**Title:**

The Importance of Place in Adults Approaching Midlife

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**Description:**

From Paige’s Dissertation abstract:

The primary purpose of this dissertation was to investigate rural-urban differences in cognitive performance by considering proximal and distal rurality differences in leisure time activity engagement and cognitive performance. Social capital, physical health, education and occupation were possible mediators. Data from the ongoing Colorado Adoption/Twin Study of Lifespan behavioral development and cognitive aging (i.e. CATSLife) were leveraged (ages 28-49 years), and potential selectivity of geospatial associations examined.

Study 1 evaluated the informativeness of continuous distal (IRRcounty) and proximal measures of rurality (IRRtract) to evaluate geographic differences in activity engagement. Results revealed that distal rurality was informative for some activity domains (social) whereas for others proximal rurality was informative (sedentary). Interestingly, distal and proximal rurality were associated with family activity engagement, but the distal measure was more informative.

Study 2 evaluated associations of distal and proximal rurality with a county-level social capital index (SCI) and individual level social capital facets (e.g., perceived support, number of close friends) and physical health (i.e., number of illnesses, somatic complaints, self-rated health). Results revealed few geographic differences in social capital or health. Of note, the more rural the county, the sparser the close friendship network and less frequent friend contact. However, while denser friendship networks were associated with less frequent somatic complaints, rurality was not a mediator.

Study 3 evaluated the relationship between activity engagement and cognitive performance as mediated by social capital (SCI) and moderated by rurality. Distal rurality moderated the association of SCI with Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) whereas cognitive engagement uniquely predicted FSIQ. Access to social capital may be more salient for individuals living in more urban counties than rural counties, whereas cognitive activity engagement and participating in cognitively demanding hobbies were salient irrespective of rurality, despite rurality differences in cognitively demanding hobbies.

Collectively these studies demonstrate geographic differences in leisure time activity engagement, social capital and cognitive functioning, showing value in constructing continuous proximal and distal rurality measures. Evaluating the interplay between individuals at midlife and their constructed and built environments is critical to further understand the etiology of rural disparities and impacts to later cognitive health.

Plans: use updated CATSLife data (pre-pandemic sample)

**Sample:**

CATSLife

**Process:**

Analyses begun

**Start:**

2019/06

**Last:**

2021/06