

## The Spanish Journal of Rural Development (SJR): An example of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary journal on issues of rural areas

**Ignacio J. Diaz-Maroto\*** and **P. Vila-Lameiro**

*University of Santiago de Compostela, Higher Polytechnic School, Campus Universitario s/n, E-27002, Lugo, Spain*

\*correspondence: [ignacio.diazmaroto@usc.es](mailto:ignacio.diazmaroto@usc.es)

**Highlights:** The Spanish Journal of Rural Development (SJR) is a journal edited by the Galician Association of Researchers for Rural Development (AGAIDERU) which publishes original research works of practical application in different fields of rural zones (forestry, agronomy, rural sciences, international cooperation and socioeconomic issues). The overall focus is on the sustainable rural development of local populations.

**Keywords:** Rural areas; sustainable development; interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary journal; role of rural science journals

### Introduction

The Spanish Journal of Rural Development (SJR) is a quarterly international scientific journal published by the Galician Association of Researchers for Rural Development, Asociación Gallega de Investigadores para el Desarrollo Rural (AGAIDERU).

Spanish Journal of Rural Development is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary journal which publishes original research articles covering both theoretical perspectives and practical application within the broadly defined disciplines of forestry, agronomy, environment, rural geography, rural planning, rural sociology, international cooperation, socioeconomic issues and related subjects.

The overall focus is on the sustainable rural development of local populations, within different identified Priority Lines: i) Sustainable agriculture and protection of natural resources; ii) Forest management and reassignment of the productive function of forest to improve the life quality of local populations; iii) Social and economic changes in agriculture, forest management and rural development to better integrate socio-economic issues in local communities; iv) Environmental management of agroforestry systems; v) Management of water and hydric resources as indicators of quality of life and sustainable development in rural environments; vi) Use of primary production, forestry and agriculture as sources of renewable energy; vii) Sustainable land use; viii) Ecological production, quality, food safety and guarantee of origin.

The journal applies a policy of exchange with scientific journals, as well national as international levels, and is indexed in the important scientific databases.

The coverage area of the journal is global in scope and requests works based on empirical research all over the world with relevance and interest to the international scientific community. The primary audience of SJR are social science researchers, professors and students interested in rural issues, processes and experiences. Another target audience is composed of those policy and management functions interested in the problems of rural areas (politicians, technicians, planners and rural people in general).

The aim of our work is show an example of inter- and multidisciplinary journal on different topics of rural areas, and the objectives are: i) Encourage conservation and appropriate management of agroforestry ecosystems and rural areas; ii) Diffusion and transfer of knowledge provided by research to sectors that have a direct or indirect involvement with rural areas; iii) Promote and coordinate activities of technical and training scientific exchange, which is intended to raise awareness of the issues and strategies to compatible the socio-economic development of rural zones, respecting their natural environment and their culture.

### The role of rural science journals

Rural science journals are typically multidisciplinary in outlook. They publish breakthrough research for the perception and analysis of the progress of current rural societies, the meaning and interpretation of "rurality", the implementation of rural policy, the human interactions with the rural environment, among other topics of interest.

The term "*rural*" suggests a lot of things to many people, such as forest and agricultural landscapes, isolation, small villages, low population density, and other aspects as tradition, rural culture,... (Miller and Luloff 1981; Morrill et al. 1999; Gary et al. 2005).

On the other hand, there is no common definition of rurality in rural areas. According to European Commission, "the complexity of a common definition is related to the various perceptions of those elements that characterize rurality, the difficulty to collect relevant data at the basic geographical unit level and to the need to have a tailor-made definition in accordance with to the object being analyzed or policy concerned".

However, defining rural for other questions such as different policies and research purposes requires researchers and policy analysts to specify which aspects of rurality are most relevant to the topic at hand and then selects a correct definition. Rural and urban taxonomies often do not discuss important demographic, cultural, and economic differences across rural places-differences that have major implications for policy and research. Factors such as geographic scale and region also must be considered (Miller and Luloff 1981; Popper et al. 2000; Gary et al. 2005).

A different approach due to van der Ploeg (2008) does not assume that the rural and urban are mutually exclusive. The simple division between rural and urban no longer fits with the spatial, cultural, economic and social characteristics of the current situation in the world and, in particular, in EU.

Villages and countryside are intimately linked and interdependent. New need appears in term of more rurality to maintain a balanced society and an acceptable quality of life. Rural is no longer the antipode of the city, but above all it is a multi-faceted prerequisite. It is important to identify the relationships between the village and the countryside in terms of needs, benefits obtained by mutual exchanges, but also disadvantages due to land uses, social and economic changes, processes of abandonment (Miller and Luloff 1981; van der Ploeg 2008). It is at this point where journals on rural issues in general and forestry in particular, should influence today, given the complexity of the interaction between urban and rural.

## Conclusions

The focal point of the rural science journals should be on the sustainable rural development of local populations. The Spanish Journal of Rural Development is an inter- and multidisciplinary journal which publishes original research works from several theoretical perspectives and methodological practical application as broadly defined.

Although, the coverage area of SJRD is global in scope, their hearing is all those people interested in the problems of rural areas (researchers, teachers, students, politicians, technicians, planners and rural people in general).

Finally, urban and rural are exhaustively related and mutually dependent. It is important to identify the relationships between the village and the countryside and, it is at this aim where journals on rural issues should pressure today, given the complexity of this interaction.

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