Empirical Research Article

Modeling Residents' Attitudes toward Short-term Vacation Rentals

Journal of Travel Research
2020, Vol. 59(6) 955–974

DOI: 10.1177/0047287519870255
journals.sagepub.com/home/jtr
SAGE

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Abstract

Researchers have recently begun to explore residents' perceptions of short-term vacation rental (STVR) from both qualitative and quantitative approaches, but 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 residents' attitudes toward STVRs in the US city of Savannah, Georgia. Results from 384 resident surveys revealed that support for STVRs was a function of both the costs and benefits associated with STVRs, as well as perceived social and psychological empowerment from 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.

Keywords

Airbnb, peer-to-peer accommodations, resident attitudes, sharing economy, short-term vacation rentals, sustainable tourism

Introduction

The growth of the sharing economy has been widely noted from *Fortune* magazine to former President Obama (Eckhardt and Bardhi 2015), and it 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 and Botsman 2010) to legal perspectives on the sharing economy (Kassan and Orsi 2012), and motivations for participation in the sharing economy (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012).

For the hospitality and tourism industry, one of the most prominent sharing activities is the sharing of homes through platforms such as Airbnb, HomeAway, and VRBO. The networked collective activities of these competitors create a market segment known as "peer-to-peer accommodations" (Dolnicar 2017) or "short-term vacation rentals" (STVRs) (Gottlieb 2013). While the rising scale of STVRs is unprecedented, they are merely a new name and form of home sharing that has been in existence for centuries and embedded within both residential and tourism landscapes (Lehr 2015; Jackson 2008; Fusco Girard 2013). Over time, mechanisms such as formalized hospitality have concentrated tourism activity, including STVRs, into the confines of the tourism landscape whose borders are determined through zoning and various other municipal regulations (Ikkala and Lampinen 2014). However, modern-day STVRs in the United States challenge the staticity of these traditional borders through STVR hosts exercising personal property rights, some of whom live within the traditional "back-stage" (residential landscape) of a destination (MacCannell 1973). The creation of these new shared places (McKercher, Wang, and Park 2015) can be a contentious process in some communities, particularly if nonhost residents perceive a lack of agency in supporting or declining the growth of STVRs in their community (Wong 2016).

One STVR company, Airbnb, has received the lion's share of attention from academia (Chasin and Scholta 2015; Oskam and Boswijk 2016; Zervas, Proserpio, and 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

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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 pre-date Airbnb such as HomeAway (c. 2004) and FlipKey (c. 2006) (Bloomberg 2018b, 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 and Michel 2014, p. 1311) while often offering a competitive price through circumventing security standards and tax processes expected of professional hotels and hostels (Füller and 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 individual interests and needs (Airbnb 2016; Dolnicar 2017).

Although STVRs have been wildly popular with tourists (Guttentag et al. 2018; Varma et al. 2016), academic research points to their potential negative impacts such as their contribution to the loss of affordable housing resulting in residential outcry (Lee 2016). For example, in 2016, posters began to appear in San Francisco's Mission District displaying CEOs 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 tourism development depends upon stakeholder collaboration (Cole 2006) and that resident involvement is the "philosophical basis for sustainable community tourism" development (Choi and Sirakaya 2005, p. 1286). Therefore, researchers have begun to answer Heo's (2016) call for more resident attitude research in the context of STVRs, such as Jordan and Moore's (2017) qualitative findings on how residents of Oahu, Hawaii, perceive the positive and negative economic, environmental, and social impacts of transient vacation rentals. Other researchers have quantitatively approached resident support for STVRs (Mody, Suess, and Dogru 2018; Garau-Vadell, Gutiérrez-Taño, and Díaz-Armas 2018).

Fundamentally, this study possesses a similar aim compared to other research on STVR that involves residents' attitudes (Garau-Vadell, Gutiérrez-Taño, and Díaz-Armas 2018; Mody, Suess, and Dogru 2018), which is to discover the factors significantly influencing residents' support for STVRs. However, the theoretical and methodological approach differs considerably. Specifically, this study offers a strengthened theoretical approach that better organizes and details the process through which residents develop their support for STVRs. Previous resident attitude studies on STVRs, such as Garau-Vadell, Gutiérrez-Taño, and Díaz-Armas (2018), solely use social exchange theory (SET) to explain why residents tend to support or oppose STVRs within their community. Although beneficial, SET is often criticized for its bias toward inflating the economic costs and benefits of social transactions between visitors and hosts without considering noneconomic factors that may influence residents' support for tourism (Woosnam, Norman, and Ying 2009).

Through applying a theoretical perspective that combines SET and Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality (WTFSR) to model resident attitudes toward STVRs in Savannah, Georgia, the economic and noneconomic factors influencing resident support for STVRs can be parsed out. It also allows for the addition of substantive constructs such as psychological, social, and political empowerment that have been shown to influence resident attitudes toward tourism in other settings (Boley et al. 2014), but have yet to be applied in an STVR context. The addition of these constructs is of interest to the literature because both the proponents and opponents of STVRs tout the psychological, social, and political empowerment of residents as being either enhanced through STVRs or being undermined by STVRs.

With this in mind, this study identifies factors significantly affecting resident support for STVRs in Savannah, GA, and discusses implications for local STVR policy while also extending the theoretically evolving resident attitude literature (Boley et al. 2014; Perdue, Long, and Allen 1990). Savannah 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 2018). To increase residential inclusion in STVR regulatory revisions, the city has hosted public forums to receive public input to inform the updated STVR city regulations released in September 2017 (City of Savannah 2017a, 2017b). However, even with all of these efforts for public involvement, residential debates over STVR development in Savannah continue, and research is needed to ascertain whether residents support or oppose STVRs in Savannah and the factors that influence their support or opposition (Editorial 2018; Lebos 2018; Skutch 2018). Through the identification of personal and community impacts of STVRs that are of significant importance to Savannah residents, policy recommendations may be made to ensure their satisfaction with STVRs.

Literature Review

Resident Attitudes toward Tourism

Researchers have long recognized the relationship between residents' perceptions of tourism and its success (Ap 1992; Belisle and Hoy 1980; Nunkoo and Gursoy 2012; Nunkoo et al. 2013; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2010, 2011) and,

therefore, have since attempted to understand why residents support or oppose these types of tourism developments through uncovering the antecedents to residents' attitudes toward tourism (McGehee 2007; Boley et al. 2014). Should residents be unsupportive of STVRs in their community, they may take political action to discontinue its development (Spencer and Nsiah 2013). Residents' frustration with tourism can challenge or discontinue its development.

For destinations benefiting from newfound STVR tax revenue, it is important to understand STVR impacts that might influence residents' decision to support STVRs. For example, the Anuha Island Resort in the Solomon Islands developed without consultation of the indigenous Melanesian community resulted in hostility from locals, the resort's ultimate closure, and a "diplomatic row between Australia and the Solomon Islands" (Sofield and Birtles 1996) cited by (Spencer and 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 and Cunningham 1996; Spencer and Nsiah 2013). Thus, the future of STVRs partly depends on residents' being supportive enough of STVRs not to support political candidates and zoning policies that could threaten their legality.

Theoretical Approach

A foundational theory used within the resident attitude literature to explain why residents support or oppose tourism development is Social Exchange Theory or SET (Andereck et al. 2005; Andriotis and Vaughan 2003; Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal 2002; Jurowski and Gursoy 2004; Long, Perdue, and Allen 1990; Madrigal 1993; Nunkoo, Smith, and Ramkisson 2013; Wang and Pfister 2008). Social Exchange Theory, coined by sociologist Richard Emerson in 1976, and fully explained in a tourism context by 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. 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 (Nunkoo, Smith, and Ramkissoon 2013), the sole use of SET has been criticized for its bias toward studying the economic costs and benefits of social transactions between visitors and hosts without considering noneconomic factors that may influence residents' support for tourism (Woosnam, Norman, and Ying 2009).

The simplification of SET into extrinsic (financial) costs and benefits has been addressed by the addition of Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality (WTFSR) to expand the scope of factors affecting residents' attitudes toward tourism that includes economic and noneconomic factors (Boley and McGhee 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. Conversely, residents that view increased neighborhood property taxes as a function of STVRs may choose not to support STVR development because they see them as effectively costing them money.

In contrast, 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. This combined theoretical approach reflects a theoretical evolution of resident attitude research (Boley and McGehee 2014; McGehee 2007; Woosnam 2011) with model constructs adapted to an STVR context. Additionally, this study's model organizes the process of attitude and support formulation in a slightly similar fashion to Bellotti et al.'s (2015) use of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow et al. 1970) in determining the process of participation in the general sharing economy where personal intrinsic (e.g., social connection) and extrinsic (e.g., payment) benefits are considered before altruistic costs and benefits of sharing economy activities. In this study, residents perceived personal costs and benefits (formal and substantive) are tested for their effect on perceived community costs and benefits of STVRs and overall support for continued STVR development. The remainder of the literature reviews the combined theoretical and empirical support for the 14 hypotheses proposed in the model (Figure 1).

Positive and Negative Community 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 et al. 2007; Látková and Vogt 2011; McGehee and Andereck 2004; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2010; Perdue, Long, and Allen 1990). Positive impacts from tourism development that are thought to influence residents' support for tourism include the positive appearance of an area, park development, increased recreational opportunities, preservation of cultural identity, improved shopping and amenities, income and standard of living, improvements to the local economy, increased

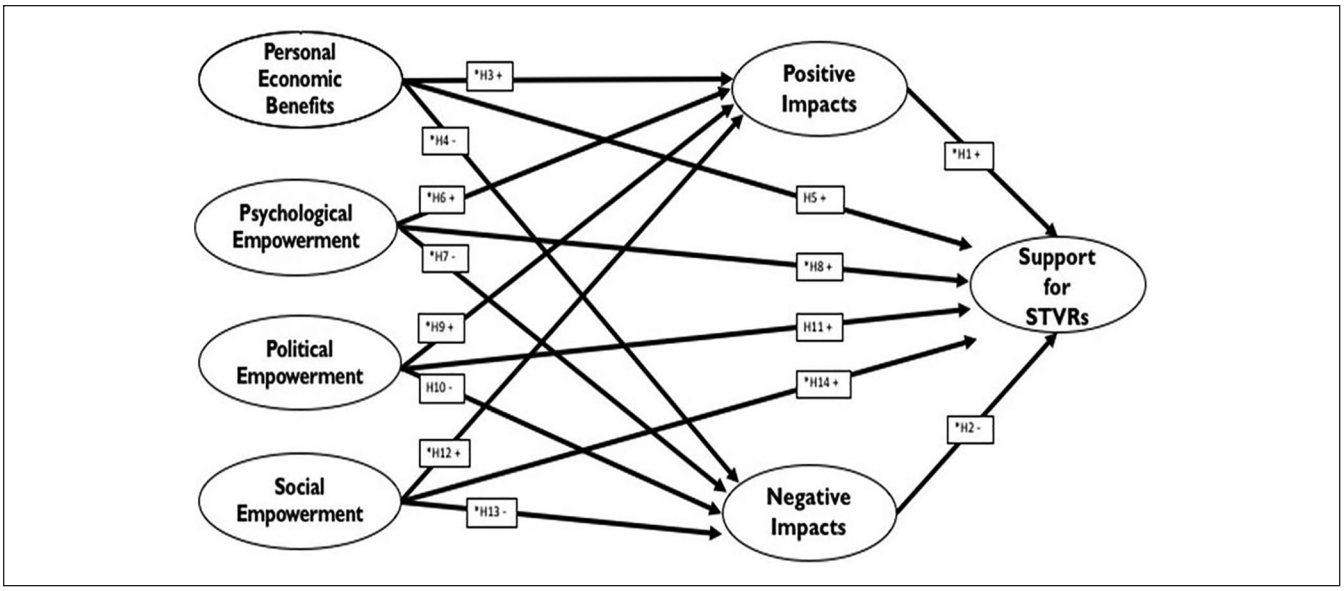

Figure 1. Structural model for residents' attitudes toward STVRs.

public development, increased quality of life, and protection and conservation of natural resources (Látková and Vogt 2011; Perdue, Long, and Allen 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). The 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, it is hypothesized that residents' 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. Stated more succinctly:

> *Hypothesis 1*: A significant direct relationship exists between perceived positive community impacts of STVRs and support for STVR development.

Just as SET theory suggests a direct relationship between residents' perceived positive impacts of STVRs and support for STVR development, SEt also suggests a direct relationship between residents' perceived negative impacts and their likelihood to oppose STVR development within their 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 and Vogt 2011; Perdue, Long, and Allen 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 almost doubled to 1,148 listings in two years (City of Savannah 2018), potentially decreasing parking availability which is shared by both tourism and residential stakeholders. Based on past empirical findings and SET, it is proposed that resident perceptions of the negative impacts of STVRs will have a negative and significant influence on their support for STVRs within their neighborhood. In other words,

> *Hypothesis 2*: A significant inverse relationship exists between perceived negative community impacts of STVRs and support for STVR development.

Personal Costs and Benefits from STVRs: Economic Impacts

One main ubiquitous finding in resident attitude research is that the more residents benefit economically from tourism, the more they tend to support the tourism industry (Boley, Strzelecka, and Woosnam 2018; Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams 1997; Látková and Vogt 2011; Madrigal 1993; Perdue, Long, and Allen 1990). STVRs have the potential to bring direct positive and negative economic impacts to

residents. For instance, STVR renovations have the potential to increase values of neighboring properties beyond the value of the renovated property (Curl 2017). This positive externality may engender support from neighbors for continued STVR development in the community (Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams 1997; Liu and Var 1986; Madrigal 1993). Conversely, rising property taxes and rent associated with increasing property values may outprice residents and ultimately discolor their attitudes and overall support for STVR development. With these considerations in mind and the support of SET and the formal rationale of WTFSR, the following hypotheses were formed:

Hypothesis 3: A significant direct relationship exists between perceived personal economic benefits from STVRs and perceived positive community impacts of STVRs.
Hypothesis 4: A significant inverse relationship exists between perceived personal economic benefits from STVRs and perceived negative community impacts of STVRs.
Hypothesis 5: A significant direct relationship exists between perceived personal economic benefits of STVRs and overall support for STVR development.

Personal Costs and Benefits: Empowerment

Tourism researchers have rallied behind a Foucauldian notion of power as omnipresent in all aspects of tourism development (Boley and Gaither 2016; Cheong and Miller 2000; Foucault 1982). Multidisciplinary efforts to define empowerment (Friedmann 1992; Rappaport et al. 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, and 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 multidimensionality of empowerment outcomes and have expanded the traditional view of empowerment by adding the outcomes of economic, psychological, social, and environmental empowerment (Boley et al. 2014; Cole 2006; Friedmann 1992; Ramos and 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 within the city 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 increasing availability of affordable housing within the city (Dawers 2017). At the time of this study, Savannah was revamping their 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). These examples highlight the tension in Savannah surrounding the balance of tourism development and the necessity to evaluate residents' agency in affecting the outcomes of this development.

Recognizing a gap between rhetoric and actual evaluation of empowerment in sustainable tourism research, Boley and 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 employed this scale in an effort to measure perceived personal empowerment beyond just the perceived political empowerment of residents to effect 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 pride and self-esteem 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, and McCormick 2002; Stronza and 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 perceiving their neighborhood as unique or having anything of importance to share with visitors (Boley and Strzelecka 2016). This feeling can also result in residents being "embarrassed and wanting to disassociate with their community" (Boley et al. 2017, 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 individuals 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 (Boley et al. 2014). 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 such residents to oppose STVRs (Boley et al. 2014). With this logic in mind and the support from SET and the substantive rationale of WTFSR, the following hypotheses are put forth for testing:

Hypothesis 6: A significant direct relationship exists between psychological empowerment and perceived positive community impacts of STVRs.
Hypothesis 7: A significant inverse relationship exists between psychological empowerment and perceived negative community impacts of STVRs.
Hypothesis 8: A significant direct 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 and Vogt 2011; Madrigal 1993; Nunkoo and 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 nonparticipation 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 the positive and negative community 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 2018). However, it is unknown how these efforts aimed at including residents in the planning process have manifested into political empowerment. In light of past research findings and support from SET and the substantive rationale of WTFSR, the following hypotheses are put forth for testing:

Hypothesis 9: A significant direct relationship exists between political empowerment and perceived positive community impacts of STVRs.
Hypothesis 10: A significant inverse relationship exists between political empowerment and perceived negative community impacts of STVRs.
Hypothesis 11: A significant direct 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 on 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 toward common goals (Evans 1996; Lam 1996; Putnam 1993). The level of cohesion between community members mediating the development of 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, and Boley 2016; Strzelecka, Boley, and Strzelecka 2017).

STVRs seem to simultaneously challenge and strengthen social bonds between Savannah residents. In response to decreasing social empowerment within communities, Savannah residents voiced concerns over the loss of permanent neighbors and decreasing sense of community due to the number of conversions of residential properties to STVRs and the influx of transient guests (Curl 2016). To address these concerns, residents in conjunction with neighborhood leaders, rental owners, and management companies formed a stakeholder group to advise City officials on STVR management strategies, with residents aiming to preserve the ability to "have next-door neighbors you can socialize with and not just strangers" (Curl 2017). Online STVR debates have also generated discord between residents. 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, SET and the substantive rationale of Weber's theory are used to put forth for following hypotheses for testing:

Hypothesis 12: A significant direct relationship exists between social empowerment and perceived positive community impacts of STVRs.
Hypothesis 13: A significant inverse relationship exists between social empowerment and perceived negative community impacts of STVRs.
Hypothesis 14: A significant direct relationship exists between social empowerment and overall support for STVR development.

Methods

Study Site

The model and 14 hypotheses were tested in Savannah, Georgia (United States). 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 Encyclopedia* 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 Encyclopedia 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 Encyclopedia 2017; Visit Savannah 2017). While the architecture has drawn many to visit Savannah since the 1990s (New Georgia Encyclopedia 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 1990s (New Georgia Encyclopedia 2017).

Tourism in Savannah has leveraged these heritage assets to host 13.7 million visitors in 2016 who spent nearly $2.8 billion (Nussbaum 2017; Savannah Area Chamber 2017). The leisure and hospitality sector (e.g., 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 2017).

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 2016). 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).

Formal regulation of STVR activity has necessitated a municipal definition of STVRs. As such, the City of Savannah, with the state of Georgia (U.S.), defines STVRs as "an accommodation 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" (2018). 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 2018).

Since then, TMAD has ushered Savannah into the spotlight as the first city in the state of Georgia to formally regulate 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 toward STVR management sets a precedent for other cities with mixed-use zones that consist of residential property, historically significant assets, and tourism superstructure. 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 and 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 2). This census-guided method was chosen to gain a high response rate (Andereck and Nickerson 1997; Babbie 2013; Woosnam, Norman, and Ying 2009); to garner a representative sample (Boley and McGehee 2014); and to include minority groups that might otherwise be excluded with other sampling methods (Boley and McGehee 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 the 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

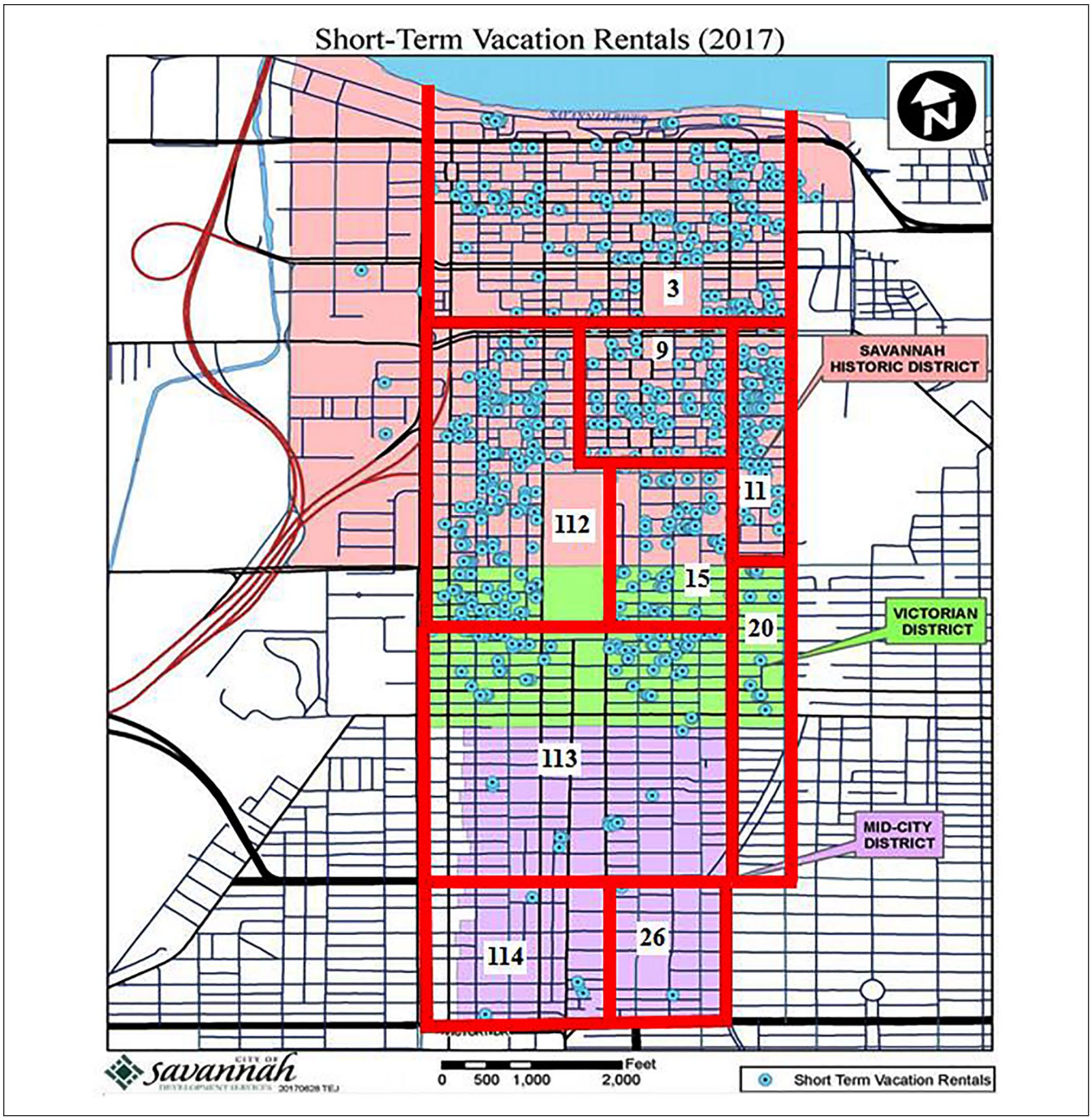

Figure 2. Nine census tracts containing the three STVR zones (US Census Bureau 2016).

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 Group 1 and the total number of households for the three STVR districts was 10,000, then the proportion of households in Census Block Group 1 would be 5% (500/10,000) and 30 surveys (0.05 x 600) would be allotted to that census block. This approach ensured 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 on an expected response rate in the range of 60%–72% (McGehee and Andereck 2004; Woosnam and Aleshinloye 2012) and a minimum of 379 surveys needed based on 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.

Survey respondents were residents 18 years and older 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, Norman, and Ying 2009). However, to ensure the safety of the researcher, sampling did not occur in the interior hallways of apartment complexes (i.e., 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 4 PM and 8 PM on weekdays and 11 AM and 8 PM 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 was picked up the following day during the same time period (Boley et al. 2014; Woosnam and Aleshinloye 2012). To allow for a greater response rate, up to two return contacts were allowed (McGehee and 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. Of the 600 surveys 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 surveys and excessive missing data, the number of usable responses was reduced to 384, resulting in a 64% response rate.

A comparison of the US Census Bureau 2016 ACS five-year data (US Census Bureau 2016) revealed demographic similarities and discrepancies in the data (Table 1). It is important to note that some census tracts span across multiple districts causing the inability to have a direct comparison between the sample and the census numbers. 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, which closely aligns with the average age of respondents being 51 years. Census data comparisons reveal respondents reporting ages slightly 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.

Instrument and Data Analysis

The model tested in this study includes the following seven constructs: *Support for STVRs, Positive Community Impacts of STVRs, Negative Community Impacts of STVRs, Personal Economic Benefits from STVRs*, and *Psychological, Social and Political Empowerment from STVRs*. All of these scales were measured on a seven-point Likert-type 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 2015, p. 257).

To measure *Support for STVRs*, this study adapted Boley and 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 (2011) nine-item Support for Tourism Development scale and Lankford and Howard's (1994) Tourism Impact Assessment Scale. To measure *Perceived Community Impacts of STVRs*, this study adapted ten items for *Perceived Positive Community Impacts of STVRs* and six items for *Perceived Negative Community Impacts of STVRs* from Látková and Vogt (2011). 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 *Personal Economic Benefits from Tourism* construct is a four-item scale adapted from Boley, Strzelecka, and Woosnam (2018). This scale seeks to measure residents' perceptions of economically

Table 1. Sample Demographics Compared to Census Statistics.

	Housing Units	No. of Surveys Distributed	No. of Surveys Returned	Race[a]	Median Age[a]	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 and 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 and Midcity districts								
C113	1,284	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
Midcity 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	1,297	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

[a]Demographic estimates from 2010 US Census.

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 previous research (McGehee and Andereck 2004). Lastly, to measure residents' perceived empowerment through STVRs, this study adapted Boley and McGehee's (2014) *Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale* (RETS). This scale 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 et al. 2017; Boley, Maruyama, and Woosnam 2015; Strzelecka, Boley, and Strzelecka 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: $\chi^2(506) = 1249.15$ ($p < 0.001$); root

mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.062; normed fit index (NFI) = 0.905; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.941. While the 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 0.08 and NFI and CFI values above 0.9. 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 0.06 and a CFI of 0.94, 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 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 for the constructs included 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 construct's AVE value (Hair 2010). Overall, the squared correlations between constructs were lower than each individual construct AVEs pointing to discriminant validity in the model (Table 3).

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 4). While the parsimonious fit indicator was high, the absolute and incremental fit indices revealed adequate fit for the model: χ^2 (507) = 1,250.254 ($p < 0.001$); RMSEA = 0.062; NFI = 0.905; CFI = 0.941; PCFI = 0.803. 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 ($p < 0.05$) 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.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 tested whether residents' support for continued STVR development is influenced by their perceptions of the positive and negative community impacts from STVRs. Both hypotheses were supported (hypothesis 1: $\beta = 0.266$, $p < 0.001$; hypothesis 2: $\beta = -0.136$, $p = 0.002$), indicating that residents' perceptions of the positive and negative community 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 (hypothesis 3: $\beta = 0.095$, $p = 0.031$) and negative community impacts of STVRs (hypothesis 4: $\beta = -0.139$, $p = 0.020$), but not directly on support for STVRs (hypothesis 5: $\beta = 0.009$, $p = 0.818$). Hypotheses 6–8 focused on the influence of *Psychological Empowerment through STVRs* on perceptions of STVR community 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 Community Impacts of STVRs* (hypothesis 6: $\beta = 0.547$, $p = 0.001$), as well as a significant negative relationship between *Psychological Empowerment through STVRs* and perceived *Negative Community Impacts of STVRs* (hypothesis 7: $\beta = -0.361$, $p = 0.001$). *Psychological Empowerment* was also found to have a significant positive relationship with *Support for STVRs* (hypothesis 8: $\beta = 0.422$, $p = 0.001$). Hypotheses 9–11 focused on the influence of *Political Empowerment through STVRs* on residents' perceptions of STVR community impacts and their overall support for continued STVR development. *Political Empowerment through STVRs* was found to have a significant positive relationship with perceived *Positive Community Impacts of STVRs* (hypothesis 9: $\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.006$). However, *Political Empowerment* did not significantly influence perceived *Negative Community Impacts of STVRs* nor *Support for STVRs* (hypothesis 10: $\beta = 0.049$, $p = 0.343$; hypothesis 11: $\beta = 0.047$, $p = 0.174$). The last set of hypotheses (12–14) focused on the influence of *Social Empowerment through STVRs* on residents' perceptions of STVR community impacts and their overall support for continued STVR development. All three of these hypotheses were supported, revealing that there is a direct significant relationship between *Social Empowerment through Tourism* and perceived *Positive Community Impacts of STVRs* (hypothesis 12: $\beta = 0.189$, $p = 0.002$), an inverse significant relationship between *Social Empowerment through Tourism* and perceived *Negative Impacts of STVRs* (hypothesis 13: $\beta = -0.197$, $p = 0.015$), and a direct significant relationship between *Social Empowerment through STVRs* and *Support for STVRs* (hypothesis 14: $\beta = 0.112$, $p = 0.037$). Overall, the SEM model supported 11 of the 14 hypotheses tested and was able to explain 72% of the variance in the construct of *Support for STVRs*, 65% of the variance in the construct of *Positive Community Impacts of Tourism*, and 37% of the variance in the construct of *Negative Community Impacts of Tourism.*

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Constructs.

Scale and Item Description	N	Mean[a]	*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 neighborhood	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 neighborhood	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	0.89*		
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 decision-making process when it comes to STVRs in Savannah	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*		

Note: STVRs = short-term vacation rentals.
[a]Items were measured on a seven-point Likert-scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."
*$p < .001$.

Table 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%**

Note: Values below the diagonal are correlation estimates among constructs. Values above the diagonal are squared correlations. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$.

Table 4. SEM Results for Hypothesized Relationships Between Constructs.

Hypotheses	Hypothesized Relationship	*R*	*p*	Support for Hypothesis
Hypothesis 1	Positive Impacts → Support for STVRs (+)	0.266*	0.001	Y
Hypothesis 2	Negative Impacts → Support for STVRs (–)	−0.136*	0.002	Y
Hypothesis 3	Personal Economic Benefit → Positive Impacts (+)	0.095*	0.031	Y
Hypothesis 4	Personal Economic Benefit → Negative Impact (–)	−0.139*	0.020	Y
Hypothesis 5	Personal Economic Benefit → Support for STVRs (+)	0.009	0.818	N
Hypothesis 6	Psychological Empowerment → Positive Impacts (+)	0.547*	0.001	Y
Hypothesis 7	Psychological Empowerment → Negative Impacts (–)	−0.361*	0.001	Y
Hypothesis 8	Psychological Empowerment → Support for STVRs (+)	0.422*	0.001	Y
Hypothesis 9	Political Empowerment → Positive Impacts (+)	0.108	0.006	Y
Hypothesis 10	Political Empowerment → Negative Impacts (–)	0.049	0.343	N
Hypothesis 11	Political Empowerment → Support for STVRs (+)	0.047	0.174	N
Hypothesis 12	Social Empowerment → Positive Impacts (+)	0.189*	0.002	Y
Hypothesis 13	Social Empowerment → Negative Impacts (–)	−0.197*	0.015	Y
Hypothesis 14	Social Empowerment → Support for STVRs (+)	0.112*	0.037	Y

Note: Measure of model fit: $\chi^2(638) = 1{,}585.013$; RMSEA = 0.062; NFI = 0.892; CFI = 0.932; PCFI = 0.803 (Average goodness-of-fit indices are not available in AMOS when estimating means and intercepts); *R* = standardized regression coefficient; R^2 = 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.
*$p < .001$.

Discussion

With growing attention to the positive and negative impacts of STVRs across the residential landscape, this study sought to add to the nascent body of work emerging on residents' attitudes toward STVRs (Garau-Vadell, Gutiérrez-Taño, and Díaz-Armas 2018; Jordan and Moore 2017; Mody, Suess, and Dogru 2018) by using WTFSR and SET to model residents' attitudes toward STVRs in Savannah, Georgia. In summary, this study finds Savannah residents' attitudes toward STVRs were 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.* These results align with other studies within the broader resident attitude literature (Boley et al. 2014; Strzelecka, Boley, and Strzelecka 2017) and demonstrate the appropriateness of using a combined WTFSR and SET lens through which to understand residents' attitudes toward STVRs since resident support for STVRs was from a combination of economic and noneconomic factors that ranged from the individual level to the community level.

When compared to Garau-Vadell, Gutiérrez-Taño, and Díaz-Armas (2018) and Mody, Suess, and Dogru (2018) recent studies on residents' attitudes toward STVRs, our findings corroborate their findings that residents' perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of STVRs significantly influence their support for STVRs. However, our study was able to explain a higher degree of variance in residential support for STVRs (72% compared to Garau-Vadell, Gutiérrez-Taño, and Díaz-Armas's [2018] 61% and Mody, Suess, and Dogru's [2018] 68%) and identified two new constructs that had a direct influence on resident support for STVRs (e.g., psychological and social empowerment). It is suggested that

future academic research on residents' attitudes toward STVRs should continue to use this blended theoretical perspective because of its flexibility that allows for the inclusion of the core SET constructs of the positive and negative impacts of STVRs but also allows for the addition of a range of formal and substantive constructs that may aid in the explanation of the remaining 30%–40% of the variance in why some residents support STVRs and others oppose them in their community.

In addition to its theoretical and methodological contributions to the literature, 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. 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 a pulse on residents' 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), then residents may 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. Findings also 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. While previous research highlights the potential for STVRs to circumvent local occupancy taxes (Füller and Michel 2014; Zervas, Proserpio, and Byers 2014), to stymie negative destination pushback, STVR companies such as Airbnb have begun to partner with local government to form tax agreements (Airbnb 2017). 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 US states and territories, but more may be needed to increase resident support for this disruptive innovation (Airbnb 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 and 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). The 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).

Subsequently, 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 nonhosts 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.

Some hypotheses pertaining to *Political Empowerment* and *Personal Economic Benefits* 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; Strzelecka, Boley, and Strzelecka 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 select "one" indicating that they strongly disagreed with the notion of STVRs providing personal economic benefits. 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 et al. 2016). Additionally, the low ratings of STVRs' 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 and Future Research

This study's quantitative nature provides insights into the process of residents' attitude formation and support for STVRs in Savannah; however, 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 on qualitative approaches such as those employed by Jordan and Moore (2017) using the theoretical underpinning in this study to assess how 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 composed 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 2018), it was a topic discussed in the series of stakeholder meetings held in 2017 (City of Savannah 2017a, 2017b) and will perhaps be on the agenda for future STVR development and research in the City.

Future research should 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 data collected solely during the summer months. Savannah is quickly becoming a year-round destination (Owens 2017), which could mean that residents' attitudes toward 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). The STVRs likely hold a higher share in the lodging options chosen by tourists during this time, but it is still unknown in what ways residents may be affected by increased numbers of visitors in their neighborhood during these events. To strengthen the understanding of how residents' attitudes toward 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, and Kang 1999), or if residents are never able to quite come to grips with this growth since the economic benefits are not shared in a way to offset the costs associated with this type of tourism (Davis and 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 nonhosts contributing to STVR hosts' residential identity. However, previous research suggests that residents may also build relationships with tourists (Woosnam and Aleshinloye 2012). 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 and 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 nonhost 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 toward 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 toward STVRs might also benefit from the integration of spatial tools, particularly into door-to-door collection methods (Ayscue, Boley, and 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, Boley, and Mertzlufft 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 toward 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 and Boswijk 2016; The Associated Press 2017; Zervas, Proserpio, and 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 the nascent literature on resident attitudes toward STVRs through applying a theoretical perspective that blended SET and WTFSR. Results highlight the relevance of this theoretical approach toward investigating residents' attitudes because of its consideration of both economic and noneconomic 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 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 their 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.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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