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Grappling with Growth: Perceptions of Development and Preservation in Faster- and Slower-Growing Amenity Communities*

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ABSTRACT

Amenity-rich rural communities attract tourists, retirees, second-home owners, and others whose values are often assumed to conflict with those of longtime residents. While prior research has examined attitudinal differences across types of residents, questions about the effects of community growth on residents' attitudes remain unanswered. This study examines whether and how seasonal and permanent residents differ within and across towns experiencing different rates of growth, and the implications of differences for attitudes toward community development and preservation. Results showed that permanent residents (both short- and long-term) perceived community development initiatives as more important to maintaining future quality of life than did seasonal homeowners. Further, community growth rates had statistically significant effects: residents of slower-growth towns attributed higher importance to both development and preservation initiatives than did residents of faster-growing towns. Growth rate was thus a stronger predictor of attitudes toward both development and preservation than resident type.

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Introduction

Although tourism marketers tend to promote the uniqueness of Vermont, this state's rural communities are similar to others in high-amenity regions of the United States. Vermont's rural towns developed in the 19th century around natural resource extraction industries involving forestry, mining, agriculture, and grazing. As those activities declined in the 20th century (Industries 2011), natural resources became re-defined as amenities—"pleasing features in the local environment" (Schaeffer and Dissart 2018, p. 478) that contributed to quality of life and alternative economic opportunity. By the mid-1900s, the scenic landscapes, forested hillsides, rivers, lakes, and walkable mountains encompassing rural villages and farms were reconceived as foundations for

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Vermont's developing recreation and tourism sectors (Jordan 1980; Sherman, Sessions and Potash 2004; Harrison 2006).

The hallmarks of the amenity economy are today visible across the Vermont landscape. Seasonal tourist travel clogs rural roads and businesses. Second home enclaves (multi-unit and single family structures) have proliferated, ski resorts and lakeside camps have increased in number, and new recreation opportunities (wellness resorts, water parks, mountain biking trails) are marketed. These projects raise new questions about development choices and residents' attitudes toward growth in rural communities—questions that reference tangible community concerns such as access to opportunities, allocation of resources, and control of local space (Flora and Flora 2013). These also raise symbolic issues related to personal and community quality of life (Deller et al. 2001; Wolf and Klein 2007; Ulrich-Schad and Qin 2017) and the meanings of amenity places in contemporary society.

Prior research has shown that amenity migrants make choices based on their perceptions of and values toward the esthetic qualities of natural landscapes, and on the potential for fulfillment of the quality of life benefits they seek (Deller, Tsai, Marcouiller and English 2001; Gosnell and Abrams 2011; Krannich, Luloff and Field 2011; Stokowski 2013). But, migration to rural places also challenges communities by raising “concerns about the impact of development on economic, social, and environmental characteristics of rural communities” (Marcouiller, Clendenning, and Kedzior 2002, p. 517). The rate of community growth seems particularly consequential relative to impacts.

Growth in amenity places can be multifaceted, complex, and produce unintended consequences. The very amenities that attract newcomers may be adversely affected by their arrival. For example, construction of seasonal or second homes can result in erosion and land fragmentation, affect wildlife habitat, overload transportation infrastructure, diminish water quality, and disturb scenic viewsheds. An influx of new residents may introduce new money into a community, enliven the business climate and stimulate social interactions, community activities and local pride—or produce community dissent and conflict. Community and regional planning addressing interlinked economic, social, and environmental factors are necessary, but may lag due to local inertia or lack of funding, leadership or vision (Stokowski 1996).

The research presented here contributes to understand migration processes and their community effects by looking specifically at one aspect of the complex set of relationships that both stimulate and result from amenity migration: local growth rates. In symbolic and practical terms, the rate of community growth likely sharpens residents' and leaders' perspectives about both quality of life and quality of place in amenity settings. Though there is an extensive literature about residents' attitudes and perceptions in rural tourism contexts and in amenity-based communities, relationships between growth rates and residents' perceptions of desired futures are understudied. Growth rates vary because places are not all alike: different kinds of communities may attract dissimilar migrants, and community capacity (economic and social resources, citizen involvement, leadership, and other factors) fluctuates over time. Understanding how growth rates affect amenity migration patterns and produce effects across different types of communities can shed new light on rural community transformation in contemporary times.

Researchers hypothesize that attitudes toward growth and development in amenity-rich places are related to residential status and longevity (Brennan and Cooper 2008; Gosnell and Abrams 2011): the longer migrants reside in a community, the more similar they will become to natives in attitudes toward growth and development. But, short- or long-term permanent residents, second-home owners, seasonal residents, relocating retirees, and occupational migrants diverge in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Categories are fluid, dependent on individuals' family, work and leisure choices and uses of rural space (Pitkänen, Adamiak and Halseth 2014). Moreover, overemphasizing *types* of residents in amenity places ignores growth rates of rural communities themselves. Places grow (in population and economically) at different rates, and growth patterns can affect both the drivers and effects of amenity migration (Park and Stokowski 2009, 2011). Though tourism researchers have typically studied growth as an outcome of migration processes (second home construction, business investment, land re-designation, government financing), the rate of growth in amenity places may also influence relocation choices, attitudes about place, access to resources, and other issues.

Given limited research specifically about growth rates in amenity places, and an interest in understanding the dynamics of growth-related processes in rural places generally, this paper asks: (a) To what extent do various types of seasonal and permanent residents differ in characteristics within and across amenity places experiencing different rates of growth; and (b) What are the implications of these differences for community members' perspectives on local development and preservation? To address these issues, we use both county- and town-level data to study four rural Vermont towns affected by amenity migration and growing at different rates.

Literature Review

Rural Migration Trends

Vermont's demographic trends over recent decades mirror those of rural areas across the country (Johnson and Fuguitt 2000). For much of the 20th century, migration patterns in the United States traced predominantly from nonmetropolitan (rural) to metropolitan (urban) areas, aligned with agricultural reorganization and decreasing labor needs of extractive industries (Fuguitt et al. 1998). Over the past several decades, however, nonmetropolitan regions of the United States have reversed course. Rural populations have increased (Johnson and Beale 2002) especially in places with desirable amenity resources, a viable economic base, and proximity to metropolitan regions (Albrecht 2010). People who move to rural areas are often motivated by quality of life issues related to an area's natural and social environments (von Reichert, Cromartie and Arthun 2014). Rural residents' decisions to stay or to migrate include their sentiments toward other residents and local natural amenities, and education, economic and housing opportunities (Beyers and Nelson 2000; Ulrich-Schad, Henly and Safford 2013).

Today, "counties that offer recreation, amenity or retirement opportunities have consistently been the fastest growing types of counties in nonmetropolitan America" (Johnson 2006, p. 2). The national economic downturn of the early 21st century slowed migration to rural counties with natural resource amenities (McGranahan 2008), but

these places still grow at more than double the rates of rural manufacturing, farming, or mining counties (Johnson 2012).

Migrants' Attitudes Toward Growth

The rural turnaround of the latter part of the 20th century precipitated a host of studies concerned with the factors behind migration trends and with hypothesized differences between newly arrived and longtime residents. Early research on newcomer/longtime resident dynamics (Cockerham and Blevins 1977; Ploch 1978) suggested that the two groups held different values and orientations toward such issues as environmental stewardship, rural development, and community life. Price and Clay (1980) hypothesized that differences in attitudes, values, and expectations would result in a “culture clash” between recently arrived and established residents. That is, newcomers who moved to rural areas to escape the consequences of rapid urbanization might “pull the gangplank” behind them, becoming more opposed to rural growth than long-term residents, and wanting to “preserve the rural and scenic qualities that attracted them to the community” initially (Smith and Krannich 2000, p. 401).

Though intuitively appealing, there is mixed empirical support for assumed conflicts between newcomers and long-term residents. An early Colorado study (Graber 1974) suggested that newcomers were more likely than longtime residents to be actively involved in and supportive of measures that attempted to control change and preserve the historical character of the community—yet “oldtimers” also collaborated with newcomers in those preservation efforts. Fortmann and Kusel (1990) suggested that new residents might not introduce new values into rural communities as much as give voice to values that had hitherto been marginalized. Research in the Rocky Mountain West (Smith and Krannich 2000) concluded that newcomers and longtime residents reported similar attitudes toward population growth, rural development, and concern for the environment. But, Jensen and Field's (2005) study of landowners in the Pine Barrens of northwestern Wisconsin found that long-term residents were more concerned about growth than newcomers, although newer residents were more supportive of policies to manage growth and development. Studies in Appalachia (Jones et al. 2003) showed that in-migrants devoted more time and resources to activities that promoted environmental values, but natives expressed similar levels of concern and commitment. In case studies of seasonal and permanent residents in four New England states, Armstrong and Stedman (2013) found that permanent residents were more likely than second home owners to perceive cultural differences; they advise researchers to focus on issues related to cultural capital in future studies about rural mobility.

Beyond evaluating the attitudes and behaviors of long-term residents and newcomers, researchers have also examined differences between permanent and seasonal residents (Jaakson 1986; Blahna 1990; Halseth 1998; Clendenning and Field 2005; Krannich, Petrzela and Brehm 2006; Krannich, Luloff and Field 2011; Matarrita-Cascante, Sene-Harper and Stocks 2015). In a northern Wisconsin county, Green et al. (1996) found support for a theory of local dependency: seasonal residents who developed ties primarily with other seasonal residents were more likely to support land use controls, while those who felt welcome across the community were more likely to support local

development. Findings of seasonal residents' higher levels of support for growth control measures were also reported by Jensen and Field (2005), although a majority of the Wisconsin residents surveyed welcomed policies to slow growth and development, regardless of tenure. Similarly, in a Washington State study, Kondo, Rivera and Rullman (2012) found that second-home owners became over time increasingly engaged in land use decision-making processes that restricted future development. Support for community development initiatives was also found to be related to environmental attitudes among second home owners in Norway (Kaltenborn, Andersen and Nellemann 2009). In a Costa Rica community, cultural and economic factors influenced whether local residents and amenity migrants would participate together in local development initiatives (Cortes, Matarrita-Cascante and Rodriguez 2014).

Community issues related to different kinds of residents, economic conditions, and rural places (and the natural resource-based amenities on which communities rely) continue to be debated (Theodori and Luloff 2000; Andereck et al. 2005; Deller 2010). Methods of categorizing positions and places (urban/rural, old-timer/newcomer, permanent/seasonal residents, and amenity-based/extractive economies) remain problematic, with theoretical and disciplinary approaches producing discrete literatures and terminologies (Marcouiller, Clendenning and Kedzior 2002; Gosnell and Abrams 2011; Abrams, Gosnell, Gill and Klepeis 2012). While broad categories are quantifiably useful, people self-identify in complex ways with respect to place and culture (Golding 2012), and changing identities can affect policy orientations.

Community Growth Rate

Questions about the pace of growth have been raised in communities that experience rapid changes in population and/or economy such as energy boomtowns (Weber and Howell 1982; Smith, Krannich and Hunter 2001). In tourism contexts, comparable research has been conducted in places where large or rapid-growth development projects (e.g., casino gaming) have been situated in small, rural places (Stokowski 1996; Perdue, Long and Kang 1999).

Tourism research about amenity places has frequently addressed community growth rates as outcomes of other social and economic processes such as migration, capital investment, or land use policy, but the rate of growth can also affect community development processes. Ramaswamy and Kuentzel (1998) showed that steady tourism growth in a Vermont community was facilitated and accompanied by reciprocal increases in social capital and other assets. Studying tourism destinations in Appalachia, Jakus and Siegel (1997) found that population growth rates were negatively correlated with attitudes toward development: residents in fast-growing communities were more likely to be concerned about negative aspects of tourism development than residents in slow-growing communities. Likewise, residents' perceptions of a community's growth rate can influence attitudes toward tourism development (Lankford and Howard 1994). McKercher, Wang and Park (2015) propose that community attitudes vary at different stages of tourism development, during which rates of change also vary.

Other impacts of differential growth rates were observed in tourism-based rural counties in Colorado, where Park and Stokowski (2009) confirmed a relationship between

high growth rates and crime. These authors suggested that rapid population and economic growth weakens a community's social bonds and stresses community relationships. Norris and Winston (2009) also found that social and economic impacts of second home development differed according to the rate of growth in three Irish communities. The size of an area, its capacity to support growth, and the scale of new developments are also relevant; these may stimulate internal competition for scarce community resources (Paris 2009).

Given prior research findings related to the outcomes of growth in rural amenity places, this paper compares four faster- and slower-growing Vermont amenity communities with historically different natural resource bases, diversity in types of amenity migrants, and differing growth patterns. In each of these places, natural amenity settings play prominent roles in shaping residents' senses of place and quality of life. Amenity values also feature centrally in decisions related to local development and preservation—issues that illustrate how residents and leaders “grapple with growth” in rural amenity settings.

Research Questions

The literature suggests a need to consider different types of seasonal and permanent residents instead of relying on simple binary categories. When towns are very small, as is typical in Vermont, it may be impossible to identify considerable variation within groups. In this study, three groups of respondents (long-term permanent residents, short-term permanent residents, and seasonal homeowners) can be distinguished. Based on prior research, we propose that:

H1: Different types of residents will attribute different levels of importance to community initiatives. In particular, seasonal homeowners are less likely to perceive the importance of local initiatives for development and preservation compared to long- and short-term permanent residents.

The literature also suggests that community growth patterns have differential effects on residents' attitudes toward others and on their perceived quality of life. Thus, we propose that:

H2: Residents (permanent and seasonal) in communities with different rates of growth (slow or fast) will attribute different levels of importance to community initiatives. Specifically, residents of higher-growth communities are less likely to perceive the importance of community development and preservation initiatives than residents of lower-growth communities.

Methods

Vermont Study Towns

The Northern Forest region of the eastern United States covers 30 million acres across Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York (Dobbs and Ober 1995), and is “home to more than 2 million people who live in rural communities, larger towns and small cities surrounded by the largest intact forest in the eastern United States”

Table 1. Characteristics of study towns.

	Population, 2010	Population change, 2000–2010 (%)	Median age, 2010	Change in median age, 2000–2010 (%)	Housing stock in seasonal use, 2010 (%)	Per capita income, 2010(\$)	Median family income, 2010(\$)	Unemployment rate, 2010(%)
Vermont	625,741	2.8	41.5	10.08	15.6	27,478	64,135	5.9
Cabot	1,433	18.1	43.0	13.46	20.5	23,661	59,464	4.7
Craftsbury	1,206	6.2	44.1	6.52	17.0	20,031	49,297	1.7
Eden	1,323	14.8	37.4	10.98	26.3	23,131	58,313	4.7
Waitsfield	1,719	3.6	45.9	13.90	18.4	32,741	85,110	4.7

Sources: American Factfinder; American Community Survey.

(Northern Forest Center 2016). In Vermont, the Northern Forest extends across portions of Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Lamoille, Orleans, and Washington counties. For this study, four Vermont towns—similar in population size, and situated in three Northern Forest counties—were selected. The towns of Cabot, Craftsbury, Eden, and Waitsfield varied in their historical forms of natural resource dependency, types of amenity development and contemporary growth rates. Eden and Cabot were identified as “faster growing” with population increases of about 15–18% between 2000 and 2010. Waitsfield and Craftsbury were considered “slower growing” with population increases in each town of $3\frac{1}{2}$ –6% in each town during the same time period (Table 1).

Community planning documents reveal that the four towns were carved from Vermont’s forested hills and situated near rivers and streams between 1780 and 1783. Timber harvesting and subsistence agriculture provided the initial economic base for each, with commercial timber industries, sawmills, and grain mills established early in Eden (Lamoille County) and in Craftsbury (Orleans County). In Cabot and Waitsfield (both in Washington County), agriculture, dairy farms, factories and waterpower predominated. Sheep farming and woolen mills emerged in the early 1800s, followed by dairy farming (mid- to later-1800s).

A decline in resource-dependent industries (and associated out-migration) in early and mid-1900s also impacted these towns. Today, Craftsbury’s prominent assets (historic village, town commons, scenic hill farms, mountain landscapes and Nordic sports facilities) blend natural and cultural amenities. Eden, surrounded by nature preserves and recreational areas, is known for its lakes and four-season outdoor recreation opportunities. Cabot continues to rely on farming; its agricultural landscapes and creamery are tourist draws. Waitsfield, situated in a valley between mountain ranges, has developed into a commerce center serving local ski areas and tourists.

Data Collection

Using the 2009 state property tax list, residential properties and owners in the four study towns were identified. All permanent and seasonal residential properties were included, while others (commercial apartments; businesses; properties owned by banks or in trusteeship) were excluded. Using stratified systematic methods, a sample of 1000 households was drawn from across the study towns.

Following Dillman’s (2000) total design method, a notification postcard was mailed to selected households in summer 2010. After authenticating addresses, 970 survey

packets containing an introductory letter, self-administered questionnaire, and a stamped, addressed return envelope were mailed. Two subsequent reminder postcards and survey mailings followed over the next eight weeks. Subtracting undeliverable addresses, 936 households constituted the effective sample. In total, 544 completed questionnaires were returned (a response rate of 58.1% that we attribute in part to the economic downturn of the late 1990s, which elevated interest in study topics). Response rates varied from 52.1% in Eden to 62.7% in Waitsfield, but follow-up telephone calls to non-respondents revealed no significant differences between respondents and non-respondents. A total of 445 usable questionnaires provide data for this paper's analyses.

The questionnaire was copied on colored paper with an appealing Vermont landscape image on the cover. A total of 47 questions across 16 pages requested information about property ownership and use, seasonal/permanent resident status, community involvement and satisfaction, support for local development, local social relationships, and socio-demographic characteristics. Successfully pretested and used in prior research (Smith and Krannich 2000; Clendenning, Field, and Jensen 2004), this questionnaire was slightly revised to reflect Vermont contexts. By adapting a survey instrument employed in other amenity settings in the United States, this project increases the number of comparable case studies—a strategy suggested to alleviate the “too few cases/too many variables” problem in case-study designs (Goggin 1986).

Measures

The dependent variable¹, *community development*, was constructed from five questions (improving local shopping choices; improving suitable housing; increasing opportunities to earn an adequate income; improving senior citizen services and programs; improving local schools and educational programs), with each item measured using a 5-point Likert scale (extremely unimportant = 1, somewhat unimportant = 2, neither unimportant nor important = 3, somewhat important = 4, extremely important = 5). The inter-item correlation of the five measures was high (Cronbach's alpha of 0.74 for total sample). Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted, with items found to be uni-dimensional.

The second dependent variable, *community preservation*, was measured with a four-question summative scale (preserving opportunities for outdoor recreation; maintaining clean air and water; preserving local cultural or historic resources; preserving agricultural land and open space). The same 5-point Likert scale was used for responses. The inter-item correlation of the four measures was high (Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 for total sample), and principal component factor analysis confirmed the items to be uni-dimensional.

The main independent variables included growth rate and resident type. This study also included level of participation in community activities, age, education, and income as covariates. Level of local participation (“community activity”) was measured by the sum of eight activities (attended a local community event, contacted a public official to discuss community issues, spent time volunteering for a community project or with a service group, attended community public meetings, shopped locally for groceries and

other products, visited a local farm or farmers market, contributed money to local service groups/organizations, joined a local organization focused on environmental issues).

Study towns were divided into two groups: faster-growing and slower-growing. Resident type included long-term permanent residents, short-term permanent residents, and seasonal homeowners. Long-term permanent residents were defined as those who had lived for more than 12 years in the study communities; short-term permanent residents had lived in a study community for less than 12 years. As previous research has noted (Smith and Krannich 2000; Clendenning, Field and Kapp 2005), it is important to capture major waves of in-migration to rural communities in distinguishing between newcomers and longer-term residents. We chose 12 years as the cutoff point for classifying residential longevity because much of the rapid growth and in-migration to the Northern Forest region of Vermont occurred during the late 1990s. Though the group of seasonal homeowners was not large enough to subdivide, the number of days seasonal homeowners spent at their residences varied by season, averaging more than a month in summer and 2 weeks in autumn.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 describes the sample composition of resident types across each town. Long-term permanent residents are the largest group in every town, followed by seasonal homeowners. For this sample, the proportion of seasonal homeowners in three of the study towns was comparable to census data averages; in Cabot, it was slightly higher than in census data. There was no difference in resident composition between communities classified as faster (Cabot, Eden) or slower growth (Craftsbury, Waitsfield).

Table 3 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of survey respondents. Analysis of age, gender, education, and income revealed significant differences across the three types of residents. According to the Bonferroni test, short-term permanent residents were significantly younger (mean age =48) than long-term permanent residents (mean age =59) and seasonal homeowners (mean age =60). Seasonal homeowners were significantly different from the other two groups: they were more likely to be male, more educated, and wealthier, compared to short- and long-term permanent residents.

The five items used to measure community development are shown in Table 4, and those used to measure preservation are displayed in Table 5. Cronbach's alphas for both development and preservation, for the total sample and for sub-groups, satisfy the minimum of 0.70, although Cronbach's alpha for community development for seasonal homeowners marginally met this criterion at 0.69 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). The data show that across the sample, long- and short-term permanent residents perceived higher levels of importance for all items of the community development measure, compared to seasonal homeowners (Table 4). The community development items, "Increasing opportunity to earn an adequate income" and "Improving senior citizen services and programs," received the highest values by both types of permanent residents and also seasonal homeowners. Community preservation initiatives (Table 5) were perceived as important by all three resident types, and respondents were especially supportive of "maintaining clean air and water."

Table 2. Sample composition of resident type by growth rate.

Growth rate	Resident type			Total
	Long-term permanent residents	Short-term permanent residents	Seasonal homeowners	
Faster growth communities (Cabot, Eden)	104	48	68	220
Cabot	56	26	31	113
Eden	48	22	37	107
Slower growth communities (Craftsbury, Waitsfield)	123	43	59	225
Craftsbury	45	9	18	72
Waitsfield	78	34	41	153
Total	227	91	127	445

Table 3. Demographic profiles by resident types.

	Total sample	Long-term permanent residents	Short-term permanent residents	Seasonal homeowners
Age				
Mean (median)	57.0 (57)	58.5 (59) ^b	49.3 (48) ^a	59.9 (60) ^b
Number of cases	435	223	91	121
ANOVA test	$F = 21.7$ ($df = 2$) significant at $p < 0.000$			
Sex				
Male (%)	51.7	46.2	49.5	63.6
Female (%)	48.3	53.8	50.5	36.4
Number of cases	435	223	91	121
χ^2 (Chi-square test)	$\chi^2 = 9.8$ ($df = 2$) significant at $p < 0.01$			
Education				
Less than a high school degree (%)	2.1	4.1	0.0	0.0
High school degree or GED (%)	19.4	25.9	15.6	10.7
Some college (%)	11.8	12.3	14.4	9.0
2 year technical or associates degree (%)	10.0	8.6	5.6	15.6
4 year college degree (%)	29.4	26.4	42.2	25.4
Advanced degree (%)	27.3	22.7	22.2	39.3
Number of cases	432	220	90	122
χ^2 (Chi-square test)	$\chi^2 = 41.724$ ($df = 10$) significant at $p < 0.000$			
Income				
<\$15,000 (%)	5.2	7.7	4.4	0.9
\$15,000–\$34,999 (%)	16.2	21.1	15.5	7.4
\$35,000–\$49,999 (%)	13.3	18.3	14.4	2.8
\$50,000–\$74,999 (%)	24.1	25.5	26.7	19.3
\$75,000–\$99,999 (%)	17.4	14.4	17.8	22.9
\$100,000–\$149,000 (%)	10.3	6.7	14.4	13.8
≥\$150,000 (%)	13.5	6.3	6.7	33.0
Number of cases	407	208	90	109
χ^2 (Chi-Square Test)	$\chi^2 = 83.04$ ($df = 14$) significant at $p < 0.000$			

Note. Short-term permanent residents (a) were significantly younger than both long-term permanent residents and seasonal homeowners (b).

Resident Type, Growth Patterns and Perceived Importance of Community Development

To test the research questions, a factorial ANOVA was conducted to compare the main effects of growth rate and resident type and the interaction effect between growth rate and resident type on the perceived importance of community development. All main effects were statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level except for the interaction effect in community development (Table 6). The main effect for growth rate type

on community development yielded an F ratio of $F(1, 357) = 7.76$, $p < 0.01$, indicating a significant difference between faster-growing communities ($M = 18.15$, $SD = 3.79$) and slower-growing communities ($M = 19.09$, $SD = 3.03$). The main effect for resident type on community development yielded an F ratio of $F(2, 357) = 3.28$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that the effect for resident type was significant for long-term permanent ($M = 19.2$, $SD = 3.41$), short-term permanent ($M = 19.17$, $SD = 3.29$) and seasonal homeowners ($M = 17.06$, $SD = 3.15$). The interaction effect was not significant, $F(2, 14.19) = 1.45$, $p > 0.05$. A post-hoc analysis showed (Table 7) that seasonal homeowners reported significantly lower importance levels for community development than the other two groups. Also, residents in faster-growing communities showed significantly lower importance levels for community development than those in slower-growing communities. The model also included four covariates. The variables of community activity and education were statistically significant, indicating that these are strongly related to perceived levels of community development.

Resident Type, Growth Patterns and Perceived Importance of Community Preservation

A factorial ANOVA was conducted to compare the main effects of growth rate and resident type and the interaction effect between growth rate and resident type on the perceived importance of community preservation. The main effect of growth rate was statistically significant at the 0.005 significance level, while resident type was marginally significant (Table 8). The main effect for growth rate type on community preservation yielded an F ratio of $F(1, 356) = 9.62$, $p < 0.005$, indicating a significant difference between faster-growing communities ($M = 21.58$, $SD = 4.40$) and slower-growing communities ($M = 22.99$, $SD = 3.66$). The interaction effect was not significant. Among four covariates, community activity and education variables were statistically significant, indicating that these are strongly related to the perceived importance level of community preservation (Table 9).

Discussion

This study examined differences between seasonal and permanent residents in amenity-rich rural towns growing at different rates. Prior research had suggested that both resident type and growth rate would have significant effects on the perceived importance of development and preservation for community quality of life. Results showed that growth rate was a stronger predictor of attitudes toward both local development and natural resource preservation initiatives than resident type. As expected, residents of towns classified as slower-growing attributed higher importance to both development and preservation than did residents of faster-growing towns. Perhaps in rapidly changing communities, personal interactions and solidarity with one's neighbors are weakened while individual needs and impersonal relationships are heightened (Tönnies 1963). This may encourage residents and local leaders to place less value on preserving traditional ways of life and community assets (open space; historic resources; other

Table 4. Mean values of community development items by resident type.

Community development items	Total sample		Long-term permanent residents		Short-term permanent residents		Seasonal homeowners	
	N	Mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
Improving local shopping choices	428	3.36	215	3.37	88	3.51	117	3.18
Improving suitable housing	428	3.47	215	3.56	88	3.72	117	3.09
Increasing opportunity to earn an adequate income	428	4.18	215	4.33	88	4.18	117	3.87
Improving senior citizen services and programs	428	3.92	215	4.05	88	4.16	117	3.53
Improving local schools and educational programs	428	3.36	215	3.37	88	3.51	117	3.18
Cronbach's alpha	0.74		0.75		0.74		0.69	

Table 5. Mean values of preservation items by resident type.

Preservation items	Total sample		Long-term permanent residents		Short-term permanent residents		Seasonal homeowners	
	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
Preserving opportunities for outdoor recreation	442	4.42	222	4.34	90	4.52	122	4.48
Maintaining clean air and water	442	4.68	222	4.65	90	4.76	122	4.70
Preserving local cultural or historic resources	442	4.26	222	4.29	90	4.19	122	4.29
Preserving agricultural land and open space	442	4.49	222	4.49	90	4.59	122	4.43
Cronbach's alpha	0.83		0.83		0.85		0.81	

amenity resources) compared to residents of communities experiencing slower rates of change.

In this study, statistically significant differences were observed between permanent residents and seasonal homeowners. Longer- and shorter-term permanent residents perceived community development initiatives as more important to maintaining future quality of life than did seasonal homeowners. These results may indicate that differences between longtime permanent residents and short-term permanent residents are diminished in rural communities undergoing social, cultural, and economic change. Rather, conflicts over development and preservation initiatives may be the result of seasonal/permanent resident differences along with differential community growth rates. This should not imply, however, that seasonal homeowners will be less supportive of community preservation options. Though we also tested a possible interaction effect between resident type and growth rate, each independent variable (growth rate; resident type) had an independent relationship with dependent variables.

Community activity participation and education were statistically significant in explaining perceived importance of community development and preservation. Thus, residents' attitudes may be influenced more by their level of community engagement than by how long they reside or visit a place, a point also noted in other research

Table 6. Univariate analysis of variance test on community development.

Sources	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Corrected model	572.064	9	63.563	6.510	0.000
Intercept	3341.000	1	3341.000	342.164	0.000
Growth rate	75.766	1	75.766	7.759	0.006*
Resident type	64.109	2	32.055	3.283	0.039*
Growth × Resident type	28.388	2	14.194	1.454	0.235
Community activity	137.581	1	137.581	14.090	0.000**
Age	0.570	1	0.570	0.058	0.809
Income	3.551	1	3.551	0.364	0.547
Education	92.354	1	92.354	9.458	0.002*
Error	3485.860	357	9.764		
Total	132997.000	357			
Corrected total	4057.924	366			
R^2	0.141				
Adjusted R^2	0.119				
Directional measures					
Eta	Growth dependent		0.234		
	Development dependent		0.136		
Eta	Resident dependent		0.332		
	Development dependent		0.277		

*Significant at the level of 0.05.

**Significant at the level of 0.001.

Table 7. Mean values for development by resident type.

Community development	N	Mean	SD
Resident Type ¹			
Long-term permanent residents ^a	215	19.20 ^a	3.41
Short-term permanent residents ^a	88	19.17 ^a	3.29
Seasonal homeowner ^b	117	17.06 ^b	3.15
Growth Rate ²			
Faster-growth communities	212	18.15	3.79
Slower-growth communities	216	19.09	3.03

¹Both types of permanent residents were significantly different from seasonal homeowners with respect to perceived level of support for development.²Perceived level of support for development was significantly different between faster-growing communities and slower-growing communities.

(Armstrong and Stedman 2013; Dax and Fischer 2017; Matarrita-Cascante 2017). While residents' income or age had no significant relationship for dependent variables, education was strongly related to residents' attitudes toward development and preservation, as in other studies on rural gentrification.

This study reinforces the importance of growth rates for processes of rural transition, but system-level analyses of the broader relationships between growth rates and other social, economic and environmental factors supporting amenity migration and community responses to it remains for future research. Further, though researchers have measured growth in varying ways, the indicator used here was local population change; this study found independent effects between dependent and independent variables, but the numbers are small and growth rates in rural amenity places may correlate with the percentage of short-term permanent residents. More complex measures of growth (incorporating business revenues, housing or commercial investment) may provide more nuanced results. Because community growth rates typically vary over time, longitudinal research is also needed. Researchers should also incorporate other socio-psychological

Table 8. A factorial analysis of variance test on community preservation.

Sources	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Corrected model	789.514	9	87.724	6.484	0.000
Intercept	4512.225	1	4512.225	333.507	0.000
Growth rate	130.168	1	130.168	9.621	0.002*
Resident type	74.305	2	37.152	2.746	0.066
Growth × Resident type	28.353	2	14.176	1.048	0.352
Community activity	230.159	1	230.159	17.012	0.000**
Age	1.500E – 5	1	1.500E – 5	0.000	0.999
Income	0.123	1	0.123	0.009	0.924
Education	133.401	1	133.401	9.860	0.002*
Error	4816.540	356	13.530		
Total	189860.000	366			
Corrected total	5606.055	365			
R ²	0.141				
Adjusted R ²	0.119				
Directional measures					
Eta	Growth dependent		0.261		
	Preservation dependent		0.172		
Eta	Resident dependent		0.325		
	Preservation dependent		0.258		

*Significant at the level of 0.05.

**Significant at the level of 0.001.

Table 9. Mean values for preservation by growth rate.

Community preservation	N	Mean	SD
Resident Type ¹			
Long-term permanent residents ^a	214	22.92	4.03
Short-term permanent residents ^a	88	22.91	3.83
Seasonal homeowner ^b	117	20.57	3.88
Growth Rate ²			
Faster-growth communities	2124	21.58	4.40
Slower-growth communities	216	22.99	3.66

¹Both types of permanent residents were significantly different from seasonal homeowners with respect to perceived level of support for preservation.²Perceived level of support for preservation was significantly different between faster-growing communities and slower-growing communities.

constructs and other control variables (covariates) to assess their mediating or moderating effects on growth and other variables. Not all amenity-driven growth is based on the same natural amenities or historic relationships with natural resource extraction.

A limitation of our survey-based design was the reliance on abstract measures of residents' perceived support for development and preservation. Specifying actual development or preservation projects may have elicited different responses, and could offer deeper insight about the ways residents show support or disapproval for local initiatives. Examining results in relation to actual behavior (voting, fundraising, committee membership) is also desirable. Additionally, while the amenity migration literature tends to focus on more affluent migrants who can afford a seasonal or second home and the costs of relocation, involuntary migrants—that is, those who lack resources to live elsewhere, or who move to amenity places to work in service sector jobs—also deserve attention. Newcomers and returnees are not all alike, and certain residents may be disproportionately affected by the rates or patterns of growth in amenity communities.

Future studies should also evaluate types of resources and amenities in conjunction with community growth rates and levels. Comparative studies of rural amenity tourism

communities (Park and Stokowski 2009, 2011) indicate that growth patterns are strongly related to specific tourism investments: some types of tourism are more economically stimulating than others, and yield more rapid, higher growth. Consequently, different types of amenity development may attract specific types of in-migrants and investment, driving growth rates higher or lower. The influence of weaker or stronger land use planning and policy controls (opportunities to convert farmland to housing vs. restrictive land use or environmental regulations) or the viability of local institutions might also factor into community orientations to growth and preservation.

Conclusions

Amenity-rich communities in rural regions have proven to be desirable places to live, though issues remain about the implications of relationships between longer-term and more recent residents. In this paper, we demonstrated the utility of evaluating resident/migrant differences and similarities within the context of community growth patterns. Our study of four Vermont amenity communities growing at faster or slower rates indicates that seasonal homeowners were not very different from permanent residents with respect to their perspectives on local development and preservation. There seemed to be considerable common ground not only between short- and long-term permanent residents, but also between permanent residents more generally and seasonal homeowners. This research contributes to understanding attitudinal differences across residents of different types, and also points to the importance of community growth rate for analyzing the impetus for and impacts of amenity-based tourism development.

This claim should be tempered, however, by knowledge that growth rates are not static, especially in small, rural places. Vermont's history of natural resource dependency followed by decline of extractive industries and later tourism and amenity development cautions against overstating conclusions. Had this research been conducted a decade or two earlier during a national period of economic growth, communities identified as slower/faster growing might reasonably have been classified as the reverse (e.g., investments in ski areas near Waitsfield boosted the mid-state economy in the 1990s, but growth had moderated by the time of this study). Thus, regional, national and global trends also may have local effects, and longitudinal research and case studies are needed to understand the implications of growth patterns over time.

Further, given that amenity migration depends centrally on the presence and quality of environmental features and resources, growth and development in affected rural communities also introduce broader questions about land use patterns across landscapes (Marcouiller, Clendenning and Kedzior 2002), local and regional distribution of costs and benefits (Abrams, Gosnell, Gill and Klepeis 2012), issues of equity, power and privilege (Winkler 2013), images and meanings of place (Stokowski 2013), and the policies (Kondo, Rivera and Rullman 2012) or educational tools (Cooke and Lane 2015) that best promote and retain ecological health and environmental stewardship. Growth issues in amenity communities, intersecting with other social, economic and environmental processes, should be seen as consequential for contemporary rural community transitions more broadly.

Communities not only grow at different rates, but their overtime growth patterns also have implications for all levels of amenity migration: from individual lifestyle choices made by potential migrants, to the personal and collective experiences of community living, to the institutional arenas where planning and policy decisions are decided. Amenities alone do not “move” migrants: generational ties, lifestyle decisions, and local and State policies (e.g., taxes) may also be strong influences. Studies that examine the complex patterns and effects of amenity migration (Saint Onge, Hunter, and Boardman 2007; Rye 2011; Lekies et al. 2015) contribute to understanding quantitative as well as qualitative aspects of growth. Both are relevant in times when growth itself may be nontraditional (e.g., economic gains without increasing numbers of residents or jobs).

Finally, comparing rural amenity communities along a continuum of slower to faster growth may help community leaders understand the timing and magnitude of local development opportunities and impacts that affect citizen well-being and community quality of life. Similar community development and preservation proposals or efforts may be received very differently in towns experiencing rapid or slow rates of social change. Research across diverse types of natural resource-based amenity places growing at different rates can help to clarify the receptivity of various types of residents toward development and preservation efforts, providing insights about rural community social change, and tourism planning and development in valued amenity places.

Notes

The attitudinal data are from a survey question that asked: “Using a scale of 1 (Extremely Unimportant) to 5 (Extremely Important), please mark the number that best indicates how important you think each of the following items is for maintaining and improving the future quality of life in (town), VT.” Fifteen development and preservation items were listed.

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