ABSTRACT Differences between old-timers and newcomers and their effects on community social dimensions have been the object of much research. These studies have shown how extensive in-migration of people with different socioeconomic backgrounds, values, and perspectives contribute to heightened social conflict in some communities. Popular media accounts and some social science research referred to the conflict emerging from these differences as a culture clash. This study examines the effects that different backgrounds, attitudes, and behaviors have on community participation. Here, earlier work on differences in participation levels between seasonal and permanent residents is extended in an attempt to identify structural and interactional characteristics associated with participative citizens regardless of their residential status. A profile of participative residents was found. Knowing these characteristics helps identify people who could bring important and useful insights to local decision-making. These residents make a deliberate choice to purposively engage in community efforts. Such voluntary interaction creates a pro-community environment where needs and solutions are tackled by residents. Additionally, this interactive environment serves as a ground for the reduction of differences among community members. Through this process, community development is achieved, enhancing community well-being.

Natural amenity-rich locations have become attractive to individuals seeking places to recreate, live, or retire (McGranahan 1999). Growing numbers of Americans have seasonally or permanently migrated to areas close to water, mild climate, and varied topography since the 1970s (Beale and Johnson 1998; McGranahan 1999). Many of these areas are in the West and have experienced significant population immigration.

Population growth associated with migration to amenity-rich areas has had an array of impacts on local Western rural communities. Past research has shown how extensive in-migration of people with different sociodemographic characteristics, values, attitudes, and behaviors contributed to community social conflict (Berry, Krannich, and Greider 1990; Doak and Kusel 1996; Freudenburg, Bacigalupi, and Young 1982;
Graber 1974; Greider, Krannich, and Berry 1991; Smith and Krannich 2000). Of particular interest for this study are the ways social conflict created barriers to communication and interaction.

Social interaction is the key element to community according to interactional theory (Kaufman 1959; Wilkinson 1991). Social interaction allows individuals to express their interests in locally-based issues. When individuals “sit down at the table” and address issues of local concern, community emerges (Luloff 1998).

Locality-oriented social interaction is the core element that distinguishes a community from other local societies such as neighborhoods or municipalities (Matarrita-Cascante et al. 2006:72).

According to Luloff (1998:8), social interaction shapes discourse and action while redefining relationships among actors. The nature of these relationships is not static. Wilkinson (1991) noted that these relationships change in terms of actors, associations, and activities. However, the whole formed by these interrelated acts becomes an ongoing process of social interaction known as a social field (Wilkinson 1991:82).

Multiple social fields exist within local societies according to interactional theory. The most common of these fields is referred to as a special-interest (or locality-oriented institutional) field. A locality-oriented field emerges as local residents organize to accomplish specific goals and interests clearly identified with the locality (Luloff and Bridger 2003; Wilkinson 1991).

The locality-oriented field is routinely identified by its distinct focus on specific goals. In contrast, a field with more general interest in the community’s well-being exists. Marked by its generalization across interest lines, the community field encompasses the other social fields, coordinating and harnessing them in the pursuit of the broader, general community interest (Wilkinson 1991:84). Its constant process of change is characterized by actors, associations, and actions moving into and out of contact with the generalization process.

Such cross-cutting and integrative efforts enable community action (Cheers and Luloff 2001). Community participation is how community action materializes.\(^1\) Community participation includes involvement in

---

\(^1\) This study builds on a larger body of literature on participation and voluntary association (e.g., Anderson 1970; Axelrod 1956; Babchuk and Booth 1969; Hahn 1970; Wright and Hyman 1958; Zimmer and Hawley 1959).
local clubs, civic groups, and projects that address specific community problems. According to an interactional approach to community, increments in community participation result in community development improvements. When local actors act upon their shared interests in the quest to solve local community problems, successful community development occurs. This leads to improvements in community well-being (Claude, Bridger, and Luloff 2000; Theodori 2000).

This study extends earlier work (Matarrita-Cascante 2005; Matarrita-Cascante et al. 2006) that examined levels of community participation among seasonal and permanent residents in Southern Utah. Those studies focused on the identification of structural and interactional characteristics associated with community participation. They found that permanent residents differed from seasonal residents in that the former were significantly more participative. One way to reduce this difference is by identifying individuals in the community who remain participative regardless of residence status. Here, we address the following question: "What is the profile of a participative resident?" Knowing these characteristics can facilitate the identification of individuals who could contribute to improved community well-being.

Methods

Sample Selection and Data Collection

Data for this study was collected in 2004 in five southern Utah counties (Garfield, Iron, Kane, Washington, and Wayne). All experienced population growth and increased seasonal home development between 1970 and 2000. Such growth, in part, reflects the growing attractiveness of natural amenity-rich areas, particularly those in the Western region of the United States (Brehm, Eisenhauer, and Krannich 2004; Johnson and Beale 1994; McGranahan 1999). These contiguous counties encompass 17,351 square miles. A large portion of the area, roughly

2 Structural measures reflect ways in which respondents are differentiated in terms of access to resources, opportunities, and social statuses within broader social contexts. These measures are generally not amenable to manipulation via policy or management decisions. Interactional factors, on the other hand, focus on the processes that lead to specific states. They measure relationships between groups or individuals, people's perceptions of well-being, and individual and collective behavior based on perceptions. Interactional factors are not given or static, i.e., structural. Rather, interactional factors change with time making them amenable to policies and/or management decisions (Matarrita-Cascante et al. 2006; see also Beal 1956; Kaufman 1959).

3 Utah was selected because it is a natural amenity-rich state, reflected, in part, by the dominant share-67 percent-of its land base being under federal control by agencies including the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and National Park Service (Bureau of Land Management 2005).
80 percent, is federally owned lands (including Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, Capitol Reef National Park, Dixie National Forest, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument) that contain mountain peaks, red rock canyons, and scenic high desert landscapes.¹

Early in the study, key informant interviews were conducted in the area to identify the most pressing problems faced by local residents. This information was then used to help design a household survey that was mailed to 2,646 selected property owners. Potential respondents were drawn from lists of residential property owners provided by each county's tax assessor office. These lists were used to determine whether a property was a seasonal or primary residence. A total of six sequential mailings were carried out during the spring and summer of 2004 following the tailored design method outlined by Dillman (2000). Adjustments to the sample were made for undeliverable surveys, as well as those sent to ineligible respondents, people unable to participate due to physical or mental disability, or those on extended travel. This resulted in an adjusted sample size of 2,179. In total, 1,409 property owners completed and returned the questionnaire, representing an overall response rate of 64.7 percent. Of the surveys completed and returned, 573 were from seasonal homeowners (40.7% of the sample). Permanent residents accounted for 836 surveys (or 59.3% of the total sample).

Measurement Approach

Dependent Variable—Community Participation

Community participation was measured by the respondent's level of activity in a range of local organizations, activities, and events identified through a battery of Likert-scale type items (see Table 1 for items). Community participation,⁵ as measured here, focuses on a general level of activeness in the community as defined by the community field (Wilkinson 1991). It attempts to capture a broad perspective on

---

¹ Sources: Bureau of Land Management (2005) and State of Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (2000).

⁵ We recognize that participation may be driven by multiple and at times clashing motivations and goals. However, our intent was not to differentiate between these divergent motivations and purposes, but simply to understand who is more or less likely to participate. We view community development as a process, one not necessarily tied to directional intentions such as those associated with either growth promotion or prevention efforts. Community development occurs whenever local actors express shared interests in their locality by interacting with each other to address community problems, improve quality of life, and shape future levels of well-being. For further elaboration see Matarrita-Cascante et al. (2006).
Table 1. Factor Loadings for Items Measuring Community Participation—Permanent and Seasonal Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Permanent Residents</th>
<th>Seasonal Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worked with other local residents</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Served as an officer in a community organization</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended any public meeting</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Served on a local government commission, committee or board</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted a public official</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Served on a voluntary community service organization</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue: 2.87, 2.15
Percent of Variance Explained: 47.79, 35.77
Cronbach's Alpha: .78, .61

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

involvement, one that encompasses an almost altruistic intent to associate or interact with others. The activities of the community field are not reflective of special interests, but rather speak to efforts designed to address the larger community good. Such activities are different in both form and structure from those indicated by more formal measures of activities and memberships.

The community participation measure was created through a factor analysis of eight items, each of which required a binary response: yes (1) or no (0). These items were listed in a series of statements that asked whether the respondent "had participated in any of the following activities in this community during the past twelve months." The items were: (1) attended a local community event (like a school concert, community parade or craft fair); (2) contacted a public official about some issue or problem affecting your community (for example, about the management of public lands or provision of services like fire protection); (3) worked with other local residents to try and deal with some community issue or problem; (4) attended any public meeting in the community (like a school board meeting or federal lands planning meeting); (5) served as an officer in a community organization; (6) voted in a local election; (7) served on a local government commission, committee, or board; and (8) served on a voluntary community service organization (volunteer fire dept., EMT, etc.).

Factor analysis was used to identify any underlying dimensions among these eight items. Results suggested a single dimension with six items. Two items were not used in the analysis (attended a local community event and voted in local election) because their incorporation resulted in reduced reliability, reflecting the fact that they failed to help differentiate among the respondents. Table 1 shows factor
loadings of these items for both types of residents. Reliability analysis produced alpha values of .78 for permanent residents and .61 for seasonal residents. The resulting multiple-item measure yielded average values that ranged from 0 to 1, where a higher number described a more participative resident. This measure was then dichotomized to reflect low levels of participation (values ranged from 0 to .50) and high levels of participation (from .51 to 1) for its application in discriminant analysis. Community participation, as measured here, reflects respondents' engagement in behaviors and actions that are focused explicitly on locality-relevant issues and interests that extend beyond the specialized, individualistic interests that might be tapped by assessing involvement in recreational groups, social clubs, and the like. As such, this measure is consistent with the notion of participation in the community field, as opposed to more generalized social interactions and involvement.

**Independent Variables**

*Sociodemographics.* Following earlier studies (Brown, Geertsen, and Krannich 1989; Goudy 1977, 1990; Luloff 1998; Theodori 2004) annual household income, level of formal education, size of community lived in the most before age 16, employment status, and religious affiliation were included as sociodemographic variables in the analysis. Income was categorical and coded into eight categories: 1 = less than $15,000, 2 = $15,000 to $24,999, 3 = $25,000 to $34,999, 4 = $35,000 to $49,999, 5 = $50,000 to $74,999, 6 = $75,000 to $99,999, 7 = $100,000 to $149,999, and 8 = $150,000 or more. Education had six categories: 1 = less than high school degree, 2 = high school degree or GED, 3 = some college, 4 = 2 year technical or associate degree, 5 = 4 year college degree, and 6 = advanced degree. Size of community lived in the most before age 16 was measured with a five category scale: 1 = large metropolitan city (over 100,000 population), 2 = medium size city (25,000 to 99,999 population), 3 = smaller city (5,000 to 24,999), 4 = small town or village (2,500 to 4,999), and 5 = the rural area or small town (under 2,500). Employment status was measured as a dichotomy (1 = employed, 0 = other). Religious affiliation was also coded as a dichotomy, reflecting the fact that 72 percent of the permanent and 50 percent of the seasonal respondents reported affiliation with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS; also known as

---

6 The seasonal resident alpha value was marginally smaller than the normally used .65 value. It was used here to maintain the ability to use the same items as in the permanent residents scale.
Mormons). This variable was coded 1 = LDS, 0 = other affiliation or no religious preference.\(^7\)

**Length of residence.** For permanent residents, length of residence was measured by the number of years that an individual lived in the community. For seasonal residents, length of residence was measured as the numbers of years she/he had owned a seasonal residence in the community.

**Community attachment and involvement in specialized local organizations.** Five dimensions of community attachment and involvement in local organizations were examined. Perceived community attachment was measured by a five item Likert scale (see Table 2 for items). Responses ranged on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. All five items were found to be highly correlated and were used in both the permanent and seasonal groups of residents. Factor loadings exceeded .81 for permanent residents and .79 for seasonal residents (see Table 2). Reliability analysis assessing the extent to which the items in the summated scale were interrelated yielded an alpha value of .90 for permanent residents and .88 for seasonal residents.

The next three measures referred to involvement with specialized, locally dedicated organizations or events as defined by special-interest social fields (Wilkinson 1991). These measures indicated specific concerns and/or motives for involvement as opposed to the more generalized measure our dependent variable attempts to capture. This was achieved by grouping these questions in the survey instrument.

---

\(^7\) Utah's residents are predominantly members of the LDS church. The Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (2000) reported that 80 percent of the state's adherents to religions in Utah were members of the LDS church in 2000 and that 66 percent of the state's residents belonged to the LDS church.
Table 3. Regression Diagnostics Testing for the Presence of Collinearity between Three Community Attachment/Involvement Dimensions and Community Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tolerance for individual variables</th>
<th>Variance inflation factors (VIF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of involvement</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of organizations</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours participating</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

under a heading that emphasized specific locally relevant involvement in organizations or activities. These measures were retrieved from the following questions: (1) “In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in community or local area activities or events?” There were four response categories: 1 = not active at all, 2 = not very active, 3 = somewhat active, and 4 = very active. (2) “Overall, how many community clubs, civic groups, or other non-religious local organizations do you belong?” A box was provided which asked the respondent to fill in the number of such clubs, civic groups, or other local organizations. (3) “On average, about how many hours do you ordinarily spend per month attending meetings or taking part in organized activities with community or local area clubs, groups, or other non-religious organizations when you are in Southern Utah?” There were four response categories: 1 = less than one hour per month, 2 = 1–4 hours per month, 3 = 5–10 hours per month, and 4 = more than 10 hours per month.

Because special-interest fields and community fields are related to each other, we would expect to find an association between measures of them—here, between community participation and our measures of community involvement (level of activity, number of groups, and number of hours). Regression diagnostics was performed on the measures of community attachment and local involvement to determine whether collinearity among these variables might produce biased analytic results when they were all included as independent variables to predict community participation. Tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values suggested that collinearity was not an issue (see Table 3).

Community sentiment was assessed with the following question: “Suppose that for some reason you had to move away from this community. How sorry or pleased would you be to leave?” Responses were measured with a five category scale: 1 = very pleased to leave, 2 = somewhat pleased to leave, 3 = it wouldn’t make any difference one way or the other, 4 = somewhat sorry to leave, and 5 = very sorry to leave.
Community satisfaction and social interaction. “Global” community satisfaction was measured using a single questionnaire item that asked for the respondent’s overall level of satisfaction with the community. This was measured with a five category scale that ranged from completely satisfied (5) to completely dissatisfied (1).

Respondents’ levels of interaction within personal social networks were measured by questions that asked about primary group relationships (Goudy 1977), including frequency of interaction with friends, family members, and neighbors. Each category of frequency of contact (friends, family, and neighbors) was measured with an eight category ordinal response scale: 1 = rarely or never, 2 = about once a year, 3 = several times a year, 4 = about once a month, 5 = several times a month, 6 = about once a week, 7 = several times a week, and 8 = daily.

Data Analysis

Earlier work found that permanent residents were more participative than seasonal residents (Matarrita-Cascante et al. 2006). It was also found that income, education, size of community lived in before age 16, religious affiliation, length of residence, level of involvement, number of organizations the respondent belongs to, number of hours participating in activities, and frequency of interaction with neighbors were significant predictors of permanent residents’ levels of community participation. We used these characteristics to develop a profile of active residents in these southern Utah communities.

For that purpose, we used discriminant analysis to interpret group differences and classify cases into groups based on the characteristics that defined a participative resident. This analysis sorted permanent residents by their level of activity. We then applied this discriminant function to the seasonal residents. Thus, we were able to determine whether a consistent set of characteristics was associated with participative citizens regardless of their permanent or seasonal status. In the final part of this analysis, a comparison between those identified as being participative residents from both groups was conducted.

Findings

The initial discriminant analysis found that participative permanent residents had higher levels of involvement in special interest community activities, higher incomes, lived longer in the area, and spent more hours participating in local events. They also belonged mostly to non-LDS churches, had more education, belonged to more
specialized local organizations, interacted more with their neighbors, and were reared in smaller towns than less participative permanent residents.\(^8\)

The canonical discriminant function testing how well the discriminant model as a whole fit the data (Klecka 1980) indicated that the discriminant function for permanent residents explained about 35 percent of the variation in community participation (canonical correlation = .59; eigenvalue = .54). The measure of discrimination between group differences over the discriminating variables also attained statistical significance (Wilk's Lambda = .65; \(\chi^2 = 294; df = 9; \text{sig} = .000\)).

The contribution of each independent variable to this function is shown in Table 4. For the permanent residents, level of involvement in specialized local activities had the greatest discriminating ability, followed by income, length of residence, and number of hours participating in specialized local activities.

The discriminant function correctly classified 69.3 percent of the low participative permanent residents, and 81.6 percent of the participative permanent residents (Table 5). This suggests that this set of characteristics was more informative for identifying high participative than low participative permanent residents. Overall, 527 cases of 693 were correctly classified among the permanent residents. Thus, the discriminant function increased classification accuracy by 47 percent when compared with the marginal values of participative and non-participative permanent residents.

\(^8\) Of these discriminant coefficients, only the size of community reared in failed to significantly contribute \((p < .05)\) to a dummy-variable regression analysis (data not shown).

---

**Table 4. Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients for Permanent Residents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discriminant Function</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of community lived in before age 16</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious affiliation</td>
<td>-.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of residence</td>
<td>.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of involvement in specialized organizations</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of specialized organizations belonged to</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours participating in local activities</td>
<td>.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of interaction with neighbors</td>
<td>.124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standardized coefficients.
Table 5. Classification Results for Permanent Residents (N = 693)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Participation</th>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Participation</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Participation</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Participation</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Participation</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because this model worked fairly well in differentiating high from low participative permanent residents, it was used to determine participation levels for seasonal residents. The results (see Table 6) indicated that seasonal participative residents had higher levels of involvement in special interest groups, were members of more local specialized organizations, interacted more with their neighbors, mostly belonged to non-LDS churches, but spent fewer hours participating in local events than less participative residents. In addition, they owned their seasonal home longer, grew up in a small town prior to age 16, had lower incomes and more education.9

The discriminant function for seasonal residents explained 23.5 percent (canonical correlation = .49; eigenvalue = .31) of the association between the groups and the discriminant function. The measure of discrimination between group differences over the discriminating variables attained statistical significance (Wilk’s Lambda = .77; \( \chi^2 = 110.40; \text{df} = 9; \text{sig} = .000 \)).

The contribution of each independent variable with the function is shown in Table 6. As was the case for permanent residents, level of involvement in specialized local activities had the greatest discriminating ability. However, for seasonal residents, the numbers of specialized organizations to which a respondent belonged and the frequency of interaction with neighbors were the next most important discriminators.

The membership classification (Table 7) indicated that 84.8 percent of the seasonal residents initially categorized as low participative were correctly classified. In addition 51.6 percent of the seasonal residents that were categorized as high participative were correctly categorized.

9 While the model for participative seasonal residents is significant, the majority of the coefficients discriminating them from less participative seasonal residents are smaller than those associated with the model for participative permanent residents. Level of involvement in specialized groups, number of organizations in special interest groups, and frequency of interaction with neighbors contributed significantly (p < .05) to a dummy-variable regression analysis (data not shown).
Table 6. Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients for Seasonal Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discriminant Function</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Size of community lived in before age 16</th>
<th>Religious affiliation</th>
<th>Length of residence</th>
<th>Level of involvement in specialized organizations</th>
<th>Numbers of specialized organizations belonged to</th>
<th>Hours participating in local activities</th>
<th>Frequency of interaction with neighbors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>-.192</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td>.578</td>
<td>-.133</td>
<td>.265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standardized coefficients.

This suggests that this set of characteristics are better predictors of non-participative than participative seasonal residents. Overall, 303 cases of 418 were correctly classified. The discriminant function contributed to a 25 percent increment in classification accuracy when compared with the marginal values of participative and non-participative seasonal residents.

Finally, because differences between participative seasonal and permanent residents existed, a comparison of these groups was performed (Table 8). Overall, permanent participative residents had lower income, were less educated, lived in smaller communities before age 16, were more likely to be members of the LDS church, lived longer in the community, were more involved in local specialized events, spent more hours participating in local specialized events or groups, belonged to more specialized organizations, and interacted more frequently with their neighbors than their seasonal high participative counterparts. This is consistent with other studies suggesting the importance of factors such as time lived in the community, local bonds, community involvement and attachment, and prior levels of participation (see Beggs, Hurlbert, and Haines 1996; Goudy 1990; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974).

Table 7. Classification Results for Seasonal Residents (N = 418)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Participation</th>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
<th>Low Participation</th>
<th>High Participation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Participation</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>263</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Participation</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Participation</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Participation</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>00.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8. Comparison of Seasonal and Permanent Participative Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seasonal</th>
<th></th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of community lived in before age 16</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious affiliation</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years lived/owned seasonal home</td>
<td>13.68</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>27.89</td>
<td>20.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of involvement in spec. orgs.</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours participating in local activities</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of spec. orgs. belonged to</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of interaction with neighbors</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

Natural amenity-rich areas in the Western United States have been experiencing dramatic change during the last 30 years (Fulton, Fuguitt, and Gibson 1997; Johnson 2003; Johnson and Fuguitt 2000). This change is often associated with an increased desire to reside, seasonally or permanently in such areas and is reflected in pockets of growth and development throughout this region and other rural natural amenity-rich areas in America.

Past research has documented the presence of structural and interactional differences among seasonal and permanent residents (Matarrita-Cascante et al. 2006). These differences create barriers to communication and interaction, both essential elements for successful community participation. Overall, permanent residents tend to be more participative than seasonal residents. One way to reduce lower levels of community participation is by seeking individuals in the community who remain participative regardless of their residence status. A profile of participative residents was established to do this.

Participative residents were more educated, grew up in smaller towns, had lived longer in the community, were affiliated with non-LDS churches, were more involved in local specialized activities or groups, belonged to more local specialized organizations, and interacted more frequently with their neighbors than residents with lower participation levels. Income and the amount of hours engaged in local specialized

---

10 Involvement in specialized groups or organizations could reduce the amount of time available for any individual to invest in general community affairs. These findings suggest, however, the willingness of such residents to offer their time and energy in efforts designed to improve overall community quality of life.
activities or groups differed in the way they were associated with community participation depending on resident type.

By knowing this, we better understand how participative and non-participative residents differ regardless of residence type. The set of characteristics described reflected those who have not only demonstrated a willingness to speak with others but actually do something about local problems. Additionally, they indicated the involvement of individuals with local area experiences who are concerned about what happens in their communities. Such traits are the embodiment of central aspects of the definition of community agency. This information is essential for those seeking individuals willing to actively engage in community affairs and is particularly relevant given the broader context of declining levels of participation typical of many American communities (Putnam 2000).

Community members, organizations, policy planners, and analysts can gain from participative residents' disposition to engage in and interact with others for the benefit of overall community good. The involvement of active participants, who bring information and knowledge skills based on previous experiences, is essential for well-designed community development efforts to take root. Finally, by knowing which residents are less participative, "they can be purposively invited and encouraged to become actively involved" (Theodori 2004).

Larger and more diverse membership of the local community participating in various actions and activities leads to increasing interactions that provide the opportunities for building cohesion and a sense of community (McDonough and Vachta 2005). Having people come together to discuss and exchange ideas reduces the gap created when special interest groups compete for local resources and attention. Indeed, the emergence of the community field reflects a shared sense of commitment towards the design and conduct of broad, community-wide projects (see Fitchen 1991; Kemmis 1990; Kranich, Petrzelka, and Brehm 2006 for issues related to the failure of the emergence of such a commitment). As a result of these interactions, fairer community development processes occur (cf. Schuett and Selin 2002).

As members of a larger body of stakeholders negotiate the path of a specific project or policy, increased participation empowers the community. Empowerment provides citizens with an authentic voice in decision-making about community direction and the means to achieve their goals (Pigg and Bradshaw 2003:390). As a result, development projects yield better community, economic, environmental, and public health outcomes (Richards and Dalbey 2006).
It is important to understand how changing structural and interactional characteristics affect community participation levels and the role policy planners can play in this process. Shifts in the sociodemographic composition of the population affect local interaction patterns (Berry et al. 1990). This shift can also affect the quality and quantity of services provided by a community, how newcomers perceive the community, and how the community perceives them.

Different perceptions can negatively affect communication and interaction (Burdge 1998). Because structural characteristics of local citizens are rarely policy malleable they should serve as indicators of who is involved in the community and who is not (Brennan and Luloff 2007). Process characteristics, on the other hand, tell us more about the ways community members interact and communicate with each other (Beal 1956; Kaufman 1959; Wilkinson 1991). Interactional variables describe social processes of communication, association, and action among individuals. This characteristic allows interactional variables to be viable for change. Better understanding the dynamics of community interaction provides a tool for targeting policies and strategies aimed at increasing levels of local participation.

From an interactional perspective, local interaction and agency are essential to the emergence of community. Any barrier to interaction creates gaps between individuals, limiting communication and association. This is often the case when divisions exist among the various special interest fields in a community. Such fields have actors who are local residents with specific goals and interests clearly identified with the locality (Wilkinson 1991:83). These fields emerge as people organize to accomplish specific locally-oriented tasks (Luloff and Bridger 2003; Wilkinson 1991). This is the case of economic-based, recreational-based, service-based, health-based, and other local community organizations. In this study, levels of involvement in specialized groups reflected these special-interest fields.

In contrast, the community field, measured here through community participation, provides a mechanism that links interaction in order to encourage community members to share their concerns and needs. It serves to coordinate and unite the other local social fields and leads to more community wide efforts. Such interaction reflects a deliberate, focused, and active decision by local residents to take part in purposive community activities (Brennan and Luloff 2007). This materializes through increased levels of community participation.

The community field, by cutting across class lines, organized groups, and other entities within the local population, focuses on the general and common needs of all residents (Brennan and Luloff 2007:5). It
brings people to the table who are willing to talk and associate with others in order to formulate solutions to local problems. Thus, increased community participation is essential for maintaining community viability. It also allows communities to protect their interests while engaging in development strategies designed to specially focus on local needs. As a result, participative residents have the capacity to improve local well-being from ideas and actions born within the community itself.

References


