ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS ON URBAN LANDSCAPES

by

EMILY PAULINE YEAGER

(Under the Direction of BYNUM B. BOLEY)

## ABSTRACT

Despite the growing importance of urban centers and their ability to provide the scale, proximity, amenities, and specializations to incubate disruptive innovations such as short-term vacation rentals (STVRs), little tourism research has conceptualized the potential positive and negative impacts STVRs have across the urban landscape. With this gap in mind, this research conceptualizes and unpacks the potential positive and negative environmental, economic, and social impacts of STVRs through three main articles. Chapter two presents an interdisciplinary framework, which utilizes residents' attitudes as an indicator for successful sustainable urban system development. Ensuring the inclusion of residents' perceptions of tourism development has long been recognized as vital to sustainable tourism development. While researchers have begun to explore residents' perceptions of Short-term Vacation Rental (STVRs) from both qualitative and quantitiave approaches, there is still a need for strong theoretical underpinnings to support this growing body of research. Chapter three addresses this gap through applying a theoretical perspective that combines Social Exchange Theory and Weber's Theory of

Formal and Substantive Rationality to assess resident attitudes towards STVRs in the city of Savannah, GA. While Short Term Vacation Rental (STVR) research is increasingly cognizant of various stakeholders impacted by the growth of STVRs, one stakeholder remains unstudied for their potential contribution to the amelioration of negative STVR impacts – the resident STVR host. Resident STVR hosts are more than just entrepreneurs. They possess a fluid identity informed by their roles as residents and STVR hosts in their community. With this fluid identity in mind, Chapter four offers qualitative techniques to explore a tripartite of STVR identities within the City of Savannah, GA: the STVR host, the resident host, and the host as a sustainable entrepreneur. Research finds evidence of all three identities across STVR hosts in this study. Through the lens of the entrepreneurial identity, this study finds that STVR hosts possess a range of formal and substantive motivations. Moreover, extrinsic motivations exist within a spectrum of lifestyle subsidization to subsistence.

INDEX WORDS: Short-term vacation rentals, Sustainable Tourism, Residents' Attitudes, Urban Conservation, Urban Landscapes

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by

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# ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS ON URBAN LANDSCAPES

by

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| | |
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DEDICATION

To Trent, the love of my life.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW[1]

## STVRs & The Urban Landscape

Broadly defined, sustainable development is "positive socioeconomic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which community and society are dependent" (Rees, 1989, p.13). Achievement of sustainable development is often measured through consideration of the economic, environmental and social impacts of a given activity (Elkington, 2004). At the center of current sustainable development debates lies the issue of urbanization. By 2050, sixty-six percent of our world's population is expected to live in urban areas, with North America already approaching an urban population of eighty-four percent (United Nations, 2014). The global urban migration has raised concerns over the intensification of consumption and production processes within these areas (Isman et al., 2018; Moscovici, Dilworth, Mead, & Zhao, 2015; Paterson et al., 2015). These concerns have been addressed in a specific area of sustainable development research, urban conservation, which adapts the triple bottom line approach of sustainable development with a focus on natural resources, infrastructure and people (Shane & Graedel, 2000; Shmelev & Shmeleva, 2009; Stossel, Kissinger, & Meir, 2015; Van Stigt, Driessen, & Spit, 2013).

Research suggests that elements of urbanization, such as increased population density, create environments that are conducive to a rapid spread of ideas resulting in

[1] Yeager, Emily

disruptive innovations (Davidson & Infranca, 2016; Christensen et al., 1996). One such innovation in the academic spotlight is the sharing economy (Davidson & Infranca, 2016; Guttentag, 2015). The growth of the sharing economy has been widely noted from *Fortune* magazine to former President Obama (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015) and is touted as one of the 10 ideas that will change the world in the 21st Century (Teubner, 2014). Moreover, its potential to reduce waste within economic, environmental and social processes has been dubbed as important as the Industrial Revolution in terms of how society values ownership of goods and services (Belk, 2014).

Research has begun to investigate the positive and negative economic, environmental and social impacts of these disruptions with short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) (i.e. Airbnb, HomeAway) emerging as one of the most controversial sectors of the sharing economy because of their unique position at the nexus of the residential and tourism landscapes (Davidson & Infranca, 2016; Heinrichs, 2013; Lee, 2016). For the hospitality and tourism industry, one short-term vacation rental (STVR) company has received the lion-share of attention, Airbnb (Chasin & Scholta, 2015; Oskam & Boswijk, 2016; Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). The networked collective activities of all of these competitiors create a market segment known as "peer-to-peer accomodations" (Dolnicar, 2017) or "short-term vacation rentals" (STVRs) (Gottlieb, 2013). The growing demand for STVRs is due to a variety of factors such as their ability to offer the "authenticity of being seamlessly embedded in a local urban neighborhood" (Füller & Michel, 2014, p.1311) while often offering a competitive price through circumventing security standards and tax processes expected of professional hotels and hostels (Füller & Michel, 2014). Additionally, STVRs come in an infinite variety of forms ranging from

boats to castles, which allows for "micro segmentation" and guests to further tailor their lodging experience to their own interests and needs (Airbnb, 2016; Dolnicar, 2017). STVR companies such as Airbnb are aggressively commodifying and marketing the experience of venturing out of traditional tourism landscapes and into 'back-stage' neighborhoods that hold the promoted "true" character of cities (Airbnb, 2016). Although STVRs have been wildly popular with tourists (Guttentag, Smith, Potwarka, & Havitz, 2018; Varma, Jukic, Pestek, Shultz, & Nestorov, 2016), academic research points to their potential positive and negative economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts (Lee, 2016; Heinrichs, 2013). For example, STVRs may potentially reduce the need to build new hotels (Midgett, 2018). Conversely, STVRs could aid in the gentrification of vulnerable neighborhoods and lead to 'ghost neighborhoods' where the "place myth" promoted only exists in theory since the neighborhood is primarily occupied by STVR guests rather than full-time residents (Lee, 2016; Davis, 2005).

Four stakeholder groups have emerged in STVR literature including the traditional accommodations sector, STVR guests, STVR hosts and resident non-hosts. STVRs operate as a classic disruptive innovation within the accommodations sector by outperforming competitors on price points and regulatory obligations (Fang, Ye, & Law, 2016; Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). STVR guests benefit from these economic advantages but have experienced social impacts such as racial discrimination facilitated by STVR online platform design (Edelman, Luca, & Svirsky, 2015; Guttentag, 2015; Molz, 2013; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2018). A majority of STVR host research has focused on their motivations for participation in the sharing economy and has yet to address the direct impacts that STVR hosts may have on their community (Edelman &

Luca, 2014; Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016; Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016; Tussyadiah & Zach, 2015). This research positions resident STVR hosts as an agent of change within the urban landscape whose concious efforts to maximize the positive economic, social and enviromental impacts of their STVRs can contribute to urban conservation goals of a destination. Suprisingly, non-host residents have received the least amount of research in terms of their pereived impacts of STVRs even though they are known to be the cornerstone of sustainable tourism development (Jordan & Moore, 2017; Mody, Suess, & Dogru, 2018; Sharpley, 2000). With no expected decline in STVR growth nor global urbanization, municipalities will need STVR management strategies that can weave this disruption as an innovation into the imperative goal of urban conservation.

**Theoretical Framework**

Tourism research has yet to conceptualize the breadth of positive and negative impacts of STVRs within the urban landscape. To address this gap, this research conceptualizes the scope of impacts guided by the triple bottom line (TBL) (Elkington, 2004). The location of these impacts in urban areas and their inextricability from one another is examined through a landscape lens. Previous configurations of tourist and residential landscapes in destinations were determined by distinct boundaries, essentially providing a "backstage" area of a destination where residents could perform their lives free from the gaze of tourists (MacCannell, 1973; Urry, 1990; Urry 1992). Through disruptions in the over-arching urban landscape such as STVRs, points of intersection between the tourism and residential sub-scapes may shift, resulting in new "shared places" where tourists *and* residents become stakeholders in determining the values and norms of these newly formed places (McKercher, Wang & Park, 2015).

Defined as a compounding of attributes, values and norms over time, a landscape approach can capture the historical context sometimes necessary in determining the *magnitude* of impacts of a given activity today [STVRs] (Jackson, 2008). However, utilization of a landscape approach limits the ability to conceptualize *future* iterations of a given landscape that may in part, be shaped by STVR development. These future iterations are folded into the STVR impact assessment framework through an ecological systems and destination development cycle approach (Costanza, 1992; Butler, 1980; Butler, 2008). A systems approach in this framework offers two benefits. First, it promotes long-term holistic planning of a destination because it considers historic, current and future iterations of the urban landscape in context of each other, which can help determine the magnitude of STVR impacts. Second, the functionality of disruptions in systems is considered to provide hypothetical trajectories of development in context of all other elements of the urban landscape. However, this framework is offered with caution as the capacity for communities to plan and adapt to these potential disruptions depends upon a community's ability to adapt to change. The capacity for adaptation is built upon community resilience, which requires an assessment from a social, institutional, economic, and ecological perspective (Holladay & Powell, 2013). This study focuses on the building of social resilience in communities in relation to STVR development.

Residents' play a significant role in determining the trajectory of urban landscape development as they maintain voting rights and tax obligations to their communiy. The trajectory of the general public's vote depends upon their support for a given activity, in this case STVRs. A handful of studies have begun to answer the call for more resident

attitude research in the context of STVRs (Heo, 2016; Jordan & Moore, 2017; Garau-Vadell, Gutiérrez-Taño, & Díaz-Armas, 2018; Mody, Suess, & Dogru, 2018). While these studies have begun to investigate the relationship between STVRs and residents, they have yet to simultaneously consider the range of economic and non-economic reasons residents support or oppose this type of entrepreneurial activity within their neighborhood.

With this gap in mind, this study builds off of this previous work through applying a theoretical perspective that combines Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality (WTFSR) to model resident attitudes towards STVRs in Savannah, GA. The proposed model frames resident support for STVRs as a product of residents' perceived costs and benefits from STVRs using SET. Support for STVRs is then framed as a product of residents' perceived economic benefits and perceptions of psychological, social, and political empowerment as direct and indirect influences using WTFSR.

While STVR research is increasingly cognizant of various stakeholders impacted by the growth of STVRs, one stakeholder remains understudied for their potential contribution to the amelioration of negative STVR impacts – the resident STVR host. Previous research has restricted host stakeholders to one identity, that of entrepreneurs (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016; Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016; Tussyadiah & Zach, 2015). This is particularly problematic in the case of the resident STVR host who often possesses a fluid identity comprised of being both residents and STVR hosts within their community (Huh & Vogt, 2004). Literature has yet to investigate the fluid identities of residential STVR hosts. This line of inquiry is important because STVR hosts are embedded in

residential landscapes, which lends them an intimate understanding of the community impacts of STVRs. Their actions taken to reduce the negative impacts of their STVRs informed by their residential identity, elevates their identity to that of a 'sustainable entrepreneur' who considers the economic, social and environmental community impacts of their business during all of their ventures (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2015; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). The participation motivations of hosts comprising their entrepreneurial identity are examined through Weber's Theory of Formal & Substantive Rationality (WTFSR) (Kalberg, 1980). The extent to which they identify with a residential identity is assessed through McMillan & Chavis's (1986) Sense of Community framework. These elements of the residential identity are discussed in terms of the individual STVR host's ability to contribute to their community's social resilience to changes induced by STVRs. The sustainable entrepreneurial identity is explored through WTFSR to discover the actions that hosts may take to minimize the negative impacts of their STVRs in their community.

**Methods**

Savannah, GA provides an interesting context for this study because it was the first city in the state of Georgia to formally address the growing short-term vacation rental market (Georgia House of Representatives, 2014). Its STVR regulatory scheme includes zoning STVRs to three different Historic Districts within the core of the city with intensity of regulation varying by district (City of Savannah, 2018).

To understand residents' perceptions of STVRs in their neighborhood, this study employed a census-guided systematic random sampling of residents using door-to-door self-administered paper surveys within the three districts where STVRs are legally

allowed in Savannah. This census-guided method was chosen to gain a high response rate (Andereck & Nickerson, 1997; Babbie, 2013; Woosnam et al., 2009); to garner a representative sample (Boley & McGehee, 2014); and to include minority groups that might otherwise be excluded with other sampling methods (Boley et al., 2014; Woosnam, 2008). Surveys were distributed by the proportion of households located in each census block group across the three districts where STVRs are legally allowed in Savannah. A portion of survey questions were developed through WTFSR as items of constructs measuring residents' perceived personal costs and benefits from STVRs. Through structural equation modeling, these constructs were tested for their significant influence on residents' perceived impacts of STVRs and residents' support for future STVR development.

To gain insight into STVR hosts' potential multiple identities, semi-structured interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes and occurred at a location and time convenient for hosts. A total of 26 interviews were conducted with all but one recorded with a digital recorder. Hosts were also given the option for a phone, Skype, or Facebook Video interview if they were not able to meet in person (Moylan, Derr, & Lindhorst, 2015). Twenty-three interviews were conducted in person with three conducted over the phone. Interview data were triangulated with the scope of STVR issues addressed in STVR development stakeholder meetings as well as popular media sources (Creswell, 2013). Deductive qualitative analysis (DQA) was used to code interview responses using the preconceived identities in the STVR host profile (Gilgun, 2010).

DQA is an approach used for thematic analysis through a preconceived coding framework, in this case the STVR host's tripartite identity (Gilgun, 2010). Grounded theory was also used to allow for important themes that might emerge.

**Structure of the Dissertation**

The chapters of this dissertation are organized to present the role of STVRs in urban landscape development and to present two stakeholders that are crucial to future sustainable development of STVRs and the overall urban landscape. Chapters two, three and four comprise the main three articles of this study that are crafted for future submission to academic journals. Chapter two provides a new framework to conceptualize STVR impacts on the urban landscape. The operability of this framework is discussed as a function of residents' resilience to changes in the urban landscape. Chapter three presents the crucial role of residents support for innovations such as STVRs in determining future iterations of the urban landscape. Antecedents of residents' support for STVRs are tested for statistical significance through structural equation modeling. Chapter four explores the multiple identities of the STVR host. The sustainable entrepreneur identity is discussed as a coalescence of the entrepreneur and residential identity. Through their sustainable entrepreneur identity, hosts' possess the power to aid urban systems into trajectories of rejuvenation or decline depending on if their actions to maximize the positive economic, environmental and social impacts of their STVRs. Chapter five discusses the integrative approach towards this research and future research made possible through this epistemological perspective. Chapter six presents a summary of this study's findings and implications for future research studies regarding STVR impacts in urban landscapes.

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# CHAPTER 2

# CONCEPTUALIZING THE IMPACTS OF SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS ACROSS THE URBAN LANDSCAPE[2]

[2] Yeager, Emily; Boley, Bynum; Goetcheus, Cari. To be submitted to *Annals of Tourism Research.*

**Abstract**

Despite the growing importance of urban centers and their ability to provide the scale, proximity, amenities, and specializations to incubate disruptive innovations such as short-term vacation rentals (STVRs), little tourism research has conceptualized the potential positive and negative impacts STVRs have across the urban landscape. With this gap in mind, this paper conceptualizes and unpacks the potential positive and negative environmental, economic, and social impacts of STVRs using an interdisciplinary framework that pulls from geographical perspectives on place-making within the tourism-residential landscape, UNESCO's historical urban landscape approach, and a systems perspective, which views destination development as a cycle with an apogee at which STVRs might most affect the trajectory of urban development. These perspectives are joined with a discussion of community resiliency to discuss the positive and negative implications for urban landscapes, which are increasingly in the crosshairs of this type of entrepreneurial disruption. With predictions of continued urban growth, Widener (2015) predicts that economies of scale and advancing smart city technologies will "usher in progressively more technocratic and frenetically paced real estate development. In this era, decisions by the administrative state might become less well-informed and increasingly ad hoc" (p.143). This framework is offered as a tool for municipalities to avoid these ad hoc decisions through proactive and comprehensive planning for STVR impacts in their communities.

**Introduction**

Short-term vacation rentals (STVRs), such as Airbnb or HomeAway, have exhibited exponential growth in recent years challenging the current design of the

traditional hospitality industry (Smolka & Hienerth, 2014). No longer are guests confined to the traditional 'front-stage' spaces that the hospitality industry has traditionally provided (Guttentag, 2015; MacCannell, 1973); STVR companies such as Airbnb are aggressively commodifying and marketing the experience of venturing out of traditional tourism landscapes and into 'back-stage' neighborhoods that hold the promoted "true" character of cities (Airbnb, 2016). This type of disruptive innovation that brings tourists out of the traditional tourist landscape into the residential landscape has many potential positive and negative economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts. For example, STVRs may potentially: reduce the need to build new hotels, be a source of much-needed income for local residents and remind residents of the unique features that their neighborhood has to offer. Conversely, STVRs could aid in the gentrification of vulnerable neighborhoods and lead to 'ghost neighborhoods' where the promoted "place myth" only exists in theory because the neighborhood is primarily occupied by STVR guests rather than full-time residents.

With the bulk of this bourgeoning STVR activity occurring in urban spaces, urban landscape perspectives are essential to understanding the successes and failures of STVRs across the urban landscape (Davidson & Infranca, 2016). Sixty-six percent of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas by 2050 (United Nations, 2014), meaning the demand for disruptive innovations such as STVRs is likely to grow faster in urban areas than rural and suburban areas (Davidson & Infranca, 2016). Despite the growing importance of urban centers and their ability to provide the scale, proximity, amenities, and specializations that incubate this type of disruptive innovation (Davidson & Infranca, 2016; Guttentag, 2015), little tourism research has conceptualized the

potential positive and negative impacts of STVRs within the urban landscape. With this gap in mind, this paper seeks to conceptualize and unpack these impacts using an interdisciplinary framework.

The triple bottom line (TBL) guides the scope of impacts considered in this framework (Elkington, 2004). The location of these impacts and their inextricability from one another is examined through a landscape lens. Previous configurations of tourist and residential landscapes in destinations were determined by distinct boundaries, essentially providing a "backstage" area of a destination where residents could perform their lives free from the gaze of tourists (MacCannell, 1973; Urry, 1990; Urry 1992). Through disruptions in the over-arching urban landscape such as STVRs, points of intersection between the tourism and residential sub-scapes may shift, resulting in new "shared places" where tourists *and* residents become stakeholders in determining the values and norms of these newly formed places (McKercher, Wang & Park, 2015). The agency assigned to these stakeholders in this place-making process is considered for its potential to produce "place-myths" that may not reflect the true character of the community (Davis, 2005).

To illustrate the usefulness of a landscape approach in assessing STVR impacts, this paper explores the Historic Urban Landscape Approach (HUL) (UNESCO, 2014) as a tool to aid the use of this paper's proposed framework by weaving STVRs as one historic and current strand in the web of patterns and processes of the urban area. Exploration of the HUL approach segues the reader into the second part of this framework, which focuses on the temporal characteristic of landscapes. Defined as a compounding of attributes, values and norms over time, a landscape approach can capture

the historical context sometimes necessary in determining the *magnitude* of impacts of a given activity today [STVRs] (Jackson, 2008). However, utilization of a landscape approach limits the ability to conceptualize *future* iterations of a given landscape that may in part, be shaped by STVR development. These future iterations are folded into the STVR impact assessment framework through an ecological systems and destination development cycle approach (Costanza, 1992; Butler, 1980; Butler, 2008). A systems approach in this framework offers two benefits. First, it promotes long-term holistic planning of a destination because it considers historic, current and future iterations of the urban landscape in context of each other, which can help determine the magnitude of STVR impacts. Second, the functionality of disruptions in systems is considered to provide hypothetical trajectories of development in context with all other elements of the urban landscape. Conceptualizing potential trajectories of the urban landscape and its sub-scapes (tourism and residential) is a vital tool for communities who wish to proactively plan for these potential disruptions (i.e. STVRs). However, the two-part framework presented here is met with caution as the capacity for communities to plan and adapt to these potential disruptions depends upon a community's ability to adapt to change. The capacity for adaptation is built upon community resilience, which requires an assessment from a social, institutional, economic, and ecological perspective (Holladay & Powell, 2013). Communities exhibiting high levels of resilience through this framework might have a greater capability of maximizing the benefits of STVRs as an innovation in the urban system rather than a disruption that reverses their progress towards a sustainably developed community.

This framework for STVR impact assessment provides academics and practitioners with a more complete understanding of the nature of STVR impacts, how they manifest across the urban landscape and how to plan for and manage STVRs in a way maximize the positive and minimizes the negative impacts across the TBL.

**Situating STVR Impacts in Landscapes & Places**

The first part of the framework presented here aims to conceptualize where STVR impacts might arise within urban areas through a landscape level lens. Landscapes can be physical in nature (Sauer, 1925) and/or socio-cultural in nature (Lewis, 1979). They can also happen at any scale (Massey, 2010). The fluid nature of landscapes produce overlapping borders and nested landscapes as the urban area evolves over time (Davis, 2005; Jackson, 2008). The borders of sub-scapes within the urban landscape are often informed by zoning laws, which regulate where certain activities may occur. Many of the STVR zoning regulations across U.S. urban areas aim to balance a quality of life for residents while also maintaining the pursuit of tourism enterprise (Lobel, 2016). Thus, we find the scope of STVR impacts as defined through zoning regulation as existing largely in the realm of the tourism-residential landscape (Figure 2.1).

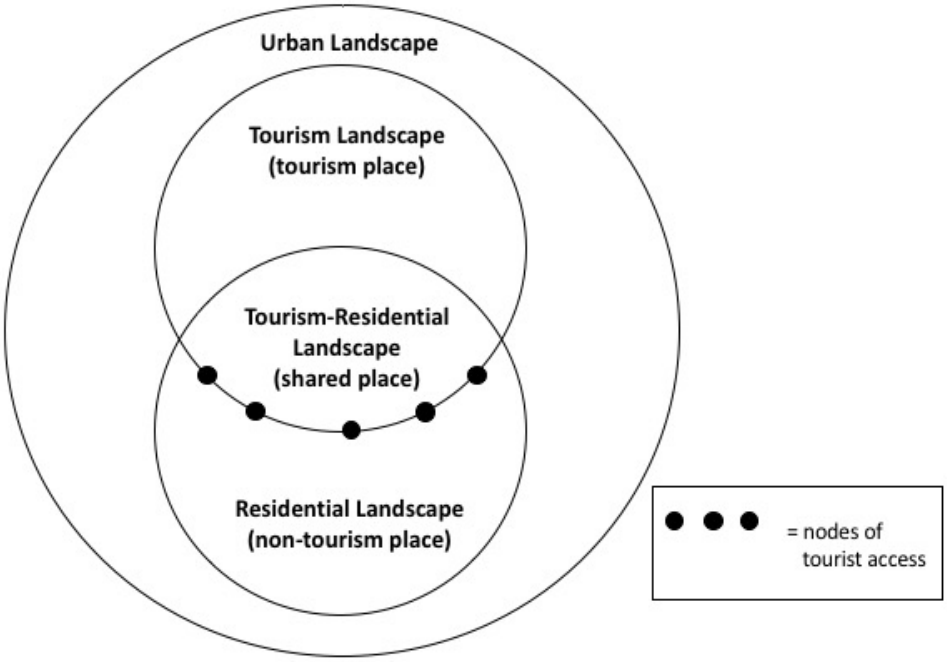


***Figure 2.1*** The layering of tourism and residential landscapes in the urban destination.

Mechanisms such as formalized hospitality networks (Ikkala & Lampinen, 2015) and zoning have traditionally delineated tourists' access to 'front-stage' places where tourism activity occurs (tourism landscape) and kept 'backstage' places where residential activity occurs for residents (residential landscape) (MacCannell, 1973). As an embedded feature of landscapes, places can also occur at many scales ranging from entire neighborhoods to the "home". In the era of STVR development, the boundaries of these landscapes are being reshaped by the changing point of contact between them. Points of contact have typically remained within mixed-use zones (shared places) of cities that simultaneously allow for commercial and residential activity. While STVRs are not a new phenomenon (Lehr, 2015), their density and location in some neighborhoods is. Research finds that increased density of accommodations in an urban area might result in greater tolerance of tourism by its residents (Bestard & Nadal, 2007). However, increased

STVR density in some urban neighborhoods has resulted in vehement protests from neighborhood residents (Morris, 2015).

Not yet fully understood, STVRs question current nodes of tourist access and facilitate direct and indirect interactions among STVR guests (consumers), STVR platforms and hosts (suppliers), and resident non-hosts. As the nodes of tourists' access penetrate further into the residential landscape, there is a development of the "shared place" mediating "non-tourism places" (backstage) and "tourism places (front stage) (MacCannell, 1973; McKercher, Wang, & Park, 2015). According to McKercher et al. (2015), in this shared place, residents and tourists co-create values and norms, which in turn define the "sense" of that shared place. This process of place-making however, does not consider tourism suppliers as a stakeholder. Omission of this stakeholder could be particularly counter-productive in assessing STVR impacts because of the influential position that STVR platforms and hosts hold in defining the communities in which they operate. For example, STVR companies such as Airbnb have complicated the notion of place-making through their pursuit of providing guests authentic local experiences. In general, the pursuit of experiential consumption in lodging such as STVRs is motivated by a desire to skip "plastic rooms" (Steylaerts & Dubhghaill, 2012) and "serial reproduction" of culture (Molz, 2013; Richards & Wilson, 2006). In its original role as an accommodations provider, Airbnb attempted to meet this demand. It has since expanded its role to also serve as a travel guide for Airbnb guests with a focus on curating urban travel experiences. For example, for guests wanting a place-based experience, Airbnb offers its "Neighborhoods" program (Airbnb, 2018a). The intention of its "Neighborhoods" program was to expand Airbnb's appeal beyond hosts and guests to

local businesses that might struggle to market themselves to locals and tourists (Thomas, 2012). For each neighborhood featured in a city, guests can access information largely curated by hosts such as the neighborhood's hand-mapped borders (Lawler, 2012) or photos virtually guiding guests through the neighborhood (Airbnb, 2018a).

With the history and design of Airbnb's Neighborhoods program in mind, the first STVR impact from the landscape perspective that is considered is the issue of place-making. Specifically, the agency given to Airbnb users to curate neighborhoods is considered in terms of their potential contribution towards a "place-myth" in a given destination (Davis, 2005). Landscapes can be understood as a lens through which to view a destination (Cosgrove, 1984) with its places comprising this over-arching representation (Rickly-Boyd, Knudsen, & Braverman, 2016). Place-making is described as an iterative socio-political process through which physical and imagined images of place build upon each other (Davis, 2005; Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991). Davis (2005) explains that there may be varying conceptualizations of a site but "power then dictates which version of place gets to be reproduced" (p. 612). Typically, place-making in the tourism landscape has been studied from the perspective of tourists' role in this process (Rickly-Boyd et al., 2016). In the case of STVRs, it might be equally as important to consider hosts' role in this process, particularly because their residential status could vary from full-time, part-time, to none at all. While full-time residency does not necessarily imply full knowledge of a place and its encompassing landscape, resident hosts may be less likely than non-resident hosts to utilize neighborhood or city-wide stereotypes in their marketing efforts on STVR platforms, an issue typically associated with the reproduction of tourism landscapes (Shields, 2013). However, initiatives such as

Airbnb's "Neighborhoods" program may encourage both resident and non-resident hosts to over-simplify the characteristics of their neighborhood to streamline marketing efforts on these STVR platforms (Shields, 2013). Over-simplification or reinforcement of stereotypes through these platforms may influence guests' expectations and could lead to problems if guests stay in "backstage" portions of a neighborhood that drastically differ from their personal lifestyle. This situation could lead to sensationalization of the local culture and a gaze upon those particular residents as the "other" (Urry, 1990, 1992).

Another power-related concern with the "Neighborhoods" program is its decision to hand-map neighborhoods because available cartography was deemed insufficient (Lawler, 2012). There is no public information as to the specifics of the insufficiencies and whether these maps were vetted across resident hosts and non-hosts. Research supports the notion that maps are inherently power-laden because their creation requires privileging a specific group of people to present their 2-D reality of space and place (Rocheleau, 2005), which are products of "dynamic, interrelating cultural, social, political and economic processes that in turn, interact with the biophysical realm" (Bosak, Boley, & Zaret, 2010, p. 461; Swyngedouw, 2004; Zieleniec, 2007). Moreover, maps represent a tool whose power could be "wielded in order to advocate for certain interests and perhaps even change control over space and place" (Bosak et al., 2010, p. 462; Corbett & Keller, 2003; Rocheleau, 2005).

An additional power-related issue to consider with the place-making process are the potentially socio-economically and ecologically homogenous lenses through which hosts curate their neighborhoods. Hosting across any STVR platform requires some level of capital (e.g., a quality listing, living in a safe neighborhood, or cash flow to buy home

furnishings such as new sheets or pillows for the guest bed). Residents in urban areas entrenched in issues such as cycles of poverty, environmental degradation, and racial discrimination inherently face challenges to accessing hosting opportunities. Additionally, zoning policies might legally confirm inaccessibility to hosting in some destinations. These two factors could effectively eliminate a socio-economically diverse subset of potential contributing residents and distort the "community" baseline from which the curation process begins.

The creation of shared places through STVRs in areas previously belonging solely to the residential landscape can create unique positive and negative economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts through STVRs' use of a culturally significant place in the neighborhood – the home. The home has been defined as a place that extends beyond its physical borders and includes the surrounding environment, e.g., neighbors, sidewalks, and yards. Recognizing this specific point of STVR place making is important because the home traditionally provides the nurturing and emotional support for residents' daily lives (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Cohen, 1988; Tuan, 1975). Companies such as Airbnb encourage guests to "feel at home anywhere" (Airbnb, 2018). The curation of "home" by STVR company marketing campaigns potentially simplifies the true process of home making, which requires compounding experiences, values, beliefs and norms over time (Tuan, 1975). Like any place, these attributes of home making are ultimately shaped by historical, cultural, physical and ecological attributes of the natural and built environment (Dias, Correia, & López, 2015; Tuan, 1975). The oversimplification or perhaps narrow projection of the "home" to guests reinforces the illusion that they are only consuming an experience at the listing as advertised to them

thus creating a 'myth identity' of the home (Harley, 1989). Regardless of the scale of the place (e.g. home, neighborhood) and depending upon which stakeholder possesses the most agency in its development, places can potentially evolve into place-myths that "enable and legitimize social practices that alter that material landscape and attempt to bring it more in line with a conceptualization that was never based on the material landscape in the first place" (Davis, 2005; Shields, 2013).

Increasing the number of ways and locations of contact between residential and tourism landscapes changes the shape of each individual landscape, both physically and socially. The impacts from this reconfiguration are not isolated to these landscapes. Due to the nested nature of landscapes, changes in a sub-scape can affect its parent urban landscape. For instance, investments into the historic preservation of a home for STVR-use can create positive impacts for the residential landscape through increased curb appeal of a neighborhood and higher property values for its associated homeowners. However, the higher property values associated with these home improvements and the emergence of the neighborhood as a destination might also increase property taxes within the neighborhood, in turn, out-pricing, and displacing residents, and effectively removing the very essence of the neighborhood that the STVR businesses use for marketing.

This section has situated the location of STVRs in the multiple landscapes that they interact with. From a landscape perspective, STVRs are found interacting with the residential and tourism landscapes and serving as a node binding their union. With this geographical conceptualization of STVR impacts, it is important to now focus on how to interpret these landscapes to further aid in understanding the nature and extent of these impacts.

**A Historic Urban Landscape Approach to Understanding STVR Impacts**

Another defining characteristic of landscapes is their temporal dynamism, meaning that they change over time. From this perspective, we can contextualize a given element in a destination through historical and current iterations of its encompassing landscape. Even more, this historical and current context provide clues as to future iterations of a given landscape. Today's STVR impacts are entwined with changes in ecological, economic and social processes in the urban landscape over time. A historical understanding of the modern urban landscape can enrich understanding of the magnitude of STVR impacts and can inform future responses to them. To illustrate how a landscape approach may be operationalized to gain this historical context for STVR impacts, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach is explored. UNESCO defines the HUL approach as "the management of heritage resources in dynamic and constantly changing environments. It is based on the recognition and identification of a layering and interconnection of natural and cultural, tangible and intangible, international and local values present in any city" (UNESCO, 2014). The goal of the HUL approach is to serve as a tool for urban destinations to pursue sustainable community development through the identification of conservation and development projects that honor these values. Through their official HUL Guidebook, UNESCO provides destinations six critical steps to operationalize the HUL approach (Appendix A) as well as a detailed list of attributes to consider in the planning process that may serve as potential indicators contributing to the "genius loci" or sense of place of an urban center. These attributes include: topography, geomorphology and natural features, built environment –both historic and contemporary,

open spaces, land use patterns and spatial organization, all other elements of the urban structure, social and cultural practices and values, economic processes, and the intangible dimensions of heritage (UNESCO, 2014). Since its inception in 2011, the HUL approach has been piloted in cities within Ecuador, Pakistan, Australia, Fiji, India and China (UNESCO, 2014). According to the HUL definition above, cities with significant cultural heritage at any scale may benefit from an integration of the HUL approach in their city planning efforts, a sentiment echoed by other researchers (Taylor, Clair, & Mitchell, 2014). In the U.S., federal urban historical significance can be established through inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places as a Building, Structure, Object, Site or District. These designations rank in terms of their physical and historical scope with Historic District encompassing the four other designations (National Park Service, 2001). An examination of the 2017 National Register of Historic Places Database reveals thousands of federally established Historic Districts located within cities across the country evidencing the potential for these cities to benefit from the integration of the HUL approach in their city planning (National Park Service, 2017).

STVR zoning and regulation is becoming an increasingly common planning issue to consider in U.S. cities ranging from the size of Lexington, Virginia (2.5 square miles, 7,106 people) to New York City (302.64 square miles, 8,622,698 people) (Foundation for Economic Education, 2017; McKinley, 2016; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Even more, STVR hosts such as those operating on Airbnb's platform, frequently market their STVR's location within Historic Districts such as the Rainey Street Historic District in Austin, Texas or the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District in San Francisco, CA (Airbnb,

2018) exemplifying the interconnectedness between tourism and heritage resources (McKercher, McKercher, & Du Cros, 2002).

One type of city proposed as a prime candidate for piloting of the HUL are port cities (Girard, 2013). In the United States, the heritage-rich port city of Savannah GA remains a salient case study in regulatory approaches towards STVRs. While the City released a revised set of STVR regulations in September of 2017 (City of Savannah, 2018), the continued success of its tourism industry could mean continued interest in STVRs from both hosts and guests, thus necessitating the inclusion of STVRs in future city-panning efforts. While briefly discussed in STVR regulatory stakeholder meetings in 2017 (City of Savannah, 2017), STVR zone expansion remains un unexplored frontier of STVR development and regulation in the City. One question that the City may consider in future decisions of STVR expansion is whether there is a demand for STVRs outside of their current zones. Two indicators from the HUL framework may be useful in answering this question: "historical economic processes" and "cultural and social practices and values".

In regard to the first indicator, in some cities, STVRs are merely a form of home sharing, a more personalized form of hospitality, which has been in existence for centuries (Lehr, 2015). Historically, in the U.S., home sharing took the form of domestic inns, which were prevalent in many port cities in the Southeastern United States (Jackson, 2008; Girard, 2013). Beginning in 1812, many of Savannah's first inns such as the Old Harbour Inn and River Street Inn were multi-functional in that they commonly operated within industrial complexes along the Riverfront located in what is now the Historic Landmark District to accommodate the transient workers engaged in the port's

commerce (Old Harbour Inn, 2018; River Street Inn, 2018). However, the nature of accommodations in Savannah began to shift in 1834 with the construction of the DeSoto Hotel in the southern extent of the Historic District designed to attract northern tourists traveling south to Florida (Historic Hotels of America, 2018). The opening of the Central Railroad in 1837 attracted both visitors and new residents to the City increasing Savannah's population by 53% between 1830 and 1840 (Bowen, 1833; Gibson, 1998). Between 1840 and the early 1900s, inns such as the Marshall House and the Gastonian Inn began to populate southward in the Historic District and were operated from family homes in response to this population growth and increased connectivity of the City to other urban centers in the South (The Gastonian, 2018; The Marshall House, 2018). The increased popularity of the automobile in the early 1900's induced a migration to more fashionable communities in the southern end of the City, thus inducing a decline in overall preservation efforts in the Historic District (Reiter & Adler, 1979). In 1955, the Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF) was established with the goal to rehabilitate properties within the Historic Landmark District (Historic Savannah Foundation, 2017). Through partnerships with various financial institutions, the HSF was able to incentivize historic property purchases and renovations. These efforts combined with the official federal designation of the Historic Landmark District in 1966 confirmed the District's significance and ultimately contributed to the thriving tourism-residential landscape seen in the District today (Reiter & Adler, 1979; Sullivan, Fenwick, & Reed, 2017). In the same fashion, the Victorian District, established in 1974, saw similar investment from the HSF, thus the existence of tourism activity (though be it on a smaller scale) in the Victorian District (Reiter & Adler, 1979). The formalized tourism areas within the

Historic District, in particular, were reinforced through the increased sophistication of the accommodations sector including the aforementioned historic inns. For instance, six of Savannah's well-known historic inns located within the Historic Landmark District are now classified as boutique hotels and are collectively owned and managed by HLC Hotels Inc. (HLC Hotels, 2018; Molz, 2014). This historical economic account of the accommodations sector may suggest to regulatory authorities that tourism demand would remain concentrated in the Historic and Victorian Districts and somewhat in the Mid-City district, therefore nullifying the need to expand STVR zones to other areas of the City. However, the HUL approach encourages the use of as many indicators as possible to inform development decisions in the urban landscape. With this in mind, another question to consider in regard to STVR zone expansion is whether current zoning is equitable? This question could be answered using the indicator of "cultural and social practices and values". Beginning in 1851, a culturally and socially significant change was happening in Savannah's population – the large migration of black slaves to the emancipated City of Savannah (Blassingame, 1973). Over time, the black community has faced many challenges to their ability to increase economic status and ultimate land ownership in the City. For example, in 1880, Savannah's population was split almost even with blacks representing 51% of the total population. However, 45% of black males were only able to gain employment as common laborers (Blassingame, 1973). At that time, black communities began to take shape with concentrations in neighborhoods such as Yamacraw (adjacent and west of the Historic Landmark District) (Blassingame, 1973). While many streets across the city exhibited some degree of integration, segregation pressures continued through efforts to enact Jim Crow Laws, particularly in streetcars

(Roback, 1986), creating mobility challenges for some individuals of the black community. The legacy of the City's historically significant African-American heritage sites in Savannah attests to the geographical marginalization of the black community. For example, two sites including the First African Baptist Church and the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum (once an important business hub for the black community) sit on the western edge of the Historic Landmark District (Visit Savannah, 2018). Just outside of the Historic and Victorian Districts in the Eastside neighborhood (located within the Eastside Historic District) lies the King-Tisdell House (the only historic African-American House in Savannah) as well as the Beach Institute, which houses the City's African-American art museum and was the site of one of the Savannah's first Freedman schools (National Park Service, 2017; Visit Savannah, 2018). A modern expression of this marginalization can be found in current demographic trends within and adjacent to the Historic, Victorian and Mid-City Districts where STVR zones are currently zoned in the City. For example, when examined by neighborhood, African-Americans comprise 26.8% of the Southern Historic District's population. In the adjacent Kayton-Frazier neighborhood to the west, African-Americans comprise 96.3% of the population. Adjacent and east of the Southern Historic District Neighborhood sits the Eastside Neighborhood where African-Americans comprise 75.1% of its population (Statistical Atlas, 2018). Lastly, the Culyer-Brownville Historic District, one of Savannah's oldest African-American neighborhoods, is located adjacent and west of the Mid-City District (Historic Savannah Foundation, 2017). The Culyer-Brownville District is currently facing the potential loss of its federal designation due to blight and the inability of residents to afford preservation maintenance costs (Curl, 2017). In terms of demographic trends,

African-Americans comprise 94.6% of the Culyer-Brownville Neighborhood, which is approximately 40% higher than their representation in the neighboring Midtown neighborhood located within the Mid-City District.

This data gathered through both HUL indicators seems to suggest that tourism demand in the City may in part have been created and reinforced through a combination of continued financial investments as well as preservation and zoning efforts into the Historic and Victorian Districts over time. The legacy of Savannah's rich African-American culture represented through many heritage sites located on the margins of these tourism areas highlight the potential to expand the geographical scope of tourism marketing and regulation (including STVR zone expansion) that is inclusive of a stakeholder that was and still is important in the development of Savannah over time. Should the City choose to expand STVR zones to increase inclusivity, perhaps it could help to reverse historical processes of marginalization that are still expressed through demographic trends today. This scenario is just one example of how multiple streams of historical data as guided by the HUL approach may be integrated into the decision-making process for future urban landscape development.

**Managing STVR Impacts in the Urban System**

The HUL framework provides not only a method of contextualizing STVR impacts in the historical development of the urban area, but it also sets the tone for a temporal approach for consideration of STVR impacts and the role of STVRs in future development of urban areas. To conceptualize STVRs' position in the future urban landscape, it might be useful to turn to the tradition of research that conceptualizes tourism destination change as a cycle. This body of research is largely predicated upon

the notion that destinations possess both natural and social carrying capacities (Butler, 1980; Doxey, 1975; McCool, 1994). A destination's natural carrying capacity refers to the scale of tourism development a destination can with handle before the quality of it natural and cultural resources are degraded. Upon degradation it can no longer provide the same quality of tourism experiences to the same number of people. The notion of a social carrying capacity is more subjective and refers to the number of tourists a destination can handle before either the residents become frustrated and revolt, or tourists leave because of perceived crowding and inferior tourism experiences. Once these thresholds of change have been surpassed, the quality of the tourism experience begins to decline. Simultaneously, tourism development begins to negatively impact residents and their subsequent attitudes towards future tourism development become increasingly negative (Long, Perdue, & Allen, 1990; Madrigal, 1993).

The second part of the STVR impact assessment framework (Figure 2.2) models this change in residents' attitude through a combined application of Doxey's Irridex and Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) (Butler, 190; Doxey, 1975). Residents have long been recognized for their pivotal role in the successful development of sustainable tourism destinations (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). Case studies reveal that residents may exercise their ability to vote and leverage their local tax contributions to support or challenge future tourism development in their community (Spencer & Nsiah, 2013; Sofield, 1996). STVRs are no exception with residents actively engaging elected officials over STVR regulations in cities such as Beacon City, New York (Martin, 2018). In some destinations such as Majorca, Spain, STVR companies such as Airbnb are seen as the additional pressure in a burgeoning

tourism industry that has ushered the city past its capacity and its residents past their breaking point (Minder, 2018). Residents' support for local regulation to curb Airbnb and overall tourism in Majorca is reflected in posters hung from balconies in the city exhibiting a woman pushing a shopping cart and brandishing a walking stick towards tourists sporting selfie sticks and carry-on luggage. The sign reads "The city is for whoever lives in it, not whoever visits it" (Minder, 2018). This example of Majorca highlights just one factor (the tourism industry) contextualizing the overall effects of STVRs on communities around the world, thus supporting the need for STVR management approaches such as a landscape approach that consider these contextualizing factors in STVR regulations. The incorporation of residents' attitudes as the main indicator of change in the urban landscape for this framework aligns with previous research highlighting their crucial role in future community development. This framework also answers previous research advocating for residents' inclusion in the assessment of STVR impacts (Heo, 2016).

Doxey's Irridex (1975) aimed to model the direct relationship between residents' attitudes towards tourism in their community and the number of tourists in a community. Five years later, Butler (1980) attempted to model the development stages of a tourism destination as a direct function of the number of tourists in a destination. Through a combined application of both perspectives, the second part of the STVR impact assessment framework attempts to model residents' attitudes towards STVRs in a destination as a function of its stage of tourism development over time. Beginning with the y-axis, the model adapts and builds upon Butler's (1980) consideration of the number of tourists to the number of STVR guests in a location. It's important to note, that

depending on where STVR activity occurs in a destination, it may become important to consider the moderating effects of the location of STVR activity in a destination if nodes of STVR guest access move further into residential areas as residents' proximity to tourism activity has been shown to have a moderating effect on resident attitudes (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002). For the x-axis, Butler's model (1980) is adopted in combination with an inversed positioning of Doxey's Irridex (1975) to show the direct relationship between residents' negative attitudes and STVR development over time at different stages of STVR development.

Applying this model through a HUL approach highlights the possibility that the latter portion of the TALC could represent not just the evolution of tourism activity but of all economic and social processes in the urban landscape. For example, Italian cities such as Venice and Florence have grappled with the "Disneyfication" of their historic centers (Guiffrida, 2017; Horowitz, 2017; LADEST, 2016), an issue plaguing the city as far back as 2011 (Allsop, 2011). While STVR companies such as Airbnb are thought to accelerate this problem, other elements of Venice's urban landscape are thought to be contributing to the issue as well including its extensive cruise tourism industry and a decreasing local population (Allsop, 2011; Horowitz, 2017). Upon arrival at the stagnation stage of tourism development, Butler (1980) presents a point of uncertainty in the model with multiple scenarios as to where the destination evolves or devolves. Researchers have reconfigured the model's "S" curve to a cyclical one with points of uncertainty possible at any stage in the model, but still recognizing the stagnation phase as the most influential point of change in destination development (Russell & Faulkner, 2004). Therefore, this

proposed model maintains the original "S" curve and focuses on the role that STVRs might play at the stagnation phase of development.

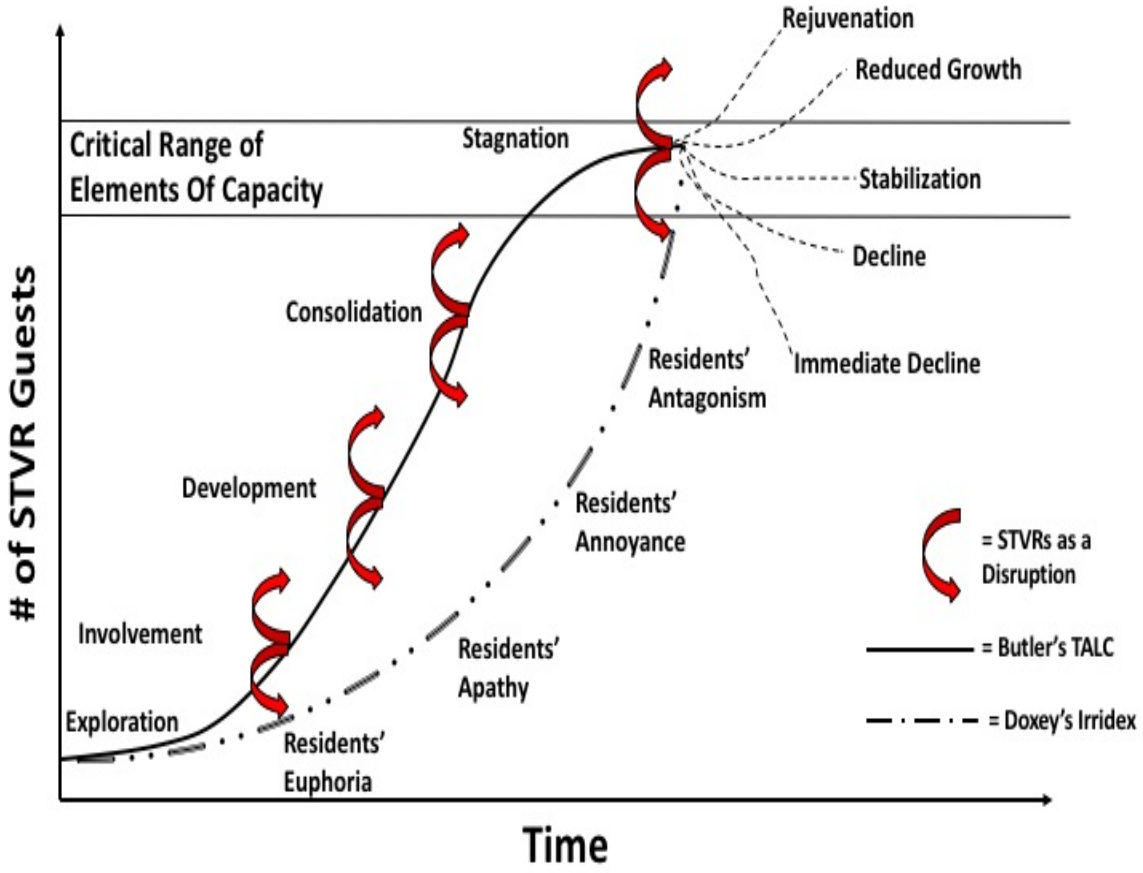


***Figure 2.2*** Butler's (1980) TALC with the disruption of STVRs present at various stages of destination development. Doxey's Irridex (1975) superimposed upon the TALC predicts residents' attitudes towards STVRs depending on the stage of STVR development defined by the number of STVR guests and location of STVRs in proximity to residents.

In a typical controlled system, disruptions result in negative feedback loops where progress is dampened or held at equilibrium (Costanza, 1992). Conversely, system disruptions may induce positive feedback loops that may destabilize a system or reinforce a particular issue in a system (Costanza, 1992). In the case of STVRs' disruption in the urban system, current media coverage of public and government reactions to STVRs

would suggest that STVRs are indeed inducing a positive feedback loop of destabilization of some neighborhoods through residents' displacement by increased property taxes or conversion of long-term rentals to STVRs (Lehr, 2015; Wong, 2016), thus exemplifying the potential influence of STVRs on a destination's trajectory of "decline". An important feature of this model is its proposed presence of STVRs at a variety of destination development stages. For example, STVRs may enter destinations in the involvement stage. At this stage, local residents "begin to provide facilities primarily or even exclusively for visitors" (Butler, 1980, p.7). STVRs may be the most effective at this stage as a disruption particularly in rural areas where traditional lodging facilities may exceed destination budgets. STVRs may circumvent this budgetary issue by using existing housing resources to operate.. Butler (1980) describes the stagnation phase as the point in the TALC where a destination begins to experience a variety of issues from tourism development including economic, social and environmental impacts. Depending on the direct actions of STVR hosts, STVRs may offer an alternative tourism sector within a destination that could offer innovative economic, social and environmental impacts, which could benefit communities in which they operate. STVRs are generally referred to as a disruptive innovation that have created opportunities for institutional entrepreneurship, which intend to change traditional markets and institutional conditions in this case, the traditional accommodations sector (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Davidson & Infranca, 2016; Ostrom, 1990; Seo & Creed, 2002). With this perspective, through processes such as the creation of new place myths, STVRs possess a potential to induce positive feedback loops in the urban system that could help propel a destination towards rejuvenation. For example, STVR growth could promote the use of existing

homes and reduce the need for land development for hotels, which might not exhibit as much multi-use. Or, hosts might feel inspired to curate their guests' stay with a personalized list of local restaurants and businesses, thus increasing their STVR guests' multiplier effect within the community. These factors might propel a destination towards rejuvenation.

With this model as a cornerstone from which to understand potential impacts from STVRs in urban areas, a few moderating factors are important to consider in the development of residents' attitudes towards STVRs including length of residency and pace of change in a destination.

Length of residency has shown varying influence on residents' perceptions of tourism. On one hand, those who live in a destination longer, or were born in a destination, may be more sensitive to change in their communities and are more aware of the negative impacts of tourism development (Besculides, Lee, & McCormick, 2002; Hayley, Snaith, & Miller, 2005; Lankford & Howard, 1994; Sheldon & Var, 1984; Um & Crompton, 1987). However, skepticism surrounding the moderating effect of demographic variables such as length of residency can be dated back to the late 1980s, with research showing that variables such as knowledge of tourism impact having a greater influence on overall positive attitudes towards tourism (Davis, Allen & Consenza, 1988). While length of residency remained an important moderator in residents' attitudes towards tourism through the early 2000's, an important societal shift began at that time. Research began to recognize an increasing diversity of residents' dwelling types and an increased mobility between second and primary homes (Quinn, 2004; Urry, 2002). According to the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 1-year

estimates, 35% of U.S. citizens rent property as their primary dwelling. These statistics are important considering that the above-mentioned research focuses largely on long-term homeowners. However, length of residency could still be a valuable context for residents' perceived STVR impacts when coupled with their experience with the neighborhood as a whole over time. For example, should a new STVR appear in a neighborhood and receives STVR guests that party every weekend, this may bother new residents of the neighborhood. The long-term residents who have lived in the neighborhood for 20 years may have seen its transition from a mixed-use to a residential zone in in the past 10 years, which results in changes such as the conversion of small businesses across the street into condominiums that newer residents integrate into their baseline of memories in the neighborhood. The availability heuristic would suggest a direct relationship between experienced consequences of an event (e.g., partying tourists) and the perceived magnitude of its impacts (Esgate, Groome & Baker, 2005). In the given scenario, the newer residents base their attitude formation on a limited set of experiences in that neighborhood. Longer-term residents have a larger set of positive and negative consequences from development in the neighborhood that could make them both more aware of a larger set of negative STVR impacts as well as more aware of inevitable neighborhood change, thus potentially more accepting of STVRs.

Another factor to consider in applying this model is the lack of an actual time scale over which this development happens. Chaos theory suggests that changes in a system can happen at any speed (McKercher, 1999). For example, in the U.S. city of Savannah, GA on May 1, 2017, a total of 748 STVRs were licensed to operate within the city's STVR zones (Curl, 2017). In June 2017, word spread of a potential moratorium on

issuing STVR licensees until the city formed an STVR growth management plan. In fear of losing their right to host in their neighborhood, homeowners began flooding the city's Tourism Management & Ambassadorship Department with STVR license applications, regardless of their intentions to actually exercise their license. The moratorium never came to fruition but there are now 1,148 STVRs that can operate at any given time (City of Savannah, 2018). This 53.5% increase in STVR listings presents a range of costs and benefits for residents and the city. The exponential growth of STVR companies such as Airbnb combined with increases in urban populations would suggest that the timescale presented here is rapid.

Research on the effects of rapid tourism development within the context of the TALC has produced varying trajectories of residents' attitudes. Perdue et al.'s (1999) findings regarding the effects of boomtown tourism on residents' attitudes reject the TALC. Rather, their findings support the social disruption hypothesis, which posits that communities enter an initial state of crisis because the disruption requires a significant increased demand for public services and infrastructure with attitudes towards tourism becoming more positive over time (England & Albrecht, 1984). Conversely, others such as Davis and Morais (2004) have found an inverse relationship between rapid tourism development and residents' attitudes within economically depressed communities that latch on to tourism as an economic savior. They found residents to initially be excited and optimistic about a large-scale tourism development planned for their community but became increasingly frustrated when the economic benefits did not materialize in the community due to the enclave nature of the tourism development.

STVRs indeed resemble a boomtown tourism phenomenon through their rapid growth and economic change to urban areas (England & Albrecht, 1984). Therefore, it might be possible to expect that the negative community responses to STVRs might improve over time thus aiding the rejuvenation of the urban landscape and its tourism industry. However, Davis and Morais (2004) highlight the effect of community schisms on residents' inertia to even respond and keep up with the inevitable change in their community. Also, their research shows that enclaves of tourism can create a dichotomy in access to tourism benefits. Depending upon a city's zoning ordinances, STVR zones could come to represent tourism enclaves where some residents cannot access this entrepreneurial opportunity. Thus, they might develop negative attitudes towards STVRs and overall lack of support for future STVR development since they do not feel like they have access to cash in on the demand for authentic experiences within their city.

Previous systems approaches to understand tourism destination development (Leiper, 1990; Mill & Morrison, 1985) have been criticized for their reductionist approach (McKercher, 1999). Systems, in this case the urban system, are comprised of interrelated parts e.g. STVRs, affordable housing, and hotel development. These interrelated parts sometimes react in unpredictable ways when changes are introduced into the system (Odum, 1985; Senge, 2000; Von Bertalanffy, 1950). For example, the TALC assumes homogenous residential reactions at each stage of development (Butler, 2008). These reactions could greatly differ across the urban landscape depending on where rapid STVR development is happening, thus the addition of the location of STVRs on the model's x-axis. This ability of the cycle to adapt and grow from the disruption of STVRs leads us to view the urban destination development system as a complex adaptive

system whose ability to adapt can be understood as a measure of resilience (Lansing, 2003). System adaptation, however, requires a treatment of a disruption as a point of innovation rather than disease (Costanza, 1992).

## Community Resiliency to STVR Impacts on the Urban System

As previously outlined, a destination's propensity towards a rejuvenation trajectory in the face of STVR impacts can largely depend upon residents opinions on the matter. Continued STVR growth depends upon a community's ability to adapt to economic, environmental and social shifts in the urban system. Residents' ability to cope with chaotic events such as the exponential growth of STVRs can be assessed through a resilience framework. According to Holladay & Powell (2013), maximizing the benefits of disruptions like STVRs requires four types of resilience held by destination stakeholders: social, institutional, economic, and ecological resilience. The following sections debate the challenges and opportunities that STVRs might pose to maintaining each type of resilience within the urban landscape.

### *Social Resilience*

Social resilience depends largely on relationships between stakeholders in the urban system. These relationships create networks of individuals, which depend upon levels of trust, communication, and equity between them (Holladay & Powell, 2013). STVRs can challenge trust, for example, between residents in neighborhoods during instances of absentee property owners who rent to STVR guests. Absence of permanent neighbors could potentially dampen a sense of community ultimately affecting the network vital to social resilience. In addition, reduction in permanent residency might reduce the capacity for social learning—defined by Holladay & Powell (2013) as knowledge building

through “communal activities” such as conflict resolution or imitation of values and norms of the system. At a larger scale, social resilience could be difficult to build across neighborhoods if there is inequitable access to participation in STVRs in a given destination. Residents denied the ability to participate may not feel incentivized or find relevance to area-wide efforts to solicit input on STVR management.

STVRs could also positively affect stakeholders’ capacity for social resilience. The time and labor associated with running a STVR could cause neighbors to come together and help staff and clean each other’s STVRs when other obligations arise. Out of town STVR hosts may also depend on neighbors living within the neighborhood to occasionally check in on the property and make sure things are running smoothly. Conversely, STVRs may become an inflammatory topic inspiring people to seek outlets to debate the issues with fellow neighbors perhaps at public in-person forums or in online platforms such as NextDoor or Facebook. These outlets cultivate communication between stakeholders, which is a tenant of building social learning (Holladay & Powell, 2013). This is especially important upon returning to the notion of STVRs as just one part of the urban system.

***Institutional Resilience***

Local governing bodies generally intend to serve public interests but diluted social resilience in a destination can make their jobs difficult and might force them into only hearing the most influential voices. Holladay & Powell (2013) define institutional resilience as power through elements including but not limited to: sharing between government and local and national community/user groups; flexibility that increases the capacity for adaptive management; and local organizing behavior supported by

legislation. Using the example of Savannah once more, Georgia State Representative, Matt Dollar, proposed House Bill 579, which would nullify local STVR regulations and secede all STVR regulatory authority to the state (Georgia General Assembly, 2018). In December, four Savannah neighborhood associations wrote the state legislature pleading opposition to the bill because it would "…rob local communities control over the future of their tourism industries…" (Lebos, 2018). Should the city's residents lose their ability to self-organize and regulate STVRs, this could negatively affect their ability for social learning and subsequent adaptive management to other disruptive innovations that may appear in the future (Folke, Hahn, Olsson, & Norberg, 2005; Holladay & Powell, 2013; Olsson, Folke, & Berkes, 2004). Should STVR regulatory control remain localized, thoughtfully designed public STVR regulation forums could induce feelings of political empowerment among residents. Political empowerment refers to a residents' perceived ability to affect political processes in their community (Boley, McGehee, Perdue, & Long, 2014). It is particularly important that residents feel politically empowered regarding STVR regulation development because political empowerment is shown to significantly affect residents' perceptions of a given tourism activity and their ultimate support for its continued development (Andereck & Vogt, 2004).

***Economic Resilience***

Economic resilience is obtained by retaining control of locally generated diverse revenue streams (Holladay & Powell, 2013). The multiplying effect of STVR revenue can positively contribute to economic resilience in a few ways. First, STVR guests searching for authentic experiences might be more likely to patron local businesses. A core competitive feature of STVRs is that they are taking tourists out of the 'front-stage'

tourism landscape and placing them into the 'back-stage' residential landscape, which naturally lends itself to more localized tourism expenditures since the unique businesses of these neighborhoods are a core part of the STVR experience. These local businesses may in turn hire local people and purchase locally sourced products, which further amplify the economic benefits associated with STVRs and help contribute to economic resilience. Second, cities have attempted to capitalize on STVR taxes. In Portland, Oregon, for example, the city annually directs $1.2 million of STVR taxes into a Housing Investment Fund (HIF), which aims to support the supply of affordable housing for low to moderate income individuals in the city (The City of Portland Oregon, 2018). The HIF is used in combination with other tax and federal funding streams to address the issue of homelessness, which the City Council describes as a nexus between loss of affordable housing, a skyrocketing rental market, and an exponential increase in STVRs (City of Portland, 2018). Lastly, residents participating as STVR hosts, might enjoy personal economic benefits (Boley, Strzelecka, & Woosnam, 2018). One of the specific benefits is enjoying immediate cash flow, which can alleviate the financial stress associated with unexpected expenses. Or, it could open new doors to financial investments that might require significant upfront capital.

STVRs might negatively contribute to economic resilience in the urban landscape through gentrification of neighborhoods and subsequent rising rents. For instance, increased investment into one's STVR's curb appeal could increase the property's value, thus increase their property taxes. This individual property tax increase does not remain an isolated phenomenon, rather it induces tax hikes throughout the neighborhood. This could be seen as a negative externality by some residents who cannot afford the tax

increase. Additionally, increased STVR development results in a reduction of total housing stock available to rent or purchase by local residents. Per the law of supply and demand, the remaining properties available to residents may also contribute to increased property values and subsequent unaffordability of these homes for local residents.

STVRs may also negatively contribute to a community's economic resilience through its circumvention of local occupancy and sales taxes, which can position STVRs as a direct competitor to smaller hotels and motels as evidenced Austin, Texas (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). Variability of STVR tax regulations such as those surrounding Airbnb listings across U.S. cities (Airbnb, 2018b) risks losing portions of the accommodations sector and consequently, a traditional revenue stream for municipalities. Also, the multiplier effect of STVR revenue relies upon hosts' local expenditures of their STVR income. Non-resident hosts only positively affect their community's economic resilience if their local property and STVR tax contributions net more than their income leakage out of the community.

***Ecological Resilience***

Lastly, STVR impacts will be influenced by a community's ecological resilience. Holladay & Powell (2013) summarize ecological resilience as the ability of a system to maintain equilibrium (Adger, 2000), which includes attributes such as environmentally conscious driven infrastructure development (Boers & Cottrell, 2007; Donoghue & Sturtevant, 2007); the ratio of the natural to the built environment (Ode, Fry, Tveit, Messager, & Miller, 2009); and biological diversity of the area (Folke et al., 2005). In consideration of developing environmentally conscious infrastructure, a couple of issues emerge. STVRs can contribute to a community's ecologically responsible development

by its maintenance of the built environment and little need for additional land alteration. This could be especially important in historic cities with a well-established urban ecosystem that relies upon the continued existence of the vernacular (Wise, 2016). Besides potentially dis-incentivizing new hotel development through STVRs added supply of beds, STVRs likely use their residential parking assigned to their home limiting the need for parking decks often associated with hotel properties. Additionally, STVR guests might alleviate traffic congestion and pollution through them already being prone to using other sharing economy services like Uber and Lyft. Second, little is known about the resource use of STVR guests and how it compares to guests within the traditional hospitality industry other than one study commissioned by Airbnb, which compared energy and resource consumption patterns of STVR guests to traditional hotel guests in North America (Cleantech, 2014). There is a need for replication and expansion of this study to other continents.

The viability of the urban system requires these four types of resiliency. They can build the capacity for a destination to innovate from the stagnation phase to rejuvenation in the face of system disruptions like STVRs. In this resiliency framework presented here, both the potential negative and positive effects of STVRs on each type of resiliency are examined. This balanced approach is reflected throughout the larger framework presented to understand the extent of STVR impacts and how to manage any number of trajectories into which they may help an urban system move towards.

**Conclusion**

The popularity of disruptive innovations such as STVRs is reflected in countries such as the United States, where by 2015, forty-four percent of adults claimed to have

participated in sharing economy transactions, e.g., ride sharing, home sharing (Steinmetz, 2016). In 2017, the United States remained one of Airbnb's largest market shares contributing 660,000 listings out its total four million listings worldwide (Hartmans, 2017). Widener (2015) explains that in organically slow-growing cities, the visionary statement of the urban area is informed by the aggregation of many voices and is used to address small-scale decisions regarding community development. With predictions of continued urban growth (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), Widener (2015) expects that economies of scale and advancing smart city technologies will "usher in progressively more technocratic and frenetically paced real estate development. In this era, decisions by the administrative state might become less well-informed and increasingly ad hoc" (p.143). With no indication from research that this trend is declining, it seems STVRs are here to stay and that there is a need for strong conceptual and theoretical underpinnings to equip municipalities with tools to make informed and proactive decisions regarding future STVR development, which this paper attempts to provide.

The first part of the framework employs a landscape lens to conceptualize STVR impacts in the urban areas where they occur. Through this lens, STVRs are examined for their influence on the transformation of traditional tourism-residential landscape boundaries. The reshaping of these boundaries may sometimes produce new places in this landscape (McKercher et al., 2015). Depending upon which stakeholders (STVR host, STVR guest, non-STVR host resident) are involved, this place-making process could potentially produce an abstracted "place-myth" that may not portray the true character of the community (Davis, 2005).

To further illustrate the usefulness of a landscape approach in assessing STVR impacts, this paper explores the Historic Urban Landscape Approach (HUL) (UNESCO, 2014) as a tool to aid the use of this paper's proposed framework by weaving STVRs as one historic and current strand in the web of patterns and processes of the urban area. These contextualized factors accounted for by STVRs' connection to many other patterns and processes in the urban landscape answers Koh's (2002) call for models that offer solutions on how to move towards a desired development trajectory.

The second part of the proposed framework considers the temporal aspect of landscapes and their propensity for change through a systems perspective underpinned by disruptive innovation theory (Assink, 2006), chaos theory (McKercher, 1999) and ecological systems theory (Costanza, 1992; Holling, 2001). The role of STVRs in future development of the urban system is modeled through a combination of Butler's TALC, Doxey's Irridex (Butler, 1980; Doxey, 1975). This model illustrates the potential impact STVRs could have on a destination's development trajectory, particularly at the stagnation stage of a destination.

The ability for STVRs to serve as a positive disruptive innovation in a community, however depends upon the community's ability to cope with chaotic events such as the exponential growth of STVRs in their community. A community's capacity for adaptation is discussed within the context of Holladay and Powell's (2013) four dimensions of resilience.

In summary, the proposed framework offers a toolbox that regulatory agencies can utilize for holistic STVR regulations that consider the current contextual and historic roots of STVR issues and how they might evolve over time with the urban landscape.

Additionally, the proposed framework focuses largely on residents' attitudes as an indicator of STVR impacts and the overall health of the urban system. These attitudes ultimately function as a driving force behind future support for STVR activity. This support, however must be coupled with a community's capacity for adaptation to rapid innovations such as STVRs in their communities.

**Future Research**

With the nascent state of the literature on STVRs, the presented perspectives and proposed model can be a starting place to explore the many positive and negative impacts STVRs have in urban areas. One important research need is associated with the economic multipliers associated with STVR guests. A gap remains in understanding the localized economic impacts of STVRs and whether or not STVR guests' expenditures have higher multiplier rates than traditional tourists. This is important because if the multipliers of STVR guests are higher than other guests, they may be more 'efficient' tourists and thus, their benefits outweigh their collective costs (Gössling et al., 2005)

In terms of ecological impacts, there is still only speculation as to the natural resource tradeoffs between STVRs and hotels. Methods such as life cycle analyses of these different structures could provide material evidence as to efficiencies of one or the other.

Social impacts from STVRs have largely been addressed in terms of more complex issues previously described such as loss of affordable housing (Gurran & Phibbs, 2017; Lee, 2016; Lewyn, 2016; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2017). However, this growing body of research remains relatively limited in consideration of its time frame. Through landscape approaches such as the HUL, affordable housing may be

contextualized in the cycle of development in the city over time alongside other important indicators as outlined by the HUL approach. Expanding the time frame of inquiry helps create a stronger baseline from which housing attributes, such as property values, may be studied with the insertion of STVRs in the urban landscape. There is also still a gap in understanding the impacts that STVRs have on the social fabric of neighborhoods in terms of neighbor relations or impacts on the individual residents' sense of place, a vein of research that might be particularly relevant with STVRs position in the home, a culturally significant marker with which resident's daily lives depend upon (Tuan, 1975). Other research is needed to understand whether STVRs have an effect on residents' pride in their communities. Boley et al. (2014) describe this pride as psychological empowerment, a dimension that has shown significant influence on residents' attitudes and overall support for a given tourism activity, but little is known about how STVRs foster or destroy this psychological empowerment among residents. The proposed framework is also entirely conceptual and needs testing across a variety of cities to see if it holds up. Lastly, the broad definition of urban landscapes used within the study presents many opportunities for looking at the impact of STVRs with sub-landscapes in the urban system like historic districts. For example, STVRs that were established on the premise of vernacular heritage within designated historic districts find themselves at the intersection of the tourism landscape and a particular cultural landscape in the urban system, thus warranting an investigation into STVR impacts on historic preservation efforts in urban areas.

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# CHAPTER 3

# MODELING RESIDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS[3]

[3] Yeager, Emily; Boley, Bynum; Woosnam, Kyle; Green, Gary. To be submitted to *Journal of Travel Research*

**Abstract**

Ensuring the inclusion of residents' perceptions of tourism development has long been recognized as vital to sustainable tourism development. While researchers have begun to explore residents' perceptions of Short-term Vacation Rental (STVRs) from both qualitative and quantitative approaches, there is still a need for strong theoretical underpinnings to support this growing body of research. This study addresses this gap through applying a theoretical perspective that combines Social Exchange Theory and Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality to assess resident attitudes towards STVRs in the city of Savannah, GA. Results from 384 resident surveys revealed that resident support for STVRs was a function of both the costs and benefits associated with STVRs, as well as their perceived *Social Empowerment* and *Psychological Empowerment* from STVR development. Perceptions of *Personal Economic Benefits from STVRs* and *Political Empowerment* influenced perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of STVRs. However, neither construct had a significant influence on *Support for STVRs*. These findings highlight the need for regulatory approaches that ensure STVRs do not infringe on residents' sense of community and that STVR activity reflects the values and norms of residents so that STVR visits induce resident pride in their neighborhoods. If residents see STVRs as increasing their social and psychological empowerment while also having net benefits that exceed costs, they will be more likely to support this type of disruptive innovation.

**Introduction**

The growth of the sharing economy has been widely noted from *Fortune* magazine to former President Obama (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015) and is touted as one of the 10 ideas

that will change the world in the 21st Century (Teubner, 2014). Moreover, its potential to reduce waste within economic, environmental and social processes has been dubbed as important as the Industrial Revolution in terms of how society values ownership of goods and services (Belk, 2014). With this rising importance, research on the sharing economy has grown from initial taxonomic explorations of "sharing" (John, 2013; Rogers & Botsman, 2010) to legal perspectives on the sharing economy (Kassan & Orsi, 2012), and motivations for participation in the sharing economy (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

For the hospitality and tourism industry, one short-term vacation rental (STVR) company has received the lion-share of attention, Airbnb (Chasin & Scholta, 2015; Oskam & Boswijk, 2016; Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). Since its inception in 2008 (Bloomberg, 2018a), Airbnb has experienced exponential growth. With four million listings in 191 countries (Hartmans, 2017), it was valued at $31 billion in 2016 (Kulwin 2016; Thomas, 2017). However, Airbnb could be considered the "new kid on the block" when compared to the debut of Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) in 1995 (Bloomberg, 2018d) and other peer-to-peer rental companies that predate Airbnb such as HomeAway (c. 2004) and FlipKey (c. 2006) (Bloomberg, 2018b & 2018c). The networked collective activities of all of these competitors create a market segment known as "peer-to-peer accommodations" (Dolnicar, 2017) or "short-term vacation rentals" (STVRs) (Gottlieb, 2013). Formal regulation of STVR activity has necessitated municipal definitions of STVRs including the study site of these research. As such, the City of Savannah, defines STVRs as "an acommodation for transient guests where, in exchange for compensation, a residential dwelling unit is provided for lodging for a period of time not to exceed 30 consecutive days" (City of Savannah, 2018b). Moreover, per Savannah's zoning codes,

STVRs differ from inns and bed and breakfasts. Inns may not contain more than 15 bedrooms or suites and they may serve meals to guests. A bed and breakfast must be owner-occupied and can rent no more than one bedroom per dwelling unit (City of Savannah, 2018c).

The growing demand for STVRs is due to a variety of factors such as their ability to offer the "authenticity of being seamlessly embedded in a local urban neighborhood" (Füller & Michel, 2014, p.1311) while often offering a competitive price through circumventing security standards and tax processes expected of professional hotels and hostels (Füller & Michel, 2014). Additionally, STVRs come in an infinite variety of forms ranging from boats to castles, which allows for "micro-segmentation" and guests to further tailor their lodging experience to their own interests and needs (Airbnb, 2016; Dolnicar, 2017).

Although STVRs have been wildly popular with tourists (Guttentag, Smith, Potwarka, & Havitz, 2018; Varma, Jukic, Pestek, Shultz, & Nestorov, 2016), academic research points to their potential negative impacts such as their contribution to loss of affordable housing (Lee, 2016) resulting in residential outcry. In 2016, posters began to appear in San Francisco's mission district displaying CEO's of various sharing economy companies with their heads impaled on spikes with the heading "Techquity, Trickle-Down Devastation". Only a few weeks later, posters materialized just northeast of the Mission District in the San Francisco's Chinatown featuring the names and photographs of 12 Airbnb landlords as "Wanted for Airbnb'ing our community and destroying affordable housing for immigrant, minority and low-income families" (Wong, 2016). Negative resident reactions such as these are cause for concern because tourism

researchers have long posited that sustainable toursim devleopment depends upon stakeholder collaboration (Cole, 2006) and that resident involvement is the "philosophical basis for sustainable community tourism" development (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005, p.1286). With this in mind, a handful of studies have begun to answer Heo's (2016) call for more resident attitude research in the context of STVRs. These studies including Jordan and Moore's (2017) qualitative findings on how residents of Oahu, Hawii perceive the positive and negative economic, environmmental, and social impacts of transient vacation rentals, and research on residents' support for peer-to-peer accommodations in Tenerife, Spain (Garau-Vadell, Gutiérrez-Taño, & Díaz-Armas, 2018). While these studies have begun to investigate the relationship between STVRs and residents, they have yet to simultaneously consider the range of economic and non-economic reasons residents support or oppose this type of entrepreneurial activity within their neighborhood.

With this gap in mind, this study builds off of the previous work of Garau-Vadell et al. (2018) and Jordan & Moore (2017) through applying a theoretical perspective that combines Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality (WTFSR) to model resident attitudes towards STVRs in Savannah, GA. The proposed model frames resident support for STVRs as a product of residents' perceived costs and benefits from STVRs using SET. Support for STVRs is then framed as a product of residents' perceived economic benefits and perceptions of psychological, social, and political empowerment as direct and indirect influences using Weber's theory of formal and substantive rationality (Figure 3.1).

Savannah, GA provides an interesting context for this study because it was the first city in the state of Georgia to formally address the growing short-term vacation rental market (Georgia House of Representatives, 2014). Its STVR regulatory scheme includes zoning STVRs to three different Historic Districts within the core of the city with the intensity of regulation varying by district (City of Savannah, 2018b). To increase residential inclusion in STVR regulatory revisions, the City hosted public forums to receive public input to inform the updated STVR City regulations released in September 2017 (City of Savannah, 2017a; City of Savannah, 2018b). Even with all of these efforts for public involvement, residential debates over STVR development in Savannah continue (Editorial, 2018; Lebos, 2018; Skutch, 2018).

## Literature Review

### *Resident Attitudes Towards Tourism*

Researchers have long recognized the relationship between residents' perceptions of tourism and its success (Ap, 1992; Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). Residents' frustration with tourism can challenge or discontinue its development. For example, the Anuha Island Resort in the Solomon Islands developed without consultation of the indigenous Melanesian community resulted in hostility from locals, the resorts ultimate closure, and a "diplomatic row between Australia and the Solomon Islands" (Sofield & Birtles, 1996) cited by (Spencer & Nsiah, 2013, p. 221). Similarly, Disneyland's prospects in Prince William County, Virginia were thwarted by residents' opposition to the project's potential impacts including encroachment on a neighboring Civil War battlefield, urban sprawl, and taxes (Hawkins & Cunningham, 1996; Spencer & Nsiah, 2013). Thus, the future of STVRs partly depends upon residents being

supportive enough of STVRs not to support political candidates and zoning policies that could threaten their legality.

Resident attitude research tends to try to understand why residents support or oppose these types of tourism developments through uncovering the antecedents to residents' attitudes towards tourism (McGehee, 2004). Should residents be unsupportive of STVRs in their community, they might take political action to discontinue its development (Spencer & Nsiah, 2013). While previous research highlights the potential for STVRs to circumvent local occupancy taxes (Füller & Michel, 2014; Zervas et al., 2014), STVR companies such as Airbnb have begun to partner with local government to form tax agreements (Airbnb, 2017). In summary, local support for STVRs is vital for local municipalities that enjoy STVR tax revenue and for STVR hosts/owners who rely upon STVR income to supplement or entirely fund their lives.

A foundational theory used within the resident attitude literature to explain why residents support or oppose tourism development is SET (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Latkova, 2008; Madrigal, 1993; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990; Waitt, 2003; Wang & Pfister, 2008). SET, coined by sociologist Richard Emerson in 1976 and fully explained in a tourism context through the model of the social exchange process in 1992 (Ap, 1992), posits that the relationship between residents and support for tourism is developed based on the perceived costs and rewards of their local municipality engaging in tourism development (Ap, 1992). Despite SET's useful logic and the plethora of positive empirical findings substantiating that residents support for tourism stems from a cost/benefit analysis of the positive and negative impacts of tourism, the use of SET has

been criticized for its bias towards studying the economic costs and benefits of social transactions between visitors and hosts without considering non-economic factors that may influence residents support for tourism (Woosnam, Norman, & Ying, 2009).

The simplification of SET into extrinsic (financial) costs and benefits has been addressed by the addition of WTFSR to expand the scope of factors affecting residents' attitudes towards tourism that includes economic and non-economic factors (Boley, McGehee, Perdue, & Long, 2014; McGehee, 2007). WTFSR summarizes the human decision-making process as a constant battle between extrinsic (formal) motivations and intrinsic (substantive) motivations (Kalberg, 1980). Formal rationality is used for decisions relating to economic efficiency and livelihoods. For instance, residents might support continued STVR development if their bills are subsidized by STVR income or if they see the renovations of their neighbors who operate STVRs as increasing their property value. On the other hand, residents that view increased neighborhood property taxes as a function of STVRs may choose not to support STVR development because they see STVRs as effectively costing them money. In contrast to formal rationality, substantive rationality drives value-laden decision-making (Kalberg, 1980). More specifically, this type of decision-making does not focus on economic outcomes, but rather considers the intrinsic value postulates such as cultural norms to inform decision making. For instance, residents might support STVR development for the substantive reason of feeling proud that people want to stay and explore their neighborhood. Conversely, residents' support may wane if they feel STVRs are decreasing their sense of community by replacing permanent neighbors with transient STVR guests.

With this combined theoretical framework that pulls from SET and WTFSR, the following model and hypotheses are presenting (Figure 3.1) The model is an extension of Perdue et al. (1990) and Boley et al.'s (2014) models, but with Support for STVRs as the main construct of interest rather than general support for tourism within the community. Each construct within the model has also been adapted to a STVR context in order to model residents' support for STVRs. The remainder of the literature review walks through the combined theoretical and empirical support for the 14 hypotheses proposed in the model.

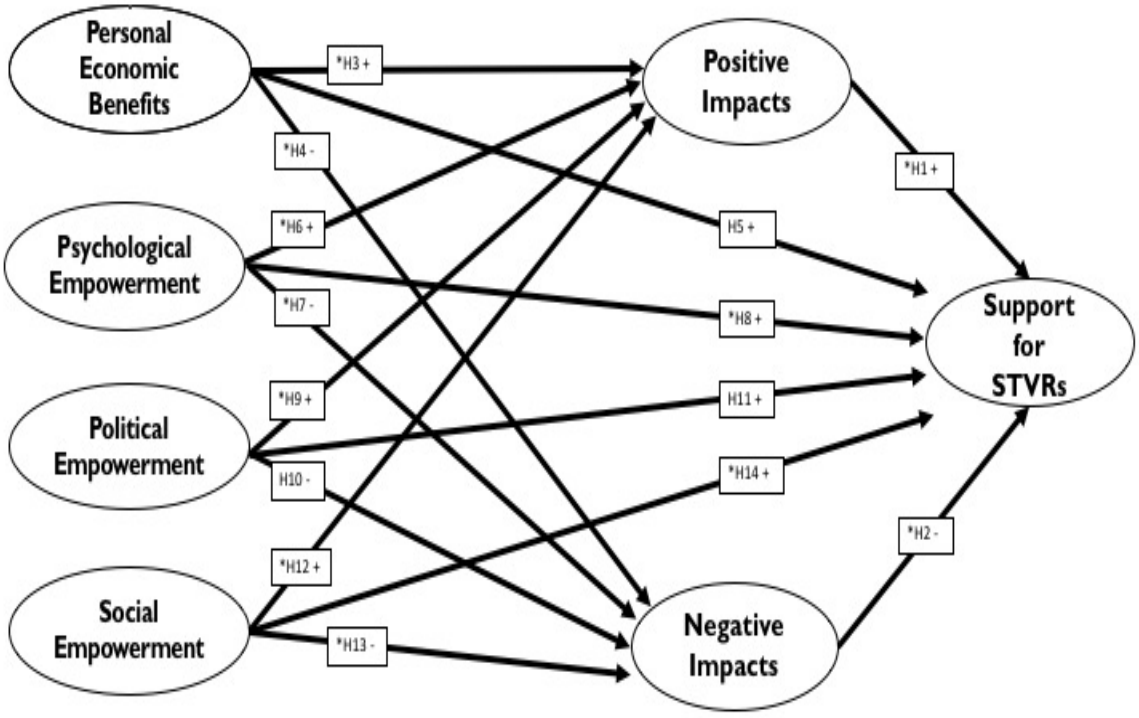


***Figure 3.1*** Structural model for residents' attitudes towards STVRs.

### *Positive and Negative Impacts of STVRs*

Underpinned by SET, the perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism have been continually shown to directly relate to support for various types of tourism (Dyer,

Gursoy, Sharma, & Carter, 2007; Latkova & Vogt, 2011; McGehee, 2004; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010; Perdue et al., 1990). Positive impacts from tourism development thought to influence residents' support for tourism include: positive appearance of an area, park development, increased recreational opportunities, preservation of cultural identity, improved shopping & amenities, income and standard of living, improvements to the local economy, increased public development, increased quality of life, and protection and conservation of natural resources (Latkova & Vogt, 2011; Perdue et al., 1990). One noted positive impact of STVRs in Savannah has been their relationship with investments into maintaining historic homes as an effort to maintain a piece of Savannah's cultural identity. In Savannah, the preservation of vernacular heritage has long been tied to the culture of the city (Historic Savannah Foundation, 2017). STVRs within both the Historic Landmark and Victorian Districts of the city often operate within existing homes comprising a portion of the vernacular heritage, which earned their historically significant designation. Organizations such as The Landmark Trust have recognized this relationship between historic preservation and STVRs and actively engage in facilitating this relationship (The Landmark Trust, 2018). Based on past empirical findings and SET, we believe that resident perceptions of the positive impacts of STVRS, like the historic preservation example mentioned above, will have a positive and significant influence on their support for STVRs within their neighborhood.

***H1:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between perceived positive impacts of STVRs and support for STVR development.*

In line with how SET theory suggest perceptions of the positive impacts of STVRS will lead to more support for STVR development, SET also suggests that residents' perceptions of the negative impacts of STVRs will lead to more opposition to STVR development within the neighborhood. Negative impacts from STVRs of interest for this study include: crime, traffic, litter, friction between tourists, overcrowding, and increased cost of living (Boley et al., 2014; Látková & Vogt, 2012; Perdue et al., 1990). Many of these issues previously existed in the districts open to STVRs, but it is of interest to see how residents perceive STVRs as exacerbating or alleviating these previous problems. For example, according to a 2016 report on STVRs in Savannah, parking has always been a problem in the City, but the issue has grown due to increasing numbers of residents, visitors, students, and businesses throughout Savannah. Since this report's release, the number of STVRs in Savannah has almost doubled to 1,148 listings (City of Savannah, 2017b) potentially decreasing this parking availability, which is shared by both tourism and residential stakeholders. Based on past empirical findings and SET, we believe that resident perceptions of the negative impacts of STVRS will have a negative and significant influence on their support for STVRs within their neighborhood.

***H2:*** *A significant negative relationship exists between perceived negative impacts of STVRs and support for STVR development.*

***Personal Economic Benefits from STVRs***

One of the most ubiquitous findings in resident attitude research is that the more residents benefit economically from tourism, the more they tend to support the tourism industry (Boley, Strzelecka, & Woosnam, 2016; Boley, Strzelecka, & Woosnam, 2018;

Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; Latkova & Vogt, 2011; Madrigal, 1993; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990). STVRs have the potential to bring direct positive and negative economic impacts to residents. Positively speaking, residents who have participated as STVR hosts might possess an economic dependence on STVRs, which could make these residents more favorable towards STVRs (Jurowski et al., 1997; Liu & Var, 1986; Madrigal, 1993). Residents who have never participated as an STVR host might still perceive direct positive economic benefits through their property values going up through renovations spurred by fixing STVR properties (Curl, 2017) or their service orientated businesses with the neighborhood seeing increased customers. On the other hand, if residents don't directly perceive any economic benefits associated with STVRS, residents may associate STVRs with gentrification and rising rents and property taxes, and therefore be antagonistic towards STVRs. With these considerations in mind and the support of SET and the formal rationale of WTFSR, the following hypotheses were formed:

***H3:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between perceived personal economic benefits from STVRs and perceived positive impacts of STVRs.*

***H4:*** *A significant negative relationship exists between perceived personal economic benefits from STVRs and perceived negative impacts of STVRs.*

***H5:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between perceived personal economic benefits of STVRs and overall support for STVR development.*

### *Empowerment*

Tourism researchers have rallied behind a Foucauldian notion of power as omnipresent in all aspects of tourism development (Boley & Johnson Gaither, 2016; Cheong & Miller, 2000; Foucault, 1982). Multi-disciplinary efforts to define empowerment (Friedmann, 1992; Rappaport, Rappaport, Swift, & Hess, 1984) highlight its elusiveness, which Rappaport et al. (1984) attribute to its situational manifestation with individuals. Despite these definitional struggles, Aghazamani and Hunt (2017) define empowerment in the context of tourism as "…a multidimensional, context-dependent, and dynamic process that provides humans, individually or collectively, with greater agency, freedom, and capacity to improve their quality of life as a function of engagement within the phenomenon of tourism" (p.343).

In their assessment of empowerment research across disciplines, Aghazamani and Hunt (2017) delineate the process of empowerment from empowerment outcomes. In the context of tourism, the former realm of research has been traditionally approached through qualitative methods to identify the mechanisms required in stakeholder participation processes to ensure inclusion and representation of the entire community (Idziak, Majewski, & Zmyślony, 2015; Sebele, 2010; Tosun, 2000). In tourism research, empowerment outcomes have evolved into the quantifiable counterpart to this realm of research and ultimately reflect the effectiveness of these participatory processes. This body of empowerment research in the context of tourism has recognized the multi-dimensionality of empowerment outcomes and have expand the traditional view of empowerment by adding the outcomes of economic, psychological, social, and

environmental empowerment (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Cole, 2006; Friedmann, 1992; Ramos & Prideaux, 2014; Scheyvens, 1999).

In Savannah, it is unclear whether residents are experiencing these types of empowerment outcomes in regard to STVR development. Savannah residents have actively petitioned against new hotel development in town to the historic review board (Editorial, 2017). Others have lamented the auctioning of property by the city to commercial or mixed-use developments and are requesting more attention paid to potential residential use that could create benefits such as "affordable housing options that would be ideal for workers in the hospitality industry" (Dawers, 2017). At the time of this study, Savannah was undergoing a tourism management plan in the face of residents' perceptions of the city reaching a "tipping point" with the influx of tourists and not enough consultation of residents' opinions on the matter (Curl, 2016). All of these examples point to the tension in Savannah surrounding the balance of tourism development and residents' ability to affect the outcomes of this development.

Recognizing a gap between rhetoric and actual evaluation of empowerment in sustainable tourism research, Boley & McGehee (2014) created the Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS) to measure residents' perceived empowerment through tourism by encompassing dimensions of psychological, social, and political empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999). This study aims to employ this scale in an effort to measure more than just the perceived political empowerment of residents to affect change in STVR legislation, but to also measure other types of empowerment that might be evoked or tarnished through STVR development.

Psychological empowerment refers to the self-esteem and pride residents develop as a result of tourists coming to visit their destination (Scheyvens, 1999). This is posed as an important intrinsic benefit of tourism development (Besculides, Lee, & McCormick, 2002; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). For additional clarity, the opposite of psychological empowerment, psychological disempowerment, occurs when tourism development strips the community of its specialness resulting in residents no longer feeling that their neighborhood is unique or having anything of importance to share with visitors. It can also result in residents being "embarrassed and wanting to disassociate with their community" (Boley et al. 2016, p.7).

With companies such as Airbnb encouraging guests to "belong anywhere" and advertising potentially more authentic experiences by staying within neighborhoods (Airbnb, 2016), perhaps the visitor's pursuit of the authentic elements of a neighborhood increases pride for some residents in their neighborhood or reminds them how special their neighborhood is. In essence, the commodification of their neighborhood makes them feel special and see the value of their neighborhood in a new light. If this is the case, one would expect residents to be supportive of the presence of STVRs. Conversely, residents could perceive the unique features of their neighborhood being undermined by STVRs and thus feel that their community has become commodified and has lost what used to make it special. Under this scenario, one would expect them to be opposed to STVRs. With this logic in mind and the support from the substantive portion of WTFSR, the following hypotheses are put forth for testing.

***H6:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between psychological empowerment and perceived positive impacts of STVRs.*

***H7:*** *A significant negative relationship exists between psychological empowerment and perceived negative impacts of STVRs.*

***H8:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between psychological empowerment and overall support for STVR development.*

Political empowerment has long been studied in terms of power transactions in tourism development (Látková & Vogt, 2012; Madrigal, 1993; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2009). The magnitude of power shared between residents and regulators in these transactions can be viewed through Armstein's (1969) model of citizen participation, which places levels of citizen participation in decision-making processes on a ladder increasing from non-participation to control of decision-making processes as the top rung. The political empowerment dimension used in this study raises the bar for citizen participation from consultation of their perceptions (the lowest rung of the ladder) to having control over decision-making processes surrounding STVR development (Cole, 2006; Scheyvens, 1999). Political empowerment in the tourism development process has been shown to significantly affect residents' perceptions of positive and negative impacts of tourism development (Boley et al., 2014).

In regard to STVR development in Savannah, the city's Tourism Management and Ambassador Department (TMAD) recently underwent restructuring to be a part of a

new division of Planning and Urban Design. Since its restructuring, the TMAD has created multiple mechanisms to generate political empowerment in determining STVR regulations that span Armstein's (1969) ladder of participation. For example, to provide residents and STVR owners/managers a platform to publicly engage the STVR regulation process, TMAD hosted three public stakeholder meetings in May and June of 2017. Additionally, residents are provided clear and easy access to STVR regulation updates via a link on the city's official STVR website (City of Savannah, 2018a). In light of past research findings and the recent unfolding of STVR regulatory processes in Savannah and support from the substantive portion of WTFSR, the following hypotheses are put forth for testing.

***H9:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between political empowerment and perceived positive impacts of STVRs.*

***H10:*** *A significant negative relationship exists between political empowerment and perceived negative impacts of STVRs.*

***H11:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between political empowerment and overall support for STVR development.*

Economically and politically successful communities are founded on a community's stock of social capital (McClenaghan, 2000). Building social capital relies upon networks, norms, institutions, and community structures that facilitate cohesion between community members. This cohesion increases the capacity for social learning,

which helps residents work together towards common goals (Evans, 1996; Lam, 1996; Putnam, 1993). The level of cohesion between community members mediating social capital can be understood as a measure of social empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999). Residents' perceived levels of social empowerment from tourism are thought to affect their perceptions of the impacts of tourism and their overall support of tourism development (Maruyama, Woosnam, & Boley, 2016; Strzelecka, Boley, & Strzelecka, 2017).

In regard to STVRs in Savannah, there are examples of STVRs bringing residents together and examples of STVRs tearing the community apart. A positive example is the timely development of Savannah's tourism management plan, which facilitated discussion on the issues of STVRs such as those already witnessed in public meetings. These discussions surrounding the issue of STVRs might result in residents with differing views rallying around the cause for sustainable management of this tourism activity. Conversely, conversations between Savannah residents on social media about STVRs have become increasingly more uncivil resulting in emotional contagions that dissipate social cohesion For example, STVR resident hosts interviewed for a separate part of this study witnessed a neighborhood open Facebook chat that progressed into emotionally charged arguments producing derogatory comments and profuse amounts of emojis ranging from sad to angry, to laughing faces that scoff at some contributors' comments (STVR Host, 2017).

With the ability of STVRs to have this type of polarizing effect on residents' relationships with each other, the substantive portion of Weber's theory is used to put forth for following hypotheses for testing.

***H12:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between social empowerment and overall support for STVR development.*

***H13:*** *A negative relationship exists between social empowerment and perceived negative impacts of STVRs.*

***H14:*** *A significant positive relationship exists between social empowerment and overall support for STVR development*

## Methods

### *Study Site*

The model and 14 hypotheses were tested in Savannah, GA, U.S.A. Founded as a commercial outpost for the colony of South Carolina in 1733, Savannah's evolution since then has been one marked with diverse settlers, slavery, wars, industrialization, natural disasters, and tourism (New Georgia Ecyclopedia, 2017). One thing that has not changed is the wealth of the vernacular heritage in Savannah. In early 1955, Savannah addressed its reputation as the "pretty woman with a dirty face" by establishing the Historic Savannah Foundation, which today, focuses on protection of historic buildings and "revitalization of historic neighborhoods" (Historic Savannah Foundation, 2017; New Georgia Ecyclopedia, 2017). Eleven years later, these houses would exist within the Historic District, a National Historic Landmark as part of a community urban-preservation program (New Georgia Ecyclopedia, 2017; Visit Savannah, 2017). While the architecture has drawn many to visit Savannah since the 1990's (New Georgia Ecyclopedia, 2017; Visit Savannah, 2017), these buildings reflect the rich cultural

resources in Savannah including but not limited to: the First African American Church, one of the oldest African American churches in the country; The Pink House, the site of the first bank of Georgia; and the birthplace of Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (New Georgia Encyclopedia, 2017). In addition to the natural beauty and cultural resources of the city, iconic literary pieces such as John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* and film classics such as *Forrest Gump* and *Roots* attracted more than fifty million people to Savannah in the 1990's (New Georgia Encyclopedia, 2017).

Tourism in Savannah has leveraged these heritage assets to host 13.7 million visitors in 2016 that spent nearly $2.8 billion (Nussbaum, 2017; Savannah Area Chamber, 2017). The leisure and hospitality sector (accommodations, food services, arts, entertainment, and recreation) is currently the largest regional economic sector in Savannah employing approximately 25,000 people (Savannah Area Chamber, 2017). By December 2017 overnight visitors were generating a total of $20.7 million in hotel tax revenue (Savannah Area Chamber, 2018).

In response to this continued growth, the city moved tourism management from under the umbrella of parking services into its own Tourism Management and Ambassador Department (TMAD) in 2014 (City of Savannah, 2017b). The organization was charged to manage and regulate many of the growing issues related to tourism development in the city such as carriage horse safety, the collection of a $1 preservation fee for each tour patron, and short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) (Curl, 2014). Since then, TMAD has ushered Savannah into the spotlight as the first city in the state of Georgia to formally address the growing short-term vacation rental market (Georgia

House of Representatives, 2014). Their STVR registration and tax remittance scheme requires an official STVR application, remittance of local hotel/motel taxes, and state use and sales tax (City of Savannah, 2018). Savannah's approach towards STVR management sets a precedent for other cities with mixed-use zones that consist of residential property, historically significant assets, and tourism functionality. However, there has yet to be an inquiry into residents' perceptions of STVRs in their neighborhoods as an indirect evaluation of Savannah's STVR management approach.

***Survey Methods & Sample***

To understand residents' perceptions of STVRs in their neighborhood, this study employed a census-guided systematic random sampling of residents using door-to-door self-administered paper surveys within the three districts where STVRs are legally allowed in Savannah (Figure 3.2). This census-guided method was chosen to gain a high response rate (Andereck & Nickerson, 1997; Babbie, 2013; Woosnam et al., 2009); to garner a representative sample (Boley & McGehee, 2014); and to include minority groups that might otherwise be excluded with other sampling methods (Boley et al., 2014; Woosnam, 2008). Surveys were distributed by the proportion of households located in each census block group across the three districts where STVRs are legally allowed in Savannah.

Using American Fact Finder and Savannah's GIS site (SAGIS), it was determined which census block groups fell into the three permitted STVR zones. The total number of housing units in each block group were recorded, so that the percent of households in each block group could be calculated in relation to the entire number of households in the three-district area. Once this was calculated, the total number of housing units from a

given census block group was divided by the total number of housing units for the three districts and multiplied by 100 to obtain the percentage of housing units represented per census block group in the study area. The percentage of housing units per census tract was then multiplied by 600 for the total number of surveys needed per census block group. For example, if 500 households were located in Census Block 1 and the total number of households for the three STVR districts was 10,000, then the proportion of households in Census Block 1 would be 5% (500/10,000) and 30 surveys (.05 x 600) would be allotted to that census block. This ensured that the surveys were distributed in proportion to the number of households residing in each census block group.

A total of 600 surveys were distributed based upon an expected response rate in the range of 60-72% (McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2012), and a minimum of 379 surveys needed based upon a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval (SurveyMonkey, 2017). The minimum of 379 responses was also above Kline's (2015) sample size requirements for Structural Equation Modeling, which recommends a 20:1 ratio between responses and parameters.

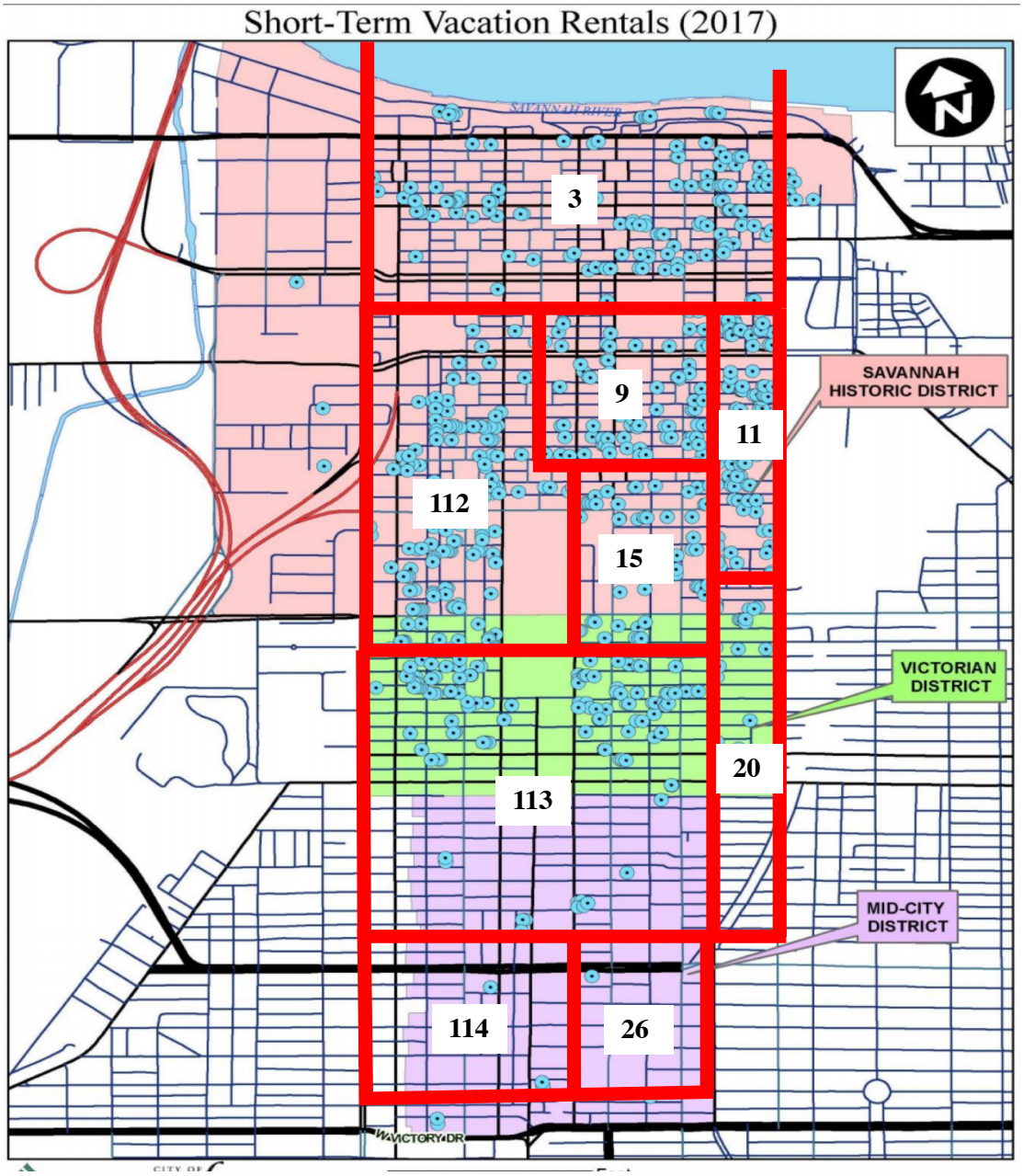


***Figure 3.2*** Nine Census Tracts Containing the Three STVR Zones (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016b).

Survey respondents were residents over the age of 18 and consisted of the adult with the most recent birthday to maintain random sampling within the housing unit. The sampling process consisted of contacting every second house beginning with a random

place in each census block group (Woosnam et al., 2009). However, to ensure safety of the researcher, sampling did not occur in the interior hallways of apartment complexes – only from exterior doors and samples were not taken from gated apartment communities. If a respondent was not home, the address was noted by the researcher and the next house skipped to maintain random sampling. If a resident declined the survey, the address was marked, and sampling continued with every second house. Once the second house-sampling pattern was exhausted in a census block group with surveys still left to obtain, addresses with no response were returned to. Once those addresses were exhausted, attempts were made at the houses that were skipped in the original sampling pattern. If the numbers of surveys per census block group were not satisfied, repeated attempts were made until that number was met.

Surveys were distributed between 4pm-8pm on weekdays and 11am-8pm on the weekends to capitalize on the peak hours that people are at home and available to answer the door. When a respondent accepted a self-administered survey, the survey was left for the respondent to complete and picked up the following day during the same time period (Boley et al., 2014; Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2012). To allow for a greater response rate, up to two return contacts were allowed (McGehee & Andereck, 2004).

Throughout the eight-week period of data collection, 2,093 households were visited with 703 individuals answering the door. Out of the 703 individuals intercepted, 49 were not permanent residents (17 of these individuals identified the residence as an STVR). At the remaining 654 households, 600 residents were willing to participate with 54 declining (4 of these residents did not speak English as a first language). Of the 600 questionnaires distributed, 256 were collected on the first return visit, 151 were collected

on the second return visit, seven were mailed in, two were emailed in as pdfs and one was text messaged. After cleaning for incomplete questionnaires and excessive missing data, the number of usable responses was reduced to 384, resulting in a 64% response rate.

A comparison of the U.S. Census Bureau 2016 ACS five-year data revealed demographic similarities and discrepancies in the data (Table 3.1). It is important to note that some census tracts span across multiple Districts. These census tracts are noted in the table under headings explaining which Districts they fall within. A majority of respondents (83.5%) identified as White. Also, respondents were more likely to be female (52.4%) than male (45.2%). The median age of respondents was 53 years old, which closely aligns with the average age of respondents being 51 years old. Census data comparisons reveal respondents reporting ages higher than demographic characteristics in seven census tracts. In terms of housing status, 62.1% of respondents owned their homes while 34% rent. A total of 3.2% of respondents reported another home ownership status (e.g., second home). These findings are surprising given that in all but one census tract, census data comparisons reveal home rentals as more common than home ownership. A total of 46.9% of respondents reported incomes of $90,000 or higher. Census data comparisons reveal that across all census tracts, respondents frequently reported an average annual income that was much higher than median incomes characteristic of their corresponding census tract and block group.

**Table 3.1** Sample demographics compared to census statistics.

| | Housing Units | # of Surveys Distributed | # of Surveys Returned | Race | Median Age | Mean Age | Housing Status | Median Income ($) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Historic District*** | | | | | | | | |
| CT3 | 1076 | 86 | 58 | 86.0% White | 53 | - | 64.4% Rent | 51,128 |
| Block Group 1 | 531 | 42 | 29 | 81.3% White | 22 | - | 63.2% Rent | 57,926 |
| Block Group 2 | 545 | 44 | 29 | 92.9% White | 27 | - | 65.4% Rent | 50,292 |
| ***Sample*** | | | | ***83.5% White*** | ***53*** | ***51*** | ***62.5% Own*** | ***90,000-119,000*** |
| CT9 | 922 | 74 | 55 | 81.9% White | 50.2 | - | 63.5% Rent | 46,304 |
| Block Group 1 | 922 | 74 | 55 | 81.9% White | 50.2 | - | 63.5% Rent | 46,304 |
| ***Sample*** | | | | ***94.5% White*** | ***33*** | ***32.3*** | ***69.5% Rent*** | ***120,000-149,999*** |
| ***Historic & Victorian Districts*** | | | | | | | | |
| C11 | 606 | 48 | 23 | 54.8% Black | 29.6 | | 75.7% Rent | 30,743 |
| Block Group 1 | 606 | 48 | 23 | 82.% White | 29.6 | - | 72.9% Rent | 35,972 |
| ***Sample*** | | | | ***73.9% White*** | ***38*** | ***38.2*** | ***47.8% Own*** | ***60,000-89,9999*** |
| C15 | 808 | 65 | 40 | 66.9% White | 30.6 | - | 81.9% Rent | 20,366 |
| Block Group 1 | 808 | 65 | 40 | 66.9% White | 30.6 | - | 81.9% Rent | 20,366 |
| ***Sample*** | | | | ***77.5% White*** | ***45*** | ***45.2*** | ***65.0% Own*** | ***60,000-89,9999*** |
| C112 | 1213 | 97 | 75 | 80.3% White | 30.8 | - | 67.8% Rent | 43,056 |
| Block Group 1 | 642 | 51 | 42 | 72.9% White | 29.6 | - | 70.0% Rent | 42,917 |
| Block Group 2 | 571 | 46 | 33 | 88.4% White | 32.5 | - | 65.3% Rent | 43,229 |
| ***Sample*** | | | | ***85.5% White*** | ***58*** | ***57.9*** | ***65.8% Own*** | ***90,000-199,999*** |
| ***Victorian District*** | | | | | | | | |
| C20 | 272 | 22 | 8 | 54.4% Black | 31.5 | - | 67.6% Rent | 26,129 |
| Block Group 1 | 272 | 22 | 8 | 67.6% White | 25.6 | - | 77.2% Rent | 32,632 |
| ***Sample*** | | | | ***62.5% White*** | ***72*** | ***72.1*** | ***50.0% Own*** | ***30,000-59,9999*** |
| ***Victorian & Mid-City Districts*** | | | | | | | | |
| C113 | 1284 | 99 | 59 | 51.3% White | 26.6 | - | 83.1% Rent | 25,746 |
| Block Group 1 | 541 | 42 | 22 | 54.4% Black | 26.5 | - | 82.1% Rent | 25,063 |
| Block Group 2 | 743 | 57 | 37 | 56.7% White | 26.6 | - | 83.9% Rent | 30,439 |
| ***Sample*** | | | | ***69.5% White*** | ***67*** | ***67.2*** | ***59.3% Own*** | ***60,000-89,9999*** |
| ***Mid-City District*** | | | | | | | | |
| C26 | 154 | 12 | 7 | 58.4% Black | 31.4 | - | 51.7% Rent | 32,672 |
| Block Group 1 | 84 | 7 | 4 | 66.6% Black | 31.5 | - | 60.0% Rent | 27,917 |
| Block Group 2 | 70 | 5 | 3 | 50.3% Black | 31.3 | - | 53.8% Own | 39,125 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Sample*** | | | | ***57.1% White*** | ***73*** | ***73.3*** | ***51.1% Own*** | ***30,000-59,9999*** |
| C114 | 1297 | 97 | 59 | 52.8% White | 29 | - | 78.9% Rent | 20,465 |
| Block Group 1 | 662 | 50 | 24 | 51.9% Black | 28 | - | 70.8% Rent | 22,128 |
| Block Group 2 | 635 | 47 | 35 | 64.3% White | 47 | - | 86.7% Rent | 13,079 |
| ***Sample*** | | | | *69.5% White* | *78* | 78.4 | *61.0% Own* | *60,000-89,9999* |

## Instrument and Data Analysis

The model tested in this study includes the following seven constructs: *Support for STVRs, Positive Impacts of STVRs, Negative Impacts of STVRs, Perceived Economic Benefits from STVRs, and Psychological, Social and Political Empowerment from STVRS*. All of these scales were measured on a seven-point likert-scale to prevent ordinal ambiguity in the intensity of responses (Babbie, 2013) and the ability of this range of responses to allow respondents to better "discriminate between scale values" (Kline, 2009, p.198). The items comprising each scale are included in Table 3.2. For the entire survey, please see Appendix B.

To measure *Support for STVRs*, this study adapts Boley & Strzelecka's (2016) four-item *Support for Tourism* scale to measure support for the presence of STVRs within a resident's neighborhood. The scale is a prior adaptation of Woosnam's (2012) nine-item *Support for Tourism Development* scale and Lankford and Howard's (1994) *Tourism Impact Assessment Scale*. To measure *Perceived Impacts of STVRs,* this study adapts ten items for *Perceived Positive Impacts of STVRs* and six items for *Perceived Negative Impacts of STVRs* from Látková and Vogt (2012). Iterations from the use of these scales have shown the scales to be reliable and valid, but they have yet to be used in the context of STVRs. These items mirror issues covered in local news sources stemming

from STVR development in Savannah such as impacts on the physical appearance of neighborhoods (Curl, 2016) and parking (Ritchey, 2014). The *Perceived Economic Benefits from Tourism* construct is a four-item scale adapted from Boley, Strzelecka, & Woosnam (2018). This scale seeks to measure residents' perceptions of economically benefiting from the presence of STVRs in their neighborhood. Iterations of the scale have been shown to significantly influence residents' support for tourism, a connection found in research before (McGehee & Andereck, 2004). Lastly, to measure *Empowerment through STVRs,* this study adapts Boley & McGehee's (2014) *Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale* (RETS) to an STVR context. This scale is comprised of a five-item *Psychological Empowerment* dimension; a three-item *Social Empowerment* dimension; and a four-item *Political Empowerment* dimension. All of these dimensions have been shown to significantly influence residents' perceived impacts of tourism. This scale has also shown construct validity across a variety of studies and international settings (Boley, Ayscue, Maruyama, & Woosnam, 2016; Boley, Maruyama, & Woosnam, 2015; Strzelecka et al., 2017).

**Results**

Prior to assessing the structural relationships hypothesized, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test model fit and construct validity. The CFA revealed good model fit for the absolute fit indices and acceptable fit for the incremental fit indices: ($X^2$(506) = 1249.15 (p ≤= .001); RMSEA = .062; NFI = .905; CFI = .941). While our chi-square was high and statistically significant, it should be noted that this test is sensitive to large sample sizes and other tests should be considered that do account for the issue of large sample sizes such as RMSEA (Hair, 2010). Hair (2010) recommends

an RMSEA below .08 and NFI and CFI values above .9. NFI estimates can also pose issues with large sample sizes, therefore CFI should receive stronger consideration in determining model fit (Kline, 2015). Based on an RMSEA of .062 and a CFI of .941, our model exhibits good fit. The CFA also helped determine construct validity by providing measures of convergent and discriminant validity (Hair, 2010). Convergent validity measures how much common variance is shared between a latent construct and its items (Hair, 2010). It is confirmed with statistically significant factor loadings of 0.5 or higher; average variance extracted (AVE) values above 50%; and construct reliability (CR) values higher than 0.7. As seen in Table 3.2, all factor loadings were at or above the 0.5 threshold and ranged from 0.5 to 0.98. All AVE values were above the 50% minimum and all CR values were well above 0.7. All of these outcomes indicate convergent validity in the model. Discriminant validity measures distinctness between constructs in the model (Hair, 2010). It is confirmed through the presence of square correlation values between two constructs that are lower than each constructs AVE value (Hair, 2010). Overall, these results point to discriminant validity in the model (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.2** Confirmatory factor analysis of constructs[1]

| SCALE & ITEM DESCRIPTION | N | Mean | R | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Support for STVRs*** | | | | **0.95** | **82%** |
| *My neighborhood should…* | | | | | |
| …actively encourage STVRs | 368 | 3.62 | 0.88* | | |
| …support STVRs | 368 | 4.36 | 0.94* | | |
| …continue to allow STVRs | 368 | 4.79 | 0.88* | | |
| …support the promotion of STVRs | 368 | 3.86 | 0.92* | | |
| ***Positive Impacts*** | | | | **0.93** | **60%** |
| *STVRs…* | | | | | |
| …improve the physical appearance of my neighborhood | 356 | 4.27 | 0.75* | | |
| …provide incentives for protection and conservation of natural resources in my neighborhood | 356 | 3.90 | 0.81* | | |
| …increase the quality of life in my neighborhood | 356 | 3.83 | 0.89* | | |
| …Encourage more public development in my neighborhood (e.g. roads, public facilities) | 356 | 4.06 | 0.71* | | |
| …improve the local economy in my neighborhood | 356 | 4.73 | 0.79* | | |
| …result in better shopping, restaurants, and Entertainment options in my neighborhood | 356 | 4.60 | 0.78* | | |
| …help preserve the cultural identity of my | 356 | 3.53 | 0.78* | | |
| …incentivize the restoration of historic buildings in my neighborhood | 356 | 4.56 | 0.72* | | |
| …increase the number of recreational opportunities in my | 356 | 3.92 | 0.74* | | |
| ***Negative Impacts*** | | | | **0.85** | **54%** |
| *STVRs…* | | | | | |
| …increase traffic problems in my neighborhood | 360 | 4.76 | 0.68* | | |
| …increase the amount of crime in my neighborhood | 360 | 3.46 | 0.70* | | |
| …result in more litter in my neighborhood | 360 | 4.29 | 0.82* | | |
| …cause my neighborhood to be overcrowded | 360 | 4.11 | 0.76* | | |
| …lead to friction between homeowners and STVR guests | 360 | 4.32 | 0.71* | | |
| ***Personal Economic Benefits*** | | | | **0.97** | **90%** |
| *STVRs in my neighborhood…* | | | | | |
| …help me pay my bills | 374 | 2.87 | 0.96* | | |
| …help provide me with additional income | 374 | 2.93 | 0.97* | | |
| …help me pay my mortgage/rent | 374 | 2.82 | 0.97* | | |
| …are vital to my economic future | 374 | 2.78 | | | |

**Table 3.2** Continued: Confirmatory factor analysis of constructs

| SCALE & ITEM DESCRIPTION | N | Mean | R | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Psychological Empowerment*** | | | | **0.96** | **82%** |
| *STVRs in my neighborhood…* | | | | | |
| …make me proud to be a resident of my neighborhood | 377 | 3.84 | 0.92* | | |
| …make me feel special because people are able to experience my neighborhood's unique features | 377 | 4.05 | 0.95* | | |
| …make me want to tell others about what we have to offer in my neighborhood | 377 | 4.02 | 0.94* | | |
| …remind me that I have a unique culture to share with visitors | 377 | 4.38 | 0.90* | | |
| …make me want to work to keep my neighborhood special | 377 | 4.46 | 0.83* | | |
| ***Social Empowerment*** | | | | **0.87** | **71%** |
| *STVRs in my neighborhood make me…* | | | | | |
| …feel more connected to my community | 368 | 4.12 | 0.98* | | |
| …feel a sense of "community spirit" | 368 | 3.20 | 0.97* | | |
| …feel like I want to get involved in my community | 368 | 4.00 | 0.50* | | |
| ***Political Empowerment*** | | | | **0.86** | **61%** |
| *I feel like…* | | | | | |
| …I have a voice in Savannah's STVR decisions | 369 | 3.50 | 0.90* | | |
| …I have access to the decisions making process when it | 369 | 3.37 | 0.88* | | |
| …my vote makes a difference in how STVRs are developed in Savannah | 369 | 3.46 | 0.70* | | |
| …I have an outlet to share my concerns about STVR development in Savannah | 369 | 3.81 | 0.62 | | |

**[1]Items were measured on a seven-point likert-scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".**

**Table 3.3:** Correlations and squared correlations between model constructs

| | STS | PI | NI | PEB | PSEM | SOEM | POEM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Support for STVRs (STS)** | **82%** | 0.58 | 0.35 | 0.28 | 0.66 | 0.50 | 0.10 |
| **Positive Impacts from STVRs (PI)** | 0.76 | **60%** | 0.26 | 0.29 | 0.61 | 0.48 | 0.12 |
| **Negative Impacts of STVRs (NI)** | -0.59 | -0.51 | **54%** | 0.20 | 0.35 | 0.29 | 0.02 |
| **Perceived Economic Benefits from STVRs (PEB)** | 0.53 | 0.54 | -0.45 | **90%** | 0.32 | 0.31 | 0.06 |
| **Psychological Empowerment through STVRs (PSEM)** | 0.81 | 0.78 | -0.59 | 0.57 | **82%** | 0.59 | 0.09 |
| **Social Empowerment through STVRs (SOEM)** | 0.71 | 0.69 | -0.54 | 0.56 | 0.77 | **71%** | 0.08 |
| **Political Empowerment through STVRs (POEM)** | 0.32 | 0.35 | -0.14 | 0.24 | 0.30 | 0.28 | **61%** |

Notes: values below the diagonal are correlation estimates among constructs. Values above the diagonal are squared correlations. All correlations are significant at the p = .001.

With tests of both convergent and discriminant validity presented, the attention now shifts to the test of nomological validity through the structural equation model to see if the relationships between the constructs are as hypothesized (Hair, 2010).

Hypotheses 1–14 were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). The structural model's fit was assessed using the same model fit statistics from the CFA (Table 3.4). While the parsimonious fit indicator was high, the absolute and incremental fit indices revealed adequate fit for the model: $X^2(507) = 1250.254$ ($p \leq .001$); RMSEA = .062; NFI = .905; CFI = .941; PCFI = .803). The absolute and incremental fit indices remained the same with the slight increase in PCFI. These values still fall near suggested thresholds of good model fit (Hair, 2010). The 14 hypotheses were tested for their statistical significance ($p < .05$) and the positive or negative nature of these relationships. A total of 11 of the 14 hypotheses tested were supported by the SEM model with 72 percent variance in Support for STVRs explained by the model.

**Table 3.4** SEM results for hypothesized relationships between constructs.

| Hypotheses | Hypothesized Relationship | R | P | Support for Hypothesis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **H1** | **Positive Impacts → Support for STVRS (+)** | **0.266*** | **0.001** | **Y** |
| **H2** | **Negative Impacts → Support for STVRS (-)** | **-0.136*** | **0.002** | **Y** |
| **H3** | **Personal Economic Benefit → Positive Impacts (+)** | **0.095*** | **0.031** | **Y** |
| **H4** | **Personal Economic Benefit → Negative Impact (-)** | **-0.139*** | **0.020** | **Y** |
| H5 | Personal Economic Benefit → Support for STVRS (+) | 0.009 | 0.818 | N |
| **H6** | **Psychological Empowerment → Positive Impacts (+)** | **0.547*** | **0.001** | **Y** |
| **H7** | **Psychological Empowerment → Negative Impacts (-)** | **-0.361*** | **0.001** | **Y** |
| **H8** | **Psychological Empowerment → Support for STVRS (+)** | **0.422*** | **0.001** | **Y** |
| **H9** | **Political Empowerment → Positive Impacts (+)** | **0.108** | **0.006** | **Y** |
| H10 | Political Empowerment → Negative Impacts (-) | 0.049 | 0.343 | N |
| H11 | Political Empowerment → Support for STVRS (+) | 0.047 | 0.174 | N |
| **H12** | **Social Empowerment → Positive Impacts (+)** | **0.189*** | **0.002** | **Y** |
| **H13** | **Social Empowerment → Negative Impacts (-)** | **-0.197*** | **0.015** | **Y** |
| **H14** | **Social Empowerment → Support for STVRS (+)** | **0.112*** | **0.037** | **Y** |

Note: Measure of model fit: chi-square (638) = 1585.013; RMSEA = .062; NFI = .892; CFI = .932; PCFI = .803 (Average Goodness of Fit Indices are not available in AMOS when estimating means and intercepts); R = standardized regression coefficient; R2 = squared multiple correlation; Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree.
$R^2$ for "Support of STVRs" = 0.72
$R^2$ for "Positive Impacts of STVRs" = 0.65
$R^2$ for "Negative Impacts of STVRs" = 0.37

Hypotheses 1–2 tested whether residents' support for continued STVR development is influenced by their positive and negative attitudes towards STVRs. Both hypotheses were supported (H1: $\beta = .266$, $p < .001$); (H2: $\beta = -.136$, $p = .002$) indicating that residents' perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of STVRs have a significant influence on their support for STVRs. Hypotheses 3–5 focused on the influence of perceived *Personal Economic Benefits from STVRs* on perceptions of STVR impacts and residents' overall support for continued STVR development. Results

revealed mixed support for the influence of the Personal Economic Benefit construct with significant relationships found between it and the positive (H3: $\beta$ = .095, p = .031) and negative impacts of STVRs (H4: $\beta$ = -0.139, p = .020), but not directly on support for STVRs (H5: $\beta$ = .009, p =.818). Hypotheses 6-8 focused on the influence of *Psychological Empowerment through STVRs* (Boley et al., 2014) on perceptions of STVR impacts and residents' overall support for continued STVR development. Results suggest there is a significant direct relationship between *Psychological Empowerment through STVRs* and perceived *Positive Impacts of STVRs* (H6: $\beta$ = 0.547, p = .001), as well as a significant negative relationship between *Psychological Empowerment through STVRs* and perceived *Negative Impacts of STVRs* (H7: $\beta$ = -.361, p = .001). *Psychological Empowerment* was also found to have a significant positive relationship with *Support for STVRs* (H8: $\beta$ = 0.422, p = .001). Hypotheses 9-11 focused on the influence of *Political Empowerment through STVRs* (Boley et al., 2014) on residents' perceptions of STVR impacts and their overall support for continued STVR development. *Political Empowerment through STVRs* was found to have a significant positive relationship with perceived *Positive Impacts of STVRs* (H9: $\beta$ = .108, p = .006). However, *Political Empowerment* did not significantly influence perceived *Negative Impacts of STVRs* nor *Support for STVRs* (H10: $\beta$ = .049, p = .343; H11: $\beta$ = .047, p = .174). The last set of hypotheses (12-14) focused on the influence of *Social Empowerment through STVRs* (Boley et al., 2014) on residents' perceptions of STVR impacts and *Support for STVRs*. All three of these hypotheses were supported revealing that there is a direct significant relationship between *Social Empowerment through Tourism* and perceived *Positive Impacts of STVRs* (H12: $\beta$ = .189, p = .002), an inverse significant relationship between

*Social Empowerment through Tourism* and perceived *Negative Impacts of STVRs* (H13: $\beta$ = -.197, p = .015), and a direct significant relationship between *Social Empowerment through STVRs* and *Support for STVRs* (H14: $\beta$ = .112, p = .037). Overall, the SEM model supported 11 of the 14 hypotheses tested. The SEM model was able to explain 72% of the variance in the construct of *Support for STVRS,* 65% of the variance in the construct of *Positive Impacts of Tourism,* and 37% of the variance in the construct of *Negative Impacts of Tourism*.

**Discussion**

This study sought to add to the nascent body of work emerging on resident attitudes towards STVRs (Garau-Vadell et al., 2018; Jordan & Moore, 2017) by using WTFSR and SET to model residents attitudes towards STVRs in Savannah, GA. Results of the model demonstrate the appropriateness of using a combined WTFSR and SET lens through which to understand resident attitudes towards STVRs since residents' attitudes towards STVRs were found to be a function of both their positive and negative perceptions of STVR impacts within their neighborhoods as well as the formal extrinsic factor of *Perceived Economic Benefits* and the substantive intrinsic factors of *Psychological Empowerment, Social Empowerment and Political Empowerment*. It is suggested that future academic research on resident attitudes towards STVRs continue to use this blended theoretical perspective because of its flexibility in allowing for a range of formal extrinsic and substantive intrinsic factors to influence resident support for STVRs. Residential support is much more than the financial rewards and costs of STVRS, but the range of impacts that positively and negatively affect the community and residents' quality of life.

These results have practical implications for two important groups of practitioners – municipalities responsible for managing destinations with STVR growth and the STVR industry itself. For municipalities wishing to manage STVR growth through formal regulation, a first step would be to consider the range of positive and negative community impacts associated with STVRs (e.g., improved physical appearance, increased traffic problems). Before working on enhancing or mitigating these range of impacts, municipalities should ensure the relevance of these STVR impacts to their destination such as the positive impacts of historic preservation from STVRs or lack of parking. There is a potential for some communities to find these impacts irrelevant, and therefore more prudent to focus on more salient STVR impacts. The results of this study and the logic of SET both suggest that if residents perceive the positive impacts of STVRs as greater than the negative impacts, they will be more likely to support STVRs within their neighborhood.

STVR companies such as Airbnb and HomeAway also need to have their pulse on resident perceptions of STVRs because their business models are largely contingent on resident support. If the negative impacts of STVRs start to outweigh the positive impacts and STVRs are not increasing resident pride and self-esteem through psychological empowerment or making the community more cohesive (i.e. social empowerment), this study's findings suggest that residents will be less likely to support the presence of STVRs. A decline in support could result in resident action to elect officials who will enact legislation that could jeopardize the very existence of these STVR companies. This study's findings suggest that STVR companies may want to self-regulate in order to prevent becoming a victim of their own success. The legitimacy of this self-regulation

may be instilled through actions such as lobbying for state or federal taxing and permitting regulation that elevates their status to other accommodations competitors in the hospitality industry. Another option could be publishing a list of best practices for hosts to ensure that they are making a positive contribution to their neighborhoods. Airbnb has already taken steps to build this legitimacy through their partnership with 275 jurisdictions in U.S. states and territories, but more may be needed to increase resident support for this disruptive innovation (Airbnb Citizen, 2017).

An issue of concern to both types of practitioners is the impact of STVRs on the psychological and social empowerment of residents. In Savannah, neighborhoods serve as a geographical and cultural point of reference for many residents (Lohmiller, 2014) and are the scale of place at which many STVR impacts have been discussed in the city (Coleman & Ritchey, 2014). STVRs' ability to engender psychological empowerment within residents depends upon STVR operations that integrate values, norms, and features of a given neighborhood that are important to its residents (Boley et al., 2014). STVR companies such as Airbnb have attempted to curate visitors' experiences in a destination at the neighborhood level through initiatives such as their "Neighborhoods" program (Airbnb, 2018). To ensure that their residents are psychologically empowered through STVR development, municipalities might find benefit in reaching out to STVR companies in their cities to discuss processes employed by these companies to create authentic representations of neighborhoods and whether these processes empower both resident hosts and resident non-hosts of these neighborhoods. A concern that both city managers and STVR companies should be worried about is the potential commodification of these neighborhoods within the city to a point where the 'place myth'

promoted about these neighborhoods becomes stagnant and something that the residents do not want to be associated with (Davis, 2005). If this were to happen, residents would be effectively psychologically disempowered and would be less likely to support STVRs.

Relatedly, the presence of STVRs in backstage places of the residential landscape can also have effects on the social fabric of communities. Savannah residents have voiced concerns over the loss of permanent neighbors and overall sense of community due to conversions of residential properties to STVRs and the influx of transient guests (Curl, 2016). The significant effects of *Social Empowerment* on residents' perceived impacts and overall support of STVRs seem to highlight the importance of this issue to residents. To ensure that residents are socially empowered through STVR development, municipalities might consider regulatory solutions that focus on maintaining the sense of community that residents find so important and preventing 'ghost neighborhoods' only full of STVRs and STVR guests. From the public forums on STVR regulations, which were held during the implementation of this study, the City seemed to have understood this concern and have since implemented STVR regulations focusing on management of current STVRs (e.g., a stringent owner-occupied certification process) and STVR growth (e.g., a tailored 20% per-ward cap in the Historic and Victorian Districts) (City of Savannah, 2018). Because of residents' perceived importance on maintaining a sense of community, it is important to formally evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in maintaining a sense of community among residents. Replication of at least the *Social Empowerment* construct in future studies may aid these formal evaluations.

There were a few hypotheses pertaining to *Political Empowerment* and *Personal Economic Benefits* that were not supported. The insignificant direct effect of *Political*

*Empowerment* on support for STVRs aligns with previous testing of this construct on residents' support for tourism (Boley et al., 2014; Strzlecka et al., 2017). The insignificant effect of *Personal Economic Benefits* on *Support for STVRs* contrasts with previous testing of this construct, which assessed residents' attitudes and support of overall tourism in a given county (Boley et al., 2014). However, *Personal Economic Benefits* does indirectly affect overall *Support for STVRs* as evidenced through its significant influence on residents' perceived *Positive* and *Negative impacts of STVRs*. A closer look at survey responses reveals that on each seven-point likert-scale item of the *Personal Economic Benefits* construct, Savannah residents most commonly rated each item at a level "one". This pattern of responses may be attributed to the wording of items comprising the *Personal Economic Benefits* construct. For instance, the item which states, "STVRs help me pay my mortgage/rent" may be irrelevant to the average Savannah resident that does not host. However, if the question was rephrased to "STVRs *affect* my mortgage/rent", then the question's relevance is widened to a larger audience. This wording accounts for larger urban housing issues sometimes linked to STVRs in the context of gentrification (Jefferson-Jones, 2014; Lee, 2016). Additionally, the low ratings of STVR's positive economic contributions to their livelihoods may indicate limited knowledge as to the impact of STVR dollars in their community. To increase residents' knowledge about STVRs' positive economic contributions to a destination, cities like Savannah might consider including information on their official STVR website that offers residents' an opportunity to educate themselves on the matter.

**Limitations & Future Research**

As with all research, there are potential limitations of this study to consider. While this study's quantitative nature provides insights into the process of residents' attitude formation and support for STVRs in Savannah, it does not provide the "why" behind residents indicated levels of perceived economic benefits and levels of empowerment from STVRs. Academic inquiry into residents' attitudes about STVRs should expand upon qualitative approaches such as those employed by Jordan et al., (2017) using the theoretical underpinning in this study to assess why residents are empowered or disempowered through STVRs and how this influences their support for STVRs. Another limitation of this study relates to the sample area which was comprised of block groups in census tracts where STVR operations are legal. While the new STVR regulation updates did not include a provision for the expansion of STVR zones in the City (City of Savannah, 2018b), it was a topic discussed in the series of stakeholder meetings held in 2017 (City of Savannah, 2017a) and will perhaps, be on the agenda for future STVR development and research in the City. Future research may want to investigate the attitudes of residents outside of approved STVR districts since these residents may perceive themselves as economically and politically disempowered by their inability to host and cash in on revenue associated with STVRs. This study is also limited by its occurrence only in the Summer. Savannah is quickly becoming a year-round destination (Owens, 2017), which could mean that residents' attitudes towards STVRs may vary by time of year depending on the type and amount of STVR guests in their neighborhood. In response to this projected growth, this study could be implemented during different times of the year that signify large fluctuations of tourists in and out of

Savannah such as its St. Patrick's Day celebration, which attracts up to 15,000 visitors at a time (Ray, 2017). STVRs likely hold a higher share in the lodging options chosen by tourists during this time, but it is still unknown the impacts that residents may incur from increased numbers of visitors in their neighborhood during these events. To strengthen the understanding of how residents attitudes towards STVRs evolve over time, longitudinal studies are needed. Longitudinal research could help examine whether this 'boomtown' style growth of STVRs causes initial resident frustration, which wanes over time as found in other destinations (Perdue, Long, & Kang, 1999) or if residents are never able to quite come to grips with it since the economic benefits are not shared in a way to offset the costs associated with this type of tourism (Davis & Morais, 2004).

One last area of future research pertains to the scope of stakeholders with which hosts may build relationships. This study focuses on relationships between hosts and non-hosts contributing to STVR hosts' residential identity. However, previous research suggests that residents may also build relationships with tourists (Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2013). The strength of these relationships can be measured through emotional solidarity, which is in essence, the extent to which individuals can identify with one another (Wallace & Wolf, 2006). Woosnam (2010) explains that this shared relationship does not necessarily serve to achieve outcomes such as built social capital. Rather, "emotional solidarity primarily serves to strengthen individuals' identity as part of a group" (Woosnam, 2010, p. 367). Future qualitative assessments of hosts' residential identity could include questions pertaining to their relationships with STVR guests. This assessment should be complemented by inquiry into non-host residents' relationships with STVR guests as well.

With STVR guests as the proxy, these two veins of research may reveal a potential threat or opportunity to residents' overall satisfaction with STVRs in their community.

This model presents many other opportunities for future research in terms of understanding residents' attitudes towards STVR impacts. One impact linked to STVRs not yet studied from a quantitative approach is the overall issue of gentrification (van der Zee, 2016). However, residents' perceived contribution of STVRs to gentrification has yet to be systematically studied. Therefore, future research may benefit from the development of an STVR gentrification scale that could be incorporated into the overall model of residents' support for STVRs. Future implementations of survey methodologies measuring residents' attitudes towards STVRs might also benefit from the integration of spatial tools particularly into door-to-door collection methods (Ayscue, Boley, & Mertzlufft, 2016). The integration of spatial data into survey methodologies provides additional data that can be imported into mapping programs such as ArcMap for spatial analysis or SPSS for statistical analysis (Ayscue et al., 2016). Because STVRs have been linked to larger urban development conversations, it is important to spatially compare residents' attitudes to other elements of the urban area to potentially develop moderators of residents' direct attitudes towards STVRs such as housing markets, crime, poverty, etc.

In conclusion, STVRs remain a controversial topic within the tourism industry and urban landscapes as a whole (Minder, 2018; Oskam & Boswijk, 2016; The Associated Press, 2017; Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). Residents remain at the heart of this controversy as they are the ones dealing with the daily impacts of STVRs in their neighborhoods. From an academic perspective, this study sought to add to nascent literature on resident attitudes towards STVRs through applying a theoretical perspective

that blended SET and WTFSR. Results highlight the relevance of this theoretical approach towards investigating residents' attitudes because of its consideration of both economic and non-economic factors driving their support for STVRs. From a practitioner perspective, this study identifies community issues from STVRs that may be addressed through regulatory measures ranging from growth management to administrative enhancements. In Savannah, residents' perceived psychological and social empowerment and perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of STVRs were the most common significant predictors of their overall support for continued STVR development. These findings higlight the need for regulatory approaches that ensure STVRs do not infringe on residents' sense of community and that STVR activity reflects the values and norms of residents so that STVR visits induce resident pride in their neighborhoods. If residents see STVRs as increasing their social and psychological empowerment while also having net benefits that exceed costs, they will be more likely to support this type of disruptive innovation.

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# CHAPTER 4

## EXPLORING THE FLUID IDENTITY OF THE STVR HOST IN SAVANNAH, GA[4]

[4] Yeager, Emily; Boley, Bynum; Welch-Devine, Meredith; Goetcheus, Cari. To be submitted to *Annals of Tourism Research*

**Abstract**

While Short Term Vacation Rental (STVR) research is increasingly cognizant of various stakeholders impacted by the growth of STVRs, one stakeholder remains unstudied for their potential contribution to the amelioration of negative STVR impacts – the resident STVR host. Resident STVR hosts are more than just entrepreneurs. They possess a fluid identity informed by their roles as residents and STVR hosts in their community. With this fluid identity in mind, this study uses qualitative techniques to explore a tripartite of STVR identities within the City of Savannah, GA [the STVR host, the resident host, and the host as a sustainable entrepreneur]. Research finds evidence of all three identities across STVR hosts in this study. Through the lens of the entrepreneurial identity, this study finds that STVR hosts possess a range of formal to substantive motivations. Moreover, extrinsic motivations exist within a spectrum of lifestyle subsidization to subsistence. Through the lens of the residential identity, hosts exhibit actions characterized by the Sense of Community (SOC) framework (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) that positively contributes to Savannah's social resilience (Holladay & Powell, 2013). However, hosts cite challenges to maintaining this residential identity. The formal and substantive rationales driving STVR hosts' motivations are also reflected in STVR hosts' willingness to evaluate and mitigate the negative environmental, economic and social impacts of their own business elevating their identity to that of a sustainable entrepreneur. STVR hosts are in part, agents of change in the very communities in which they operate. Exploration of their multiple identities provides insight into how they might exert positive impacts on their community as informed by their identity as an entrepreneur and resident.

## Introduction

Short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) have received significant attention for their exponential growth, which has positively and negatively impacted a variety of stakeholders (Smolka & Hienerth, 2014). Four stakeholder groups have occupied much of this attention within the literature including the traditional accommodations sector (Fang, Ye, & Law, 2016; Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014), STVR guests (Edelman, Luca, & Svirsky, 2015; Guttentag, 2015; Molz, 2013; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2018), STVR hosts (Edelman & Luca, 2014; Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016; Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016; Tussyadiah & Zach, 2015) and resident non-hosts (Jordan & Moore, 2018; Mody, Suess, & Dogru, 2018). While STVR research is increasingly cognizant of various stakeholders impacted by the growth of STVRs, one stakeholder remains understudied for their potential contribution to the amelioration of negative STVR impacts – the resident STVR host. Previous research has restricted host stakeholders to one identity, that of entrepreneurs (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016; Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016; Tussyadiah & Zach, 2015). This is particularly problematic in the case of the resident STVR host who often possesses a fluid identity comprised of being both residents and STVR hosts within their community (Huh & Vogt, 2004). Literature has yet to investigate the fluid identities of residential STVR hosts.

This line of inquiry is important because STVR hosts are embedded in residential landscapes, which lends them an intimate understanding of the community impacts of STVRs. This embeddedness could lead to hosts direct effects on their community's sustainable development. On one hand, STVR hosts have the potential to integrate their local knowledge of a community within their STVR operations to cultivate yet another identity as 'sustainable entrepreneurs' who consider the economic, social and

environmental community impacts of their business during all of their ventures (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2015; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). On the other hand, they have the potential to be alienated by their neighbors for commodifying the neighborhood and driving unwanted visitation in the 'back-stage' of tourism destinations (MacCannell, 1973).

With this fluid identity of STVR hosts in mind, this study uses qualitative techniques to explore a tripartite of STVRs identities within the City of Savannah, GA. The first identity positions STVR hosts as entrepreneurs in their communities and specifically aims to understand the extrinsic (economic) and intrinsic (non-economic) motivations for their participation in the STVR marketplace through the lens of Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality (WTFSR) (Kalberg, 1980). The second identity positions STVR hosts as residents that may contribute to their community's social resilience (Holladay & Powell, 2013) as evidenced by characteristics identified through Mc Millan and Chavis' (1986) Sense of Community framework. Upon integration of the entrepreneur and residential identities, hosts' actions to reduce their economic, social and environmental STVRs impacts is examined through their identity as a sustainable entrepreneur (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). STVR hosts are in part, agents of change in the very communities in which they operate. Exploration of their multiple identities provides insight into how they might exert positive impacts on their community as informed by their identity as an entrepreneur and resident.

## Literature Review

### *Research Angle 1: STVR Hosts as Entrepreneurs*

Entrepreneurs are seen as innovators in their communities and their increased agency in local supply chains is thought to benefit communities through their increased use

and valuation of local cultural and natural resources (Greenfield & Strickon, 1981; Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2002; Morais et al., 2012; Morais, Wallace, Rodrigues, España, & Wang; Morrison, 2016). Moreover, entrepreneurs are thought of as important contributors to local economic growth (Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2002; Lordkipanidze, Brezet, & Backman, 2005; Wennekers & Thurik, 1999). Their identity has long been shaped by their image as institutional rule-breakers driven by their recognition and exploitation of market failures and a desire to better their own economic condition (Elert & Henrekson, 2016; Schumpeter, 1935; Zhang et al., 2009).

STVR hosts fit this description of entrepreneurs by their commodification of their homes to provide lodging experiences that guests might not find elsewhere in the marketplace (Pentescu, 2016). Increasing research on host participation in shared lodging and the general activity of collaborative consumption reveals a consistent trend of economic (extrinsic) motivations, a trend mirrored in the entrepreneurship literature (Elert & Henrekson, 2016; Schumpeter, 1935; Wakkee & Van Der Veen, 2012). However, STVR hosts' motivations vary by whether STVR income is relied upon for subsistence (e.g., paying off graduate school loans) (Dubois, 2015; Ikkala & Lampinen, 2015) or subsidization of a lifestyle (e.g., paying for a wedding) (Dubois, 2015; Hamari, et al., 2015; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015). Researchers have also pointed to non-economic (intrinsic) motivations of entrepreneurial pursuits that rank high in importance for entrepreneurs such as independence, role modeling and educating the public about the activity at hand

(in the case of STVRs, one's neighborhood and home) (Carter, Gartner, Shaver, & Gatewood, 2003; Birendra, 2015; McGehee, 2007; McGehee, 2002). Intrinsic motivations specifically found within STVR hosts include building social connections and networks (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Emerson, 1976) has theoretically underpinned previous investigations of STVR hosts' range of motivations with the exception of one study, which utilized a combined theoretical approach that included Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Bellotti et al., 2015; Maslow, 1943; Maslow, Frager, Fadiman, McReynolds, & Cox, 1970). One potential issue associated with Bellotti et al.'s (2015) application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is its implication that formal motivations must be met before substantive ones are formed. However, this is not the chronology of all entrepreneurial enterprises. Indeed, entrepreneurs start with different levels of financial resources and at different points of life creating heterogeneity among their motivations for starting a business. Cases have been noted where businesses begin with social or cultural motivations (intrinsic motivations) and evolve into a secondary or primary income for participants (extrinsic motivations) (Busby, 2003). This study proposes a different combined theoretical approach using SET and WTFSR. The latter theoretical approach has been used within the tourism literature to provide a balanced approach towards simultaneously considering formal (extrinsic) and substantive (intrinsic) motivations for entrepreneurship (McGehee, 2007).

The combined theoretical approach bypasses the chronological assumption in motivation creation posed by Maslow' Hierarchy of Needs but also supports Bellotti et al.'s (2015) proposed range of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for participation. With this theoretical approach in mind, the following research question was formulated.

> ***RQ1****:* What are the range of extrinsic and intrinsic benefits and costs that motivate hosts to participate in STVR activity?

### *Research Angle 2: STVR Hosts as Residents*

While motivations for STVR hosting are an important aspect to better understanding the entrepreneurial identity of STVR hosts, Casson and Giusta (2007) recognize the individuality of the entrepreneurial journey, which is highly contextualized by the diverse sets of socio-cultural elements that exist in every community (Burt, 2000; Hoskisson, Covin, Volberda, & Johnson, 2011; Ulhøi, 2005). One particularly important socio-cultural element is the residential landscape that a host operates within. Residential landscapes can be understood as the amalgamation of formally delineated residential areas, which in Savannah is accomplished through zoning of residential districts (City of Savannah, 2018; Whitehand, 1990). The capacity for resident STVR hosts to help build a sustainable tourism industry is in part measured by the strength and functionality of their community's social networks, or in other words, the community's level of social resilience within the residential landscape (Holladay & Powell, 2013).

Indicators of social resilience are thought to include: *Trust*, *Networks*, *Social Learning*, *Social Equity* and *Knowledge Sharing* (Holladay & Powell, 2013). Evidence of

STVR hosts' contributions to the development of the first three listed indicators is explored in this study using McMillan & Chavis's (1986) sense of community (SOC) framework. This study proposes that hosts' consideration of the impacts of STVRs on their community hinges on their balance of their entrepreneurial and residential identities. The degree of a residential identity that a host possesses may position them as an important contributor in their community's adaptation to the changes posed by STVR development through their participation in community organizations and decisions as to how they operate their STVRs.

The social resilience indicator of *Trust* is built through community capital development and an individual's membership in the community (Holladay & Powell, 2013; Pelling & High, 2005). *Membership* is thought to be one's perceived deservingness of belonging because of their financial or social investments into the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). *Membership* is further defined by boundaries that distinguish who does and does not belong in the community. Those who earn *Membership* into a community receive the benefit of "emotional safety necessary for needs and feelings to be exposed and for intimacy to develop" (p.9). An address may automatically constitute an individual's physical belonging to a community. However, social belonging to a community depends upon one's acceptance by its current members (Ulsaner & Conley, 2003). It is important to consider that communities are not always physically bound and can occur at may scales and can even be ideological in nature (Durkheim, 1964; Gusfield, 1975; Leonard & Onyx, 2003; Massey, 2010).

Strong networks in a community depend upon interpersonal relationships built at the individual level (Holladay & Powell, 2013; Donoghue & Sturtevant, 2007). This dimension of social resilience can also be measured through STVR hosts' perceived

*Membership* in their community (MacMillan & Chavis, 1986). STVR hosts who actively participate in a community through outlets such as volunteering at philanthropic organizations or participating in special interest groups are more likely to have built personal connections with other non-host residents in the community than those without strong networks.

The social resilience indicator of *Social Learning* is an adaptation process whose success depends upon open communication between residents; a shared set of community values and norms; and the ability to achieve conflict resolution (Holladay & Powell, 2013). This critical approach towards knowledge accumulation can be understood as reflexive learning. It aims to empower residents to critically consider the feasibility or appropriateness of a potential development trajectory that reflects the values and norms of the community (Cundill, Fabricius, & Marti, 2005). STVR hosts contributing to this indicator of social resilience engage in this learning process through actions such as neighbor-to-neighbor communication or participation in public forums, which is an expression of McMillan and Chavis's dimension of *Influence*. STVR hosts' awareness of their community's attitudes towards STVRs is another product of their experience with the social learning process and can be exemplified through MacMillan and Chavis's (1986) dimension *Integration and Fulfillment*; This is thought to be a function of the extent to which one believes their fellow community members share the same values (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Depending on the municipality or even the neighborhood, regulations or direct neighbor interactions may reflect negative opinions of STVRs. These instances of conflicting values over STVRs may weaken relationships between STVR hosts and non-host residents, thus weakening communication between neighbors and overall social

resilience. Investigation into STVR hosts' awareness of resident non-hosts opinions regarding STVRs may help identify opportunities for improved communication and eventual reconciliation of these two resident stakeholders' values.

Achievement of all three of these social resilience indicators depends upon the strength of relationships between residents. The strength of these relationships can be measured by the *Emotional Closeness* between community members, which is characterized by the frequency and quality of interactions between community members (Ahlbrandt & Cunningham, 1979; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Some residents may perceive an increasing limitation to opportunities for these interactions as their neighborhood experiences the transition from permanent residency to transient STVR guests. The impacts of less frequent interactions with neighbors might be considered in relation to the quality of pre-existing relationships between neighbors. Additionally, the impacts of STVRs on emotional closeness between neighbors may be moderated by STVR hosts' ownership and residential statuses. For example, if they live in the city or an area relatively close by, non-owner-occupied resident hosts may visit their STVR more frequently, thereby creating the familiar face that permanent residents may need to see in order to secure their own sense of community. Or, they may feel more compelled to seek out neighbors of their STVRs to ensure trust from neighbors.

STVR hosts' contribution to the social resilience of a community in relation to STVR development relies in part, on how they contribute and function within their community's social networks.

The SOC framework provides a tool to evaluate hosts' contribution to their community's social resilience and helps identify elements of a residential identity that they may possess. With this residential identity in mind, the following research question is posed:

***RQ2****:* What is the nature of hosts' role in their community's social networks that define their residential identity?

***Research Angle 3: STVR Hosts as Sustainable Entrepreneurs***

Through the dual identity of STVR hosts as entrepreneurs and residents, another potential identity of hosts emerges – the sustainable entrepreneur (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). The characteristics of the sustainable entrepreneur can be understood through the concept's roots in both the social and institutional entrepreneurship literature. Through the lens of social entrepreneurship, social enterprises are described as those that seek equitable distribution of resources over economic gain (Ridley-Duff, 2008). Institutional entrepreneurship is described as an entrepreneur's effort to contribute to changing regulatory, societal and market institutions through their business operations (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Ostrom, 1990; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Seo & Creed, 2002). Through these two definitions, sustainable entrepreneurs are believed to be driven by strong environmental, economic and social values that affect all aspects of their ventures (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

While previous research has investigated the influence of STVR hosts' perceived environmental benefits on their intention for continued participation (Hamari & Skiljoint, 2015; Bellotti et al., 2015), there is little knowledge about resident STVR hosts perceptions of their positive and negative impacts across the Triple Bottom Line. This study expands and adapts this line of inquiry to include the exploration of STVR hosts' perceived

environmental, economic and social benefits and costs of STVRs. Additionally, this study differs from Hamari et al.'s (2015) research in that it is qualitative in nature and it does not establish a causal relationship between perceived impacts and behavioral intention. Rather, it separately investigates hosts intended and current actions to minimize the negative impacts of their STVRs. For example, to mitigate negative environmental STVR impacts, hosts might install solar panels on their roof to reduce energy consumption during the hot summer months. To reduce negative social impacts on their community, STVR hosts may develop house rules for noise, trash disposal etc. that mirror the values and norms of their community. To maximize positive economic impacts, hosts may encourage guests to patron local businesses, resulting in a larger multiplier effect from STVR guests in the community. These behaviors are interpreted as values that affect STVR hosts' activities in their hospitality venture. With this perspective of the sustainable entrepreneur identity in mind, this study aims to answer the following research questions.

***RQ3:*** What economic, social, and environmental impacts, if any, do STVR hosts perceive that STVRs have on their community?

***RQ4:*** What actions, if any, do STVR hosts take to minimize the negative economic, social, and environmental impacts of STVRs on their community?

## Methods

### *Study Area*

This study takes place in Savannah, Georgia, a city founded in 1733 as a refuge for English debtors who would serve as the future agrarian class for the new British Colony

of Georgia (New Georgia Encyclopedia, 2017). This commercial outpost differed from other southern cities in that slavery was banned at its inception. However, 17 years later, the ban lifted, and the city transitioned to an international port participating in the slave trade with cotton as its main export crop (New Georgia Encyclopedia, 2017). Because of its port, Savannah has maintained its status as a commercial trade center into the 21st century expanding its portfolio of economic activity to include: paper-pulp and food processing, ship building, corporate air craft manufacturing, and now tourism (New Georgia Encyclopedia, 2017).

Savannah's residents have long recognized the city's rich history complementing its economic assets beginning as early as 1839 with the establishment of the Georgia Historical Society, still in operation today (New Georgia Encyclopedia, 2017). Savannah's vernacular heritage has inspired many cultural icons such as the book *Midnight in the Garden of Good & Evil* and has captured the imagination of many who have traveled to Savannah to experience its rich history. Beyond its history, Savannah offers many other activities to its guests including its annual St. Patrick's Day celebration; a vibrant arts scene whose growth is largely attributed to the Savannah College of Art & Design; and the opportunity for beach day trips to nearby Tybee Island (Visit Savannah, 2017).

In 2016, the city hosted 13.7 million visitors who spent US$2.8 billion (Nussbaum, 2017; Savannah Area Chamber, 2018). The leisure and hospitality sector (accommodations, food services, arts, entertainment, and recreation) is currently the largest regional economic sector in Savannah employing approximately 25,000 people

(Savannah Area Chamber, 2018). By December 2017 overnight visitors were generating a total of US$20.7 million in hotel tax revenue (Savannah Area Chamber, 2018).

As tourism has been expanding, so has the prevalence of short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) both in commercial and residential zones leaving the city entrenched in debates over STVR regulations and management (Curl, 2016, 2017b). Savannah was the first city in the state of Georgia to formally regulate STVR growth (Georgia House of Representatives, 2014). These regulations were informed by a series of public stakeholder processes attended by a range of stakeholders such as residents, hospitality industry groups and property management companies (City of Savannah, 2017b, 2017c). These meetings focused on identifying STVR issues that were negatively impacting community stakeholders with an emphasis on the residential stakeholder. However, previous research indicates that residents' attitudes towards tourism depends upon costs *and* benefits from tourism development (McGehee, 2004; Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, Kock, & Ramayah, 2015). As a qualifying residential stakeholder, STVR hosts were interviewed for their perceived impacts of STVRs on their community contextualized by their identity as both residents and entrepreneurs in their community. They were also asked about their perceptions of the positive and negative environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impacts of their hosting activities and any actions they would take or were taking to maximize or minimize these impacts. STVR hosts were solicited to share their hosting experiences and perspectives from three districts to which STVRs were (and still are) limited to: Historic, Victorian and Mid-City Districts as seen in the 2017 STVR density map created by the City of Savannah (Figure 4.1).

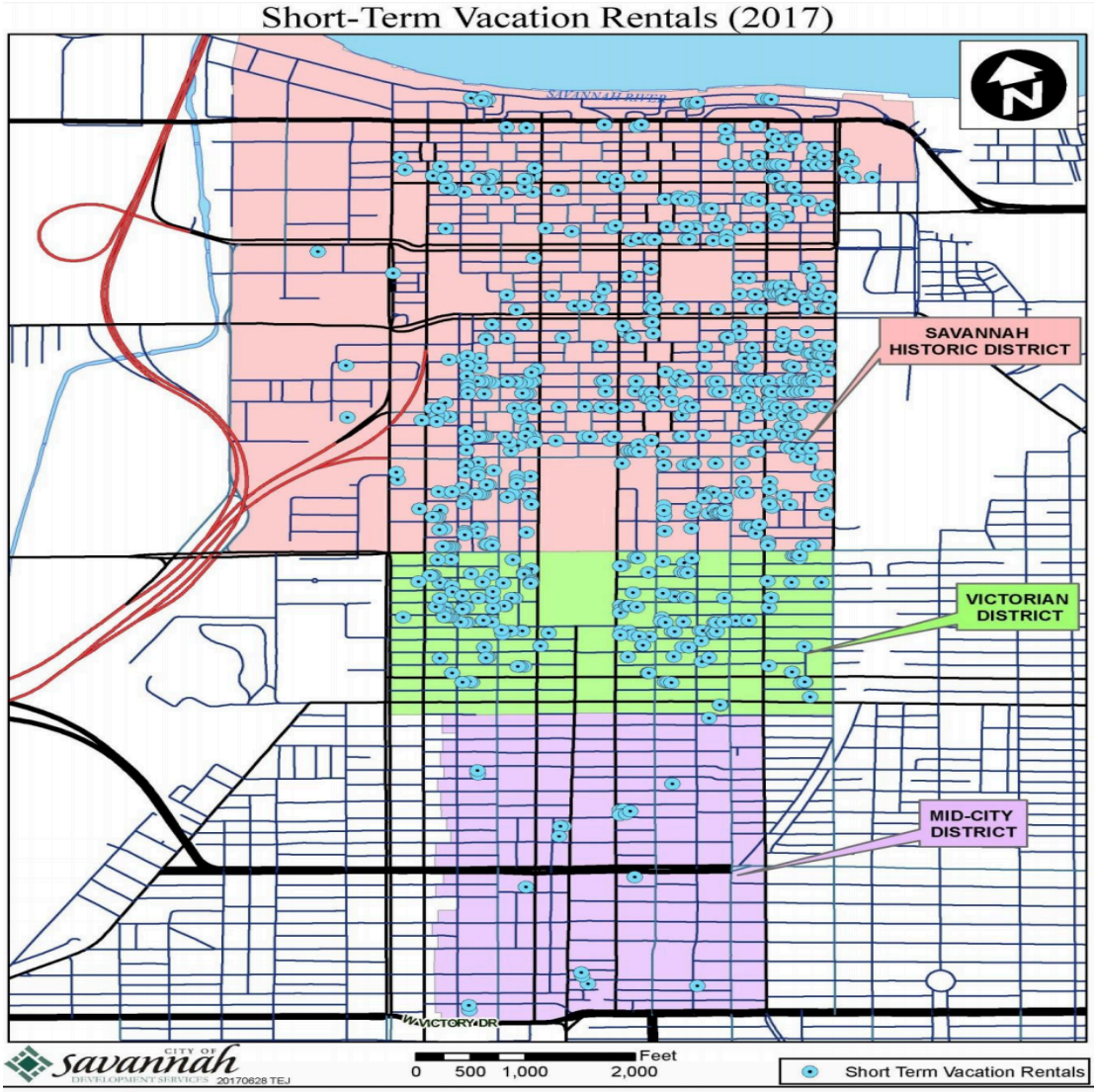


***Figure 4.1*** Density of STVRs per District in Savannah, GA zoned for STVR activity (City of Savannah, 2017a).

***Sample***

STVR hosts were recruited via STVR platforms (i.e., Airbnb, HomeAway, VRBO and FlipKey) as well as through snowball sampling (Babbie, 2013). This research attempted to identify a sample of STVR hosts proportionate to the density of STVR permits in the three districts of Savannah where STVR activity is permitted.

At the time of sampling, there were a total of 585 registered STVRs in Savannah including 76% in the Historic District, 22% in the Victorian District, and 2% in the Mid-City District (City of Savannah, 2017).

***Interview Methods***

Semi-structured interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes and occurred at a location and time convenient for hosts. A total of 26 interviews were conducted with all but one recorded with a digital recorder. Hosts were also given the option for a phone, Skype, or Facebook Video interview if they were not able to meet in person (Moylan, Derr, & Lindhorst, 2015). Twenty-three interviews were conducted in person with three conducted over the phone.

A semi-structure interview guide was generated by informal phone meetings with members of various organizations including an STVR management company in Savannah, the Savannah Development & Renewal Authority, Savannah's Metropolitan Planning Commission, Neighborhood Associations, and Savannah's Destination Marketing Organization (Appendix C). Additionally, interview content was generated through attendance of public stakeholder meetings regarding STVR regulation along with informal meetings with STVR owners met at these meetings.

Interviews were conducted with STVR hosts until data saturation (Rubin & Rubin, 2011), which was determined when little or no new information was gained within the realm of the study's three research angles by legal STVR district. Interview data were triangulated with the scope of STVR issues addressed in STVR development stakeholder meetings as well as popular media sources (Creswell, 2013).

**Analysis**

Interviews were transcribed through Express Scribe (Express Scribe, 2018) only by the primary investigator. The qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) Atlas.ti.7 for Mac (atlas.ti, 2016) aided coding and thematic analysis by way of creating memos, a codebook, and mapping connections between themes. This study employs a constructivist understanding (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) of hosts' perceived impacts of STVRs on their community in Savannah, GA.

Deductive qualitative analysis (DQA) was used to code interview responses using the preconceived identities in the STVR host profile (Gilgun, 2010). DQA is an approach used for thematic analysis through a preconceived coding framework, in this case the STVR host's tripartite identity (Gilgun, 2010). Grounded theory was also used to allow for important themes that might emerge outside of this framework (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Member checks were completed to ensure authenticity and accuracy of the data (Creswell, 2013). Reliability of the study was addressed using a "memoing" process to document the creation of codes (Davidson & Di Gregorio, 2011; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010).

Before presenting the results of this research, it is important to offer a critical perspective into potential biases I held that may have colored the results and discussion of the data. Qualitative research engages both the researcher and participants in the co-creation of knowledge (Dupis & Smale, 2000). A researcher's reflexivity into their role in this process of knowledge production increases transparency and overall trustworthiness of their research (Cohen, 2013). Researchers may reflect on a variety of potential personal biases including their historicity, which refers to their past and current experiences with

the issue or topic at hand (Cohen, 2013). Prior to this study, I had participated in the STVR sector as a guest both within and outside of the U.S. Even more, Savannah was the site of my first STVR experience. The positive experiences as an STVR guest indeed challenged my ability to equally consider the positive and negative impacts of STVRs in Savannah. Additionally, the primary researcher has participated in the sharing economy as an Uber driver in an attempt to better understand the entrepreneurial lifestyle of sharing economy providers. It was difficult to ask STVR hosts to confront the potential negative impacts of their activities as it also required me to reflect on the potential impacts that my participation as a consumer and provider in the sharing economy may have had on the communities in which I participated. In addition to historicity, it is argued that emotions also affect the way in which we approach our research and interpret its findings (Burkitt, 2012; Widowfield, 2000). During the tenure of this research, I served as an intern in what was then, the Tourism Management and Ambassadorship Department (TMAD) in Savannah. Among their many responsibilities was the management and regulation of STVR activity in the City. While in this position, I had tasks ranging from the perusal of STVR websites for illegal listings to data entry of resident STVR sentiment comment cards from public stakeholder meetings. This position afforded me invaluable intimate insight into Savannah's STVR issues from the perspective of the municipality stakeholder. However, it also generated an identity of a City employee that was sometimes at odds with my pursuit of maintaining an objective researcher identity. For example, in one interview with an ex-host in a non-STVR zone, I felt frustrated over their inability to host because they were one block outside of an STVR zone. During thematic analysis, I found these types of

experiences challenging my ability to code for both positive and negative actions of STVR hosts in regard to their STVR operations.

**Results**

A total of 26 interviews were conducted with 28 respondents. One interview was conducted with a couple that host together at a single STVR and another interview was conducted as a joint interview with two separate STVR hosts. Interviewees varied in terms of STVR District; the status of hosting versus managing STVRs; owner-occupied status; residential status; average length of residency; gender; and age range (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1** Demographics of STVR host interviewees.

| | Number of Interviews | Host or Manager | Owner-Occupied Listing | Live in Town? | Average Length of Residency | Gender | Most Frequent Age Range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Historical District | 15 | Hosts: 13<br>Manager: 2<br>Both: 0 | Yes: 3<br>No: 12 | Yes: 14<br>No: 1 | 7 years | F: 10<br>M: 5 | 45-64 years old |
| Victorian District | 9 | Hosts: 8<br>Manager: 0<br>Both: 1 | Yes: 7<br>No: 2 | Yes: 8<br>No: 1 | 7 years | F: 8<br>M: 1 | 25-44 years old |
| Mid-City District | 3 | Hosts: 2<br>Manager: 0<br>Both: 1 | Yes: 2<br>No: 1 | Yes: 3<br>No: 0 | 6 years | F: 1<br>M: 2 | 45-64 years old |
| No Zone: | 1 | Hosts: 0<br>Manager: 0<br>Both: 0 | Yes: 1<br>No: 0 | Yes: 1<br>No: 0 | 6 years | F: 1<br>M: 0 | 45-64 years old |

***Research Angle (RA)1: The Entrepreneurial Identity***

Hosts were motivated by a range of extrinsic benefits that vary by whether hosts rely upon STVR income for subsistence or subsidization of a particular lifestyle. Subsistence motivations in this study relate to using STVR income to pay for bills or expenses that cannot be deferred. Subsistence related extrinsic motivations for hosting include: STVRs comprising all or most of a host's income, affording property taxes and

mortgage/rent, and paying non-property related bills such as student loans. One host explains this possibility.

> *"In town where rents are high, it's [STVRs] probably paid half of my rent every single month, sometimes more"* (T19)

One host whose career path has remained in the field of finance describes her journey to hosting beginning with her shock from the local job market upon moving to Savannah.

> "*Your average salary in Savannah is somewhere around 30 some thousand…It's not a big city. It's not Atlanta where I would've been able to find work in my capacity… we had big city jobs. Can't find that kind of thing here in Savannah".* (T2)

Subsidization motivations in this study relate to using STVR income to pay for non-essential bills and opportunities. Extrinsic benefits that subsidize hosts' lifestyles include: ability to travel, home renovations, supplementing retirement, the immediacy of payment, and saving/paying for college. One set of hosts explain that all of the income from their STVR is directly invested into a college fund for their young child.

> *"We take all the money [from their Airbnb] and it just goes in an account for school. We haven't touched a dime of the money that's put in there."* (T23)

In some cases, hosts may experience multiple extrinsic benefits at one time. One host explains that he and his wife bought an STVR with the intention of moving into it upon retirement to Savannah. They were surprised by its financial success.

> "*The vacation rental was doing well so we stuck with the vacation rental and bought something else [to retire to].*" (T14)

Regardless of their motivations for hosting, physical and financial capital emerged as potential moderators for hosts' financial motivations. Home furnishings emerge as one form of physical capital that may be cost prohibitive to hosting. One host describes how a fortunate family event resulted in their acquisition of this important form of capital to have a desirable space for guests.

> *"We wouldn't have thought about a vacation rental except a family member was selling their home in Pennsylvania… All of this [furniture within the STVR] is almost 50 years of antique collecting…when they lived in Pennsylvania, they didn't know what to do with all the furniture, so we worked out a deal".* (T2)

Financial capital also seems to be related to previous or current real estate ownership. Several hosts' initial real estate ventures are tied to a family member or friend's real estate ownership or past experience with STVR hosting. When asked about how they initially got into hosting, one interviewee details the hosting legacy that was passed down from her mother.

> *"…My mom bought three houses in North Carolina in the 80s and 90s. She bought my grandmother's mountain house from her and started vacation rentaling it. But back in those days, there was no internet. She put ads in all the big*

> *newspapers in Florida. That's what generated her calls…Everything else was mailing information… She did so well with her grandmother's house in North Carolina that she bought two more [STVRs] in North Carolina and vacation rentaled them out. She was a teacher. She had a full-time job. She didn't need to be doing this stuff…So, I kind of picked it up from her and when she said to me 'Hey buy nana's house from me I'm tired of doing vacation rentals', I said 'ok'…I bought it..."* (T12)

Hosts were also found to be motivated by a variety of intrinsic personal benefits. The most frequent one cited by hosts was meeting new people. Through these encounters, hosts have forged lasting friendships while others have resulted in cultural exchange. The latter outcome is highlighted by one host.

> *"I definitely have some anecdotal stories where it's [hosting] been amazing… I had this person stay with me. She was from Denver and was staying for a wedding. She was this white woman and we were talking about feminism and the black feminist perspective and just all these different scenarios. We got into this huge back and forth and we're sitting there with our unshaved armpits and it was really like… I would never had met this woman without this passing."* (T4)

Other intrinsic benefits from hosting include: maintaining an occupation during retirement, guests being appreciative of the host's home, and the ability for hosts to share their community and home. Sometimes, a host's joy in sharing their community may be tied to the enjoyment of providing hospitality as well. Approximately three-fourths of the respondents in this study offer materials curating their guests' stay in the community. Materials range from brochures offered through Visit Savannah to hand-drawn maps of their neighborhood with their favorite restaurants highlighted. One host couple explains how their hospitality efforts contribute to their guests' experiences at their STVR.

> *"Recently we got little seashell chocolates. We leave them in a bowl. We also have a couple of the mini alcohol bottles and water…I letter pressed a little suggestion sheet for where to go for coffee and things to do downtown and we definitely put some real touristy information like maps in there…I love doing that…you really want to ask somebody who's local. It's different than what your gonna find if you go and ask a tourist 'where should I go?' and they'll say 'Paula Deen' [a restaurant in the Historic District] …we recommend things for a different reason. It ensures a better experience… talking to the concierge at a hotel is different than talking to someone who lives here and works here and has family here… Their views are probably going to be more similar to what you were looking for."* (T23)

In addition to sharing their community, hosts also describe a sense of pride that is engendered from sharing their home. One owner-occupied host explains how this can feel.

> *"It's been a fun experience…Guests are wonderful. They're appreciative. We just get such a thrill out of it. When they walk in the door, sometimes you can hear them because they haven't shut the door yet. You're down in the hallway and you can hear them like 'oh my god, oh wow'…they are just really impressed…we get real excited about that."* (T2)

STVR hosts also identified intrinsic costs that may demotivate them to host such as the loss of a flexible lifestyle.

> *"The only con is that we like to go camping and just drop of the grid… I barely have a cellphone. I think I have an iPhone 3 or something like that… Now we have to be more on the grid. We would go into rural areas and stay there for a week and literally not talk to anybody. Now you can't do that. Now I'm checking my phone for emails like… nine times a day."* (T25)

Several hosts lamented the stress of maintaining a five-star review within the STVR platforms, especially when dealing with difficult guests. One host detailed a particularly extreme negative experience.

> *"So, evidently there's some people that will go book an Airbnb then they give it terrible reviews and they demand their money back… They [STVR guests] took a photograph of the dining room that I put a red rug in and said that that I had done false advertising because that was not the same décor in the dining room as in the pictures they saw…Then they said they found some lipstick on a wine glass... and then she said that we didn't have dark blackout curtains and she couldn't sleep. She wanted her money back because I had sheer curtains in the bedroom. I just turned her over to Airbnb to figure it out so they split it down the middle and gave her half her money back."* (T16)

Depending upon the frequency of hosting, some hosts operating owner-occupied listings (meaning that hosts live in their STVR) may be stressed by the constant presence of maintaining their home for others. One host whose primary income relies upon hosting through Airbnb explains this issue.

> *"…this notion of being like ok, I need to shower right now so I can wash the tub because we've got guests coming… everything is kind of ridiculous because you feel like you're not really at home."* (T4)

In summary, hosts' formal motivations for hosting are made complex by the fact that STVR income subsidizes some hosts' lifestyles while providing subsistence to others. Additionally, hosts describe physical and financial capital necessary to their

decisions to host. Substantive motivations encompass feelings of empowerment and pride in sharing one's home and community. However, sharing these spaces may require sacrifices of a lifestyle to accommodate guests. Even more, the pride felt in these homes may be offset by the stressful design of the STVR platform, which heavily relies upon customer reviews. In essence, the commodified nature of hospitality associated with STVRs has caused hosts to acknowledge the range of positive and negative economic impacts they experience from hosting.

***Research Angle (RA)2: The Residential Identity***

Hosts describe *Membership* to a variety of communities defined by physical boundaries including city blocks, neighborhoods and Districts. Hosts also identify with communities defined by intangible boundaries including the STVR host community, the military community, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) community, neighborhood associations, and special interest groups (e.g., neighborhood book club and social clubs). However, subscribing to the STVR identity may stifle or prohibit belonging to a given community. One host describes how his STVR identity stifles his ability to maintain their identity as a community musician.

> *"I haven't joined a neighborhood organization or anything like that…my community is really centered around yoga. That kind of community is really where I've been…I can be open to short term vacation rental owner as an identity. That's [STVR host identity] been a little strange…it certainly was an identity shift for me because I used to be a teacher in the community. I was invited to weddings,*

> *graduations, and funerals. A lot of times I was playing [music] at these important events. That isn't who I am in this community…"* (T13)

Another host describes a situation where their STVR identity could have jeopardized their acceptance into a special interest group to which they were seeking membership.

> *"One of the things that I learned very early on to be quiet about was the fact that I do host…it was just all women there [at the special interest group meeting]… a lot of those ladies are involved with the hospitality industry so I said, 'yeah I sort of am in that business to on a very small scale'. I don't think I got a warm reception so I just never said it again. And, a couple of my friends said, 'yeah don't talk about it.'"* (T19)

In summary, while hosts identify with a variety of communities, they may not always be accepted into these communities because of their subscription to the STVR host identity. Even more, if hosts gain membership of a given community, it may be difficult to maintain belonging if that community does not value or approve of STVR activity.

In terms of the SOC dimension, *Influence*, hosts were asked about their outlets for leadership and general activities that would indicate their "ownership" of their community. For some hosts, community participation takes the form of leadership in community organizations or joining associations such as the chamber of commerce. Many STVR hosts exhibited *Influence* through their descriptions of their political activity in the context of voting and attending City Council meetings. However, hosts describe

disheartening experiences in terms of their influence or "ownership" of the political process surrounding STVRs as illustrated by one host from the Mid-City District.

> *"I am involved. I go to them [STVR stakeholder meetings]. I don't have a voice. The city has purposefully allowed the voices to be community organizations, not individuals…So presidents of associations can speak but they have purposely said if you are not representing an organization, don't speak…It creates conflict and anger so then the accusation is that you're not getting input from the community. You're getting input from the business associations who obviously have a slant getting the neighborhood associations' input. They're not getting input from individuals."* (T7)

Another host from the Victorian District echoes T7's frustration with the mode of stakeholder representation during these STVR public forums.

> *"I am frustrated that the neighborhood association makes a claim that they speak for a unified voice of the neighborhood. They don't. The neighborhood association has never reached out, A. for me as a vacation rental owner or B. as a citizen… All I've seen is a little sign that says come to the neighborhood association every Tuesday of the month."* (T24)

In summary, hosts exert *Influence* through leadership positions in organizations across the community. However, frustrations with stakeholder input processes seem to impede their perceived ownership over the STVR regulatory process.

In terms of the SOC dimension, *Integration and Fulfillment*, hosts were asked to gauge the level of acceptance of STVRs in their neighborhood. Hosts' perceptions of their neighbors' acceptance of STVRs fall within a spectrum ranging from a general sense of animosity towards STVRs to a general level of acceptance of STVR development in the neighborhood (Figure 4.2).

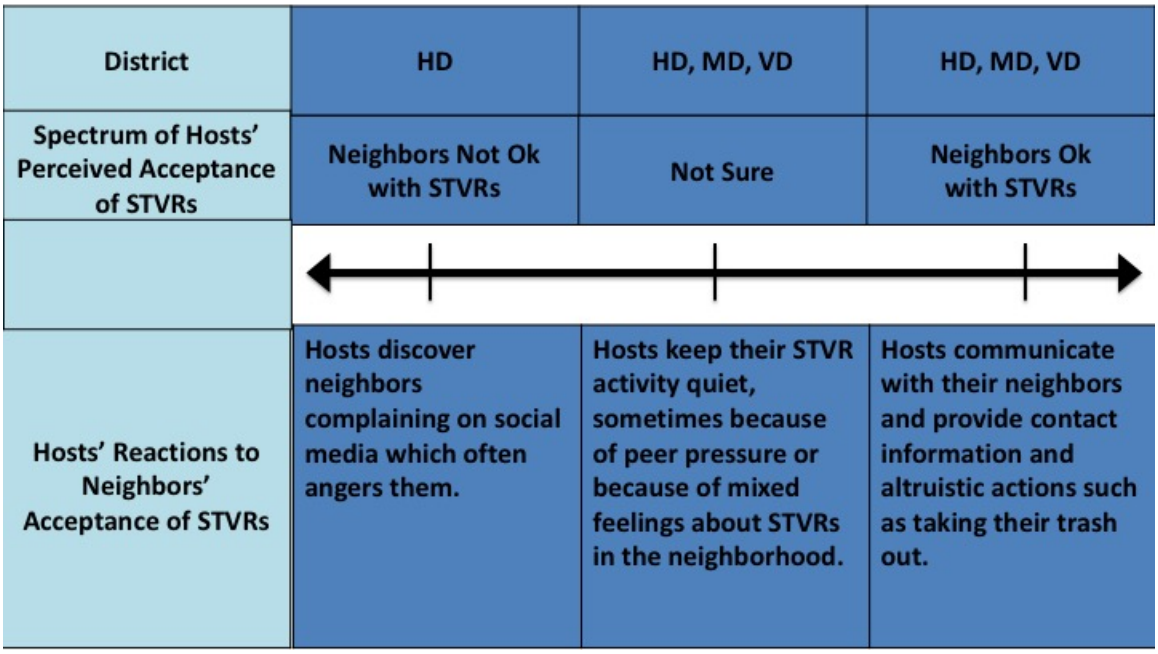


***Figure 4.2*** Spectrum of hosts' perceptions of their neighbors' acceptance of STVRs.

Beginning with the left end of the spectrum, some hosts illustrate instances of neighbors rejecting STVRs in their neighborhood through complaints on social media while other complaints may happen in person between hosts and non-hosts. One respondent details an encounter with a non-hosting resident who was voicing their concerns over STVR development. This host's response to the encounter highlights the fact that a general

attitude of rejection of STVRs in a community does not mean that there is no room for communication and understanding between the two stakeholders.

> *"I met somebody just a few weeks ago who didn't realize that I was a short-term vacation rental owner. She goes on about how short-term vacation rental owners are ruining the neighborhood. I didn't say anything. She grew up here. Her family's here and you know it's a whole thing. And I said, 'well full disclosure, I'm an owner'. She was a little embarrassed. I said 'you know what? It's ok. I really wanna hear what you have to say.' It's good to know that and I get a chance to hear sort of what's going on with city council regulations. I can understand certain points for sure."* (T13)

Many hosts' responses fall within the "Not Sure" point on the spectrum because their neighbors' feelings towards STVRs are mixed. At this same point, some hosts explained that they weren't really sure what the STVR regulations were in their community or that they feel pressure from community outcry against STVRs so they decide to keep quiet about their hosting activities to avoid any issues.

> *"It's not a secret [hosting] if anyone asks but we're just not gonna tell anyone…Because I think that some people may have a problem with it [hosting]."* (T9)

> *"I don't know what the ordinances are in Savannah. I never asked. I don't wanna know if it is. So, my neighbors don't know. Or, I've not communicated that with my neighbors. I've not communicated that [hosting activity in the unit] with my landlord. It's not in my lease that I can't do it. I don't want her to sneak that in."* (T4)

If their neighbors host, then respondents always indicated a general level of acceptance of STVRs in their neighborhood. The one non-STVR zone respondent explains that even though they are no longer allowed to legally operate their STVR, many of their neighbors would like to be zoned for STVR activity. By District, hosts and non-hosts sense of *Integration & Fulfillment* over STVR development seems to vary the most within the Historic Landmark District. Whereas, in the Victorian and Mid-City Districts, hosts generally are not sure what their neighbors think about STVRs or they perceive their neighbors being ok with STVR development.

In terms of the SOC dimension, *Emotional Closeness,* STVR hosts describe examples of how relationships with their neighbors are maintained as well as how they are challenged. Examination of hosts' perceived *Emotional Closeness* is meant to identify points of camaraderie between hosts and non-hosts to determine the extent to which STVRs might be impacting relationships between residents. STVR hosts maintain relationships with their neighbors through activities such as attending neighbors' parties; frequently seeing neighbors through the daily routine (e.g., walking the dog); and participation in informal Neighborhood watches. In spite of these shared elements of a residential identity, media coverage in Savannah suggests that STVRs challenge the

*Emotional Closeness* between resident hosts and non-hosts (Curl, 2017; Poindexter, 2017). Hosts seem to reflect this sentiment, particularly in regard to negative STVR debates on social media platforms (e.g., NextDoor and Facebook) between residents.

> *"…I don't know if you know NextDoor…The general thing that we came up with…is really the way we treat each other on the internet. It's nowhere near the way they would treat somebody to their face."* (T10)

One host describes her reaction to a particular STVR post in the NextDoor app.

> *"That stuff that comes across that NextDoor Savannah… somebody was making a comment on there about how they didn't like short term vacation rentals and they didn't wanna here Mariachi music coming out of the vacation rental. And I was like 'what'? You know, that's just offensive'…Everybody needs to be civil to other people and have kindness in how your words are affecting others. I just think that's common decency. I'm not quite sure that that person would like to have something about their ethnicity focused on as a pejorative. I'm not Hispanic and I don't know that I've ever had a Hispanic guest, but I'm offended by that on behalf of other hosts 'cause that's just stupid… I just said I'm out of this NextDoor Savannah. I can't be on this chatroom anymore. It used to be we're talking about our pets…or you've got a couch for sale. Now it's degenerated into this hard line. Everybody's polarized over this issue and nobody will ever listen…I'm like, 'if this is the neighborly feeling you're trying to foster, I'm out of here'"* (T6)

Additionally, STVR hosts from large urban areas explained that one's perspective of "neighborly feeling" might be totally different in the context of the anonymity and emotional distance between neighbors that you may experience for years in large cities (e.g., New York City) compared to Savannah.

In summary, hosts belong to communities with physical and intangible borders. Their subscription to these communities and awareness of others provides evidence of their embeddedness in Savannah. STVR hosts also exert influence within their community(ies) through their political participation. Depending upon the District, hosts perceive a spectrum of integration and fulfillment with their neighbors over the issue of STVR development. Hosts engage in a variety of mechanisms, which build emotional closeness with their neighbors. For example, several non-owners occupied hosts describe altruistic activities such as taking out their neighbor's trash or watering their garden when they come to maintain their STVR. However, these emotional connections may be weakened by residents resorting to social media to express frustrations with STVRs in a tone that may not reflect their normal interpersonal communication style.

***Research Angle (RA)3: The Sustainable Entrepreneur Identity***

During the exploration of STVR hosts' identity as sustainable entrepreneurs, hosts perceived positive and negative economic, social, and environmental impacts of STVRs in their community. Furthermore, the magnitude of these STVR impacts was often contextualized by elements of the urban landscape and include: *Housing, Resident Relocation, Tourism, Crime, Taxes, Employment, Race, Class, Walkability and Education*. Through these ties, STVR hosts highlight the embeddedness of STVRs in the urban landscape and expand the scope of STVR impacts beyond just the neighborhood scale. Upon reflection on their perceived impacts, STVR hosts were asked about any potential or current actions that they take to minimize the negative economic, environmental and social impacts of their STVRs.

Hosts recognize economic benefits of STVRs related to the local tax contribution of STVRs in Savannah and to the state of Georgia as well as their ability to attract guests who in turn invest in Savannah's housing market. The two most popularly cited benefits were the positive impacts on Savannah's housing market and the high multiplier effect associated with STVR activity.

In terms of the City's housing market, hosts often discussed the impacts of STVRs on property values in Savannah. The consensus across all interviewees was that STVRs tend to increase the value of an individual's property.

> *"I think that if you are committed to do this and you build it, I think that the value of the property goes up so in that respect it would seem possibly be an impact."* (T15)

Furthermore, a property's STVR status could be used as a selling point of the property and could be marketed in terms of the additional revenue stream that it might provide for the owner.

> *"You'll see some listings come in town and they'll talk about the income stream that has been generated…$50,000 [per year] on a vacation rental basis. And theoretically you can translate that into value and it may bump the value [of the property] up."* (T19)

STVR equity might also be enhanced by its convertibility into other residential assets. One host illustrates this quality through a scenario of STVR market saturation.

> *"If the market gets saturated and people stop coming for whatever reason…the economy goes bad…something*

*happens in the world like terrorism…people stop traveling for a while. Or there's so many [STVRs] that people can't use them all and the market goes back to empty houses…It's gonna be much easier for people to convert those vacation rentals into long-term rentals or into homes that somebody can purchase than it is to turn hotels into some other kind of usable function."* (T6)

In terms of the multiplier effect associated with STVR guests, hosts perceived STVR guests more likely to patron local businesses as a result of their quest for authentic experiences.

*"I think that vacation rentals have more of an impact on the community economically by supporting local vendors… it does bring people who want an authentic experience."* (T18a)

Hosts from the Victorian and Mid-City Districts discuss this quest for authentic experiences from a geographical and cultural perspective. STVR restrictions increase moving southward from the Historic District. In the same fashion, commercial zoning/activity also decreases in these Districts up to Victory Drive (the southern boundary of the Mid-City District). These developmental patterns produce a more residential environment in the southern STVR zones that may be more conducive to providing an authentic residential experience.

*"It's a different kind of person that's coming to where we are [the Victorian District] ...a lot of the local businesses*

*are not the brand names so there's a lot of people that wanna experience that."* (T3)

Patronage of local businesses does not solely reside with STVR guests. Some hosts illustrate the use of local businesses for STVR maintenance and upkeep.

*"I think especially if you're from here and if you own a local business, you are more apt to wanna use local people to fix it [STVR] up…it's like 'oh we need to repaint or we need to find someone providing furniture."* (T23)

*"I also employ general contractors and other subcontractors and all the materials that went into that…so had I not bought that property [STVR listing], you know?"* (T13)

Hosts perceived negative economic impacts of STVRs that would affect both residents and tourists alike. In the previous section of positive economic STVR impacts, one host argues that the convertibility of STVRs into other assets in the urban landscape is evidence of its superiority to hotel development. However, another interviewee reveals that the conversion of STVRs to residential housing may not be so simple.

*"If they dampened it a lot [STVR activity], you would have quite a few properties that would hit the market and would cause values to fall because there would be so many properties on the market. I mean you look at the percentage of how many properties in the [Historic] district are*

*vacation rentals…I don't think it would be good for property values in the Historic District."* (T17)

One of the most commonly recognized negative economic STVR impacts among hosts relates to the overall availability and affordability of long-term rentals and mortgages in Savannah.

*"There are no medium high range rentals, because it is geared towards tourism. You can't come to Savannah and rent a decent property really because all the decent places make so much more doing an Airbnb or a short-term vacation property. So why would you rent it on a monthly basis?...If you want to rent and you want to have what I would have considered coming from San Diego like normal amenities, you have to go to the south side…"* (T20)

*"The real estate market downtown…has been booming and a lot of the purchases have been by investors who intend to do vacation rentals…So that in itself has driven property values up. It's cut down on the long-term availability, which drives rents up because there's less supply."* (T18b)

STVR hosts identified direct impacts of STVRs on the availability of long-term rentals and affordable housing. However, some hosts explain that the stakeholders experiencing displacement vary depending on the District in question. Within the Historic District and

the northern end of the Victorian District, college students are thought to feel the majority of impacts on long-term rental availability and affordability.

> *"Most of the places that are now Airbnb were already bought by landlords so it's not like we're buying from the second generation of an African American family that has fallen on hard times and then you're gonna take the house and sell it. I think that happened in maybe the 90s. So, what I see downtown is a lot of places went from being long-term rentals for SCAD students [to STVRs]."* (T25)

The most frequent economic action taken by hosts was recommending local independent businesses in their neighborhood to their guests. One host from the Victorian District outlines the type of local business recommendations that they provide.

> *"I give them a restaurant recommendation list. I send almost every one of my people to the bakery next door so that that helps that family business. I send them to the local places around them like Foxy Loxy [a locally owned coffee shop]. Places they wouldn't find by themselves. River Street doesn't need advertisement. I send them to the farmer's market on Saturdays…The reason they're [STVR guests] staying with me is that they want these local places"* (T21)

Hosts also discuss financial incentives that they wish were offered to STVR guests to aid hosts in their efforts towards recommending these local businesses.

> *"It would be nice if it [STVR] was more established like a small business. Obviously, you're not like an actual B&B or a small hotel so I don't think that you're entitled necessarily to get certain benefits. But, it would be nice if the small businesses would reach out to the Airbnb people with a discount or something…I think you could encourage people a lot more if there's a financial incentive for people to try out the local businesses."* (T20)

Other economic actions include: investing STVR profits into their child's education fund to attend school in Savannah, using local businesses for STVR maintenance, and purchasing STVR supplies (e.g., groceries) from locally owned stores, STVR profit sharing with local NGOs; and promoting minority-owned businesses in their marketing materials that they leave for guests in the STVR. One host explains this last effort.

> *"We promote local and black-owned businesses in our binders… So, for recommendations for things to do…we list Day Journeys, which is a locally black owned bus tour of Savannah. It's opposite of the carriage tour and they're really smart. It's about the Gullah Geechee and the history of African Americans in the city."* (T25)

Hosts perceived positive social impacts that affect their community as well as society as a whole. As previously highlighted, some hosts believe that STVR guests are likely to search for authentic experiences. Hosts believe that in their search for authentic

experiences, STVR guests might be more likely to include cultural and historical attractions in their trip itinerary.

> *"Most of them [STVR guests] are there to engage in activities that are probably more in keeping with a tour… seeing one of our house museums or our art museums…the restaurants… as opposed to maybe someone coming in and staying in a hotel and is really looking for the River Street Experience."* (T18a)

> *"Airbnb instills that whole idea of the authentic experience…I know Airbnb has the "Experiences" now so there's a lot more of this farm to table type thing. So, I could see more of that becoming more popular overall through things like Airbnb that is instilling that sort of authentic local vibe that you wanna experience"* (T9)

Hosts also highlight the potential contributions that STVRs make towards historic preservation of houses that earned some Districts their historic designations in Savannah. The historic preservation efforts are aided in part by the demand created by STVR guests wishing to experience the vernacular heritage of the City.

> *"People like the idea that they can come and stay in a historic building"* (T5)

Reduction in crime was presented as an element of the urban landscape tied to STVR development in Savannah. STVRs are seen by some hosts as a new tool in reducing crime, particularly in the Victorian District.

> *"Five years ago, when I moved in, I was afraid to walk my dog at night. Now, with the vacation rentals, people are coming home from dinner and there's people on the street [in the Victorian District]. So, this is good for my neighborhood…I feel like I can walk by myself as a female because there's other people around."* (T21)

> *"So, as this little area [the Victorian District] brought itself up, two crack houses were shut down. You know it's [STVRs] improving the crime rate, which was kind of like murder capital for a couple years. When I first moved here, nobody in their right mind would walk down to the 500 block on the east side…And now, I mean that drive down East Broad is beautiful… all the buildings are all redone."* (T1)

Hosts cite other positive social impacts of STVRs including the ability of companies like Airbnb to offer opportunities to open their STVR in the aftermath of natural disasters. Additionally, STVRs were thought to increase Savannah's domestic and international visibility and reputation. Social impacts were not just thought of in the context of the community but also as society as a whole. For example, one host bemoans the

omnipresence of technology in society and its degrading effects on inter-personal connections. STVRs are thought to counter this issue.

> *"It's a society problem for the next generations to come that they stop talking, that they stop reading. Airbnb in my opinion is kind of a power that pushes it [loss of personal connections] back a little bit."* (T8)

For some hosts, this sense of pride through hosting is felt in conjunction with feelings of empowerment. Even more, these feelings of empowerment can be especially important for specific populations as illustrated by one interviewee.

> *"I feel proud as a female business owner that's contributing to the development of the neighborhood that's up and coming and that is helping the local economy."* (T3)

Hosts often recognized the potential impacts of STVRs on sense of community because of the loss of permanent neighbors. One host discusses her perceived irrationality of this fear in the context of her pre-existing relationship with her neighbor.

> *"I don't understand all of the consternation… he's a fine guy…but he's writing these poems on NextDoor Savannah about the loss of his neighbors. I felt like, 'I've lived next door to you…for 15 years. You barely have spoken to me… really our interaction amounts to me waving at you and you waving at me as I drive by'…I felt like saying 'if I promise to make my guests wave at you as they drive by, will you*

*feel like you are getting the same interaction as if they lived here permanently?'"* (T6)

Hosts perceived magnitude of STVR impacts on sense of community is sometimes moderated by their previous community experiences, particularly in extremely urbanized areas.

*"I can only compare it [loss of permanent neighbors to STVRs] to New York where I lived in a 4th floor walkup. I lived there for 8 years and basically made very good friends with one of the three [neighbors]. The other two [neighbors] were just so awkward. Those people wouldn't say 'hi' when we passed each other in the stairs so that's where I'm coming from. I just could not imagine that here in Savannah. So, as far as making friends with neighbors, I've done better here in 6 months than I did in New York in 12 years. New York people don't make friends with neighbors."* (T10)

The most common negative social impact perceived by hosts related to noise. However, hosts often tied the issue of noise to particular types of STVR guests. One host explains that Thomas Square residents (located in the Mid-City District) do not necessarily have a problem with hosting, rather they would prefer to avoid the type of STVR guests visiting the Historic District.

*"I don't think they [Thomas Square residents] have a problem with it. I think they just want to make sure that it's*

> *[STVRs] responsible. That it's the right kind of guests that we're getting. We're not getting the kids on Jones Street that are partying all night and trashing people's homes and walking up and down the street and screaming. That's what we don't want."* (T3)

Noise issues are further contextualized by home size. Hosts explain that larger homes can accommodate larger groups who often come to Savannah to celebrate special occasions, which contributes to their noisiness.

> *"I really think that it [noise issues from STVRs] is a phenomenon of the bigger houses where maybe they're having a bridal shower or bachelor party or graduate party…and they've got 20 people in the house…and they're partying so they've got music going. I can see having extra standards on the bigger places that have six or more possible guests but putting all these clampers on like one or two-bedroom places where you're talking about four, five, or six guests… it just doesn't make sense to me because that use is less impactful on the neighbors than if I rented it [STVR] to SCAD."* (T6)

The Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD) is headquartered in the Historic Landmark District with academic buildings scattered throughout STVR zones. As highlighted in the previous quote, hosts cite SCAD students as the worse perpetrators of noise in the Historic and Victorian Districts.

> *"…Students that live on our block, I call the police on them three or four times a year and they come every time. I'm calling them because I don't want my Airbnb guests to be bothered. And so, the idea that Airbnb guests are the horrible ones is crazy."* (T24)

Regardless of the noise culprit, one host from the Mid-City District contextualizes the issue of STVR noise in terms of how tourism is developing in the City.

> *"I was having a conversation with someone. They had a short-term vacation rental and they were up in arms… they bought a home on Jones Street… and she can't sleep at night. She can't enjoy her property and I'm like 'you don't understand'. You can't buy next to an airport and bitch because of the airport. You don't get that right. Savannah is a vacation town. I mean it is a party city for the most part. It's a destination. It's a vacation town. So, if two years ago, four years ago, even 10 years ago, you said 'you know what? I'm gonna move to Savannah and turn it into this quaint little neighborhood community.' You were wrong. Because, that's not what it is and that [tourism in the Historic District] down there is exploding out and this [the Mid-City District] is becoming where at two in the morning, you'll see people walking up and down the street.*

*So, I think that the economic impact is good… The city is making tons of money through vacation rental tax."* (T7)

In terms of social actions, hosts recommend museums and historical sites across Chatham County in order to promote a more holistic and authentic version of Savannah. One host describes the tour that they provide to STVR guests who do not have a car during their visit.

*"When people come who don't have a car and they're here for let's say 3 days, I take them on what I call my magical mystery tour. The first part of it is to start here [Mid-City District] and drive down Abercorn. I'll take a shortcut on Washington Street just to show them the beautiful canopy and Ardsley Park. You literally can see history move forward architecturally as you move south. Then you get to urban sprawl and then you could be anywhere in the country except for the foliage. They [STVR guests] love it when we go to Wormsloe…Then I go to Bluff Drive on Isle of Hope. Then I go to the Majestic Oak, which is the largest oak tree in the area. Most people don't even know it's there. See everybody thinks that the Candler Oak, which is down in the parking lot across from the park, is the biggest. It's not…Then I take them to Bonaventure and drive around… by going to these places, they see the other part of Savannah and they realize that yes, there's a part here*

*that's look ugly like every other city, but most people come to see down here [the three Districts]."* (T11)

In addition to a holistic curation of Savannah, one host illustrates another social action, which includes the investment of her STVR income into local philanthropic organizations.

*"We give 3% to the boys and girls club downtown…In our binder of information, we have a whole thing about the Boys & Girls Club and poverty in Savannah and ways to help."* (T11)

Additionally, hosts attempt to educate guests on rules surrounding issues such as noise that could cause a disruption to the community. One host explains that in a non-owner occupied STVR that they own has received guests whose noisiness has been an issue for neighbors. These complaints prompted the host to ensure that proper educational opportunities were made available for guests to understand neighborhood expectations in regard to noise.

*"I have had a couple of problems on Duffy street. My neighbor is a family guy with two babies and he has texted me in the middle of the night 'you better shut em' up or I'm gonna go over there…'. So, now I instill the fear of GOD in these people. There are signs all over the house that sends them a message about no loud noises after 9 o' clock at night. Any loud talking or um or festivities bring inside behind closed doors….I tell them in advance: 'Listen, I'm*

*not gonna be able to rent to you if there is going to be a noise problem. If there's a noise problem, the police will come, complaints will be filed and I will be out of a business.' I don't even know if that's really true but you know, I don't want to upset my neighbors…"* (T12)

STVR hosts perceived positive environmental impacts of STVRs that related to natural resource consumption as well as the aesthetics and physical design of the community. In regard to STVRs contribution to natural resource consumption, one host weighs the costs and benefits of STVRs versus hotels.

*"There may not be the need for huge sky rise hotels anymore…and there's things like water usage. In a hotel, you're washing towels every day. There's just so much more. But in our Airbnb, we don't wash their towels every day."* (T9)

Another host reiterates this point, but from the perspective on environmentally conscious consumer behavior patterns.

*"I think it's probably easier to recycle in an STVR than a hotel when they only have one waste basket. At least here [at the STVR] you've got these different options."* (T15)

The one positive environmental impact related to physical design that hosts most commonly cited was increased curb appeal of neighborhoods through investments into the appearance of STVR properties. One host explains this phenomenon in parts of the Victorian District.

*"I think it [STVRs] actually benefits the rest of the neighborhood because people who own vacation rentals keep their houses beautifully…a detailed gorgeous clean yard, clean trees and clean flowers in the yard whereas the rest of the neighborhood looks bad."* (T12)

In terms of natural resource consumption, hosts explain that STVR guests seem to use an excess use of products such paper towels and toilet paper. Moreover, this excess consumption is thought to be related to guests' mindset of being on vacation.

*"I go through more toilet paper than you can imagine. It's insane. Every week guests need toilet paper. It's the craziest thing…I think in general, when people go on vacation, they're like oh 'yay!' and they use twice as much, which my trash has doubled, tripled. It's true."* (T7)

One host discusses the aesthetic impacts of STVR development but compares these impacts to the alternative scenario of other types of living arrangements within these same neighborhoods.

*"There's this one block a couple blocks over by the park where you can see all the lockboxes [on STVR doors]. I think that it doesn't add anything positive to the neighborhood when you have full blocks that no one lives in…Aesthetically it's a good thing I think because there's maintenance and people are definitely keeping up with the homes. But, it doesn't add anything to the*

> *neighborhood…there's no one walking their dogs. I think that's a shame, but I think with this area specifically, it would be nice if the restriction were a certain percentage of each block that was able to be STVRs. But, if the neighborhood should be a certain percentage of residents, that might bring lower incomes and that's not necessarily improving that area either because you have a lot of cheap rents and students or people that aren't maintaining their spaces."* (T20)

Environmental impacts relating to the physical design of the community described by hosts largely relate to parking. One host discusses the magnitude of STVR related parking issues.

> *"The parking issues I don't understand. Because my place I rent next door is two bedrooms. If there are people that live there, there would be at least two cars if not more. My people never bring more than two cars…I ask people how many cars they're bringing because I'm only allowed to have so many [cars] per my license"* (T21)

Compared to economic and social actions, hosts exhibited the widest variety of actions to reduce the negative environmental impacts of their STVRs. The most frequently cited environmental action was offering recycling to guests. One host explains that even though recycling is available, the City's current approach towards recycling can make accommodating the extra recycling from guests a challenge.

> *"Once they [STVR guests] get here, they may say 'hey where do we put our recyclables?'. I will say that is a little bit of a problem with the city because they give you these little polycarts and they service those once every two weeks instead of once every week. Sometimes, you accumulate more in that time frame. Then, that's stuff that just ends up going in the trash."* (T17)

Other environmental actions included: offering composting to guests, using a Nest thermostat, limiting the amount of laundry per stay to reduce water usage, using eco-friendly cleaning products, installing energy efficient measures (e.g., lighting, attic insulation), instructing guests to limit shower times, installing solar panels on STVRs, encouraging guests to walk everywhere, providing bike maps and information on public transportation, and providing biodegradable products for guests. In regard to this last action, one host illustrates why using biodegradable makeup wipes in his STVRs became a necessity.

> *"Women use makeup pads to take their makeup off and the sewer system is not capable of digesting these things that are meant to last for 10 years… I mean those things don't biodegrade. It's a huge problem. So, my plumbing bill has quadrupled 'cause I gotta have the plumber come in and snake it all out 'cause the city sewer system can't handle it…so now I buy the biodegradable makeup wipes. I have to. It's cheaper because it's 600 bucks a wop for a plumber*

*and women are either gonna use the towels or whatever they can find so it's a problem from a B&B owner perspective…"* (T7)

In addition to these current actions, hosts described potential environmental actions that they would like to take and barriers to acting upon these intentions. The most frequent environmental action that hosts were willing to take was installing solar panels on their STVR. Barriers to this action included: not wanting to install panels on a roof that needs replacing in the next 10-15 years, upfront costs, a long return on investment (~10-15 years), having to cut down trees in their yard to accommodate the solar panels, and historic preservation restrictions particularly in the Historic District. One host from the Historic District explains this last constraint.

*"I had looked at it [solar panels] before. I haven't done it yet, but the historical society, they don't particularly like those. You know the only way you can do them [solar panels] is if you do them on the side generally that's facing the lane depending on the pitch of your roof. So, would we be up for it? Absolutely. That's really more of something that I would like to see the Savannah Historic Foundation get behind in conjunction with the City because I'm all for solar panels."* (T17)

Other potential environmental actions that hosts would like to take include installing a windmill on their STVR and retrofitting their older homes to be more energy efficient. However, one host explains that this last initiative can be cost-prohibitive.

> *"Now I would love to spend less money on heating and air. But there's no way you can gracefully seal these windows and keep the attractiveness, so I have large energy bills I have three heating and air systems. One for each floor."*
>
> (T11)

In summary, hosts perceive positive and negative economic, social and environmental impacts on their community from their STVR hosting. At least one impact from each of these categories was contextualized by elements of the urban landscape. In recognition of potential impact from STVRs, hosts engage in a variety of initiatives to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of their STVR.

**Discussion**

This research has implications for academics, municipalities and the STVR industry. For academic end-users, this study provides a conceptual identity framework to capture the moderating variables of hosts' motivations for hosting. The co-occurrence of hosts' extrinsic and intrinsic motivations mirrors previous research findings (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016) but the addition of Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality strengthens the theoretical underpinning of this area of research (Kalberg, 1980). Even with the addition of WTFSR, a theoretical gap remains in terms of understanding the spectrum of extrinsic motivations found in this study and previous research (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016).

A goal of this study was to explore the residential identity of hosts in the context of their contribution to their community's social resilience and ability to adapt to community changes induced by STVRs. Hosts are uniquely positioned to contribute to

building this social resilience because they are in part, the agent of change in their community Even more, hosts who are embedded in the communities in which they operate their STVRs may be able to directly affect both positive and negative economic, social and environmental changes in their community. Municipality end-users may use questions relating to hosts' residential identity as a guide for the following assessment: the embeddedness of STVR hosts in the community; hosts' perceived inclusion in the STVR regulatory process; and the nuances of hosts' emotional closeness or distance with fellow residents. Identifying and addressing potential challenges to hosts' maintenance of a residential identity may ultimately inspire them to consider more actions to reduce the negative impacts of STVRs on their community than found in this study.

Hosts' contributions to the social resilience indicators of trust and social networks are found in their *Membership* to various communities in the City. Continued participation in these communities could increase the *Emotional Closeness* between hosts and non-hosts through increased frequency and quality of interactions. For example, if a host were to join a civic organization that meets monthly, they might develop a reputation as an active resident that non-host can trust and can rely upon to positively contribute to the community through their STVR. The level of trust between hosts and non-hosts may be a significant factor in their successful collaboration in mechanisms to regulate STVR activity such as public stakeholder meetings. Trust and social networks, however, may be threatened by dissipating *Emotional Closeness* through STVR debates over social media. Governing entities seeking resident input in the STVR regulation process might consider observing public social media platforms for insights into residents' STVR concerns with the acknowledgment of vocal stakeholders sometimes being overrepresented in social

media discourses. However, it is important to remember that sometimes social media may only represent vocal stakeholders. Therefore, this approach should only augment other approaches to gain holistic input surrounding STVR issues.

Exploration of the social resilience dimension, social learning, reveals a potential challenge to a community's ability to engage in dialogue about STVR impacts in the City. This challenge is identified through hosts' perceived gap in *Integration & Fulfillment* of STVR values with their neighbors. While Savannah distinguishes three Districts for STVR activity, zoning is nuanced within each District (City of Savannah, 2018). The spectrum of values over STVRs could be used to evaluate current geographically nuanced STVR regulations.

Related to social learning is the social resilience dimension of knowledge sharing. Residents' propensity for knowledge sharing is measured through their ability to cooperate and address community issues across a variety of methods (Berkes, 2009; Chambers, 1994; Holladay & Powell, 2013). Some STVR hosts seemed to perceive little personal *Influence* in the community discussions surrounding STVRs facilitated by the city and questioned the representativeness of the stakeholder voices being heard in these meetings. Research suggests political empowerment of all residents in a community as a reflection of the highest levels of community participation and is achieved when community members perceive equitable access to sharing their opinions over tourism development in their community (Arnstein, 1969; Scheyvens, 1999). Hosts' perceived lack of political *Influence* in regard to STVR regulations might warrant close consideration due to their other identity as a resident. Should STVR hosts feel uncounted as both entrepreneurs and residents in the political debates surrounding STVRs in their

community, they may eventually stop hosting and choose to not support future tourism development altogether.

Viewing STVR hosts through the lens of the sustainable entrepreneur identity provides valuable insight to municipalities and the STVR industry. Hosts within the Victorian and Mid-City Districts talked at length about their believed high multiplier of STVR guests because of guests' pursuit of a holistic experience of Savannah and their willingness to patron local businesses. Continued STVR growth, particularly in the Victorian and Mid-City Districts could be an important economic opportunity for neighborhoods such as the "Starland District" (nestled within the Mid-City District) that is currently growing local businesses and is the heart of a thriving arts community in Savannah (Visit Savannah, 2017). These economic speculations highlight a potential visitor segment for the City to include in future tourism economic impact analyses. Additionally, these marketing efforts may be of interest to Visit Savannah in terms of learning about a growing tourist segment in the City that may not find current City-wide marketing materials relevant to planning their trip itinerary. The reality of these economic benefits is evidenced through hosts' recommendations of their favorite local places for the reason of wanting to support local businesses. To incentivize maintenance of this loyalty, local businesses might employ discount programs specifically for STVR guests particularly in the Victorian and Mid-City Districts. The City might encourage the implementation of these incentives through information outlets such as the Chamber of Commerce website to which over 2,200 Savannah businesses belong (Savannah Area Chamber, 2018).

While STVR dollars can provide local economic benefits, they can also provide social benefits to communities. Only one host described their philanthropic donations of a portion of the STVR income. However, in general, this example of social investments of STVR proceeds has been operationalized in other destinations such as Portland, Oregon where STVR lodging taxes are redirected into a Housing Investment Fund. This program aims to support the supply of affordable housing or help low to moderate income individuals to access affordable housing in the city (City of Portland, 2017). Affordability and availability of housing (mortgages and rents) are symptoms of gentrification often tied to STVR development (Lee, 2016; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2017). Savannah is no exception to these issues with many affordable housing options migrating from the urban core to peripheral areas (Curl, 2018). The location inefficiency of these affordable housing complexes has been questioned by Savannah residents (Dawers, 2018; Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2018) as commute times from these housing options to downtown are upwards of two hours or more (Dawers, 2018). To offset these hardships, Cities such as Savannah might consider redirection of a portion of STVR taxes to a fund to improve location efficiency for displaced residents. Examples of projects from the investments might include construction of green spaces in newly built affordable housing complexes or the purchase of more public transportation to increase route frequency.

To date, Airbnb is the only STVR company to formally assess the environmental impacts of STVRs. Many actions taken by hosts in this study mirror those found in Airbnb's environmental impact assessment including those related to: reducing energy and greenhouse gas impacts of their STVR; reducing STVR water footprint; reducing

STVR waste through initiatives such as recycling; and using environmentally friendly cleaning products (Cleantech Group, 2014). This study provides insight into a missing piece to Airbnb's environmental assessment, which are the challenges that hosts take to implementing environmentally sustainable initiatives within their STVR. Within the Historic Landmark District, hosts cited historic preservation regulations as a barrier to adopting solar panels. Perhaps revisions could be made to these regulations informed by resources such as those provided by the National Park Service's division of Technical Preservation Services, which offers seven different types of examples of solar panel installations on historic properties (National Park Service, 2018). As STVR companies such as Airbnb expand the opportunities for hosts to incorporate environmentally sustainable features into their homes such as reduced costs for solar panels (Airbnb, 2016) and smart home technology (Airbnb, 2017), municipalities may need to adapt certain regulatory measures to afford hosts these opportunities.

**Limitations & Future Research**

While this study builds on the understanding of resident STVR hosts' multiple identities, limitations exist. First, STVR hosts perceived levels of *Integration & Fulfillment* varied by district within Savannah. It is important to contextualize potential negative responses to STVRs in the Historic Landmark District with other factors in the urban landscape. For example, tourism zoning and commercial activity are mostly confined within the Historic District with mass tourism concentrated in the northwest corner of the District in City Market and along River Street as exhibited through a local tour business's tourist map of the Historic Landmark District (Appendix D). Residents living close to the northwest corner of the District face pre-existing pressure from tourism

and find STVRs as another contributor to this activity. Future research may want to increase the number of hosts interviewed so that district-to-district comparisons can be made. Reflection upon the research tradition of destination development, we can understand this geographically nuanced resident attitude pattern through a combined lens of Butler (1980) and Doxey's (1975) tourism development models. Through this lens, resident attitudes towards STVRs in the Historic Landmark District may be a combination the type of tourism activity and density of tourism activity near their home (Butler, 1980; Doxey, 1975). Depending on where in the District each host operates, they may perceive different levels of acceptance from neighbors. Relatedly, this study was afforded the opportunity to interview one non-STVR zone resident who had previously hosted. This interview highlights another limitation of this study, which is that interviews were only conducted with hosts within STVR zones in the City. Future extension of this study could include interviews with prospective hosts in non-STVR zones. Their perspective on STVR impacts and potential STVR regulations present an opportunity for proactive and bottom-up regulation development regarding STVR zone expansion.

Another limitation of this research is that data collection occurred in the summer, a time where many hosts (owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied) are out of town on vacation. While virtual interview opportunities were offered for those out of town, only one interviewee accepted this offer. To increase interview response rate, the study could be extended to another season. Future research could include diving deeper into the entrepreneurial opportunities afforded to specific populations (e.g. people of color, women) through hosting. According to 2016 American Community Survey Data, women earned a median income of $35,254 with over 50 percent of women earning income at

poverty level (Georgia Department of Community Health, 2018; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). STVRs may provide an empowering employment opportunity for women who are seeking avenues for increased income. These opportunities are emerging in international contexts as well. Airbnb's recent partnership with India's Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) highlights these research opportunities (Airbnb, 2017).

In conclusion, this research reveals that STVR hosts are more than just entrepreneurs commodifying their homes to make extra money. They possess multiple identities spanning entrepreneurs, residents, and sustainable entrepreneurs that are using STVRs to bring positive economic, social, and environmental impacts to their community. Through the lens of the entrepreneurial identity, STVR hosts' formal and substantive motivations often form simultaneously, thus rebutting previous conceptualizations of the process of motivation formation (Bellotti et al., 2015; Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016). Through the lens of the residential identity, hosts exhibit actions characterized by the SOC framework that may positively contribute to three dimensions of Savannah's social resilience (Holladay & Powell, 2013; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The full potential of their contributions, however may be offset by the zoning regulations in the City that may not provide equitable access to hosting, thereby negatively affecting the social resilience dimension of social equity. Moreover, the increasing costs of hosting may present insurmountable barriers to residents wishing to host one day. The potential of the other social resilience dimension of knowledge sharing between stakeholders in regard to STVR regulation may not be fully realized in the City due to previous mechanisms to collect stakeholder input. The formal and substantive rationales driving STVR hosts' motivations are reflected in hosts' consideration of the positive and negative environmental, economic

and social impacts of STVRs. An STVR host's willingness to evaluate and mitigate the negative the impacts of their own business elevates their identity to that of a sustainable entrepreneur. However, this study finds that a majority of hosts' actions relate to minimizing negative environmental impacts whether that be extrinsically motivated by cost savings or intrinsically motivated by an environmental ethic. Hosts' social and economic actions generally do not reflect their perceived STVR social and economic impacts. This may in part, be due to the complexity of urban issues at the intersection of these two types of impacts, particularly, loss of affordable housing. If the onus of reducing this negative impact were placed on the individual host, they would arguably have to abdicate their STVR to the housing market, ultimately violating their privilege to exercise public property rights. How then, can destinations avoid a tragedy of the commons scenario where an equitable housing market and entrepreneurial opportunities are harmoniously maintained? One solution may be through regulatory mechanisms that expand the borders of STVR zones and that are tailored for "shared spatial regulating" (Widener, 2015). Currently, the density and location of STVRs in Savannah is determined by City zoning codes and precludes individuals from participating outside of those set boundaries.. Savannah has yet to formally present STVR zone expansion for vote. Perhaps, this is because expansion would require more resources from the city to address issues such as crime and waste that may result from increased visitation in other parts of the City. Should the City eventually offer this option, however, Widener (2015) argues that this top-down regulation may not always be the appropriate scale of regulation in destinations. Instead, residents may find it more empowering and meaningful to participate in STVR regulation development at community scales relevant to the destination e.g., Districts, neighborhoods, etc. The City

currently uses “wards” as the scale of STVR density regulations. But, the City has yet to formally evaluate the effectiveness of this regulatory scale. Future evaluations and amendments to the City’s STVR regulations may consider revising the scale at which power is given to manage and regulate STVRs. This may induce more support for STVRs from residents and also give STVR hosts an opportunity to more effectively contribute to building their residential identity and overall contribution to the social resilience of their relevant geographically scaled community.

According to Greenfield (1981), there are actually very few times that an entrepreneurial innovation gains mainstream popularity. But, when they do, they “may change the population-environment interaction so as to result in massive far-reaching changes [in behaviors]” (p. 498). As the popularity of STVRs increases, more opportunities may arise for STVR hosts to become sustainable entrepreneurs that bridge the gap between market, environmental and social progress (Schaltegger, 2011).

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# CHAPTER 5

# AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING STVR IMPACTS ON URBAN LANDSCAPES[5]

## Introduction

Conservation issues are complex and require integrative approaches that incorporate more than one way of understanding the issue at hand (Hirsch et al., 2013). The extent of integration between these epistemologies directly relates to the level of diverse stakeholder involvement and the theoretical and methodological idiosyncrasies of the approach (Tress, Tress, & Fry, 2005). In other words, research may be considered integrative if the conservation issue would not have just as appropriately been addressed from a single disciplinary or multidisciplinary approach. This section intends to highlight the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary elements of this dissertation research focused on the positive and negative economic, sociocultural, and environmental impacts of Short-Term Vacations Rentals (STVRs) on urban landscapes using Tress, Tress, and Fry's (2005) conceptualization of integration.

Before exploring these integrative components via Tress et al.'s (2005) framework, it is important to acknowledge the ongoing debate between tourism researchers regarding the formal designation of tourism research as a field or discipline. The researcher's positionality in this debate in part, affects her approach and perceived

[5] Yeager, Emily.

need for integrative research in tourism studies. Tourism's role as either a discipline or field has seen ongoing debate (Aramberri, 2001; Jiang-zhi, 2005; Leiper, 1981; Taillon, 2014; Tribe & Liburd, 2016). Tourism's role as a field of study has been strongly advocated by researchers such as John Tribe (Tribe, 1997, 2006; Tribe & Liburd, 2016). Tribe (1997) rests his case of the 'indiscipline' of tourism upon earlier evaluations of other disciplines and fields (Hirst, 1974; Hirst, 1965). This dissertation research aligns with this position based on Tribe's (1997) four argument points below.

First, tourism does not have concepts unique to itself such as carrying capacity, cultural landscapes and the multiplier effect (Tribe, 1997; Hirst, 1965). Many of these areas of tourism research find roots in disciplines such as population biology (Sayre, 2008), geography (Preston & Geoffrey, 1972) and economics (Keynes, 1936). Second, concepts used within tourism studies do not form a distinctive network. They cannot link together in any logical way to provide a "tourism studies" way of analyzing the world. Rather, tourism is the linking object for all approaches in this area of study (Tribe, 1996; Hirst, 1965). Third, there are no truth criteria in tourism studies found in disciplines such as mathematical axioms (Tribe, 1996; Hirst, 1965). Fourth, tourism studies do not meet the criteria of "reducibility", meaning tourism concepts can be broken down and explained through a specific disciplinary lens (Tribe, 1997; Hirst, 1965). Tribe (1997) exemplifies this through the concept of tourist satisfaction. The addition or removal of "tourist" from the concept does not affect the psychological disciplinary roots of "satisfaction".

Even though Tribe (1997) argues that tourism is not a discipline, there are distinct advantages towards approaching tourism research as a field. Henkel (1988) explains that

"disciplines are held together by constellations of theories, concepts and methods" (p. 185) whereas "fields draw upon all sorts of knowledge that may illuminate them" (p. 185). Approaching tourism as a phenomenon outside of a disciplinary structure inherently requires interdisciplinary approaches towards addressing rapidly evolving research areas such as STVRs in urban landscapes.

In addition to the debate of tourism's disciplinary status, research has specifically addressed the production of knowledge in tourism studies (Belhassen & Caton, 2009; Jafari & Ritchie, 1981; Laws & Scott, 2015; Liburd, 2012). However, academic discussions about the integration of these epistemologies and ontologies into interdisciplinary tourism research are nascent (Okumus, van Niekerk, Koseoglu, & Bilgihan, 2018; Tribe & Liburd, 2016). Inquiry specifically investigating tourism researchers' ontological perspective of interdisciplinary research reveals highly varied conceptualizations of multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity (Okumus et al., 2018).

This brief overview of the disciplinary debates and status of interdisciplinary research within the field of tourism intends to provide support for this project's use of an integrative approach to explore the impacts of STVRs on urban neighborhoods.

**STVRs & Urban Conservation**

Broadly defined, sustainable development is "positive socioeconomic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which community and society are dependent" (Rees, 1989, p.13). Achievement of sustainable development is often measured through consideration of the economic, environmental and social impacts of a given activity (Elkington, 2004). At the center of current sustainable development debates lies the issue of urbanization. By 2050, sixty-six percent of our world's

population is expected to live in urban areas, with North America already approaching an urban population of eighty-four percent (United Nations, 2014). The global urban migration has raised concerns over the intensification of consumption and production processes within these areas (Isman et al., 2018; Moscovici, Dilworth, Mead, & Zhao, 2015; Paterson et al., 2015). These concerns have been addressed in the specific areas of sustainable development research and urban conservation, which adapt the triple bottom line approach of sustainable development with a focus on natural resources, infrastructure and people (Shane & Graedel, 2000; Shmelev & Shmeleva, 2009; Stossel, Kissinger, & Meir, 2015; Van Stigt, Driessen, & Spit, 2013).

Research suggests that elements of urbanization, including increased population density, create environments that are conducive to a rapid spread of ideas resulting in disruptive innovations (Davidson & Infranca, 2016; Christensen et al., 1996). One such innovation in the academic spotlight is the sharing economy (Davidson & Infranca, 2016; Guttentag, 2015). Research has begun to investigate the positive and negative economic, environmental and social impacts of these disruptions with STVRs emerging as one of the most controversial sectors of the sharing economy because of their unique position at the nexus of the residential and tourism landscapes (Davidson & Infranca, 2016; Heinrichs, 2013; Lee, 2016). All of the economic, environmental and social impacts of traditional lodging options, typically confined to tourism areas of a given city, are now possible in backstage residential areas or in newly created shared spaces (MacCannell, 1973; McKercher, Wang, & Park, 2015).

## Assessing STVR Impacts through an Integrative Approach

### *Interdisciplinary Research: Development of Knowledge & Theory*

The exponential growth of the sharing economy, particularly its sectors such as STVRs has been explained by disruptive innovation theory (Christensen et al., 1996; Guttentag, 2015). However, discussion of STVRs as disruptive innovation have mirrored the economic roots of this theory whereby, disruptive innovations provide a niche product that outperforms existing competitors in the marketplace (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014; Guttentag, 2015). This economic slant has overlooked the opportunity for STVRs to become an innovation within urban landscapes rather than just as a disruption to housing and tourism markets (Jefferson-Jones, 2014; Lee, 2016; Zervas et al., 2014). Tress et al., (2005) explain the development of knowledge and theory as the fusing of disciplines to create new knowledge. STVRs' emergence as a phenomenon in the field of tourism necessitates this fusing of disciplines to understand all of its potential impacts on urban communities. Through the fusing of ecological systems theory, geographical concepts of landscape and tourism concepts of destination development cycles, Article 1 of this study specifically aims to conceptualize how STVRs possess the possibility for both disruptive and innovative roles in the urban landscape, thus expanding knowledge about the functions of disruptive innovations in urban landscapes. In Article 3, hosts' intended and current actions to reduce negative STVR impacts generates new insight into how STVRs might operate as an innovation to propel destinations into a rejuvenation trajectory (Butler, 1980).

### *Interdisciplinary Research: Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries & Integrating Disciplines*

The model presented in Chapter 3 could not have been developed from tourism concepts alone. Tress et al. (2005) specify that interdisciplinary research includes the crossing of *unrelated* disciplines with "contrasting paradigms" (p.486). The integration of disparate disciplines in this study can be seen in the context of its theoretical and methodological approaches.

Much of the interdisciplinary theoretical approach is found in Chapter 3. Without the integration of geographical concepts of landscapes and the concept of ecological systems, the model would simply reflect the influence of STVRs on residents' attitudes. Through ecological systems theory, the model demonstrates the ability of STVRs to affect either a positive or negative feedback loop into a destination's urban system (Costanza, 1992; Ostrom, 2009). Additionally, a landscape perspective highlights the position of STVRs in the urban landscape and justifies the use of residents' attitudes as a relevant indicator of STVR impacts in urban communities.

The methodological approach of Chapter four focuses on the opinions of the non-host resident regarding the impacts of STVRs. While methods for this research originate from social sciences and past tourism studies, Murphy (1986) argues that the anthropocentric nature of conservation, tourism and landscapes require the inclusion of human values for successful conservation and management of urban landscapes. Regardless of the positive or negative economic, environmental and social impacts of STVRs identified through specific disciplines, the success of these strategies in ameliorating these impacts is hinged on urban residents' political support (Rees, 1989).

Chapter four specifically seeks to model why residents tend to support or oppose the presence of STVRs within their community.

***Transdisciplinary Research***

The evolution of transdisciplinary research has produced two distinct definitions of this type of research approach. From one perspective, transdisciplinary research involves transcending disciplinary boundaries to create new disciplinary research approaches (Bramwell, 2015; Aboelela et al., 2007). The other perspective of transdisciplinary research falls within the realm of publicly engaged scholarship. This portion of this paper reflects upon this perspective of transdiscipliarirty and its presence within this research project. Transdisciplinarity is considered the most integrated approach towards research with the highest level of stakeholder involvement. Specifically, it engages academia and the general public (Tress et al., 2005). Klein (1990) elevates transdisciplinarity as the top approach towards sustainability research and explains that in this state of research "gaps between the real and the ideal are most apparent" (p.66). In other words, single disciplinary research approaches without the inclusion of end-users at its inception might produce abstract research agendas that are irrelevant to a community's needs. Jantsch (1972) specifically defines transdisciplinarity as an overhaul of the organization of the university system as a whole in that this approach answers society's demands for answers or innovations. One of the motivations for this dissertation project was the discussion of STVR growth in Savannah within popular media outlets (Combs, 2016; Curl, 2017; Lebos, 2018; Ritchey, 2014) and the gap in a formal theoretical and methodological framework to address STVR impacts. This study has maintained inclusion of non-academic stakeholder involvement throughout its implementation. To inform the

development of questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides in Chapters three and four respectively, a total of 14 interviews were conducted with stakeholders representing the tourism industry, government, and community. Tourism industry stakeholders varied in their scale of operation and represented the following organizations: The Georgia State Tourism Office; an employee of Airbnb's research division; Visit Savannah (the local destination marketing organization); Savannah's Tourism Leadership Council (the local tourism trade organization); and an STVR property management company. Government stakeholders included: a Georgia House Representative who served on the special committee for STVR state regulations, Savannah's Metropolitan and Planning Commission, Savannah's Development & Renewal Authority, and the City's Tourism Management & Ambassadorship Department (TMAD). By name, this last stakeholder may seem more like a tourism industry stakeholder. However, TMAD was commissioned to regulate and manage tourism activity in the City rather than promote it. Interviews conducted with community stakeholders included neighborhood associations and four interviews with residents. Resident interviews were made possible through the recommendation of previously listed stakeholders. During the beginning of the research time frame in May 2017, a series of public stakeholder meetings were held to discuss STVR management and regulations. Attendance of those meetings resulted in two collaborations with STVR hosts who helped refine the qualitative questionnaire in Chapter five. Continued involvement of STVR hosts in the research process included member checks after interview transcription to provide editing agency to hosts.

Transdisciplinary research is commonly discussed as an achievement through team science (Klein, 2008; Lang et al., 2012; Tress, Tress, & Fry, 2005), seemingly excluding individuals from conducting transdisciplinary research. It is argued, however that the public engagement component of transdisciplinary research allows individuals to practice this research approach (Wickson, Carew, & Russell, 2006). Even more, researchers who choose transdisciplinary research as their "modus operandi" (p. 1052) will develop research agendas that necessitate interdisciplinary and community collaborations. Through consultation of a wide variety of stakeholders in Savannah, the scope and content of this research were significantly refined to address questions that still require answers today. The primary researcher in this study has continued to cultivate a transdisciplinary research agenda through a current research project that is being developed in partnership with several rural communities in Eastern North Carolina, USA.

**Strategic Communication of Research**

In an effort to continue the transdisciplinarity of this research throughout the study, it is important to consider how this research will be disseminated to non-academic stakeholders in Savannah. Moseley (2010) questions the merit of engaging the public in research because of its potential distraction from generating academic currency – peer-reviewed articles. In her paraphrase of Karl Marx, Moseley (2010) counters this perspective by arguing that "the point of scholarship…is not just to interpret the world but to change it" (p.205). Beyond academic contributions, this research was developed with the intention to provide a toolkit for municipalities in their assessments of STVR impacts. Moseley (2010) suggests that the scale of your engagement should mirror the scale of the issue. With this in mind, two approaches towards strategic communication

are being coordinated for the results of this research including a technical report to inform future STVR policy (Lackey, 2007) and public engagement via popular media outlets (Dean, 2009; Moseley, 2010).

Gregrich (2003) recommends steps to strategically communicate research findings to inform public policy. First, the formatting of research reports for policy-makers should be concise with recommendations directly related to their most pressing questions. Additionally, these reports should consider the feasibility of accomplishing those recommendations. The decision cycles and calendars of legislative entities should also be considered (Gregrich, 2003).

Over the past year and a half, the City dissolved TMAD and shifted the director and obligations of STVR management and regulation to the Department of Planning & Urban Design. However, Savannah's STVR Manamgent and Regulation efforts are still in action today (City of Savannah, 2018). Development of a technical report on the resident attitude survey results, produced by the primary investigator of this researcher, is in nascent stages. The recent one year anniversary of Savannah's new STVR regulations highlights the need to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of these policies. Results from the survey are expected to be incorporated into this evaluation. It is important to also note that these technical reports will be provided to qualitative and quantitative research participants who indicated interest in receiving a copy of the final results of this project.

In his notion of "public geographies", Ward describes "public scholarship" of either the organic or traditional varieties, with the latter describing traditional forms of public scholarship such as Op-Eds in newspapers (Ward, 2006). This type of public

engagement is not meant as an intervention as a peer-reviewed article might provide, but a way to bring a "disciplinary" approach towards a public conversation (Moseley, 2010). They can also provide the benefit of more control over the content of your public engagement message (than other popular media options such as radio or television (Mosely, 2010). Even if they are not published, they can be a great exercise in effective communication of your research and can identify you as a source for future information on the subject (Dean, 2009). Additionally, Op-Eds are a way to write about timely issues related to your research (Dean, 2009). Networking during the implementation of this research resulted in a connection to the City's alternative weekly newspaper, Connect Savannah. Current coordination with Connect Savannah aims to identify opportunities to contribute an Op-Ed to their news outlet.

The primary researcher in this study also engaged in another form of strategic communication during the implementation of this research, which included their contribution to a sustainable tourism guide for businesses in Savannah (City of Savannah Sustainability Office, 2016). One of the major contributions to the sustainable tourism guide by the researcher was the listing of STVRs as small businesses in the guide that could benefit from its tips and strategies. Some of the opportunities provided in this guide include but are not limited to Georgia Power energy efficiency incentives and voluntourism opportunities. In addition to receiving technical reports of this dissertation work, research participants will be sent a copy of this guide to aid any desired or current pursuits of economic, environmental and sustainable activities of their STVRs.

**Future Conservation Research of STVRs**

While this dissertation consists of three main chapters focusing on different aspects of STVRs within the urban landscape, the use of quantitative methods in Chapter three allowed for the collection of GPS data points for each survey participant. This data will aid future spatial analysis comparing residents' perceived impacts of STVRs in relation to other elements of the urban landscape as proposed by the HUL approach (e.g., green spaces, historic sites, historical patterns of tourism development). These types of spatial approaches towards holistically understanding the role of STVRs in the sustainable development of urban landscapes are considered practical developments towards improving the integration of social impacts into sustainability research (Ban, Mills et al. 2013; Newell, Crumley et al. 2005).

**Conclusion**

In summary, STVRs pose challenges to urban conservation that cannot be solved from disciplinary approaches. This study presents an interdisciplinary theoretical approach to understanding the extent and nature of STVR impacts in the urban landscape through the fusion of ecological systems, landscape concepts, and the area of tourism studies pertaining to destination life cycles. Through the research outlined in Chapters three, four and five, future research requiring interdisciplinary approaches towards assessing STVR impacts are revealed such as the operationalization of the Historic Urban Landscape approach in the spatial analysis of survey data. The relevance of the scope and content of this research was developed through a transdisciplinary approach, which included the collaboration with a breadth of stakeholders in Savannah from the project's inception.

In an effort to create a meaningful transdisciplinary approach to this study, strategic communication of this research to both regulatory authorities and residents is currently being coordinated.

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# CHAPTER 6

# MAJOR CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH[6]

## Implications for Practitioners

The popularity of disruptive innovations such as STVRs is reflected in countries such as the United States, where by 2015, forty-four percent of adults claimed to have participated in sharing economy transactions, e.g., ride sharing, home sharing (Steinmetz, 2016). In 2017, the United States remained one of Airbnb's largest market shares contributing 660,000 listings out of its total four million listings worldwide (Hartmans, 2017). Widener (2015) explains that in organically slow-growing cities, the visionary statement of the urban area is represented by the comprehensive aggregation of residents' voices and is used to address small scale decisions regarding community development. With predictions of continued urban growth (United Nations, 2014), Widener (2015) predicts that economies of scale and advancing smart city technologies will "usher in progressively more technocratic and frenetically paced real estate development. In this era, decisions by the administrative state might become less well-informed and increasingly ad hoc" (p.143). With no indication from research that this trend is declining, it seems STVRs are here to stay and that there is a need for strong conceptual

[6] Yeager, Emily.

and theoretical underpinnings to equip municipalities with tools to make informed and proactive decisions regarding future STVR development for the sake of larger goals of urban conservation.

The proposed framework in Chapter 2 offers a toolbox that regulatory agencies can utilize for holistic STVR regulations that consider the current contextual and historic roots of STVR issues and how they might evolve over time with the urban landscape. Additionally, the proposed framework focuses largely on residents' attitudes as an indicator of STVR impacts and the overall health of the urban system. These attitudes ultimately function as a driving force behind future support for STVR activity. This support, however must be coupled with a community's capacity for adaptation to rapid innovations such as STVRs in their communities.

Chapter 3 offers practitioners an approach towards measuring residents' attitudes towards STVRs to provide tangible data to include in the use of the STVR impact assessment framework in Chapter 2. In Savannah, residents' perceived psychological and social empowerment and perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of STVRs were the most common significant predictors of their overall support for continued STVR development. These findings highlight the need for regulatory approaches that ensure STVRs do not infringe on residents' sense of community and that STVR activity reflects the values and norms of residents so that STVR visits induce resident pride in their neighborhoods. If residents see STVRs as increasing their social and psychological empowerment while also having net benefits that exceed costs, they will be more likely to support this type of disruptive innovation.

Chapter 4 presents municipalities with an identity framework through which they can view STVR hosts in their community. In this study, STVR hosts are found to be more than just entrepreneurs commodifying their homes to make extra money. They possess multiple identities spanning entrepreneurs, residents, and sustainable entrepreneurs that are using STVRs to bring positive economic, social, and environmental impacts to their community. Through the lens of the entrepreneurial identity, STVR hosts' formal and substantive motivations often form simultaneously (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016). Through the lens of the residential identity, hosts exhibit actions characterized by the SOC framework that may positively contribute to three dimensions of Savannah's social resilience (Holladay & Powell, 2013; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Municipalities wishing to offer support for hosts to engage in these sustainable activities can use the interview questionnaire offered in this study to identify current actions being taken by hosts and gaps in support to do so. These support gaps could be filled by local governments through strategies such as facilitating partnerships between local businesses and STVRs that incentivize STVR guests' patronage of local businesses.

**Future Research/Implications for Academics**

STVRs pose challenges to urban conservation that cannot be solved from disciplinary approaches. This study presents an interdisciplinary theoretical approach to understanding the extent and nature of STVR impacts in the urban landscape through the fusion of ecological systems, landscape concepts, and the area of tourism studies pertaining to destination life cycles. Through chapters two, three and four, future research requiring interdisciplinary approaches towards assessing STVR impacts are revealed such as the operationalization of the Historic Urban Landscape approach in the

spatial analysis of survey data. The relevance of the scope and content of this research was developed through a transdisciplinary approach, which included the collaboration with a breadth of stakeholders in Savannah from the project's inception. As researchers dive deeper into understanding STVR impacts in urban landscapes, the complexity of these issues will become more apparent. Therefore, strong consideration of integrative approaches towards researching these issues should be made.

One important research need is associated with the economic multipliers associated with STVR guests. A gap remains in understanding the localized economic impacts of STVRs and whether or not STVR guests' expenditures have higher multiplier rates than traditional tourists. This is important because if the multipliers of STVR guest are higher than other guests, they are a more 'efficient' tourists and thus, their benefits outweigh their collective costs (Gössling et al., 2005). STVR economic impact research could also benefit from diving deeper into the entrepreneurial opportunities afforded to specific populations (e.g., people of color, women) through hosting. These opportunities are emerging in international contexts through initiatives such as Airbnb's recent partnership with India's Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) highlights these research opportunities (Airbnb, 2017).

In terms of ecological impacts, there is still only speculation as to the natural resource tradeoffs between STVRs and hotels. Methods such as life cycle analyses of these different structures could provide material evidence as to efficiencies of one or the other.

Social impacts from STVRs have largely been addressed in terms of more complex issues previously described such as loss of affordable housing (Gurran &

Phibbs, 2017; Lee, 2016; Lewyn, 2016; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2017). However, these issues are symptoms of larger urban issues of gentrification comprised of many elements of the urban landscape beyond housing (van der Zee, 2016). The framework in Chapter 2 provides a conceptual starting point for researchers wanting to study complex relationships between STVRs and urban issues such as gentrification from a landscape approach. While Chapter 3 provides a method to measuring residents' attitudes towards support for STVRs, the landscape lens suggests that there could be other factors in the urban landscape moderating their attitudes. To identify these factors, future implementations of this survey might also benefit from the integration of spatial tools particularly into door-to-door collection methods because of the ability to collect exact GPS points of a resident's home. The integration of spatial data into survey methodologies provides additional data that will can be imported into mapping programs such as ArcMap for spatial analysis or SPSS for statistical analysis (Ayscue et al., 2016). Through this approach, residents' attitudes can be spatially compared to other elements of the urban area such as those identified through UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape approach exemplified in Chapter 2.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A.** The Six Critical Steps to Operationalizing The Historic Urban Landscape Approach (UNESCO, 2014)

**Appendix B.** The STVR Resident Attitude Survey Instrument

# Survey of Residents' Attitudes toward Short-Term Vacation Rentals in Savannah

*This study aims to understand Savannah residents' attitudes toward short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) such as Airbnb, HomeAway, and Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) in their neighborhoods. These STVRS are rentals of individual rooms or entire residential dwellings. Your responses are confidential and voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from participation at any time. Thank you for your time!*

## Section 1: Residential Status

**1. Were you born in Savannah? (*Please check one*).**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**2. How many years have you been a resident of Savannah? (*Please write in number*)** _____ **years**

**3. How long have you lived in your current neighborhood? (*Please write in number*)** _____ **years**

**4. Please select the home status that best describes your residence. (*Please check one*)**

☐ Rental ☐ Primary residence ☐ Second home ☐ Other: _____

## Section 2: Attitudes towards Short Term Vacation Rentals such as Airbnb and HomeAway

**5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about STVRs (e.g., Airbnb, HomeAway)?**
**The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement*)**

| My neighborhood should... | Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actively encourage STVRs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Support STVRs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Continue to allow STVRs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Support the promotion of STVRs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**6. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about STVRs (e.g., Airbnb, HomeAway)?**
**The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement*)**

| STVRs in my neighborhood… | Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Help me pay my bills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Help provide me with additional income | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Help me pay my mortgage/rent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Are vital to my economic future | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**7. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about STVRs in your neighborhood (e.g. Airbnb, HomeAway)? The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| **STVRs (e.g. Airbnb, HomeAway) in my neighborhood ...** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Moderately Disagree*** | ***Slightly Disagree*** | ***Neither*** | ***Slightly Agree*** | ***Moderately Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Make me proud to be a resident of my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Make me feel special because people are able to experience my neighborhood's unique features | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Make me want to tell others about what we have to offer in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Remind me that I have a unique culture to share with visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Make me want to work to keep my neighborhood special | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**8. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about STVRs (e.g. Airbnb, HomeAway)? The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| **STVRs (e.g. Airbnb) in my neighborhood make me...** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Moderately Disagree*** | ***Slightly Disagree*** | ***Neither*** | ***Slightly Agree*** | ***Moderately Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Feel more connected to my community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Feel a sense of 'community spirit' | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Feel alienated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Feel like I want to get involved in my community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Feel like my community is falling apart | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Feel frustrated towards my neighbors who host STVR visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about STVRs (e.g. Airbnb, HomeAway)? The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| **I feel like…** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Moderately Disagree*** | ***Slightly Disagree*** | ***Neither*** | ***Slightly Agree*** | ***Moderately Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My voice is excluded from the STVR planning process in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have a voice in my neighborhood's STVR decisions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have access to the decision making process when it comes to STVRs in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Those in positions of power disregard my concerns about STVRs in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My vote makes a difference in how STVRs are developed in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have an outlet to share my concerns about STVR development in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Section 3: Interactions with STVR visitors**

**10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about STVRs visitors in your neighborhood (e.g., Airbnb, HomeAway)? The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| | Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am proud to have STVR visitors come to my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel the neighborhood benefits from having STVR visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I appreciate STVR visitors for the contribution they make to the local economy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I treat STVR visitors fairly in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel close to some STVR visitors I have met in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have made friends with some STVR visitors in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I identify with STVR visitors in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have a lot in common with STVR visitors in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have respect for STVR visitors in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I understand STVR visitors in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Section 4: Community Life in Your Neighborhood**

**11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your connection to your neighborhood in Savannah? The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| | Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My neighborhood is a part of me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My neighborhood is very special to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I identify strongly with my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am very attached to my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My neighborhood means a lot to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Living in my neighborhood says a lot about who I am | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My neighborhood is the best place for my lifestyle | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| No other neighborhood in Savannah can compare to mine | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I get more satisfaction out of living in my neighborhood than any other one in Savannah | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Living my life in this neighborhood is better than living anywhere else | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would not substitute any other neighborhood because of the quality of life my neighborhood provides | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your neighborhood?**
**The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| **I feel…** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Moderately Disagree*** | ***Slightly Disagree*** | ***Neither*** | ***Slightly Agree*** | ***Moderately Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can get what I need in this neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This neighborhood helps fulfill my needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Like a member of this neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I belong in this neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have a say about what goes on in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| People in this neighborhood are good at influencing one another | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel connected to this neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have a good bond with others in this neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

## Section 5: Impacts of STVRS in Your Neighborhood

**13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the impacts of STVRs (e.g., Airbnb, HomeAway)?**
**The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| **STVRs…** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Moderately Disagree*** | ***Slightly Disagree*** | ***Neither*** | ***Slightly Agree*** | ***Moderately Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve the physical appearance of my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Increase traffic problems in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Provide incentives for protection and conservation of natural resources in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Increase the quality of life in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Increase the amount of crime in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Encourage more public development in my neighborhood (e.g., roads, public facilities) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Improve the local economy in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Result in more litter in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Result in better shopping, restaurants, and entertainment options in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Result in an increase of the cost of living in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Help preserve the cultural identity of my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Incentivize the restoration of historic buildings in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Cause my neighborhood to be overcrowded | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Increase the number of recreational opportunities in my neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lead to friction between homeowners and STVR guests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Help save natural resources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Are a sustainable mode of consumption | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Are efficient in terms of using energy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Are environmentally friendly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**14. How would you rate your level of knowledge about STVR regulations in Savannah? Please check one.**

☐ Not at all knowledgeable (1) ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable (3) ☐ Knowledgeable (5)

☐ Barely knowledgeable (2) ☐ Moderately knowledgeable (4) ☐ Very knowledgeable (6)

**15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about STVR legislation?**
**The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| **STVRs…** | **Strongly Disagree** | **Moderately Disagree** | **Slightly Disagree** | **Neither** | **Slightly Agree** | **Moderately Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Should be taxed as regular hotels/inns | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Owners should be required to have a special license to operate in Savannah | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Development should be controlled by the local government | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Should be restricted by the local government | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Should be expanded to other parts of the city by the local government | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

## Section 6: Use of STVRs as a Host or Guest

**16. Have you ever rented out your residence through a shared lodging business like Airbnb or Homeaway? Please check one.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**17. Do you currently rent out your residence through a shared lodging business like Airbnb or Homeaway? Please check one.**

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, approximately how many nights per month? _____ # nights/month

**18. Have you used a STVR business like Airbnb, or HomeAway while traveling for business or pleasure? Please check one.**

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, approximately how many times? _____ # times used STVR

**19. Does someone in your immediate family or any of your close friends use STVRs while traveling? Please check one.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**20. Does someone in your immediate family or any of your close friends participate as a STVR host? Please check one.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**21. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about <u>your neighbors</u> who host STVR visitors?**
**The scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." (*Please circle one number per statement)***

| | **Strongly Disagree** | **Moderately Disagree** | **Slightly Disagree** | **Neither** | **Slightly Agree** | **Moderately Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I identify with my neighbors who host STVR visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have a lot in common with my neighbors who host STVR visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have respect for my neighbors who host STVR visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I understand my neighbors who host STVR visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel close to my neighbors who host STVR visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have made friends with my neighbors who host STVR visitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Section 7: Background information.**
This information is completely confidential and will only be considered to determine if we have satisfactorily represented residents of your neighborhood in Savannah.

**22. With what gender do you identify? Please check one.**

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other_____

**23. Which category best describes your ethnicity? Please check one.**

☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Hispanic
☐ American Indian ☐ Caucasian ☐ Other: _ _____

**24. How many people live in your household as permanent residents? (*Please write in number)*** _____

**25. What year were you born? (*Please write specific year)*** _____

**26. What is the highest level of education you have completed so far? Please check one.**

☐ Less than high school ☐ Some college ☐ Master's Degree
☐ High School or GED ☐ Junior college ☐ Ph.D./Professional Degree
☐ Technical, vocational or trade school ☐ 4-year college

**27. What is your approximate annual household income before taxes? Please check one.**

☐ Less than $30,000 ☐ $90,000-$119,999 ☐ $180,000-$209,999
☐ $30,000-$59,999 ☐ $120,000-$149,999 ☐ $210,000 or more
☐ $60,000-$89,999 ☐ $150,000-$179,999

**28. Please share any additional comments that you would like to add:**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Additional comments continued…**

**Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey!**
**We appreciate your time and willingness to share your opinions**

*If you have any additional questions please contact Emily Ayscue in the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia * epa86580@uga.edu * 252-915-8846 * 180 E Green Street, Athens, GA 30602*

**Appendix C.** The STVR Host Identity Interview Guide

ID # _ _ Date: Time:

**Research Angle 1: Motivations for Participation in the STVR market (Entrepreneur Identity)**

1. What is the nature of your STVR? primary residence, second home, business investment, or something else?
2. How did you become interested in becoming an STVR host/owner?
3. Are you present on the premises when guests stay in your STVR? If so, do guests stay in the same building as you or something else (e.g., a carriage house)?
4. How do you advertise your accommodation (e.g., by district, nearby amenities such as Forsyth Park)?
5. What are the benefits of hosting (renting out your STVR property)? Would you say that these benefits motivate you to continue hosting?
6. Are there any aspects of hosting (renting out your STVR property) that you would change or that could be improved? Would you say that these aspects of hosting would deter you from hosting?

**Research Angle 2: Connection with Community (Residential Identity)**

7. Do you feel like being a host aligns with the values of your neighborhood? What about with the city of Savannah as a whole? Does this influence your decision to host (or rent out your STVR property)?
8. Do you think that Savannah is a friendly place towards STVR guests? What about STVRs in general? Does this influence your decision to host (or rent out your STVR property)?
9. Are your neighbors aware that you are a host? If so, what do they think about it? Has hosting (or renting our your STVR property) affected your relationship with your neighbors?
10. Are you a part of any civic organizations or causes in Savannah? What about in your neighborhood?
11. Do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighborhood?
12. How well would you say you know your neighbors?
13. How often do you interact with your neighbors? Through events, personal relationships?
14. Do you feel close to your neighbors?
15. Do you feel that you have a say in the way that STVR regulations and fees are developed?

**Research Angle 3: Perceived STVR Impacts & Actions to Reduce Impacts (Entrepreneur Identity)**

16. What do you think about tourism in Savannah? In your neighborhood?
17. What do you think about the management of tourism in Savannah? In your neighborhood?
18. Do you see a role for local government to manage tourism activity and growth in Savannah? In your neighborhood?
19. What do you think about STVR regulations and fees in Savannah?
20. Do you think short term vacation rentals are an economically sustainable option for Savannah? What about your neighborhood?
21. Do you think short term vacation rentals are a socially sustainable option for Savannah? What about your neighborhood?
22. Do you think short term vacation rentals are an environmentally sustainable option for Savannah? What about your neighborhood?
23. Do you think that there are any actions that hosts can take to help reduce negative economic impacts of STVRs in Savannah?
24. Do you think that there are any actions that hosts can take to help reduce negative economic impacts of STVRs in Savannah?
25. Do you think that there are any actions that hosts can take to help reduce negative social impacts of STVRs in Savannah?
26. Do you think that there are any actions that hosts can take to help reduce negative environmental impacts of STVRs in Savannah?

**Appendix D.** The Tourist Guide Map for The Historic Landmark District of Savannah, GA (Old Town Trolley Tours, 2018)