |
| Derr, J. M. | 1973 | rural sociology | population (rural urban, SMSA) | | |
| Fuguitt, C. V. | 1971 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | Descriptive | Incorporated non-SMSAs grew in 1950, '60, '70. More places move to larger size classes than move down. Places with larger initial size show more & quicker growth |
| Gertz, B. Meider, J. & Plückhan, M. L. | 1975 | rural mental health | NIMH Directory | | |
| Ginsberg, L. H. In L. H. Ginsberg (Ed.) | 1976 | rural social work | population (SMSA) | | |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Base of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--|
| Hasinger, E W & Holk J S | 1970 | rural sociology | population (rural-urban) | Descriptive | Greater number of rural churches since 1952. Sects experienced greater proportion of additions than churches. |
| Heaton T B | 1980 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | | |
| Hougland, J G, Jr & Sutton, W A, Jr | 1978 | rural sociology | population (Kruegel, 1966) | Multivariate | Number of volunteers is useful predictor of inter-organizational participation. |
| Johansen H E & Fugitt, G V | 1979 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | Multivariate | Weak association between urban accessibility & retail change is due to negative direct effect of urban accessibility on retail change offset by positive indirect effect operating through population change. |
| Jones J D, Wagenfeld M O & Robin S S | 1976 | rural mental health | population (NIMH Directory) | Narrative | Rural show more stall hours invested in "program oriented consultation" than urban, inner city, or suburban. Rural centers see selves as different from medical model. |
| Kahn, E J Jr | 1973 | population distribution | population (SMSA) | | |
| Kane W J | 1978 | rural health | population (rural urban) | | |
| Kirschenbaum A | 1971 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | Descriptive | No increase in volume on migration from metro to nonmetro found. |
| Lichter, D T, Heaton T B & Fugitt G V | 1979 | rural urban comparison | population (SMSA) | Multivariate | Migration streams less selective of young & high socioeconomic groups since 1970, but decline is less prominent for nonmetro. Age structure, education, & occupation composition more dissimilar. Migration has pushed age structure up & SES status down in nonmetro areas. |
| Maret F & Chenoweth I | 1979 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | Multivariate | Differences in supply & demand factors related to labor market activity between rural metro & rural nonmetro women. |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--|
| McGinn, N F | 1971 | rural urban comparison | population (rural-urban) | Multivariate | Urban knowledge is acquired through exposure to cities. Once person lives in city, increase in involvement in social system leads to increase in urban knowledge. |
| Ploch, L A | 1978 | rural sociology | population (rural-urban) | | |
| Pryor, R J | 1968 | rural sociology | population (rural-urban) | | |
| Rainey, K D. & Rainey, K G In T R Ford (Ed) | 1978 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | | |
| Rieger, J H | 1972 | rural sociology | population (rural urban) | Descriptive | Most men raised in rural place would leave community of orientation. Preponderance of movement is cityward. Migrants have higher levels of occupational attainment. Mean SES of nonmigrants in 1957 exceeds that of fathers of migrants. |
| Schwarzweiler, H K | 1979 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | | |
| Smith, L W. & Petersen, K K | 1980 | rural-urban comparison | population (rural-urban) | Descriptive | No support for Stouffer's suggestion that higher tolerance level of urban may be due to having lived in both worlds. |
| Solomon, G | Unpublished Manuscript Note 8 | rural mental health | population (SMSA) | | |
| Steeves, A D | 1972 | rural sociology | occupation (census farm) | Descriptive | As proletarianization rises, capital commitments to agriculture decrease. Degree of proletarianization related to type of farm enterprise, age, education, income, & political preference. |

Table 1 (Continued)

| Authors | Date | Focus | Basis of Definition | Statistics | Findings |
|---|------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|---|
| Sweet, J A | 1972 | rural urban comparison | population (rural-urban) | Multivariate | 75% of working farm women in 1960 were engaged in nonfarm occupations |
| Tarver, J D | 1972 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | Descriptive | Industrial structure of towns at start of decade influenced population trends in ensuing decade |
| United States Department of Health, Education & Welfare | 1974 | rural mental health | population (SMSA) | Descriptive | Rural centers younger than non & part rural 90% of rural centers in poverty catchment area Rural had more inpatient than part , but less than non-rural Out-patient greater at non-rural |
| United States Department of Health, Education & Welfare | 1978 | rural mental health | population (SMSA) | | |
| Veevers J E | 1971 | rural-urban comparison | population | Descriptive | Rural woman less likely to be childless than urban woman |
| Wagenfeld, M O & Robin, S S In L H Ginsberg (Ed) | 1976 | rural mental health | population (SMSA) | Narrative | Rural centers view organization as social service Urban centers view is medical Rural centers more activist in organizational role than urban Rural more subject to discrepancy between organizational & personal expectation |
| Weber, G K | 1976 | rural sociology | population (rural urban) | | |
| Wilkinson, K P In T R Ford (Ed) | 1978 | rural sociology | population (rural urban) | | |
| Witt, J | 1977 | rural sociology | population (rural urban) | | |
| Zutches J.L. & Brown, D L In T R Ford (Ed) | 1978 | rural sociology | population (SMSA) | Narrative | Growth of young & old ages in nonmetro Proportion of males declining in nonmetro Household size declining faster in nonmetro Nonwhite declined in nonmetro Education, % white collar & income in creasing in nonmetro |

Ninety sources defined rural in terms of population (verbal, $N=25$, homemade quantitative, $N=25$, external quantitative, $N=40$). As definitions became quantified, population becomes the sole component studied. "Rural-urban" and SMSA were the two primary population definitions in Table 1, both are based on census data. However, there was little consensus on a population criterion to define rural, it was applied to any town/city with a population less than 2,500 to less than 40,000. Other criteria used to define rural included occupation (14 sources), such as farming versus manufacturing, socioeconomic (19 sources), such as education and income levels, values (7 sources), which included importance of family and work ethic factors, isolation (5 sources), such as distance to a major city or university, and government (4 sources), such as type, or dependency on or autonomy from neighboring towns.

To determine if definitions were becoming more quantified in recent years, sources published since January 1978 ($N=73$) were inspected. In this subsample, 42% utilized homemade or external quantitative definitions versus 38% of all sources reviewed, 57% of the sources reviewed since January 1978, fell in the not stated and verbal categories as compared with 62% of all literature reviewed.

In the review, 48 sources presented a rural-urban comparison. It was found that 23 of these (48%) were based on "not stated" definitions of rural, seven utilized "verbal" definitions, 11 "homemade quantitative," and seven "external quantitative" definitions. Descriptive or inferential statistics related to rural-urban differences were presented in 32 cases (not stated, $N=9$, verbal, $N=7$, homemade quantitative, $N=10$, external quantitative, $N=6$).

The two most widely used quantitative external definitions were those based on United States Bureau of the Census data, Rural versus Urban (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1970), and Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) (Office of Management and Budget, 1975). For example, a National Institute of Mental Health study published in 1974 (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare) defined a rural town as having a population of less than 2,500 and a rural county as having at least 50% of its population residing in towns no larger than 2,500. The rural county definition then was used to define catchment areas of community mental health centers. The SMSA definition was formed on the basis of three criteria: population size, metropolitan character, and integration (Maret & Chenoweth, 1979). Briefly, a SMSA was defined as an area which included one city with 50,000 or more inhabitants, or a city with at least 25,000 inhabitants, which together with contiguous places, had a combined population of 50,000 and constituted for general economic and social purposes a single community, provided that the county had a total population of at least 75,000.

Discussion

The review of rural literature supported the belief that a wide variety of

definitions of rural have been employed. Comparative analysis of hypothesized rural-urban differences, replication studies, and comparability of different rural areas all are difficult because of lack of operational definitions (not stated and verbal) and because few authors are using the same definitions. When rural was defined it was treated as a unidimensional concept in most literature, when rural was quantified, reliance was almost totally on population criteria. Disappointingly there is no strong trend toward more quantified explorations of the meaning of rural, the proportions of "not stated" and "verbal" definitions utilized since 1978 was comparable to those used in the entire literature sample reviewed.

This is not to argue that quantified definitions of rural are in and of themselves the goal, they have limits. They rely almost totally on population data, omitting such important considerations as sociocultural or value factors. They also may mask changing lifestyles and migration trends. For example, to define an area as rural or urban may overlook differences between rural and urban counties adjacent or nonadjacent to a SMSA (Beale & Fugitt, 1978, Heaton, 1980, and Schwarzweller, 1979) (Adjacent counties have greater accessibility to services and employment within an SMSA than do nonadjacent counties and thus may be more urban than rural in nature).

It is evident that multidimensional definitions of rural which focus on sociocultural or occupational factors as well as population criteria are not in wide use. One example being explored by the authors in a study of mental health administrators combines a rural definition based on population density and center concepts with SMSA influences. This taxonomy of rural has four parts: (a) an urban SMSA baseline for comparison purposes, (b) rural county in a SMSA, (c) rural county adjacent to SMSA, and (d) rural county nonadjacent to SMSA. A county with a city of 10,000 or more (the population center) in which 50% of the population or more live in towns/cities of 2,500 or greater was defined as urban. Any county not meeting either of these criteria is defined as rural.

This conceptualization of a heterogeneous rural has application in the study of mental health management and systems. Selection and orientation of personnel for mental health positions would focus on specific components of rural in a catchment area and how these influence both work and nonwork parts of these professionals' lives (cultural events available, school system quality and type, shopping, medical facilities available, etc.). A detailed inspection of rural would aid in understanding the career paths and turnover of mental health professionals. Rather than asking whether the generic rural catchment area has difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, interest would be on whether differences occur between rural mental health systems in counties nonadjacent to SMSA, counties adjacent to SMSA, and in SMSAs. Do these rural systems differ in salaries for mental health professionals, roles mental health professionals fill, or turnover rates? For example, data under analysis indicate that retention of mental health administrators may be "better" in urban and nonadjacent rural areas, than in adjacent rural catchment areas. These

may be the starting systems in mental health management career paths. Further research is needed but the point is that propinquity of rural systems to SMSA may make these adjacent systems significantly different from nonadjacent rural counterparts.

In conclusion, the authors are not arguing for any one specific definition of rural but for attention paid in defining and conceptualizing rural equal to the energy currently devoted to rural problems and issues.

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