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Building an Accessible California: The State of Accessible Housing in Rural Northern California

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**Building an Accessible California: The State of Accessible Housing in Rural Northern California**

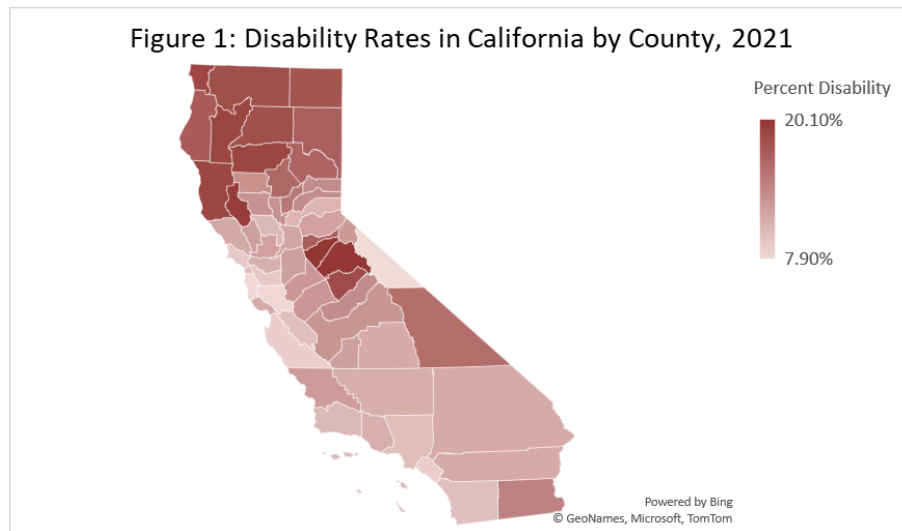
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POL 195: Policy Analysis in California

Professor Butters

## Introduction

As California faces an unprecedented housing crisis, the unequal burdens facing marginalized groups in securing a home has become more apparent. For those with disabilities, securing an affordable, comfortable place to call home requires accommodating their specific needs. One in four California adults have a disability, with rural jurisdictions in northern California representing some of the highest rates of disability in California, as demonstrated by **Figure 1** (Disability Impacts California, 2023; *California State Profile*, 2017). California's housing crisis has led to a lack of housing supply and continuously growing housing costs for Californians, and half of disabled households in California have unmet housing needs (Statewide Housing Plan, 2023). This underscores the importance of examining the experiences of those with disabilities in northern California during the ongoing housing crisis.



Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data, Table S1810

Federal and statewide policies, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Fair Housing Act (FHA), and California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), have mandated that housing providers and policymakers ensure that people with disabilities have equitable access to housing. The most common approach to securing accessibility is the

reasonable accommodation and modification framework. Reasonable accommodations are changes to housing policies or procedures that ensure equal opportunity to “use and enjoy a dwelling” (Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications,” 2023). Reasonable modifications, by contrast, are structural changes to housing to ensure accessibility (“Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications,” 2023). For the purposes of this project, reasonable accommodation will be the language used to describe procedural and structural changes, as this is the framework used by California jurisdictions.

This project seeks to understand the state of accessible housing and policy in rural northern California. My research question is whether rural counties with Whiter, more affluent populations have a higher number of accessible housing units for those with disabilities. To answer this question, I will be conducting a county-level index of reasonable accommodation policies in each jurisdiction, and analyzing whether my index results are correlated with the affluence, Whiteness, and rurality of counties. I will also explore possible correlations between the number of accessible housing units with Whiteness, affluence, and rurality. This analysis will begin to provide insight as to how housing policies serve those with disabilities across different rural counties in California, and provide recommendations as to how disability housing policy can better serve those in rural areas.

### **Significance of Issue and Background**

Assessing disability housing policy in rural counties holds important implications for local, state, and federal policymakers and stakeholders. The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has identified that disabled Californians continue to face burdens to securing housing that accommodates their needs, which is reflected in the fact that many households have unmet housing needs (People with Disabilities, 2023). Furthermore, the

greatest number of housing complaints are on the basis of disability discrimination, signaling that housing policy must continue to protect and advance the housing rights of those with disabilities (Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, 2020). While legal protections have been granted in recent years, these protections do not guarantee that people with disabilities have ceased to face discrimination and lack of accommodation.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has identified that disability rates are highest in rural areas and low-income households, both factors that shape housing experiences and need (A Picture of Disability and Designated Housing, 2015). This is further complicated by the fact that statewide policies surrounding disability often remain vague, without measurable goals, and do not sufficiently serve those with different types of disabilities (McCormick et al., 2023).

While research has demonstrated the housing needs of those with disabilities, little research has been done regarding the needs of those with disabilities in rural areas. Housing affordability has impacted rural Californian communities, with many citizens of rural communities encountering rent and housing costs that are above their income levels (Statewide Housing Plan, 2023). In addition, rural communities face difficulties when building new housing due to increased costs, meaning that there is less incentive to build affordable housing (Strauss, 2018). Rural areas have specialized housing needs and often lack resources that urban areas have, including legal aid to prevent eviction (Newman and Pruitt, 2020).

In 1988, the Fair Housing Act was amended to prohibit housing discrimination based on disability (“Fair Housing Law,” 2023). This established that the federal government would protect disabled people from discriminatory zoning and land use policy, and enforce accessibility requirements (“The Fair Housing Act,” 2023). Furthermore, the FHA allowed for people with

disabilities to request reasonable accommodations to their rental units (“Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications,” 2023). The FHA also stipulated that multifamily housing with four or more units built for occupancy after March 13, 1991 must meet accessibility requirements (“Accessibility Requirements for Buildings,” 2023).

California expanded these requirements and definitions of disability with the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), which defined a wider array of conditions as disabilities, and does not substantially limit the coverage of disability protections as federal law does (“The FEHA Provides Broader Coverage,” 2022).

California jurisdictions are required to regularly submit Housing Elements, which are “blueprints” submitted to HCD that identify and address local housing needs and how development will be approached (Housing Elements, 2023). In these Housing Elements, jurisdictions are required to undergo an analysis that quantifies the amount of disabled people and their housing status, assessment of housing needs and existing programs, and steps that the jurisdiction will take to meet unmet needs (Housing Elements, 2023). This was furthered by the passage of Senate Bill 520 in 2002.

California’s Senate Bill 520 mandated that local jurisdictions include an analysis of housing needs and barriers for those with disabilities in their housing element (“SB 520 Memo,” 2002). This analysis includes information regarding possible constraints in building and zoning codes that limit the construction of housing for disabled people, special permit requirements for group homes, and information regarding reasonable accommodation (“SB 520 Memo,” 2002). This bill also required that jurisdictions provide programs that limit the housing barriers disabled people face or provide reasonable accommodations, emphasizing the need for solution-oriented housing programs and policies (“SB 520 Memo,” 2002).

This research project will examine how housing needs for people with disabilities are currently met by rural northern California jurisdictions, as disability rates are higher in this region relative to the state. This study attempts to understand the possible relationships between social determinants including Whiteness, affluence, and rurality, and the availability of accessible housing.

### **Theory and Argument**

In this project, I propose that more affluent, Whiter rural counties in northern California will have more affordable, accessible units for those with disabilities. I believe that Whiteness will positively influence the amount of accessible housing units because of the fact that Whiteness is positively correlated with affluence (Iceland, 2019). Affluent counties are more likely to have monetary resources to create housing programs for those with disabilities, and therefore may have more affordable, accessible units. In summary, I argue that Whiteness and affluence both positively influence accessible housing because both of these variables are positively correlated with economic resources, which in turn may provide more opportunity to build accessible housing.

Conversely, I argue that rurality will negatively influence the availability of accessible housing for people with disabilities. I argue this because rural areas have older housing stock and less housing demand, which would negatively impact the amount of accessible housing being built (“The Future of Rural Housing,” 2016).

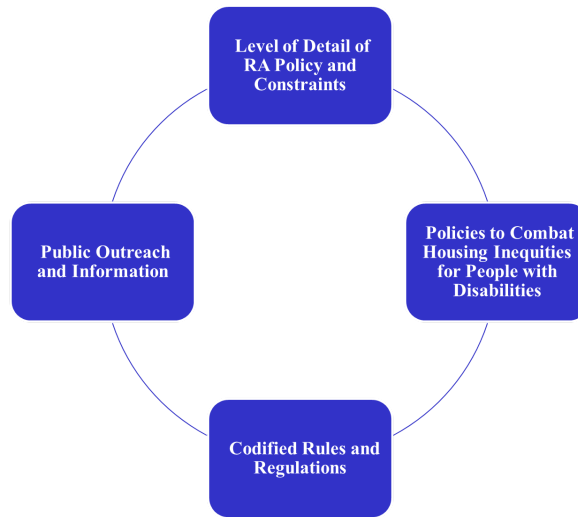
The independent variable Whiteness will be measured with the percentage of White residents in the county of interest. The independent variable economic affluence will be measured using the median income of people living in each county in 2021. Data for my independent variables Whiteness and affluence were found using the U.S. Census American

Community Survey (ACS). The ACS provides county-level, quantitative data between 2015-2022 (“American Community Survey Data,” 2023). I will be using the 2021 5-Year Estimates ACS data due to the fact that many of the counties I examine have small populations, and 2021 data is the most recently available for these counties.

The independent variable rurality by county will be measured using the 2013 US Department of Agriculture's Rural-Urban Continuum Codes (RUCC). RUCC codes measure commuting patterns, population density, and urbanization to delineate codes among metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties (“Rural-Urban Continuum Codes,” 2023) . RUCC has five datasets available between the years 1974-2013. I will be using the 2013 RUCC code dataset for my analyses, as this is the most recent dataset available.

The dependent variable, accessibility, will be measured using multiple indicators: the number of multifamily housing structures with 5+ units built on or after 1991, and the efficacy of each county’s reasonable accommodation policy. 2021 ACS data will be used to determine the number of accessible multifamily units in each county. Reasonable accommodation policies will be measured using an index. The qualitative index has the following categories, as listed in **Figure 2**: the level of detail in the reasonable accommodation policy, whether there are codified rules and regulations for reasonable accommodation in building and zoning codes, and whether the counties make information about reasonable accommodations readily available to the public. These categories will be operationalized into continuous numerical variables that represent the effectiveness of reasonable accommodation policies.





**Figure 2. Reasonable Accommodation Index Evaluation Criteria**

To collect data concerning accessibility, I have found both qualitative and quantitative datasets. HCD’s Housing Element Download Tool provides the most updated housing elements for counties and cities in California. Element data from 2009-2023 is available, and the elements list qualitative and quantitative analyses as to how counties and cities are complying with HCD’s accessibility requirements (“Housing Element Download Tool,” 2023). I will be utilizing the most updated housing elements for my counties of choice to assess their reasonable accommodation policies, which supplements my accessibility variable. I will use 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates data to measure the number of multifamily buildings with 5+ units built on or after 1991. The qualitative index and measurement of multifamily buildings with 5+ units will work in conjunction to assess the state of accessibility in each county.

Possible confounding variables include the housing market and demand, as well as the years in which the housing stock was built. The comparatively less competitive housing market in rural Northern California areas may account for the lack of accessible housing in the area, as accessible housing is only required in rental units, and with less demand less rental units would

be available. In addition, the housing stock in rural areas may be older, which would account for the lack of accessible units due to the fact that accessible housing was only required by law after 1991 (“Accessibility Requirements for Buildings,” 2023).

The demand for affordable housing may also influence the state of accessible housing in each jurisdiction. This is because people with disabilities are more likely to require affordable housing, meaning that the demand for affordable housing in a given area may influence the availability of accessible housing, and vice versa (Dawkins and Miller, 2015). This research does not delve into the relationship between affordable and accessible housing, meaning that some accessible housing may not be accounted for.

### **Research Design and Data**

I will be exploring the relationships between Whiteness, affluence, and rurality on accessible housing in rural northern California. The first hypothesis I will explore is that higher levels of White populations will lead to higher rates of accessible housing. The second hypothesis I will explore is that higher levels of affluence lead to higher rates of accessible housing. The third hypothesis I explore is that the more rural an area is, the less accessible units will be available.

To answer these hypotheses, I conducted a small-n analysis of 21 rural northern California counties. I focused on rural counties north of Sacramento county, as these areas have higher rates of disability (*California State Profile*, 2017). I chose to conduct a small-n analysis due to the relatively limited research available on my given topic. I also felt that a small-n analysis was most appropriate because a more in-depth reasonable accommodation program evaluation would gather valuable information regarding accessible housing policy in these areas. I focused on counties because county-level data and analysis would be better suited to evaluate

the state of reasonable accommodation policy and accessible housing in the rural northern California region. While county-level analysis ensures that policies still remain local, it can provide more insight into accessible housing availability and procedure for rural California counties than a more localized analysis would.

My independent variables are Whiteness, affluence, and rurality per county. To operationalize the Whiteness variable, I gathered data from 2021 5-Year ACS estimates regarding the percentage of White residents per county. I had 21 total variables, with possible percentages being between 0-100% population of White residents. The range of percentage of White residents among these 21 counties was 59.23% to 90.5% White, indicating a relatively varied range of Whiteness in these counties.

To operationalize affluence per county, I collected the median household incomes in each county during the year 2021 from the 2021 5-Year ACS estimates. I chose median incomes as a measure of affluence due to the fact that this measure would disregard income outliers in each county, and reflect the affluence of the overall population. There were 21 total variables, with the range of household incomes being between \$42,206 to \$99,734.

To operationalize rurality per county, I used 2013 RUCC codes for each of the 21 counties analyzed. RUCC codes range between 1-9, with 1-3 measuring the population density of metropolitan areas. As the code increases, metropolitan area populations decrease, which indicates less urbanization (“Documentation,” 2023). Codes 4-9 are reserved for non-metro areas, and as the code number increases, the more rural an area is (“Documentation,” 2023). In summary, higher RUCC codes signify lower population density and urbanization, which in turn indicates higher rurality.

My dependent variable, accessibility, was operationalized using two indicators. One indicator was the number of multifamily buildings per 1,000 residents with 5+ units built on or after the year 1991. This data was collected from 2021 5-Year ACS estimates tables. The number of variables for this measure was 21, and the range of multifamily units per capita was 0-156. This indicator was used because of FHA accessibility regulations requiring that multifamily buildings with 4+ units built after 1991 have accessible housing units available. While there are other state and federal legislation that impose accessibility requirements, the FHA requirements have been in effect for the longest amount of time. Given the fact that rural counties may have older housing stock, the FHA requirements are the most appropriate to use as a variable of analysis, as more housing was built following its regulations.

The second indicator used to measure accessibility was a reasonable accommodation policy evaluation index. Qualitative and quantitative data regarding each county's reasonable accommodation policies were gathered from the most recent Housing Elements enacted by each county, which ranged in year from 2016-2023. This index sought to measure the implementation and effectiveness of each county's reasonable accommodation policies using the following criteria: 1.) the level of detail in each county's housing element regarding reasonable accommodation policy, 2.) the presence of policies to further housing for the disabled population, 3.) the enactment of codified rules and regulations regarding reasonable accommodation policy, and 4.) the availability of public information regarding reasonable accommodation policy. These criteria follow the recommendations of the Analysis Tool listed in SB 520 for reasonable accommodation policy ("SB 520 Memo," 2002).

I used a 1-3 scale to measure the reasonable accommodation criteria for each county. The lowest score that a county could receive was 4, while the highest score a county could receive was 12. The breakdown of scores received are detailed in the following paragraphs.

The level of detail in each housing element regarding reasonable accommodation policy was chosen as a criterion because of the fact that Housing Element analysis and SB520 require that counties explore housing needs, constraints, and current and future programs to address shortcomings in housing for people with disabilities. Detailed, specific analysis and findings are necessary to advance reasonable accommodation policy and housing for disabled people as a whole, as counties cannot improve without thoroughly understanding the state of policy. The scoring of this criterion was as follows: a score of 1 meant that counties provided little detail and/or weak description of implementation and analysis of reasonable accommodation policy, a score of 2 meant that counties offered some detail into their reasonable accommodation policy, but didn't adequately describe implementation or analysis of policies, and a score of 3 meant that counties provide a high level of detail regarding their reasonable accommodation policies, and included specific implementation and barriers.

The presence of policies to further housing for disabled people was a criterion because of the need for solution-oriented approaches to securing accessible housing for people with disabilities. In addition to being required by SB520, the presence of policies ensure that counties not only understand current constraints and shortcomings, but have committed to improving current reasonable accommodation and accessibility policy. The scoring of this criterion was as follows: a score of 1 meant that no policies to advance housing for those with disabilities were listed, a score of 2 meant that a policy to further housing was listed but with limited actionable

goals, and a score of 3 meant that at least one policy was listed with an actionable goal to further housing, and an explanation as to how it will help.

The codification of reasonable accommodation rules and regulations was a criterion because codifying policy ensures that it has a legal basis for implementation and enforcement, which is important considering the implications these policies hold for people with disabilities. Codifying policy ensures that officials have a set procedure to follow, and properly follow accessibility requirements in building and zoning code. The scoring of this criterion was as follows: a score of 1 meant that reasonable accommodation policy was not codified in the county's zoning and building codes, a score of 2 meant that reasonable accommodation policy was codified in county zoning and building code but some processes or procedures were vague or unclear, and a score of 3 meant that reasonable accommodation policy was codified with clear processes and regulations.

The availability of public information regarding reasonable accommodation policy was a criterion because in order to fully commit to advancing equitable housing policy for people with disabilities, jurisdictions must provide public information and outreach regarding housing rights and procedures for disabled residents. While establishing codified laws and policies to further housing for people with disabilities is vitally important, these laws and policies won't be fully realized with an uninformed population, as people won't be aware of the rights and services granted to them. The scoring of this criterion was as follows: a score of 1 meant that there was no discussion in the housing element as to how public outreach or publicly available information will be promoted or used, a score of 2 meant that some information regarding reasonable accommodation was available publicly, but this information utilized one medium of communication and there was no discussion of continued outreach, and a score of 3 meant that

there was at least one policy listed that seeks to publicly inform with multiple mediums of distribution, including but not limited to collaboration with nonprofits, online and in-person distribution, or a designated city official to provide information.

Data from each jurisdiction's most recent Housing Element, as well as information on their county websites, will be utilized to evaluate and score reasonable accommodation policies. After evaluation of the data is complete, scores and trends of the policy evaluation will be used to determine whether there are relationships between my independent variables and the effectiveness of reasonable accommodation policy.

While the measures utilized in this project begin to successfully operationalize my variables, there are a few limitations to consider. The FHA accessibility regulations list that multifamily buildings with 4 or more units have a certain number of accessible units ("Accessibility Requirements for Buildings," 2023). However, Census data separates the applicable data by 3-4 units and 5-19 units, meaning that my multifamily units measure only included 5+ unit buildings. Due to this discrepancy, this measure may not account for some accessible units included in the 3-4 unit category. Furthermore, the data concerning multifamily units only accounts for occupied housing units. Potential accessible unoccupied housing units will not be considered in this data.

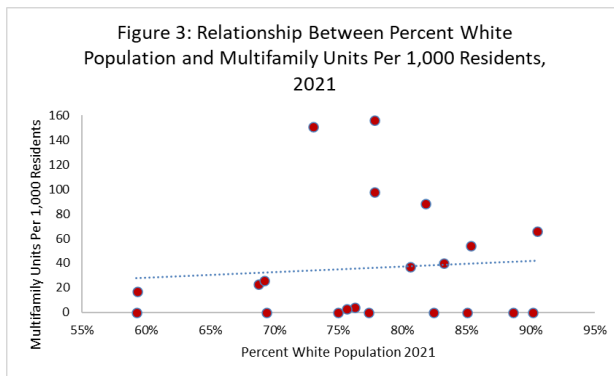
Data regarding the availability of accessible housing, especially in rural areas, is difficult to come by. Future research might seek to establish measures or databases for accessible housing in these areas. In summary, the measure of multifamily buildings with 5+ units is reasonably reliable, but validity comes into question when considering the high margins of error often present in rural ACS data (Greiman, 2017).

The reasonable accommodation policy index followed the tenets of SB520 policy and recommendations, meaning that it is a valid measure, but reliability may be questioned. As the data analyzed for the index was mainly qualitative, subjectivity of the evaluator may influence index results. While I gave jurisdictions certain scores with the information gathered from Housing Elements and county websites, other evaluators may reach different conclusions with the same information.

Finally, the validity of RUCC codes is questionable, considering the fact that the data used is from 2013. These codes may not reflect the current conditions of counties measured, and it would be preferable for future research to use more updated rurality data.

## Findings and Analysis

### Hypothesis 1: Whiteness and Accessibility



Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates Data and HCD Housing Element Data

The percentage of White residents was not demonstrated to be significantly correlated with availability of accessible housing in each county. As demonstrated by **Figures 3 and 4** below, the scatterplots demonstrate a weak correlation between White residents and multifamily units, as well as reasonable accommodation index scores. As shown in **Figure 3**, the correlation coefficient between the White population and multifamily units is .08, demonstrating a weak

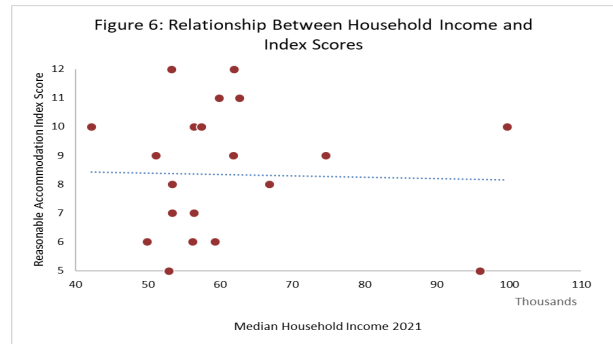
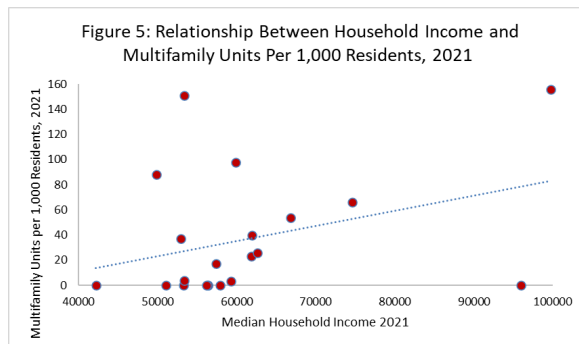


relationship. As shown in **Figure 4**, the correlation coefficient between the White population and index scores is  $-0.17$ , which also demonstrates a weak relationship. My hypothesis that a higher percentage of White residents would lead to more accessible housing was not supported by the data.

While my hypothesis was not supported, some interesting findings arose in the data.

**Figure 3** demonstrates that 8 out of 21 counties analyzed had 0 multifamily buildings following FHA accessibility regulations. This is a significant proportion of counties, and demonstrates a need for research into the availability of accessible housing in rural areas. Furthermore, Lake and Placer counties far outweighed other counties in terms of accessible units, with 151 and 156 units per capita, respectively. Further research might examine why these counties may have more accessible housing relative to other rural areas in northern California.

## Hypothesis 2: Affluence and Accessibility



Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates Data and HCD Housing Element Data

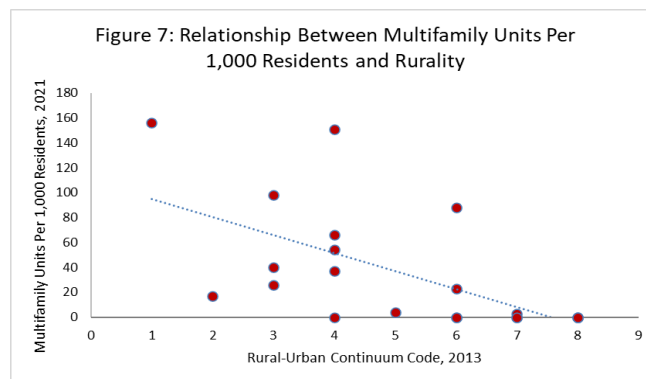
Economic affluence was not demonstrated to have a significant correlation with accessible housing. **Figure 5** models the correlation between affluence and multifamily accessible units, and the correlation coefficient is  $0.34$ . This demonstrates a moderate relationship between affluence and multifamily units, but is not significant enough to support my hypothesis. **Figure 6** demonstrates the relationship between affluence and reasonable

accommodation index scores, with a correlation coefficient of -0.03. While the relationship between affluence and multifamily housing alone may indicate moderate support for my hypothesis, the weak negative correlation between affluence and index scores complicates this relationship.

Interestingly, the slight negative correlation between affluence and index scores demonstrate that some poorer counties had higher index scores than their more affluent counterparts. This means that despite limited economic resources, some poorer jurisdictions established comprehensive reasonable accommodation policy and programs.

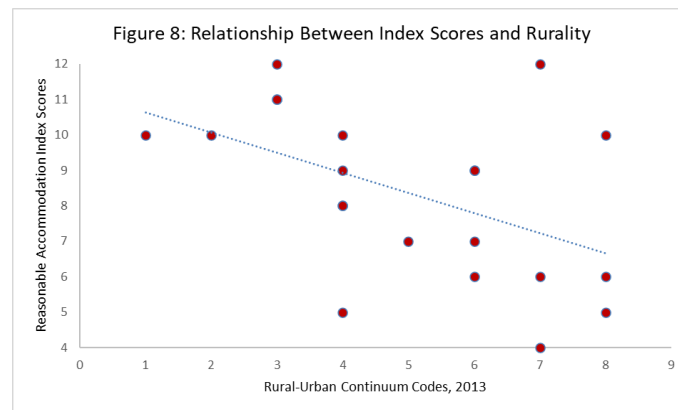
In addition, these graphs showcase two counties that perform consistently in opposite directions across measures of accessibility, despite having similar levels of affluence. Placer County is one of the most affluent counties analyzed, and has significantly higher levels of accessible multifamily units and index scores compared to its counterparts. Alpine County, a similarly affluent county, is an outlier in the opposite direction: it has 0 accessible multifamily units according to ACS data, and scored among the lowest on the index evaluation. This begs the question of why these counties are so different in their approaches and implementation of accessible housing for people with disabilities.

### Hypothesis 3: Rurality and Accessibility



Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates Data and 2013 RUCC Codes

**Figure 7** models the relationship between multifamily units and rurality, with a  $-0.61$  correlation coefficient. This demonstrates a moderate negative correlation between rurality and multifamily units. In summary, this indicates that the more rural a county is, the less likely it is to have accessible housing units.



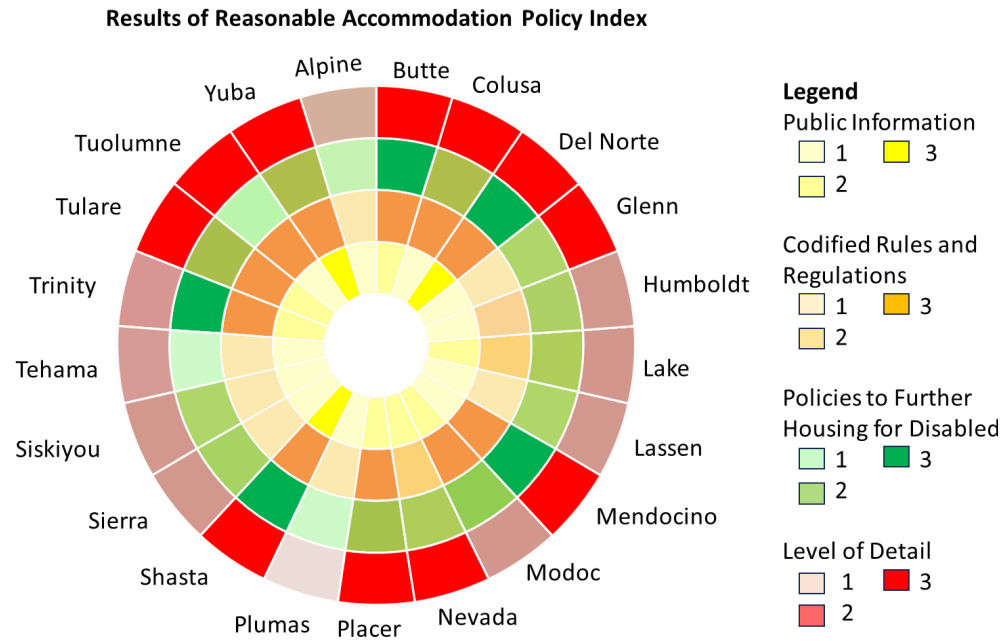
Source: HCD Housing Element Data and 2013 RUCC Codes

Support for my hypothesis is furthered with the relationship shown in **Figure 8**. Reasonable accommodation index scores and rurality were demonstrated to have a correlation coefficient of  $-0.49$ . While this relationship is not as significant as the relationship between multifamily units and rurality, this moderate correlation further supports my hypothesis that rurality is negatively correlated with accessible housing. Further research should be conducted to assess the relationship between rurality and accessible housing availability and policy.

Importantly, **Figure 8** shows two important outliers in the data. Shasta County scores low on the RUCC Codes with a code of 3, and high on the index evaluation, with a score of 12. In contrast, Del Norte County scored high on the RUCC Codes with a code of 7, but also received a score of 12 on the index evaluation. These outliers demonstrate counties that are vastly different in terms of urbanization and built environment, but have both successfully furthered reasonable accommodation policy. Possible future research could compare and contrast these two counties

to assess why these counties in particular have successfully adopted and implemented reasonable accommodation policy.

**Reasonable Accommodation Policy Index Results**



**Figure 9. Results of Reasonable Accommodation Index**

Source: HCD Housing Element Data and County Websites

**Figure 9** models the results of the reasonable accommodation index policy evaluation.

The mean score for the index was 8.3/12. The lowest scoring counties were Alpine County and Siskiyou County, with scores of 5/12. The highest scoring counties were Del Norte County and Shasta County, with scores of 12/12.

**Figure 9** reveals that 11/21 counties scored a 3 on the level of detail regarding reasonable accommodation in their housing elements, and 9/21 scored a 2. Only one county, Plumas County, scored a 1 on its level of detail. This is a positive finding, as this demonstrates that the vast majority of counties are including some level of detail and analysis as to the respective needs, constraints, and policies needed for people with disabilities in their county.

The lowest performing criterion on the index was public information available, as only Yuba, Del Norte, and Shasta Counties scored a 3 on this criterion. Most counties had incredibly limited information on their websites regarding reasonable accommodation policy. A trend among counties that scored a 2 was that many had codified reasonable accommodation policy in their building and zoning code, which was found on their websites, but no other information was found. While the codified policy in zoning code is a step in the right direction, this information isn't necessarily accessible to the average person. Counties need to provide more easy-to-access information regarding reasonable accommodation policy and housing rights for those with disabilities.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Data-driven policy is essential to further the housing needs of people with disabilities. More research must be done on the state and local level concerning housing accessibility. A potential model for this research could be HUD's 2015 report that used American Housing Survey data to analyze the accessibility potential of the national housing stock (Bo'sher, 2015). This report created an accessibility index that measured the level of accessibility potential, which could be a useful model for California-based research.

State and local-level research must consider the unique social, political, and environmental circumstances of urban and rural areas. Housing research has overwhelmingly focused on the housing crisis and affordability in urban areas, despite the fact that rural areas are also impacted by the housing crisis.

The unique housing needs of people with disabilities must be included in mainstream conversations regarding housing policy. Disability is another important factor that can contribute to understanding how intersecting identities shape housing experiences. Housing debate

acknowledges the interactions and influences that race and income have on housing, but we lack nuanced discussion as to how disability impacts individual and family housing situations. Conversations regarding rural housing policy must also begin to include the needs of the disabled community.

Local rural counties must continue to advance accessible housing policy, which includes adopting reasonable accommodation policies as well as continuing to build accessible housing. Counties should collaborate with disability advocacy organizations and leaders, such as Disability Rights California and local disability advocates, to advance more equitable housing policies, and develop outreach and public information programs.

### **Conclusion**

This research sought to understand potential social and economic factors that may drive accessible housing production. My research sought to understand if Whiteness, affluence, and rurality affected the accessible housing stock in rural northern California communities. To do so, I examined the correlations between Whiteness, affluence, and rurality with accessible multifamily units, and scores on a reasonable accommodation policy index.

Both Whiteness and affluence were not shown to be strongly correlated with accessible housing stock and policy. However, rurality was demonstrated to have a moderate negative correlation on housing accessibility, meaning that more rural areas were less likely to have accessible housing. This is an important finding, especially given the fact that many of the rural jurisdictions examined have high levels of disability. This signals the need for more prioritization of housing policies that reflect the needs of people with disabilities in rural northern California.

An evaluation of reasonable accommodation policies demonstrated that while many jurisdictions were making positive steps towards establishing and implementing reasonable

accommodation policies, most were not adequately disseminating information regarding reasonable accommodation and housing rights for people with disabilities. Without informing the public of available resources and programs, advancing housing rights for disabled Californians cannot be achieved. Hopefully, this research can serve as a starting point to thoroughly examine accessible housing policies and stock in rural California. Advancing accessible housing is one pivotal step to build a California that reflects the needs of all its residents.

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