



Subjective Well-Being and Geographies of Discontent in Rural Europe: Quantitative Insights from Survey and Spatial Data

Organisers:

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Abstract

Subjective well-being is a critical area of research that examines individuals' perceptions of their happiness, life satisfaction, and quality of life. While much of the literature on subjective well-being has focused on urban areas, there is a growing need to explore its dynamics in rural regions, particularly in Europe where rural populations face unique challenges and opportunities. This session aims to bring together researchers using quantitative methods to investigate the factors that influence subjective well-being in rural Europe.

We are particularly interested in contributions that leverage survey data linked with spatial data at various scales – ranging from grid-level up to regional spatial dimensions – and that explore the concept of “geographies of discontent,” understood as the uneven distribution of well-being and perception of decline in rural areas. Contributions may involve examining factors such as economic marginalization, depopulation, limited access to services, environmental changes, and social isolation, all of which contribute to differing levels of well-being and political discontent across rural Europe. We seek papers that investigate how these factors intersect and are spatially distributed, and how they can be quantitatively analyzed to inform policy and practice. Contributions may include but are not limited to:

- The use of geospatial data to explore how environmental, economic, and social factors such as proximity to urban centers, access to services, rural poverty, infrastructure, and natural amenities affect subjective well-being and political discontent.
- Methodological innovations in the integration of survey data with spatial information, such as the use of geographic information systems, spatial econometrics, multilevel modelling, or advanced mapping techniques.
- To showcase innovative empirical studies that merge survey and spatial data to uncover key drivers of subjective well-being and geographies of discontent in rural areas.

- To foster a dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners on the implications of these findings for rural development and well-being improvement.
- Quantitative studies that analyze the role of rural policies, social networks, and community structures in shaping well-being outcomes in remote or depopulated areas.

Objectives:

- To advance the understanding of the spatial and contextual factors that contribute to well-being and political discontent in rural settings.
- To showcase innovative quantitative methods that combine survey and spatial data to offer deeper insights into the determinants of subjective well-being and geographies of discontent in rural Europe.
- To foster discussions on the implications of these findings for policy development aimed at improving quality of life in rural areas.

Target Audience:

This session is designed for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners interested in rural studies, human geography, public health, and social policy. It is particularly relevant for those using quantitative methods to explore the relationship between well-being and spatial factors, as well as for those investigating rural marginalization, inequalities, and the lived experiences of rural populations.