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Growing Pains: Amenity Migration and Farmer/Rancher Subjective Well-being,
A Case Study in Teton Valley

by
Melissa Taysom

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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Committee Approval

To the Graduate Faculty:

The members of the committee appointed to examine the thesis of MELISSA TAYSOM find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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April 6, 2022

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RE: Study Number IRB-FY2022-184 : Farmer and Rancher Well-being in Teton Valley

Dear Ms. Wilson:

Thank you for your responses to a previous review of the study listed above. These responses are eligible for expedited review under OHRP (DHHS) and FDA guidelines. This is to confirm that I have approved your application.

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Sincerely,

Ralph Baergen, PhD, MPH, CIP
Human Subjects Chair

Dedication

I dedicate this, with a full and thankful heart, to all the people in my life who are like the sun. You've guided me through the darkest times and celebrated every triumph, big and small, with me. Thank you for making my life and the world brighter and more fulfilling.

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I want to extend heartfelt gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Sarah Ebel. You saw potential in me even when I wasn't able to see it in myself. Your influence, guidance, and support have forever changed the course of my life for the better. Words truly fall flat in capturing all you've done for me. Please know that I'm forever thankful for you. To my committee members, Dr. Sarah Ebel, Dr. Kate Reedy, and Dr. Morey Burnham, thank you so much for your invaluable guidance and encouragement. Your insights and feedback were crucial for the completion of this project, and I'm thankful for the time, effort, and thoughtfulness you put into helping me complete this. To the farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley, thank you for sharing your thoughts, time, and experiences with me. None of this would have been possible without your generosity. Finally, I want to thank the Center for Ecological Research and Education and the National Science Foundation Idaho EPSCoR GEM-3 for financial funding which allowed me to focus on my research more than my bank account.

Note on Name Change

I began my research under my married surname, Wilson. After my divorce, I legally changed my surname back to my maiden name, Taysom. This is why there is a discrepancy in last names for me on various included documents. I did not use different surnames to intentionally mislead anyone involved.

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Growing Pains: Amenity Migration and Farmer/Rancher Subjective Well-being,
A Case Study in Teton Valley
Thesis Abstract-- Idaho State University (2023)

In rural regions of the United States, the number of small family farms is decreasing despite population growth in these areas which have outdoor recreational spaces rich with natural amenities. While this growth, known as amenity migration, is a trend in amenity-rich rural areas across the country, little is known about how farmer/rancher subjective well-being is impacted by amenity migration, which is the focus of my research. Amenity-based growth restructures communities, landscapes, and economies, reducing open spaces and causing a shift from traditional extractive industries, including agricultural-based livelihoods, to service and hospitality centered businesses and spurs the development of an amenity-based 'gig' economy consisting of short-term, seasonal, and/or contractual work instead of long-term jobs. Amenity-based transitions and the resultant social, landscape, and economic changes positively and negatively influence the quality of life experienced by farmers and ranchers, and thus have the potential to positively and negatively impact their subjective well-being.

Key Words: Subjective Well-being, Agricultural Livelihoods, Amenity Migration, Rural Community, Elite Access Mentality

Foreword: Past Memories Meet Current Reality

Teton Valley has always been a magical place for me. When I was a child, my grandparents owned a cabin up Henderson Creek. I loved everything about the cabin and getting to the cabin. Once we turned off I-15 onto Highway 33, there were times it felt like we were the only people in the world, surrounded by nothing but open fields and scattered farmhouses. As we got closer to the Valley, I was always overwhelmed with the incredible scenery, my face pressed against the window, quickly wiping away the condensation when my breath obstructed my view. I couldn't get enough of the scenes around me: rolling green fields speckled with cows and horses, mountains in the background no matter which way you looked, the sparkling river weaving through the earth, reflecting the bright sunshine. When I decided my sister's view was better than mine, I'd lean over her to take in as much of the scene through her window as possible. When she began squealing in protest, I'd grudgingly move back into my own space, quickly becoming helplessly entranced with the beauty outside my own window once again.

My dad would exchange a smile and a wave with the drivers of the sporadic cars, trucks, and farm equipment which made up the oncoming traffic. I remember asking him, completely awestruck, how he knew everyone there. He laughed and said "I don't know them. We're just being friendly. That's what you do in small towns." After this conversation, I waited with anticipation for another vehicle to come. When it finally happened, I smiled so hard my cheeks hurt and my mom, sitting in the passenger seat in front of me, caught more than one of my overzealous waves with her head. In and around the Valley, everyone smiled at each other and everyone waved at one another, whether they were in a passing vehicle, working in a field, or

walking down a dirt path. I'd never felt so welcome in a place before and I didn't even know anyone there.

In the summer, days at the cabin were filled with running through the tall grass, picking wildflowers, and going to see the hot air balloons in town. In the winter, days at the cabin were filled with making snow angels in the deepest and whitest snow I'd ever seen in my life, pouring root beer over cups of freshly fallen snow to make snow slushies, and building snow people with prominent smiles etched into their round faces. Nights at the cabin were filled with board games, laughter, and wishing on the brightest stars filling the clear night skies. The cabin offered me a chance to step into another world. One without the hustle and bustle of city life. One where laughter filled the air more than noisy cars did. It was an escape into the most ideal life I could imagine and I loved it. I cried when my grandparents sold the cabin as part of their divorce. It wasn't just property. To me, it was Chinese checkers and laughter, fresh air and wildflowers, powdery snow deeper than I was tall, vibrantly colored hot air balloons set against the deep blue silhouette of the Tetons, and the coveted chance to be among the friendliest people I had ever seen. When I had the opportunity to return to the Valley to conduct my Master's thesis research with farmers and ranchers, my inner child jumped with joy. I couldn't wait to get back to the Valley.

I couldn't stop smiling when I headed out on my first trip back to the Valley for research. I excitedly took the exit off I-15 to merge onto Highway 33, anticipating reduced traffic and a chance to revisit that feeling of total isolation, but neither happened. For the entire drive to the Valley, there was a steady flow of traffic in both directions on the two-lane highway. Individuals who were in a hurry took risky chances at passing other vehicles, darting between the two lanes like it was a mechanical game of leapfrog. After receiving the fifth blank stare in response to my

smile and wave, I sullenly stopped waving at the oncoming vehicles. I consoled myself with the fact that many of the license plates were from other states, so maybe they didn't know about small town etiquette.

It was a brilliant sunny day and I had my windows open slightly to let in the country air, but I couldn't really notice a difference between this air and the city air, which caught me off guard. As I got closer to the Valley, the scenery was as overwhelmingly incredible as I remembered. I signaled and pulled off the road as far as possible so I could stop to take pictures of the Valley when I got to the 'Welcome to Teton Valley' sign. After taking several pictures, I got back into my car, accidentally slamming my foot in the door as I hurried to close it before the next car passed. I signaled and merged back into traffic at the next opening, then became aware of the fact that I hadn't seen any cattle in the fields yet. It was summer and they should be out grazing.

I watched each passing field closely as I made my way into the Valley, but I only ever saw a single field boasting a small herd of cattle. Houses and buildings in varying states of construction, advertising billboards, and for sale signs spotted the fields more than any livestock did. People floating on tubes filled the river to the point of congestion in certain bends. An almost palpable sense of rushedness hung in the air now that wasn't there years ago. Before I even got into Tetonia, it was overwhelmingly obvious that things had changed significantly in Teton Valley.



Figure 1. Taysom family in Driggs circa 1990.



Figure 2. Driggs in 2018. Photo by user Coleen Bevan. Retrieved from:

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/401383385518269490/>

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Change

The changes I've noticed in Teton Valley are not isolated to this specific location. In rural regions of the United States, the number of small family farms is decreasing despite population growth in those areas (Todd & Whitt 2021). The majority of these population increases are driven by wealthy individuals from urban areas who have a desire to live in rural areas with open, undeveloped landscapes and outdoor recreational areas rich in natural amenities (McGranahan 2019; Krannich, et al. 2006). This amenity-based growth, known as amenity migration, restructures local communities, landscapes, and economies resulting in reduced open spaces and a shift from traditional extractive rural industries, including agriculture, to service and hospitality centered businesses and the development of an amenity-based 'gig' economy consisting of short-term, seasonal, and/or contractual work instead of long-term jobs (Gober, et al. 1993; Krannich, et al. 2006; Abrams, et al. 2012). These transitions have a significant impact on the lives and emotions of individuals with agricultural livelihoods (Abrams, et al. 2012).

In the Intermountain West of the United States, small-scale family farmers and ranchers, who are affected by these social, landscape, and economic transitions now rely more heavily on livelihood diversification, utilizing multiple sources of income, both on farm and off, in order to maintain their livelihood (Todd & Whitt 2021; Bryant & Garnham 2014). Livelihood diversification has been used for generations and is not a new method of navigating survival for individuals with agricultural livelihoods, however, the intensity of diversification has compounded because of how the transitions to new forms of economies in rural communities have affected their abilities to maintain their livelihoods (Israr, et al. 2014). Additionally,

changes to the landscape have impacts on farmers' and ranchers' emotional ties to the land itself, including their overall sense of belonging and attachment as well as the collective identities of individuals who have connections to it, since many individuals have personal and familial history with the land, sometimes spanning more than a century (Escalera-Reyes 2020). Amenity-based transitions and the resulting landscape, social and economic changes impact the quality of life experienced by farmers and ranchers, and thus have the potential to impact their subjective well-being. In this paper, I define subjective well-being as the overall happiness of an individual as a result of life-satisfaction and life quality (Bryant & Garnham 2014; Durand 2015; OECD 2013; Zaffar 2021).

Even though these economic shifts are a trend across the United States' rural regions, little is known about how farmer and rancher subjective well-being is impacted by the physical, economic, and social changes resulting from amenity migration. Therefore, I addressed the following research questions: (1) How do farmers and ranchers experience the changes resulting from amenity migration? (2) How do farmers and ranchers define their own subjective well-being? and (3) How is amenity migration, and its resultant changes, impacting the subjective well-being of farmers and ranchers?

For my research, I used a case study of Teton Valley which consists of four rural communities located in Idaho and Wyoming. Locals call the area "Wydaho." Teton Valley is experiencing a transition from an agriculturally-based community, landscape, and economy to an amenity-driven economy resulting from rapid population growth largely driven by wealthy individuals seeking different lifestyles and outdoor recreational opportunities in a picturesque landscape. Thus, it was an ideal location to investigate farmer and rancher subjective well-being

within the context of transitioning landscape, community, and economy as a result of amenity migration.

1.2 Reality of Change in Teton Valley

The participants in my research stated that the past five years have been particularly challenging for small-scale farmers/ranchers in Teton Valley and claimed that the population in the Valley had grown significantly through the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the official data that is currently available doesn't cover these specific timeframes with the most recent Census being comprised of data from 2020, prior to the pandemic, and the most recent Agricultural Census being comprised of data from 2017. However, the available data does show some trends that are consistent with participants' claims even though it is prior to the timeframes they specifically mentioned (Table 1, Table 2).

From 2007 to 2017, there was a decrease in the total number of farms present in Teton Valley and there was a decrease in consumable food crops produced (USDA 2007a,b, 2017a,b). During this same time period, there was an increase in the acreage dedicated to farm use and an increase of irrigated land, cattle farms, and forage farms (USDA 2007a,b, 2017a,b). From 2010 to 2020, there was a 14.75% increase in population in the Valley as well as a significant increase in the diversity of the population (USCB 2010a,b, 2020). The percentage of renters in the Valley increased from 37.66% in 2010 to 43% in 2020 and the number of housing units dedicated to recreational/seasonal use increased from 181 to 258 in the same period of time (USCB 2010a,b, 2020). The median rent for a studio apartment in the Valley has increased from \$615/month in 2013 to \$957/month in 2023 (US Housing Data 2013, 2023). Businesses in the Valley offering minimum wage jobs are short-staffed and having a hard time filling the positions because of the

increased cost of living and the lack of affordable housing options. There is a housing crisis in the Valley which leaves economically disadvantaged individuals with few options for housing. While conducting my research, I saw many online posts in the local Facebook forums offering rented driveway spaces for individuals who were willing to live in their vehicles. Renting a driveway space does not include any access to utilities or facilities. Solutions for the housing crisis are broadly discussed in public and private settings, but no formal solutions have, as of yet, been put into action.

	2010	2020
Total Population	4,251	4,878
American Indian/Alaska Native	26	45
Asian	19	32
Black/African American	17	12
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	9	0
Other	732	705
White	3,372	3,632
Two or More Races	76	452
Total Housing Units	2,080	2,350
Housing Units Permanently Occupied	1,516	1,848
Housing Units Occupied by Owner(s)	945	1,051
Housing Units Occupied by Renter(s)	571	797
Housing Units for Recreational/Seasonal Use	181	258

Table 1. Teton Valley Population and Housing Demographics in 2010 and 2020 (USCB 2010a,b, 2020). *Racial categories and terminology as used on the US Census.

	2007	2017
Number of Farms	479	419
Number of Farms <50 acres	176	156
Number of Farms >50 acres	303	263
Land in Farms (acres)	175,408	185,053
Irrigated Land (acres)	70,835	74,425
Cattle (farms)	123	137
Wheat (farms/acres)	22 / 11,673	19 / 5,158
Barley (farms/acres)	72 / 35,574	79 / 30,404
Forage (farms/acres)	197 / 24,107	226 / 38,005
Vegetables for Human Consumption (farms/acres)	14 / 7,000	33 / 4,330

Table 2. Teton County (Idaho and Wyoming combined) farming statistics from 2007 and 2017 (USDA 2007a,b, 2017a,b).

1.3 Terminology to Protect Participant Identity

As an effort to protect participant identity in this thesis, I’ve used the generalized term “farmer/rancher” and I’ve intentionally excluded gender terminology. I’ve also refrained from using specific locations, instead using the generalized term “the Valley” due to the small size of my research area and the limited number of individuals with agricultural livelihoods in that area. It is important to note that my use of these generalized terms does not indicate that these individuals are interchangeable or that they have the same sentiments, experiences, or outlooks. This generalization is an effort to protect participant identity and is not meant to minimize anyone.

I heavily debated using pseudonyms because it is difficult to achieve a level of personalization and depth in their absence, however, I decided not to include them because I don't want to lead readers to false generalizations about gender or age and I don't want to inadvertently reveal participants' identities. Because of the small research site and because of the limited number of individuals who have small-scale farms and ranches in Teton Valley, I made every effort to protect their identities. I recognize that some readers may disagree with my omission of pseudonyms, but this is what I felt was the most ethically responsible thing to do given the context of my research.

1.4 Key Terminology

To provide clarification, I will define key terms used in this study. I want to note that the participants self-identified and self-selected as belonging to particular groups/categories, so the definitions I give are largely based on observable commonalities between the participants in my research and may not necessarily generalize to larger populations or different areas accurately.

Small-scale farmer/rancher- This term is used to describe individuals who are farming/ranching at a smaller scale than larger, industrial agricultural operations. In this research, this term is synonymous with 'family farming/ranching' and 'smallholder operations' in that the individuals who self-identified as small-scale farmers/ranchers practice diversified agriculture on comparatively small acreage (Netting 1993; Khalil, et al. 2017) and they depend heavily on family labor, using minimal, if any, hired hands, to run their operations. The farming/ranching individuals in this study cited primarily local consumption of the goods they produce, through farmer's markets (often in multiple locations throughout the area), on-site sales, and contracts with local stores and restaurants.

Newcomer- This term is used to describe individuals who have recently settled in the Valley. The defined length of time spent in the area that's connected to newcomer status is ambiguous among participants. Some individuals self-identified as newcomers even after five or more years of living in the Valley, while others explained that they only felt like newcomers in certain social settings, for example at the land code meeting, after living in the Valley for fewer years. This term often carries a negative social stigma with it, especially when it is used by individuals that have spent the majority of their lives living in the area, aka old-timers. Old-timers refer to any individuals who haven't spent the majority of their lives in the Valley as newcomers. Among farmers and ranchers, there is an ascribed lower social status for newcomers, especially those who do not have agricultural livelihoods.

Old-timer- This term is used to describe individuals with agricultural livelihoods who have lived and worked in the Valley for the majority of their lives. This term was never used by participants to describe any individual who did not have an agricultural livelihood. There is an achieved and ascribed elevated social status for old-timers, especially those who are descendants of founding families, locally referred to as "last name families."

1.5 Limitations and Bias Acknowledgement

I'm a 40 year-old white female who was born and raised in Pocatello, Idaho, which has experienced amenity migration and the changes it brings. Aside from the 1.5 years I've spent living in other places (Russia, China, and California), I've spent my entire life in the southeast portion of the state. While my immediate family lives in the city, I have family that has farmed and ranched in rural areas throughout the state, primarily in Ashton and McCammon. I've always been fascinated with agricultural livelihoods and the individuals who dedicate their lives to such

pursuits, spending as much time as possible visiting family and friends' farms/ranches. I've always been curious to know more about the farms and ranches I've seen in passing, especially those in Teton Valley.

While I made every effort to include as many voices as possible in my research, this study does not include all of the small family farmers/ranchers in Teton Valley and has a relatively small sample size. Some of the individuals I spoke with didn't have time to meet or had to cancel prior to our meeting because of unexpected issues on their farms/ranches. Time and weather constraints limited our ability to reschedule to meet with one another. Some individuals didn't feel like they were qualified to participate because of self-imposed limitations relating to their education level ("I'm not an educated person. I don't have much to say."), or their level of experience with farming/ranching in the area ("They call me a hobby farmer. I'm not a real farmer. I don't feel like I can speak for farmers because of that."), or the amount of time they've spent in the Valley ("I'm new here and I don't know what it's like yet."). Additionally, some individuals didn't participate because they didn't want to ("I don't do interviews.").

Initially, it seemed important to include farmers/ranchers of different ages, sexes, and crops/livestock. As I progressed with the interviews, it became clear that these weren't the factors for differentiation in experiences of farmers/ranchers in the area. Length of time in the Valley, the size of their farm/ranch, political ideations, and personal/familial history of farming/ranching, especially if that is in or out of the Valley, emerged as much more important factors that shape farmer/rancher experiences. I didn't exclude anyone who was willing to participate, but the limited accessibility to individuals with agricultural livelihoods largely determined the participants in my research.

Prior to going to the Valley, I performed several Google searches of farms/ranches in the area, hoping to establish contacts ahead of time. However, many of the phone numbers listed were disconnected and several of the farms/ranches had been abandoned/listed for sale/sold. Many of the ranches listed online have been converted into guest ranches to accommodate tourists and are no longer functioning as active ranches in the traditional sense. While I believe this could be an interesting avenue for research (“Why do traditional ranches convert to guest ranches?”), I only included ranches that are still functioning in the traditional sense as those align better with my thesis research focus.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge that this research is inherently shaped by my own biases and background. I attempted to construct interview questions that were open-ended and had room for individuals to expound on their own thoughts and experiences, but the questions I asked in the interviews were designed with a specific focus in mind (understanding how recent changes in the Valley have impacted the subjective well-being of farmers/ranchers) and so shaped the conversations that took place during the interviews. As I’m not an individual with an agricultural livelihood, while constructing my interview guide, I didn’t have insight into the various aspects that influence their subjective well-being beyond what I could deduce from researching academic literature, and online sources. Given this, there may be different questions that could have been asked which may have resulted in more accurate depictions of participants’ experiences.

Another important factor influencing this research is that the timing of my research overlapped with the Covid-19 pandemic. It seems likely that the pandemic is, at least in part, responsible for fueling and intensifying the changes taking place in the Valley during this time. While no one I spoke with cited the pandemic as being directly responsible for the addition of

new types of change in the Valley, the majority of individuals claimed that the pandemic resulted in an increased intensity and complexity of the already present changes.

1.6 Significance

I cringed when I got a notification for a new message on Facebook. My friends and family knew that I was conducting research on farmers and ranchers, so they took it upon themselves to send me links to articles/podcasts they came across on the topic. While I appreciated their efforts and thoughtfulness, the media they sent were equally concerning and depressing. I braced myself for the information I'd find as I clicked on the link after reading the podcast title 'Farmer Suicide Crisis' (V 2022). A Google search for 'farmer/rancher suicide' yields news article upon news article of the phenomenon, frequently referred to as an "endemic" or "epidemic" in the search results, but the same search on Google Scholar reveals shockingly few results. I have no idea how many times I've asked myself over the past few years "Why isn't this getting the attention it deserves?!".

Official data from the CDC concerning suicide rates associated with occupations have been called out for inaccuracy and misrepresentation with a number of researchers noting that inconsistencies in data collection and categorization have significantly skewed statistical facts concerning farmer/rancher suicide rates (Bissen 2020, FarmProgress 2018, V 2022). Strikingly, even though the CDC reports Agricultural Livelihoods as having the fourth highest rate of suicide compared to any other occupation, researchers insist the correct placement for the occupation is actually first when you group all farmers/ranchers together in one category instead of the three categories they're currently separated into based on their production levels, size of operation, and number of employees (Bissen 2020, CDC 2023, FarmProgress 2018, V 2022).

Also noted by these researchers who are attempting to refute the CDC estimations, only suicides from 17 states in the country were considered in the report which excluded eight of the top agricultural producing states (Bissen 2020, CDC 2023, FarmProgress 2018, V 2022).

Additionally, the combination of social isolation of farming/ranching individuals and the social stigma associated with suicide can lead to underreporting, often classifying suicide deaths as accidents (Bissen 2020, Crawford 2022, FarmProgress 2018, V 2022).

Concern for increased suicide rates of individuals with agricultural livelihoods is not only present in rural areas in the United States—similar concerns are also prevalent in global news articles. China, Australia, the UK, and France all report a surge in suicide rates among individuals with agricultural livelihoods (Farkas 2017). Reports from India reveal at least 30 farmers are committing suicide every day in the country (Kaur 2022). This is a global issue with profound consequences for agricultural communities. Agricultural communities like Teton Valley.

The interview was almost over when the topic came up. We had been casually discussing the way the Covid-19 pandemic had altered life in the Valley. It was my first interview and I had naively shut off the recording app on my phone after the participants responded to my final question on my interview guide. Talking of altered life turned to talking of unexpected death. The mood in the room shifted and their voices took on a hushed tone as they spoke solemnly of the young men who had recently passed in the Valley. I assumed they had passed from complications resulting from Covid-19 infection, but they quickly clarified that it wasn't a "visible" illness or injury that caused their deaths. They "gave up" and took their own lives. I had so many questions but at the same time I had no idea what to say. A ripple of grief washed over

me and my heart hurt for the ones who died and for their families, friends, and members of the community who were left to navigate their losses.

This conversation coupled with the numerous articles I've read about farmer/rancher suicide solidified my research focus on farmer/rancher subjective well-being. I acknowledge that there are more pieces to the puzzle than any single researcher can put together, but I believe this is a topic that deserves attention. The prominence of news articles about the farmer suicide crisis shows that the subjective well-being of farmers and ranchers is being negatively impacted by something at a global level. These losses shake rural communities which are already unsteady with all of the changes taking place. My research offers insight into how amenity migration and its resultant changes are impacting the subjective well-being of farmers and ranchers.

Additionally, this research gives voice to individuals who may feel like their voices have been diminished, overlooked in the rush of local growth and the push for development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Amenity Migration Reconstructs Rural Areas

Amenity migration, a phenomenon which originated from rural tourism (Özden-Schilling 2019; Sherman 2021a; Williams, et al. 2016; Hill, et al. 2009), occurs when wealthy individuals from urban areas travel to remote rural areas, often visiting the same destination multiple times as they increase ‘levels of commitment’ to the location (Hill, et al. 2009), then discover that land and housing in those areas is significantly more affordable than land and housing in urban areas, ultimately driving their migration to rural areas (Özden-Schilling 2019; Sherman 2021a; Sherman 2021b; Williams, et al. 2016; Hill, et al. 2009). Comparative affordability combined with the allure and prestige/status involved with living in or owning a second home/vacation property as well as the perceived health benefits in areas with plentiful natural amenities has quickly propelled the phenomenon (Sherman 2021a; Williams, et al. 2016; Hill, et al. 2009). Drawn to these areas because of the natural amenities, newcomers move to pursue personal goals, such as status achievements, healthier lifestyles, a return to more “natural” and simple ways of living (McGranahan 2019; Krannich, et al. 2006; Sherman 2021a; Williams, et al. 2016), or to obtain existential authenticity which is returning to one’s true self by pursuing a way of living that is perceived to be more authentic (Cai, et al. 2018). Due to this and an increased opportunity for remote work, which escalated during the Covid-19 pandemic, farming and ranching communities across the United States are experiencing an increasing population due to an influx of incoming ‘outsiders’ or newcomers. This amenity-based growth restructures local physical and social landscapes and creates changes in local economies which results in reduced open spaces, an altered community, and a shift away from traditional extractive rural industries, including agriculture, to service and hospitality centered businesses and the development of an

amenity-based ‘gig’ economy consisting of short-term, seasonal, and/or contractual work instead of long-term jobs (Gober, et al. 1993; Krannich, et al. 2006; Abrams, et al. 2012). Newcomers come to amenity-rich rural areas with the privilege of greater financial independence than locals, causing both small and significant changes in the daily lives of locals because of the resultant widening income inequality (Abrams, et al. 2012; Sherman 2021a; Sherman 2021b; Ulrich-Schad 2018; Williams, et al. 2016).

As wealthy newcomers relocate to rural areas, they drive up the cost of living in those areas (Gosnell & Abrams 2009; Sherman 2021a; Sherman 2021b; Williams, et al. 2016) and create an ‘economic gulf’ between old and new populations (Sherman 2021a). The economic shifts that take place in these rural areas in response to the rapid population growth privilege wealthy individuals as they result in an overall increased cost of living, decreased livable wage employment opportunities, and limited housing opportunities which cause increased financial strain for individuals who are already financially vulnerable (Gosnell & Abrams 2009; Sherman 2021a; Sherman 2021b; Williams, et al. 2016). In response, less financially secure individuals ‘get creative’ and strive to find additional sources of income to continue living in the area (Gosnell & Abrams 2009; Sherman 2021a). One way farmers and ranchers are doing this is through intensified and population-adapted livelihood diversification.

A livelihood is not just a source of income; rather it encapsulates everything that is needed to support a way of living (Ellis 1998). While livelihood does include monetary income, it also involves social institutions, social capital, and property access as well as access to public services such as water, roads, education, health care, etc... (Ellis 1998). Livelihood diversification, therefore, goes deeper than solely income diversification, as it requires increased and changing cooperation of multiple aspects of life (Ellis 1998). Dependence on multiple sources of income is

not a new concept to individuals in rural areas as it has long been a common source of additional income for individuals with extractive livelihoods, including agriculture, but these individuals have reported a need to increase efforts and sources of diversification in response to recent changes (Ellis 1998; Israr, et al. 2014). One emerging form of livelihood diversification arising from an increased population of newcomers who are interested in more ‘simple/natural’ rural life experiences is the adaptive concept of agritourism.

Agritourism is when a farm/ranch operates a tourism business open to the public which is agriculturally focused such as hayrides, pumpkin patches, rural weddings, corn mazes, and farm experiences through demonstrations/classes among others (AGMRC 2022). While this can be a lucrative source of additional income, especially in the context of increasing population due to amenity in-migration, it also comes with the added expenses of extra insurance to cover customers and employees associated with the business as well as concern for decreased feelings of safety and security for their property, livestock, and families due to increased public exposure (AGMRC 2022). The ability for a farm/ranch to participate in agritourism relies heavily on having multiple people, oftentimes within a family, working together to keep both the business and farm/ranch running but global and local changes are reshaping farming/ranching families resulting in a decreased presence of youth in rural areas (Olmstead 2021; Ashwood 2018; Pilegram 2021).

Because of global and local transitions in economies and labor structures, youth are leaving rural areas to pursue external opportunities, an occurrence known as ‘brain drain’ (Olmstead 2021), while wealthier people are moving into the same areas for the available natural amenities and the perceived benefits they offer (Olmstead 2021; Ashwood 2018; Sherman 2021b; Pilegram 2021). Decreased local job opportunities with livable wages leaves young adults and other financially vulnerable individuals unable to afford to live in these rural areas (Olmstead 2021; Ashwood 2018;

Pilegram 2021). The increased cost of living, housing costs, and lack of affordable housing options, coupled with a lack of long-term, well-paying jobs within an amenity based economy presents serious problems for individuals in these rural areas (Olmstead 2021; Sherman 2021b; Ashwood 2018; Pilegram 2021). Economic changes aren't the only changes taking place as a result of amenity migration. The influx of wealthy individuals and the forced out migration of local youth and financially vulnerable individuals creates significant social changes as well.

Rural communities are traditionally tight-knit and homogenous with individuals sharing 'roots' through common livelihoods and values (Sherman 2009, 2021; Pilegram 2021; Olmstead 2021; Ashwood 2018; Russell-Hochschild 2016). Population changes resulting from amenity migration alter the social fabric of these communities, resulting in increased diversity, differing community values, sociopolitical tension, and social division (Sherman 2009, 2021; Pilegram 2021; Olmstead 2021; Ashwood 2018; Russell-Hochschild 2016; Hill 2009). Newcomers are often influential in local politics because of their financial advantages and civic knowledge which allows them to have a prominent voice in how things are structured and functioning within their new communities (Sherman 2009, 2021; Pilegram 2021; Olmstead 2021; Ashwood 2018; Russell-Hochschild 2016; Hill 2009). While the changes taking place may be for the better, for example in increased land and wildlife protection efforts, the restructured communities can leave longtime locals feeling disconnected and like outsiders in their hometowns (Sherman 2009, 2021; Pilegram 2021; Olmstead 2021; Ashwood 2018; Russell-Hochschild 2016; Hill 2009). The multifaceted challenges resulting from changes brought by amenity migration impact life quality and life satisfaction for individuals in rural communities and are therefore likely to impact their well-being.

2.2 *Well-being*

Well-being, simply defined as ‘positive life experience’ (Tov 2018), encompasses many aspects of life and as such, has numerous definitions and conceptualizations (Tov 2018; Veenhoven 2012; Spain, et al. 2021; Huppert & So 2013; OECD 2013; and others). While these numerous definitions and conceptualizations add complexity to the concept, well-being is important to understand and study because it is linked to health and functionality of individuals and populations as a whole (Tov 2018; Veenhoven 2012; Spain, et al. 2021; Huppert & So 2013; OECD 2013; and others). One way that governments around the world track and measure progress is through the economic well-being (productivity, growth, income distribution, etc...) of their citizens, completely ignoring other types of well-being, then use this information to gauge the overall welfare of their nations (Forgeard, et al. 2011). In the 1930’s, United States economist Simon Kuznets insisted that economic indicators were only a small part of the well-being picture and rejected the increased international focus on economic well-being as an adequate measure of a nation’s welfare (Forgeard, et al. 2011). Regardless of Kuznets’ protestations, through the twentieth century Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP) were the main measures used to indicate a country’s living standard. However, time has shown that there are significant gaps between economic conditions and well-being, especially in wealthier countries (Forgeard, et al. 2011, OECD 2011). As a result of this divergence, there has been a recent push to measure additional aspects of well-being, not based on bank accounts or economic growth to determine a nation’s welfare (Forgeard, et al. 2011, OECD 2013).

There are two main types of well-being that are currently measured: objective well-being and subjective well-being. Objective well-being focuses on generalized community experiences

gathered from economic, environmental, and social statistics measurements (OECD 2013, Zaffar 2021). Subjective well-being is centered on individual experiences, emotions, and feelings concerning interpretations of those experiences by the individual (Durand 2015, OECD 2013, Zaffar 2021). As such, individual interpretations of an experience will vary due to the reporting individual's current affect and state of mind (Zaffar 2021). Subjective well-being is highly variable as it is also influenced heavily by genetics, health, personality, whether basic and psychological needs are satisfied, and their social environment (Durand 2015; Zaffar 2021).

2.3 Measuring Subjective Well-Being

Because of the inherent variations of subjective well-being, there are numerous definitions and conceptual frameworks which have been constructed for research efforts (Spain, et al. 2021; Forgeard, et al. 2011; OECD 2013; McGregor 2018; Veenhoven 2012; Huppert and So 2013; and others). For my research, I defined subjective well-being as the overall happiness of an individual as a result of life-satisfaction and life quality (Bryant & Garnham 2014, Durand 2015, OECD 2013, Zaffar 2021). Multiple subjective well-being frameworks exist (Spain, et al. 2021; Forgeard, et al. 2011; McGregor 2018; Veenhoven 2012; Huppert and So 2013; and others) which have pre-constructed domains of subjective well-being to guide research efforts. However, this is frequently done through quantitative data collection, primarily using brief surveys because companies are interested in collecting data from as many people as possible, as quickly and efficiently as possible so they don't use qualitative methods because they are time-consuming (OECD 2013; Spain, et al. 2021; Forgeard, et al. 2011; McGregor 2018; Veenhoven 2012; Huppert and So 2013; and others). Individuality and variability are embraced within qualitative research methods, which better allows for variations without concern of removing or reducing outlying data, resulting in a well-rounded and more accurate overall report of individuals'

experiences that allows understanding of the interwoven “webs of meaning” (Aspers 2009) constructed by the individuals themselves, providing richer data in subjective well-being research (Aspers 2009; Zaffar 2021). For this reason, I used qualitative methods and I didn’t use a pre-constructed subjective well-being conceptual framework, opting instead to use emergent data to construct and identify the subjective well-being domains.

2.4 Subjective Well-being and Agricultural Livelihoods

Both life satisfaction and life quality for farmers and ranchers are potentially at risk of being altered in the evolving social, physical, and economic conditions as their communities shift from agriculturally-focused economies to amenity-based economies. Farmers and ranchers have historically been the primary stewards of these open spaces since colonization and their connections, constructed identity and emotional ties to these landscapes, both worked land and open space, are often overlooked as in-migrants move to the area. Ranchers’ and farmers’ ways of life are challenged by individuals new to the area who are in pursuit of “existential authenticity” or returning to one’s true-self and a perceived better quality of life, potentially impacting the quality of life and subjective well-being of the individuals who are already in those areas in that process (Cai, et al. 2018). Some newcomers launch complaints and file legal actions against farmers and ranchers for multiple issues which interfere with the newcomers’ goals and expectations of the area including noise of animals and/or equipment, slow farm equipment and/or livestock on the roads, unpleasant smells, chemical applications on fields, and farm equipment obstructing prized views (Cai, et al. 2018). These complaints add stress, financial burden, and worry to farmers and ranchers who are already experiencing increased stress in the changing landscape and economy which can lead them to feel punished and ostracized for making a living

as a farmer/rancher, negatively impacting their quality of life and possibly their subjective well-being.

2.5 The Research Gap

While I was able to find a lot of information on the “farmer crisis” in news articles, I was shocked to see how few academic findings were available on the topic of farmer/rancher subjective well-being. Many scholars have examined amenity migration and the various impacts it has on rural communities (Pilegram 2021; Sherman 2021a; Ashwood 2018; Gosnell & Abrams 2011; Hill, et al. 2009; Gober, et al. 1993; Özden-Schilling 2019; Krannich, et al. 2016; Van auken & Rye 2011; Ulrich-Schad 2018; and others), but little research has been published on how those changes are impacting the subjective well-being of longtime locals with agricultural livelihoods within those communities, through qualitative research. For my research, I chose to address this gap by qualitatively investigating the subjective well-being of small-scale farmers and ranchers in the context of social, landscape, and economic changes resulting from amenity in-migration, using a case study in Teton Valley.

Post colonization, Teton Valley was ‘settled’ in the early 1800’s by trappers and soon after became an agricultural area with the arrival of the pioneers (Driggs 1926). Because of its location near Yellowstone and the plentiful natural amenities surrounding it, Teton Valley has been a destination for tourists nearly as long as it has been an agricultural area (Driggs 1926). The population in Teton Valley has slowly but steadily increased ever since, experiencing sporadic waves of population growth, but over the past few years the increased technology available in the Valley and the increasing ability for individuals to work remotely has resulted in a more rapid, unexpected population growth in the area.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Study Site

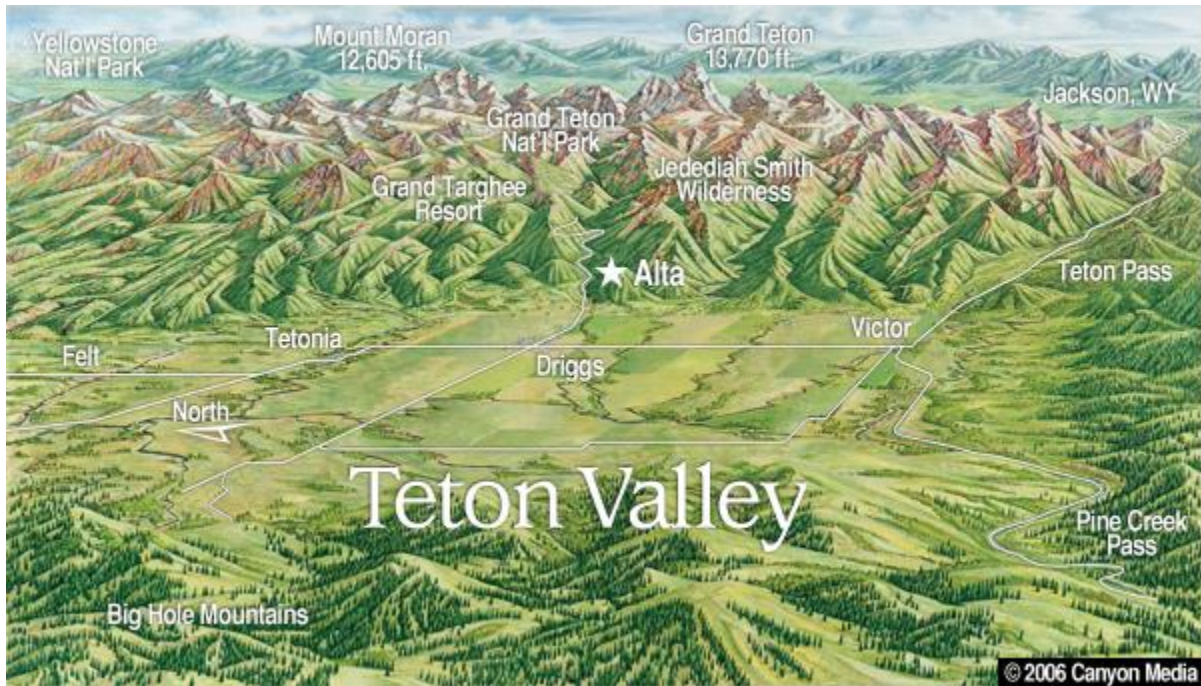


Figure 3. Map of Teton Valley. Retrieved from: <https://www.tetonpeaks lodge.com/area/>

Teton Valley in Idaho and Wyoming ('Wydaho' as the locals call it) is a group of four small towns, Tetonia, Driggs, Victor, and Alta, on the border of Idaho and Wyoming. It is surrounded by mountains and rivers, natural amenities, which attract wealthy tourists who often end up deciding to move to the Valley as newcomers. The Valley is currently experiencing a dramatic increase in population as a result of amenity-based in-migration. While the national average rate of growth from 2010-2019 was 6.3 percent, Teton County, Idaho had a growth rate of 19.61 percent and Teton County, Wyoming had a growth rate of 10.18 percent (Kassel 2021). These higher than national average rates of population growth are consistent with other rural counties across the country that have abundant natural amenities (Kassel 2021). Teton Valley is a

region that has historically relied upon agriculture but is currently transitioning away from that as a result of amenity in-migration.

3.2 Methods Overview

I used a qualitative approach to understand and examine small-scale farmer/rancher subjective well-being in the context of amenity migration. Using semi-structured interviews, I spoke with 23 small-scale farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley. Some of the farmers/ranchers were in-migrants themselves and some were old-timers who've lived in the Valley their entire lives. I conducted both in-person and online participant observation for this research. I chose to present my research findings in ethnographic format in an effort to maintain authenticity.

3.3 Interviews

My research was approved by the Idaho State University Human Subjects Committee (Study Number IRB-FY2022-184). In the summer and fall of 2021, I conducted exploratory research in Teton Valley to gain a better understanding of farmer and rancher experiences in the community. On my first day of exploratory research in Teton Valley, I stopped at the local museum in Driggs to try to get background knowledge about the history of the area as well as long time farming/ranching family names in local documents and displays. While I was there, I was approached by a longtime local who asked me what I was doing in town. I explained why I was there and what my research is about. They asked about my family background and once they found out that I am from Idaho ('born and raised') and that much of my family on both sides has a history of farming and ranching in Idaho, they got noticeably excited about our interaction. They told me about their experience with farming in the Valley and the struggles they had raising

their children and fighting to keep the farm. They noted the difference in farming then and farming now and the value farmers place in the livelihood and the land:

“A lot of farmers- this is their dream, you know? The land and farming the land is their dream. But with everything changing, it’s just as hard for them to hold on to it as it is for them to let it go. With the price of land so high, no one can expand and no new farmers can come in to work the land. A lot of farmers are asking themselves why they’re breaking their backs working so hard when they could just sell the land for a lot of money and retire.”

As I was getting ready to leave the museum, they wrote a small list of names and phone numbers for some of their family and friends in the area who are farmers/ranchers who ‘aren’t too shy’ and suggested that I contact them for interviews, which I did. Most of these contacts participated in my research. This contact led to additional participants in the study who are more removed from ‘the city’ and who don’t participate in the farmer’s markets in the area, allowing greater access to different viewpoints and experiences.

Additional interviewees were identified using a combination of purposive/judgment sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive/judgment sampling allows me as a researcher to make the best decision I can concerning who to interview and involve in the study in order to gain the greatest possible insight into the issue in a representative population with maximum variation (Tracy 2020). I used this strategy while initially seeking participants for my study at the Teton Valley Farmer’s Market. I chose individuals who vary in age, gender, products and items for sale, as well as their approachability and willingness to communicate with me. Snowball sampling is used when a researcher asks initial participants for suggestions of who to interview

next (Tracy 2020). I had planned to employ this method of sampling, but before I could ask at the end of each interview, the participants listed off names and phone numbers of the people they felt would be beneficial to the study. For my exploratory research, I conducted six semi-structured interviews with eleven people who are/were farmers/ranchers for varying lengths of time in Teton Valley ranging from less than two years to over sixty. My being from Idaho and having a history of farming/ranching family in the state carried a lot of weight with the individuals, whether they had spent their lives in the state, or not.

In the spring, summer, and fall of 2022, I completed my field research by conducting an additional seven interviews with twelve farming/ranching individuals, one interview with an individual involved in the regional land trust and two informal interviews with individuals who work on small-scale farms in the Valley. These participants were recruited primarily through previous connections and through the farmer's market. I had the opportunity to follow up with several of the farmers/ranchers I had interviewed previously, which allowed me insight into how the year had progressed for them and if they had noticed changes within the Valley that they felt were impacting them differently than before. All of the interviews flowed smoothly in an easy, conversational tone. While I had my interview guide and made sure to address the questions in each interview, often the conversations flowed naturally to provide answers to all of the questions without me having to specifically ask each of them. I tried to give enough time for the participants to speak their minds with the topics we covered by including intentional periods of silence. This allowed for additional insights into the things that they considered important in the study, rather than limiting it to the things I thought were important.

All of the participants verbally consented to participate and all except one agreed to have the interviews audio recorded. They were all informed of their voluntary participation in the

study and that they had the right to not answer questions that made them uncomfortable and the right to stop the recording and/or the interview at any point if they no longer wished to participate. Once I had the interviews recorded, I uploaded them to otter.ai transcription software to convert them to text files. I checked over the transcriptions carefully while comparing them to the audio recordings and made corrections to the texts as needed. I then used manual coding and computer-aided coding to identify salient themes through the interviews.

I started with *in vivo* codes (Tracy2020) which I identified through listening to and reading each interview. I used sticky notes and manually wrote ideas/feelings and/or topics that participants discussed with me under each code, separating and reorganizing the ideas/feelings into different code categories as needed, using the constant comparative method (Tracy 2020). I separated these into topics by change, experiences of changes, concerns, and aspects of subjective well-being. I then used Microsoft Word to organize chunks of quotes from participants by similarity in the ideas/feelings and by the topic discussed. After this, I color-coded each applicable line from the quotes for each coded theme that I identified in the manual coding. This allowed me to see the data arranged in both similar topics and/or ideas/feelings as well as how that data fit into the identified coded themes, giving specific examples for each code and revealing the answers for my research questions.

3.4 Participant Observation

I conducted participant observation in person before, during, and after the interviews and during the twelve weekend trips I made to the Valley to find participants and conduct the interviews. I also spent a month living in the Valley from June to July in 2022. This allowed me to participate in and attend community events, like the balloon festival, local rodeos, farmers'

markets, etc..., and observe community behavior on a broader scale by visiting local businesses and popular hiking trails throughout the Valley. I kept detailed field notes of each day that I was in the Valley and of the context surrounding each interview I conducted. This month in the Valley also allowed me to have casual conversations with multiple individuals there, longtime locals, newcomers, protestors, and tourists alike.

In addition to in-person participant observation, I also conducted over 100 hours of online participant observation by observing community discussions and interactions on social media. I primarily conducted this online participant observation on several public Teton Valley Community groups on Facebook. I found the online participant observation to be extremely helpful in identifying issues that were impacting the community as a whole, which helped me to be more fluid in the conversations I had with locals in person. Another benefit of the online participant observation was that individuals seemed much more comfortable discussing issues in a more blunt and direct fashion than they would be in person. Most of the people in Teton Valley try to present themselves as being welcoming and friendly. This presentation is important in a rural community that is dependent on tourists for survival. While no one online was blatantly unfriendly or mean, community issues were discussed in a direct fashion largely without the concern of saving face. Online, feelings about community issues were openly discussed, both positive and negative, and people seemed more confident in expressing their feelings than they seemed to be in a face-to-face setting. The limitations of this type of participant observation were that it only allowed for insights into the community members' experiences who are parts of these groups and that it was difficult to decipher the individuals' length of time in the Valley, their occupations, and the contexts behind their posts, unless these things were expressly stated in the posts.

3.5 Why Ethnography?

I chose to present my research findings in an ethnographic format. The benefits of ethnography include the ability to present research findings in a fashion that largely maintains participant voice through using their own words in frequent quotes. Additionally, ethnography allows me to provide important context surrounding the interactions, including thick descriptions (Geertz 1973) which express the emotions and non-verbal communications that took place during and surrounding the interviews. Also, because the focus of my research is subjective in nature, I feel that ethnography provides the opportunity to present the findings in a way that honors that subjectivity as much as possible. While I'm not saying that this ethnography is free from my own biases, it is an authentic way to share participants' lived experiences.

Chapter 4: Changes in Teton Valley

To better understand the effects of amenity in-migration on farmer/rancher subjective well-being, I asked participants about the changes they've noticed in the Valley and if/how they feel those changes are impacting their lives. The changes described and experienced by farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley can be separated into economic, landscape and social categories. However, it is important to understand that while these categories can be separated from one another for organizational purposes, the reality is that they are each multifaceted and deeply interconnected. Changes in one category bring about changes in the others as well. I will highlight the landscape, economic, and social changes described by farmers/ranchers in that order, as that is the common order of emergence in each of the interviews.

4.1 Landscape Changes

After asking what changes they've noticed in the Valley, I was not surprised to first hear about landscape changes. I had noticed these changes as well, when I compared the current Teton Valley to my memories of the Valley when I was a child. The landscape changes in Teton Valley were a salient theme in discussions with my research participants, given the participants' strong connection to the Valley and the length of time they've spent living in the Valley, some having spent their entire lives there. Most individuals remarked "It's tough to even know where to start." Various emotions, including sorrow, frustration, and disbelief danced across their faces as they took a deep breath and began to talk about the changing landscape, often with a pained tone and frequently teary eyes. With brows furrowed, they described how the Valley is nearly unrecognizable to them now with the construction of new buildings, as old familiar farms, ranches, and open spaces transition into apartment complexes or large, sprawling houses with

pristine lawns. Views they used to enjoy of mountains, rivers, and open spaces are no longer visible, completely different than before, altered by buildings, vehicles, seemingly permanent construction equipment, and never-ending flows of people. For individuals who've spent most of their lives in the Valley, heavy mourning sets in as they reminisce on the way the Valley used to look. One individual stated:

“Before the growth, there were definitely separate towns. I mean, you could see Tetonia, Driggs, Alta, and Victor, and you knew everybody's yard lights. You would come down off of Harris Hill, which is on the west end of the valley, the Northwest end. And you could see, distinctly, the separate communities at night. And you could say, ‘Oh, yeah, that's so and so's’ and ‘Oh yep there's, so and so's’ because you knew the yard lights. That’s gone. It’s gone. It will never be like that here again. We knew it would change a little bit when Grand Targhee opened and that there'd be a lot of people coming in for skiing but we never dreamed it would be like this.”

Houses, apartment complexes, and new businesses have been constructed which blend the previously distinct cities together. The only thing physically separating these cities from one another now are the posted signs which indicate that you've entered another place. Trying to distinguish between the towns at night is no longer possible. This rapid growth and change is concerning for individuals with agricultural livelihoods. A farmer/rancher shared:

“There's been a lot of development in the county over the past few years. A lot of really good farmland is becoming subdivisions. It's kind of been hard to reconcile with that because there are farmers out here who are losing ground to subdivisions, and it's a really hard pill to swallow.”

Another individual lamented:

“It’s not just all the buildings going up. Even the river looks different. We haven't been down on the Teton River or floated that in years. I mean, it seems like there's some sections of the river that are almost bumper to bumper rafts, kayaks, float tubes, you know, it's crazy. It's exactly like the lazy river at an amusement park now.”

According to the individuals I spoke with, part of mourning the physical changes which have already taken place in the Valley is the recognition that even more changes are necessary and forthcoming. For example, the small towns in Teton Valley weren’t constructed with heavy traffic flow in mind. The main road connecting the towns together is a two lane highway which is now congested and packed full of traffic more often than not. An individual worried:

“There are increased stresses and pressures on infrastructures, and things like that, that the community wasn't set up for. You know, just because of the amount of traffic and I don’t know whether that's been because of the population growth, or if it's just because more people are finding the West, finding the area and liking it, or tourism, but we've had three traffic fatalities in Tetonia so far this summer. We just have such increased traffic and, you know, our highways are not set up to handle that much traffic. So the county and the state, they're dealing with that and trying to work through things and come up with some solutions. And it's one of those things that has to happen. It’s not safe.”

Another issue farmers/ranchers have with the development of lands around their farms/ranches is when the surrounding parcels of land are cleared and prepped for development projects that end up not happening as/when planned. When this occurs, the land is often left open and unkempt and quickly becomes overrun with weeds which spread rapidly into fields,

interfering with intentionally planted crops and adding additional work for farmers/ranchers who are responsible for managing weed growth on their properties. This often leads to increased frustration and tension between farmers/ranchers and developers. One individual explained:

“There is an ordinance that you do have to have some kind of weed management in the Valley. And it's hard because we have two parcels that are kind of butted up against one of those failed developments. There are currently two people building there, but there are a lot of parcels that aren't maintained, and up until this year that had not even been sprayed. So we were getting weeds from this big development that was just festering with them. We're kind of downwind depending on whichever way it blows. Like if the wind was blowing from [this direction], we were getting it on our land that way. And then when the wind switched and blew from [that direction], we were getting it on the other side. It's been an uphill battle managing weeds and trying to do it as organically and as affordably as possible.”

Concerns about the financial burdens of land management lead into broader concerns about the changing economy.

4.2 Economic Changes

There is a narrative in the Valley that I heard in each interview and many informal conversations I had: The billionaires are forcing the millionaires out of [nearby] Jackson Hole, so now the millionaires are forcing the ‘normal’ people out of Teton Valley. The increasing number of wealthy newcomers in the Valley is causing significant economic changes in the community. There are both consequences and benefits for longtime locals with the influx of new money. The disproportionate income gap between newcomers and longtime locals privileges newcomers over

longtime locals in multiple ways and results in changes to financially vulnerable individuals' accessibility to vital resources, like housing and food, resulting in a forced out migration of longtime locals because they can't afford to live there anymore. One farmer/rancher shared:

“There are major housing issues here and there are a lot of restaurant and hospitality positions that are unfilled because those positions can't pay people enough to be able to afford to live here. Insane gas prices make it impossible for them to commute here. Being so heavily reliant on tourism and hospitality on one hand, and 'ag' on the other isn't a sustainable way to build a thriving community. It leads to tension from the changing demographic and the changing economy. It's a challenge Valley wide. How can we ensure that we're not Jackson? How can we ensure that the folks that want to live here are able to live here, that they're able to find housing and able to find childcare? We try to be as fair as possible with our own employees, but it seems impossible to pay them a livable wage with our own costs and with housing and everything else here being so expensive now.”

Although many farmers and ranchers see wealth disparities grow in the Valley, those who sell products at the farmer's markets have seen the newcomers' money as a boon. Farmers and ranchers mention increased feelings of support, appreciation, and encouragement from newcomers at the markets. The drive to 'buy local' comes with the perception and desire to buy 'better' and 'healthier', more natural foods which has prompted some farmers/ranchers to seek certifications which align with newcomers' values in order to advertise a perceived higher quality of the goods they sell. Organic, certified-humane, certified gluten-free, and other such certifications are pricey to obtain but if the profit is worth it, and they have the available funds to

do so, farmers and ranchers acquire them for increased revenue and business. One individual enthusiastically exclaimed:

“The [farmer’s] markets have been excellent! [Newcomers] brought with them a strong desire to buy local and have lots of money to do so! The past few years have been the best we’ve ever had as far as the markets go.”

Another challenge resulting from higher costs of living is the access to food in the Valley, even for the food producers. The majority of the individuals I spoke with reported that they drive to Idaho Falls, 76 miles away, to obtain the groceries and necessities that they’re not able to produce themselves because of higher prices for the items in the Valley. The farmer’s markets offer an opportunity to slightly offset this financial burden as many of the farmers and ranchers who participate in the markets have a trade system set up with one another. One individual shares:

“We all trade with each other before the market opens for the public. It’s great! We can get many of the things we want but don’t grow or make ourselves. It benefits all of us because money is tight for all of us. It has been a saving grace for us personally because we can get the things we want by trading the things we have without any money involved.”

Financial optimism is fairly isolated with the more successful farmer’s markets as most other aspects of selling products have gotten more competitive, restrictive, and expensive. Some of the individuals who’ve been priced out of the Valley had businesses that were essential for farmers and ranchers, especially those that dealt with food/food product processing. Regardless of the newcomers’ desire to buy local and ‘plenty’ of money to do so, the recent lack of

processing facilities in the Valley greatly impacts farmers' and ranchers' ability to sell the products of their labor. Some farmers and ranchers I spoke with have to transport their animals/animal products to Twin Falls, over 200 miles away, for processing. This is very expensive and requires them to sell the final products at a much higher price in order to make any profit at all, further compounding high food prices in the Valley. There are some workarounds to this, such as using a local non-USDA certified butcher which is not ideal as it results in limited sales options and decreased profit due to federal regulations.

I saw this issue first hand when I arrived for one interview shortly after the mobile butcher left. I pulled up to the property and found them heading out to the pen to bottle feed a baby animal. I was excited about it, but they were frustrated because it's a male. They saw the need to bottle feed it as a burden and a waste of finances. They showed me the different animals they have on the property and mentioned that the butcher had just come and 'taken' as many of the males as they had open slots for. There is a large demand in the Valley for butchers, and, while they went with a local one who isn't USDA certified so are unable to sell this as meat due to federal regulations, they were happy to have the extra males gone. They looked at the ground and pointed to the spot where the butcher had a pen set up to kill them. I couldn't see any blood or signs of struggle they had in their final moments. The individual seemed troubled, sighed and kicked the dirt around a bit then explained:

"I can't even sell it as meat because the butcher isn't USDA certified. If I have someone lined up ahead of time who wants it, I can sell it to them as a whole animal before it goes off to the butcher. It doesn't give us much profit doing it that way, but it gives us a little. I can't ever watch them kill the [animals]. Even knowing it's happening makes me feel sick. We can't afford to keep the [males]. It costs too much to feed them. We eat the meat

and we give it to friends and family who want it. It's the best solution I have with the resources we have available now."

The economic shift away from agriculture in the Valley has left many farmers and ranchers feeling pressured to sell their land, creating a rift between those who 'sell-out' and those who stay. Some farming/ranching families find themselves in heated disputes over land rights and land ownership with extended family members. Oftentimes, the land is legally split between multiple siblings when it is handed down, but only one sibling stays to work the land because it can't support multiple families. The recent, drastic increase in land value has caused long distant siblings to surface in the Valley, wanting to cash out on their share. One individual, overcome with emotion, revealed through tears:

"They've had nothing to do with this land whatsoever. For all these years we've poured our sweat, blood, and tears into this dirt, fighting and struggling to make a living. Now they show up and want us to buy them out of their share or sell it. We don't have that kind of money and there's no way we can survive on one-third of the land we've been working up to now. I have no idea how we're going to make it through this, but all they care about is getting money."

Compounding these economic changes that farmers and ranchers in the Valley are facing are the myriad of social changes.

4.3 Social Changes

Among farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley, there are rampant concerns about the integrity of the social fabric of the community in the midst of the many changes taking place.

Longtime locals considered the Valley to be a religious place and shared feelings of concern with the shifting population which, according to the religious individuals I spoke with, is not as religious as they would like it to be. Religious connections offer feelings of community for those who are involved and create out-groups of others who are not involved. As one individual shared:

“It used to be very, very conservative and very religious. And, you know, it's not the case anymore. The Valley has lost its way as it has grown away from its religious roots. We're close with the people we go to church with but it seems like there are so many people here who don't attend now.”

Because small-scale farmers and ranchers feel that their livelihoods are threatened with the changes that are happening, newcomers who move to the Valley to pursue agricultural livelihoods are often warmly welcomed by them. While these newcomers normally avoid the stigma associated with non-agricultural newcomers, they still face stigma. Because newcomer farmers are purchasing and operating farms with significantly less acreage than traditional farms in the Valley, they are locally labeled as “hobby farmers” and their voice holds less weight in social and public settings. Some of these individuals shared that even the local politicians refer to them as “hobby farmers” and don't take their concerns or opinions seriously because they're not considered to be “real farmers.” As one frustrated individual shared:

“I'm hoping that small farmers, especially new ones, are not discouraged by local leaders, especially this one commissioner, who keep calling us hobby farmers. I was like, this is not my hobby. Believe me, this is not my hobby.”

Like many rural areas in the United States, especially in the Intermountain West, farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley have traditionally been more conservative with political ideations generally leaning Republican. The majority of newcomers are moving from heavily populated urban areas from blue states and as such, they typically have different political leanings. In each interview, I was told about ‘huge political issues and divides’ that are present in the Valley, but no one wanted to get into details about those in fear of backlash. A dominant narrative that I was told repeatedly is that newcomers ‘ruined where they came from with their politics’ and there is fear that the same thing will happen in the Valley. As one individual revealed:

“The new people coming in are changing the face of the Valley. And I'm kind of torn because new people coming in means more revenue, more income. As long as they don't bring the politics that ruined wherever they're coming from, I'm okay with them being here.”

Another individual shared:

“We just want an apolitical Valley, but folks are really becoming more political and polarized in their politics, which is interesting, but also a little scary. It's a lot more volatile. There's a lot more prickliness, a lot more prickliness in folks, which is sad because we're neighbors. These political changes and political difficulties could potentially really tear our community apart, and really make things difficult to just have good relationships with folks.”

With many newcomers working remotely, they are perceived to have more flexibility in their daily schedules. This privilege of ‘free time’ allows them to participate in local politics more frequently than individuals with agricultural livelihoods feel they can. Newcomers’ civic

involvement coupled with their financial advantages over others in the Valley fuels farmers' and ranchers' concerns for the political stability and integrity within the community. Accusations of local politicians being 'bought out by the money' and 'turning their backs' on individuals with agricultural livelihoods are prominent, in both in-person and online settings. The Teton County Land Development Code, often referred to as the "Comprehensive Plan" by locals, was constructed to establish rules and regulations for how land can and can't be used. The Code creates zones for all property types in the Valley with specific rules for each zone and regulates the number of times a parcel of land can be divided, minimum acreage for land parcels, maximum height and location on the property for new buildings constructed, and limits where equipment and buildings can be placed on the property to increase roadway visibility (TCLDC 2022). Many individuals in the Valley shared feelings of support for the Code, claiming that it will help control development, promote ecological health, and increase roadway safety. However, farming/ranching individuals largely feel overlooked, forgotten, and unrepresented in Teton Valley politics and to them the recent land development code feels like a direct attack on their livelihoods.

"They're making it harder to be a small farmer/rancher here and it was already plenty hard enough! I hope we'll get new officials in that will get rid of the code. It is an attack on ag people in a place that used to only exist because of ag people. We need at least some people in leadership that have got the same mindset as us and who realize and know that farming and ranching is a very key element in what makes Teton Valley, Teton Valley. Who are they to tell me what I can and can't do on my own land?"

Farming/ranching individuals who have come from other places or have different political ideations have different opinions about the code. They generally feel that while the code

could be potentially limiting in future growth options for agricultural operations in the Valley, the reality of what the code is and does is completely overshadowed by how the code has been ‘politicized’ and how individuals who “haven’t even read it” are “weaponizing it as an attack on their freedom.” Rural individuals’ mindsets and opinions can be surprising for individuals who didn’t grow up in rural areas, as one newcomer shares:

“I grew up in suburbia. The land development code meeting was my first time really seeing opinions that can happen in rural America. It was shocking for me. They’re different than mine and that’s all I’ll say.”

Rural individuals can have a difficult time understanding wealthy urban individuals’ mindsets as well, leaving some individuals who’ve spent most of their lives in the Valley shocked with how newcomers behave in their hometown.

4.4 Elite Access Mentality

In many interviews and conversations with longtime locals and farmers/ranchers in the Valley, I was repeatedly told how ‘different’ the newcomers are. Given the political division and heatedness present in the Valley, I assumed they meant differences along those lines, but I was quickly corrected in my thinking by a farmer/rancher who clarified:

“Other types of individuals are moving in. Their money makes them different. They’re really different from us, not just financially. Their thoughts, their expectations of what they want. They’re just completely different from us. You wouldn’t believe how they act.”

I made a mental note to watch for differences in the behavior of newcomers, but it didn't take long for me to understand what they were talking about. While browsing the cereal aisle of the local grocery store, I was caught off guard by a booming voice. I peeked around the corner and saw that the voice belonged to a man who was dressed too Western to be a local- a perfectly pressed button up Western shirt tucked neatly into flawless jeans, with no wallet or chew can marks on the back pockets, which were held up by a leather belt with no buckle or visible wear, and fancy cowboy boots that looked like they just came off the shelf and had never seen a speck of dirt. The man's voice boomed again: "Hey, [shortened version of the name on the nearest cashier's nametag]! Which aisle is the ketchup on?" The cashier was caught off guard as they were busy ringing up someone's groceries and likely not expecting a shortened version of their name to be called out by a stranger. "Come on [shortened name]. Where's the ketchup?!" This man's voice was dominating and he barely gave pause between his demands. The cashier realized they were the person the man was addressing and started stuttering, a bit surprised to be called out that way. The man started clapping his hands in an effort to further deliver his words. "Come on [shortened name] *clap* which *clap* aisle *clap* is *clap* the *clap* ketchup *clap* on?!?" The cashier replied with an uncertain, "Aisle three, I think." and the man said: "I hope you're right, [shortened name]." Then disappeared down aisle three. I was blown away by this exchange, but the people in the store quickly resumed normal functions like nothing strange happened at all.

I finished getting the few groceries I needed, making a point to avoid aisle three like the plague, then headed to the front to check out. As the worker was ringing up my groceries, a customer in the next line over, who was also being rung up, turned around and told the worker who was bagging my groceries that she needed help right away because she forgot to grab

something. She pointedly commanded the worker, who was in the middle of bagging my groceries, to stop what she was doing and go grab the item she forgot. The bagger nodded and skittered off to grab the item for the domineering woman. I looked at the worker ringing up my groceries, but they kept their head down then took over bagging them up. They didn't say anything about it and their body language made it clear that they didn't want to talk about it. I thanked them profusely and loaded the groceries in my cart to leave. I was completely flabbergasted. I had never seen behavior like that before. I must have had a strange look on my face because an employee near me shook their head and said, "This happens more often than you'd think now".

A few days later, I decided to go to a popular hiking trail. It was very busy and the parking lot was nearly full. Once I was on the trail, I fell into step with the numerous other hikers enjoying the scenery around us. Soon, I found myself behind two individuals who were decked out in expensive, high-tech hiking gear- walking poles, rugged mountain boots, helmets, day packs, Camelbaks, cameras, and HD sunglasses- who were very vocal in their disapproval of the number of people on the trail. "We moved here to get away from people and enjoy nature. We didn't come here to be shoulder-to-shoulder with a crowd of people in the mountains." The other nodded in agreement and said: "They should really charge a fee to access the trails. Like a hiking pass or something. That would at least limit the number of people who are here." The first agreed enthusiastically and added: "And you should have to prove you own a house in the Valley to buy one." They took up as much space as possible, angling their poles wide on the trail to limit the number of people who could be near them, quickly vocalizing distaste for anyone who got too close to them, even if they were just trying to pass by them.

During my time in the Valley and while conducting online participant observation, I saw many other similar instances of this behavior, including this 10pm post on one of the social media platforms:

“We just moved to the Valley last month and I need a homemade birthday cake by tomorrow. We don’t eat store-bought cake. I know someone here can do this for me. I have money to pay you! Get in touch with me to make this happen.”

Each time I observed this behavior, I was surprised that no one called them out for their shocking and inconsiderate actions.

Environmental privilege, the unequal access to natural amenities and freedom from environmental responsibility which privileges wealthy individuals over others (Murphy 2016), explains newcomers’ presence in the Valley. These wealthy individuals believe their money gives them the right to have access to beautiful spaces without the burden of maintaining those spaces or dealing with the consequences of poor environmental management (Murphy 2016). While the behavior I observed in some wealthy newcomers in Teton Valley is similar to what you would expect to find within environmental privilege, there are some significant differences in the behavior and mindset associated with individuals who exhibited this behavior. As I was unable to find any literature that addresses this behavior and mentality, I came up with the term Elite Access Mentality to describe it.

Elite Access Mentality (EAM) is a combination of expectation, entitlement, and hyper-individualism which leads wealthy individuals to believe that they have the right to, and immediate ownership of, anything they want that they have the money to pay for. They strongly believe that their wants supersede other’s wants and/or needs, to the point that cultural

expectations of social conduct are entirely disregarded. Within EAM, individuals not only expect to have whatever they want, they expect to gain access to the desired object as quickly and effortlessly as possible, often demanding others, who they perceive to be below themselves, to immediately assist them in the acquisition, no matter how inconvenient it may be for the others. From my observations, EAM can cause discord between newcomers and locals in rural communities in the context of amenity migration, resulting in the failed integration of newcomers and a continuous segregation of the populations.

4.5 Brainstorming Solutions

Many of the individuals I spoke with saw the challenges they're facing as a result of these changes as a personal responsibility and shared that they need to "figure out a way to make it work" by increasing the intensity of their livelihood diversification efforts, or that small-scale agricultural livelihoods in the Valley are a 'lost cause' until they garner the support of local politicians and leaders who could change codes/ordinances to be more in their favor. However, some participants shared ideas they have of how to create a better community among small-scale farmers/ranchers in the Valley and how to ease the financial and personal stressors they are facing.

One idea shared with me is the formation of a co-operative equipment library that would allow farmers/ranchers to borrow equipment instead of each operation individually purchasing and maintaining the necessary equipment. This would help ease the financial burden placed on farmers/ranchers and offer an opportunity to connect with other agricultural individuals that they may not normally interact with. Another idea shared with me is the creation of a call-list consisting of farmers/ranchers in the Valley who are knowledgeable and willing to help cover

work tasks in the event of an individual's illness or desire to take some time off. This would allow peace of mind and better self-care for farmers/ranchers who normally do not have anyone to cover the seemingly endless tasks that need to be done, regardless of their health. This would also create/reestablish a sense of connectedness, trust, and support among farmers/ranchers in the Valley through their reciprocated efforts which would allow them to take time off when needed/desired.

While nothing has been put into action yet, there are some ideas of how farmers/ranchers can adapt to the changing conditions brought by the landscape, economic, and social changes resulting from amenity migration. As demonstrated above, these changes are deeply felt and significantly experienced by farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley. Understanding how farmers and ranchers define and construct subjective well-being can give insight into the level of influence these changes have had on livelihoods and communities.

Chapter 5: Farmer/Rancher Subjective Well-Being in Teton Valley

5.1 Farmers' and Ranchers' Definition of Subjective Well-Being

When I asked farmers and ranchers how they would define subjective well-being, there was often a long pause as they thought about their response. While their individual definitions vary slightly, as one might expect, one word is repeated in each of them: balance. This may initially seem like a simple definition but it sufficiently summarizes how the farmers and ranchers that I spoke with in Teton Valley conceptualize subjective well-being. One individual defined well-being:

“You have to have balance. Between work, between life, between everything that needs you, the land, the animals. Because you need all of those things, too. If things aren’t balanced, nothing can be well.”

Another individual shared their definition:

“Well-being means you have peace in your heart and you can’t have peace if you don’t have balance in life. Life pulls you so many different ways and you have to find a way to balance all of it. That’s the only way you can be well.”

Another definition given was:

“Well-being is avoiding burn-out and the only way you can avoid burn-out is by having balance. This is exhausting work and it’s only getting more complicated and challenging with everything changing. You have to find a way to balance everything or you can’t be well.”

One individual's questions for clarification reveal the complexity of this concept.

“Well-being for who or what? For us? Our animals? Our land? Other [farms/ranches]?

The Valley? It's all connected. I don't know how you could separate those. We all depend on each other, living or not, for anything to be well.”

Prior to my time conducting research in Teton Valley, I didn't understand or appreciate the depth of connectedness or the challenge of maintaining balance between all aspects of their lives that farmers and ranchers face. This isn't a 9-5 job that they can separate themselves from once they've put in their hours. Every minute of their day, and often their night, is infused with the demands of their livelihoods. While everyone I interviewed was friendly and welcoming, I was very aware of the fact that the time they spent talking with me delayed the tasks they still had to complete. They checked the position of the sun in the sky more often than they checked watches/clocks and creases of stress/worry promptly appeared on their foreheads. They were still physically present with me, but their minds briefly joined their animals and/or land that still needed them. There wasn't an interview that occurred without animals present- dogs and cattle closely observing us, chickens bedding down in the dirt at our feet, goats repeatedly escaping, honey bees buzzing around our heads- and while most of the interviews lasted an hour, within that hour there were multiple times the participants had to stop and see to the animals' needs. The demands of their livelihoods infiltrate the inside of their homes as well.

Blankets, muddy boots, gloves, coats, hats, flashlights, ropes, bottles, and other various items sit by their doors, ready to grab at a moment's notice, regardless of the time or weather, to help an animal in need. Individuals who participate in farmer's markets have boxes of signs, tablecloths, baskets, business cards, and other materials nearby as well. I arrived for an interview

the day before a market and I felt almost claustrophobic when I entered the small home. There was a walkable path through the connected kitchen and living room, but the rest of the space was filled with something productive. Every available outlet had some kind of machine plugged into it, bread makers, crock pots, mixers. A spinning wheel and weaving loom took up nearly the entire living room, with a colorful handwoven blanket in progress. A mountain of dishes and pans overflowed from the sink onto the surrounding countertops. A sweet smell escaped from the oven which was busy baking something to sell the next day, further heating the already uncomfortably warm space. Piles of books about animals, farming, and business lined the walls on either side of a wood chair, the only place to sit in the space at the moment. A stack of bags and labels sat next to one of the three cooling racks set up on the remaining counter space. The individual wiped sweat off their forehead with their forearm and said, “There’s a lot more work to do when the markets are going.” Their lives and their homes are consumed by their livelihoods.

Given the many directions farming and ranching individuals feel pulled, due to livelihood, family, social, and diversification demands, it seems logical that they define subjective well-being as maintaining balance. However, it seems difficult to maintain something if you struggle to achieve it in the first place. The domains of subjective well-being which emerged from my research provide insight into how farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley conceptualize and construct subjective well-being, and the challenges they face in obtaining it.

5.2 Emergent Domains of Subjective Well-Being

Because subjective well-being is, as it states, subjective, the definitions, constructions, and experiences of different aspects of subjective well-being can vary greatly. Given this, I utilized emergent themes from the collected data to understand how small-scale farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley conceptualize and experience subjective well-being. While these domains can be separated for organizational purposes, it is important to understand that they are interdependent and deeply interconnected. Below, I will discuss the emergent subjective well-being domains from my research: Livelihood Preservation, Navigating Survival, Sense of Belonging, Environmental Well-Being, and Community Cohesion.

Livelihood Preservation

Livelihood Preservation is constructed on concerns for the stability of the future for agricultural livelihoods in Teton Valley. This includes issues related to their individual operations as well as all other small-scale agricultural operations in the Valley. Aspects of this domain include concerns about newcomers' acceptance of their livelihoods, concerns for the length of time that they will be physically able to continue their work, what will happen to their operation when they're no longer able to manage their workloads, concerns for social connections that are required to continue their operation, what the future of the community will look like with the decreasing number of farms/ranches in the Valley, and whether their livelihoods are sustainable in the changing economic structure within the Valley given the increasing presence of "Big Ag" operations and 'losing' land to development.

One individual remarked:

“A changing of the guard is happening a little bit. And that makes us a little nervous for the long term health of this community. You know, I think people who are coming in, I'm sure they have something they can offer to the community. But we do worry about losing hard working, diligent, creative people. But I'm sure there's some more moving in. But at the same time, it's just a question mark. How will this community shift as all these new things happen?”

There are differing views on what the future of farming/ranching looks like in the Valley. There is a clear divide between newcomer farmers/ranchers and old-timer farmers/ranchers with newcomers being more optimistic and old-timers being more pessimistic. A newcomer shared their thoughts:

“I think it looks promising. I think there's gonna be a lot more of it at small scales. I think it's going to increase like crazy, actually. And not because of financial reasons, but because we're going to need it. I do see some farmers struggling for sure. Some farms will be affected. I think the bigger you are, and the more tied you are to intermediaries or commodities, the more struggles you'll have because that's a very vulnerable place.”

On the other side of the spectrum, individuals don't feel so optimistic about the future of agricultural livelihoods in the Valley. An old-timer dejectedly shared:

“We're a dying breed. There's been a lot of people that have sold out from when I was growing up. Any type of agriculture from farming, to ranching, to dairy, I see some of the other counties and see how their agriculture is still flourishing. It's not happening here. It's nowhere near what it was and what it could have been or should be. But the demographics and the people are changing. And so, what do you do? You make the best

of what you got. Especially the last two or three years, you can make way more money selling your property than you ever can selling your cattle or farming. You can't blame those individuals. You can't blame somebody for wanting to try to improve their lives and do better.”

Another old-timer shared:

“We're no longer an agricultural valley because people have not been able to withstand the pressure [to sell] and it's sad. It's really sad to me. There's just housing developments everywhere. I can't stand it. It's really changed.”

Honest self-reflection and the reality of mortality also influences their outlooks, as one individual stated:

“It concerns me how long I can do this, and my age makes me more concerned with the aches and pains, and just getting older. We’re killing ourselves to do this. I feel like this work is always stress.”

Maintaining balance appears in this domain as farmers and ranchers try to balance their own physical limitations and the limitations placed on their livelihoods through the shift away from agriculture in the Valley in an effort to continue with their livelihoods. Landscape changes impact this domain through the decrease of agricultural land due to development which is further fueled by the temptation for farmers/ranchers to sell for financial prosperity. Compounding this, individuals are faced with economic changes, such as increased prices to live and work in the Valley which results in an increased demand on their workload and output. These changes are intertwined with social changes as they perceive that community values are shifting and the

number of individuals with agricultural livelihoods is decreasing, resulting in decreased social connections which farmers/ranchers require to maintain their livelihoods. The desire and associated challenges to preserve livelihoods results in a need to navigate survival in a changing Valley.

Navigating Survival

Navigating Survival refers to farmers' and ranchers' concerns for being able to keep their agricultural operations functioning in the wake of the economic shifts that are taking place in Teton Valley. This domain includes individuals' concerns for having the financial means to take care of animals, deciding how many animals to keep because of increasing feed prices, brainstorming ways of intensifying livelihood diversification for additional income sources, deciding what and when to cut back on personal needs in order to maintain their operation, and investing in new skills to increase diversification.

Sacrifices are part of survival when finances get tight, especially when you have animals to care for that you are dependent on for income. A participant explained:

“I’m being a little more careful with the money. Because I just don’t know what’s going to be happening. And I’ve got to make sure I have enough to feed my animals and to take care of my animals. So there’s things I’m not gonna buy for myself, because I want to make sure I have plenty for my animals. We’re going to be butchering off a bunch of them just because of how much feed costs. It breaks my heart to have to do that, but I don’t know how else we can survive financially.”

Efforts to increase diversification to bring in as much extra income as possible include establishing and building agricultural connections in other states to reach a bigger customer base, teaming up with local businesses to hold combined public events, expanding to online platforms to sell products, embracing agritourism, and finding ways to ‘get creative’ to come up with additional ways of making money with minimal input. One couple I interviewed had five off-property jobs between them just to make ends meet and keep their operation going. They shared, “I have no desire to get rich. I just want to be able to pay my bills and be comfortable.”

The ability to diversify is consistently seen as a make-or-break point of survival in the Valley. As one individual claimed:

“We’ve had to get creative. We’ve had to brainstorm new ways of making it work. You can’t expect to just do things the traditional way. You won’t make it if you do that. It doesn’t work anymore here. It’s not impossible to live this type of life, but you have to be flexible and willing to change. Change is inevitable. You can either fight against it and struggle or you can work with it and survive.”

Farmers and ranchers struggle to maintain balance as they weigh their own needs against the needs of their animals and operations within the changing economy. As landscape changes impact the Valley, farmers and ranchers are limited in their ability to diversify because of the decrease in workable land. In addition, the increase in development of the land surrounding theirs limits their hours of operation due to the noise of equipment and/or animals and the rising costs of living and maintaining their livelihoods requires them to increase their profit just to survive. They navigate survival by aligning their livelihoods with the preferences of a changing

customer base, which results in farmers and ranchers questioning their sense of belonging within the changing Valley.

Sense of Belonging

Sense of Belonging is constructed on farmers' and ranchers' feelings and beliefs about whether they as individuals, or individuals with agricultural livelihoods in general, belong in the rapidly changing Valley that is shifting away from its agricultural foundation. An interesting and consistent variation in the construction of these feelings or beliefs occurs based on the length of time these individuals have been farming/ranching in the Valley. Individuals who've been in the Valley for under ten years primarily construct their sense of belonging on social ties they have in the area, whereas individuals who've been in the Valley for over ten years primarily construct their sense of belonging on the land ties they have. An individual who has been farming/ranching in the Valley less than ten years shared:

"I don't think I belong here quite yet. It's not home yet. I think that will change once we get more of a social group here. It's hard because we work 24/7, you know? It's hard to socialize and make friends with other like minded people when we're all so busy. I think we're getting that on the right track now that the pandemic is over, but we're not quite part of the Valley yet."

An individual who has been farming/ranching in the Valley for over ten years shared:

"We belong here. This is home. Our blood, sweat, and tears are in this ground. Our roots are planted here. This is still home, even if it's changing."

Another old-timer stated:

“We belong here because of our connection to the land. It's a deeply spiritual interaction. Sometimes it's like a friend. Sometimes it's like a benefactor. Sometimes it's like a mother. Sometimes it's like a lover. We get the full range of emotions from our interactions with the land. And that's an amazing richness. When you love the land, you want to do what's best for it. You don't want to harm it. We have a responsibility to take care of it and protect it. That's why we're here. This is where we belong.”

Maintaining balance becomes a challenge for farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley as they feel that their livelihoods, communities, and sense of place shift away from being tied to agriculture. Old-timers describe their sense of belonging as decreasing when their ties to the land change and they struggle to balance profit with their responsibility to their land and animals. The connection that farmers and ranchers feel to the land they work extends further to include feelings of responsibility for the overall health of the environment, around their property and in the Valley as a whole. The way newcomers described their sense of belonging was different from old timers in that how they create a sense of belonging is through their social ties. Many suggested that as the community changed, so did their sense of belonging.

Environmental Well-Being

Farmers and ranchers discussed the concept of Environmental Well-Being as a concern for ecological health on a Valley wide scale, not just the land they work/own. Aspects for this domain include concerns for the way land, water, and wildlife are treated, how the environment should be managed, how land and water should be used, the fairness of land use codes, and sustainable practices for the future health of the environment.

Individuals with agricultural livelihoods feel a deep connection to and responsibility for the land they work as well as the land, water, and wildlife in the area. They recognize the interconnectedness of all aspects of the environment and worry about how development and newcomers are impacting it. One individual shares:

“I don’t just feel connected to the land I work. It’s really nature in general. We need to make a living off the land, but that doesn’t mean we need to abuse it. We’re responsible for preserving the land and nature for future generations. It’s hard because some people see the land as an investment instead of a responsibility. They sell it to make money, then it gets developed, and it changes the whole environment here. People need to think about that. We should be protecting the land and the biodiversity that thrives here.”

Many non-agricultural newcomers come to the Valley with differing ideas on how the land should and shouldn’t be used. This doesn’t always align with how the land is and has been used prior to their arrival. Safety concerns and calls for environmental justice are frequently made against farmers/ranchers which can leave them feeling exasperated and confused. As one individual shares through tears:

“It feels like they’re always coming after us now. I’m just trying to make a living and do what I’ve been doing. I’m dependent on my land and my animals. I’m not going to do anything to harm them. I’m very conscious about how I’m handling things here and what kind of footprint I’m making in the environment. I do the best I can, but I feel like no one is willing to see that. They’re always coming after ag like all the problems in the Valley are our fault.”

Another individual, frustrated with a recent dispute with a newcomer over ‘chemical’ use on their field states:

“They want to call me out for ‘ruining the environment’ and ‘poisoning people’ with the treatment I put on my field. Say that I’m ‘destroying’ the Valley. What are they doing to it here? They’ve turned almost an entire field into lawn. It’s not easy to keep grass green here. How many pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers are they using, how much water are they wasting, just to grow grass?! At least I’m growing something useful.”

Farmers and ranchers share concerns for a perceived lack of respect for the environment that non-agricultural newcomers have. While many newcomers move to the area because of the natural amenities, they want to experience nature on their terms which, according to the farmers and ranchers I spoke with, don’t always include accountability for their own actions. One individual explains:

“They just leave their garbage everywhere. If they have something big to get rid of, they haul it in and leave it next to the dumpster at a local business so it’s not their problem anymore. I’m always picking up garbage now, on the edge of my property, on the sidewalks in town, by the river, on hiking trails. There are little plastic bags full of dog crap everywhere you look. Like, why even put it in a bag if you’re not going to throw it away? They just leave their garbage everywhere like it’s someone else’s job to clean up after them, then they get on their high horse about saving the environment, like they’re not doing damage themselves.”

Farmers and ranchers balance their responsibilities to the environment with the requirements of their livelihoods. Changes in the Valley, such as the loss of open space and

increased water usage as well as the environmental impact of land development impact farmers' and ranchers' abilities to live well with the environment. Compounding this problem is that wealthy newcomers to the area perceive that farmers and ranchers abuse the environment through the use of chemicals or overgrazing their livestock. These social changes in how people believe humans should interact with the environment create conflict between farmers/ranchers and newcomers and negatively impact farmers' and ranchers' well-being.

Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion is constructed on concerns for the overall well-being of the community at its core. Aspects of this domain include beliefs about what a community is or should be, what the community should provide, how people should behave within the community, individuals' importance and social positions within the community, what makes the community special and worth protecting, and the responsibility of individuals to maintain and support the community.

The constant flow of people coming in and leaving the Valley results in an ever-changing community. Individuals put a lot of effort into the achieved statuses and social positions they hold but these achievements and positions can be lost or overlooked in the constant flow of people who make up the community. As a result, individuals who are new to the area can unintentionally offend someone who has spent a significant amount of time in the Valley by failing to recognize the achieved statuses and/or social positions that old-timers hold in the community. As one old-timer shared:

“We were recently able to attend church in person again. We were really excited but when we got there, we had a bunch of people we didn't know who were welcoming us

like we were new to the area. It was offensive. I'm a major part of the social backbone here 'cause I've been here [many] years! We're not new here. They are."

Farmers and ranchers who've spent the majority of their lives in the area feel uneasy about the continual evolution of the 'face' of the community, especially as it shifts away from its agricultural foundation. The decreasing presence of like minded individuals with similar livelihoods results in increasing challenges for those who stay. One old-timer shares:

"The amount of people and this kind of growth impacts how agriculture here is because it limits what it can be. I don't think the social ties are as strong as they used to be just because there aren't as many people here doing this anymore. You used to always see people out helping other people in their fields or with livestock. You could always count on someone showing up to help out when you needed it. We used to be really close with everyone, especially our neighbors, because we were all doing similar things. We had a lot to talk about. With ag people leaving and new people coming in who want nothing to do with ag, that's changed. We have neighbors we don't even know now, at least not on friendly terms. They're sure quick to complain, though."

Small towns all have their own idiosyncrasies and forms of unspoken, expected social behaviors. This is an important display of belonging in a culture and can be offensive to people when efforts are ignored or unreciprocated, especially in cases where there is already tension between different populations within the community. One farmer/rancher explains:

"This is how we do things here. We wave to each other when we're the only cars on a dirt road. We say hello at the post office. We smile. We don't ignore each other. This is how

it is here. And we like it. We'd appreciate it if you participated in it the way we like. You don't like that? Go.”

The feeling of a cohesive community can lead to increased feelings of support and encouragement. As another individual shares:

“Having the small town community feeling is nice. There’s a lot of good people doing good work and supporting each other which helps you keep your chin up. I think ag is very much supported locally, not by the government or by the leaders, but by the community in general. We have people who thank us all the time for the work we do. We have people who inspire us and people who are inspired by us, and that’s a nice place to be. We should support each other even through our differences, and I feel like that’s happening. Probably not on the scale it should be, but it is happening.”

Farmers and ranchers strive to navigate their social positions and statuses within an ever-changing community in order to maintain balance in their livelihoods and social lives. Landscape changes influence this domain as development creates more housing for non-agricultural individuals which alters the community. The segregation of newcomers and farmers/ranchers furthers income discrepancies and social exclusion between the two populations. The increased flow of people coming and leaving the Valley presents a challenge for the farmers and ranchers who stay as they try to preserve and recreate cohesiveness within the community.

How do farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley view the quality of their lives and what are their perceptions of happiness?

5.3 Having a Good Life vs. Being Happy

The definition of subjective well-being that I used to construct my research, the overall happiness of an individual as a result of life-satisfaction and life quality (Bryant & Garnham 2014, Durand 2015, OECD 2013, Zaffar 2021), led me to ask participants two questions that I initially thought may be redundant. What does it take to have a good life? and What does it take to be happy? I thought the two questions might be redundant because in my mind, having a good life was synonymous with being happy. However, the responses to these questions revealed that is not the case.

When I asked individuals what they think it takes to have a good life, they quickly responded with physical or financial achievements such as having their operation reach a certain level of production and profit, reaching a certain size of herds or land, and/or expanding their operation to include additional services they hoped to provide in an effort to increase their financial stability. When I asked if they felt like they had a good life, all participants responded that they either felt like they had achieved those goals and that they currently have a good life or that they were on the right track to achieve their goals in the near future and felt like they had a good life because the achievement of those goals was in sight.

In contrast, when I asked individuals what it takes to be happy, there was a significant pause each time. Many chuckled uncomfortably and stated, “That’s a tough one.” Individuals gave varying ideas of what it takes to be happy with most talking about the concept as if it was a foreign idea to them. Those who are religious cited their religious beliefs about happiness and explained that everything is in God’s hands and in God’s control and that it is their responsibility to appreciate the blessings they have in their lives in order to achieve happiness. Regardless of

religious beliefs, all individuals' responses to this question assign personal responsibility in the achievement of happiness. As one individual shared:

"That is an inner issue. That happens from what you choose to have inside your heart. Outside things can influence happiness, but if you base all your happiness on what's happening around you, you'll never have it."

Even with an acknowledgement of personal responsibility to be happy and insistence that each person is in charge of their own happiness, when I asked the participants if they are happy, only two individuals responded that they were. The remaining individuals stated that they weren't happy and that they weren't sure how to achieve happiness. As one individual said:

"I'm trying to be happy. I really am. I should be happy. I have a good life. But no, I'm honestly not happy and I'm not sure what to do to be happy. Things are really hard right now."

Their responses to the questions about happiness reveal a disjunction between the constructed ideals and the reality of happiness. Despite their insistence that happiness isn't or shouldn't be influenced by outside factors, it seems that outside factors do play a role in the achievement of happiness. Because of their beliefs that they are personally responsible for their own happiness, individuals blame themselves for their lack of happiness which can end up compounding feelings of unhappiness. As one individual shared:

"I can't think about that too much. It gets really depressing. I know it's my fault that I'm not happy but I don't know how to fix it. It brings me down if I think about it too much. I just need to focus on what I can control."

The insights gained from these questions about having a good life and being happy reveal that there is a significant gap between financial well-being and subjective well-being. Individuals

believing that they have a good life does not translate to them being happy. Using either the farmers'/ranchers' definition of subjective well-being or the definition I used to construct my research, individuals' reports of struggling to maintain balance and reports of unhappiness regardless of the quality of life or life-satisfaction that they have indicates that the subjective well-being of farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley is threatened by the present landscape, economic, and social changes resulting from amenity migration.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Discussion

Small-scale farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley experience the landscape, economic, and social changes resulting from amenity migration on a very personal level. Strong emotions were evoked when they discussed their experiences with these changes during the interviews, with the landscape changes being particularly upsetting. Solastalgia, known as “distress caused by environmental change” (Albrecht, et al. 2007), is experienced by many individuals in the Valley, especially by farmers and ranchers. Their interconnectedness with, and dependence on, the land makes the loss of open spaces and development painful for them to observe. They share feelings of helplessness when it comes to protecting the land because of the varying opinions about how the land should be used and treated and, while they feel that development is harmful to the land and their livelihoods, they generally disagree with having rules and regulations that limit and govern this. They feel that their financial disadvantage compared to wealthy newcomers has resulted in them having decreased voice and power in social settings as the Valley continues to change and shift away from an agricultural place. Overall, the changes taking place as a result of amenity migration deeply impact their subjective well-being.

Much of the subjective well-being research that is conducted large-scale utilizes pre-constructed definitions of subjective well-being and conceptual frameworks to collect data. Because subjective well-being is inherently variable, these definitions and conceptual frameworks likely do not capture the whole picture. The definition of subjective well-being which I used to construct my research, the overall happiness of an individual as a result of life-satisfaction and life quality (Bryant & Garnham 2014, Durand 2015, OECD 2013, Zaffar 2021),

is significantly different from the definition of subjective well-being that farmers/ranchers gave, maintaining balance. The farmers and ranchers I spoke with did not consider happiness to be part of their subjective well-being, which demonstrates the importance of self-definitions in subjective research. The application of an existing conceptual framework would have overlooked many of the emergent aspects of subjective well-being in my research, which is concerning because many groups and government agencies use conceptual frameworks to guide policy-making decisions globally.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an inter-governmental group that has constructed a universal subjective well-being framework and program to collect well-being data internationally. The OECD Better Life Initiative is a program designed to measure the subjective well-being and progress of people from 41 countries in an effort to understand if life is getting better and for whom (OECD 2013). The OECD uses their “How’s Life?” well-being index to gather information on the individuals they research with the end goal of using this information to guide policy making decisions, expressly stating on their website that their “goal is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity, and well-being for all” (OECD 2022). The domains of subjective well-being in the OECD conceptual framework are: life evaluation, affect, and eudaimonia (“psychological flourishing”) (OECD 2013). *Life evaluation* is a reflective, individual judgment of one’s life overall, which an individual constructs by considering how they remember experiencing, not necessarily how they actually experienced, circumstances which impact their quality of life (OECD 2013). *Affect* refers to one’s emotional state and particular feelings, both positive and negative, at a specific point in time (OECD 2013). *Eudaimonia* is how well an individual is functioning in relation to

their potential which includes aspects such as autonomy, sense of purpose, competence, and meaningful social interactions among others (OECD 2013).

While the domains of subjective well-being in the OECD conceptual framework may have gathered useful information if applied to my research, many aspects of subjective well-being that are relevant and important to the participants in my research would have been omitted. The five domains of subjective well-being which emerged from my research, Livelihood Preservation, Navigating Survival, Sense of Belonging, Environmental Well-Being, and Community Cohesion, demonstrate the aspects of life that are significant and applicable to the participants in my research. Applying the OECD conceptual framework would have narrowed data on the way farmers/ranchers maintain their subjective well-being, reduced/limited/omitted the influence of change on subjective well-being, and likely would have completely overlooked the deep connection between farmers/ranchers and the environment, which is a prominent aspect in the way they construct their subjective well-being. While conceptual frameworks have important uses in research, they may not be appropriate for subjective research because subjective conditions and experiences are not static and vary significantly among individuals.

6.2 Concluding Thoughts

This research suggests that the landscape, economic, and social changes resulting from amenity migration are deeply felt by small-scale farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley, impacting farmers' and ranchers' subjective well-being, and possibly even shaping the way they define and construct it. At the time of my research, farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley defined subjective well-being as maintaining balance. However, this balance was often spoken about as a 'struggle' or a 'fight' as they strive to maintain their livelihoods in the wake of the recent, intensified

changes. This results in difficulty in managing their subjective well-being because farmers and ranchers internalize their struggles, taking responsibility for their situations and insisting they need to “figure out” a way to “make it work” even though many aspects causing their difficulties are out of their control. Some individuals give up on their dreams and “sell out” or “give up” while others dig their heels in and fight to keep their dreams alive, believing that there is a solution somewhere if they just try hard enough to find it.

The five subjective well-being domains that emerged from the data were Livelihood Preservation, Navigating Survival, Sense of Belonging, Environmental Well-Being, and Community Cohesion. The changes taking place in the Valley as a result of amenity in-migration impact each of these domains and present a challenge to farmers and ranchers as they strive to maintain balance. While small-scale farmers and ranchers share similar livelihoods, regardless of the length of time they’ve spent in the Valley or the size of their operations, the way they experience the landscape, economic, and social changes resulting from amenity migration varies. Newcomers express concerns for the changes but tend to remain more optimistic about the outcomes. Old-timers experience mourning with the changes and tend to have a more pessimistic view of the outcomes. Newcomers and old-timers alike acknowledge that the occurring changes are not all bad but they also report that the changes have presented significant challenges to their livelihoods.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should examine the mechanisms of adaptation that farmers and ranchers employ in response to the changes resulting from amenity migration. I found several of these during my research which include passive and active forms of adaptation. Some of the

mechanisms of adaptation I noticed include avoidance of busy locations, defensive land grabbing in which individuals try to control who buys land surrounding their property, and selective voting in which individuals only vote for people who they believe respect and/or share their ideals. While I didn't have the opportunity to expand on these findings here, there is a need to investigate these mechanisms of adaptation further because it seems that the successful employment of these adaptations has a direct impact on subjective well-being outcomes.

Another suggestion for future research is to investigate how small-scale farmers and ranchers in other areas that haven't yet been seriously affected by amenity in-migration define and construct subjective well-being. This could give important insights into the level of influence amenity migration and its subsequent changes have on subjective well-being. It could also be insightful to conduct this research on rural areas that are avidly working against growth and change, vigorously rejecting development in their areas. Assessing the way farmers and ranchers define and construct subjective well-being in the absence of amenity migration could give insight into how significantly amenity migration and its changes have influenced the way farmers and ranchers in Teton Valley have defined and constructed subjective well-being.

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Appendix A: Exploratory Interview Guide

Background

How long have you been in the valley? How long have you farmed/ranched in the valley?

Did you grow up in a farming/ranching family? (Local?)

How did you get into farming/ranching?

Have you farmed/ranched anywhere else (other than Teton Valley)? If so, where?

Have you recently changed your crop/focus to meet changing demands? Are these local demands?

How has your farm/ranch experience in the valley changed over time? Do you feel like these changes are positive or negative? Why?/How so?

Motivation

Have you always wanted to be/ had interest in farming/ranching?

Why do you farm/ranch?

If you could go back in time, would you choose this lifestyle in Teton Valley again? Why/why not?

Community Ties

How do you feel your ties to the community have changed over time? Do you feel like these changes are positive or negative?

How has your community and the region changed over time?

Do you feel supported by the community as a farmer/rancher? How so/not? Has this changed over time?

Do you feel important to/appreciated by the community as a farmer/rancher? Has this changed over time? How so/not?

Do you feel like you belong here? How so/not? Has this changed over time?

Are there local activities that you participate in to create stronger community bonds/ties?

Are there local activities you avoid to preserve community bonds/ties?

Are there any local groups/activities that help support you as a farmer? What are they?

What activities/groups would you like to have locally to better support you and other farmers/ranchers in the valley?

What are your biggest challenges and concerns with being a farmer/rancher in the valley? Are these new? What do you think is creating these challenges (if new)?

What do you think the future of farming/ranching in the valley looks like?

Wellbeing

How has your view of the changes taking place in Teton Valley affected your connection to the valley and your occupation?

Do you feel like your ranch is stable/unstable right now? Why?

Markets

Do you participate in farmer's markets? (Why/why not? How many?)

If yes, what is the main purpose of participation? (earnings/advertising/mingling, etc...)

Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Thesis: Farmer and Rancher Subjective Well-being in Teton Valley

Fall 2022

Semi-structured Interview Guide

- Thank you for being willing to participate in this research project which is in connection with Idaho State University's Department of Anthropology for Melissa Wilson's Master's Thesis under the guidance of Dr. Sarah Ebel. The purpose of the interview is to learn about your experience as a farmer/rancher in Teton Valley and how the changing economy, landscape, and local community structure is, or is not, affecting that experience. The interview will be conducted by Melissa Wilson. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.
- You will be asked to answer questions about yourself including your applicable history/background and your experience as a farmer/rancher in Teton Valley. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete, depending on your willingness to elaborate on each question.
- With your permission, the interview will be recorded by a digital voice recording application on the interviewer's phone.
- Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this interview, you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer.
- Your name will not appear on any documents or reports to maintain confidentiality. No directly identifiable information will be collected as part of the interview process.

I. Demographic information

1. How old are you?
2. How long have you lived in Teton Valley?
3. How long have you farmed/ranched in Teton Valley?
4. Are you from a family of ranchers or farmers? How many generations of your family have lived in and farmed/ranched in Teton Valley?
5. Why did you choose to be a farmer/rancher?
6. Have you farmed/ranched in another location outside of Teton Valley? If so, why?
7. Please tell me about your operation. Has it changed over time? How?

8. Is your operation able to financially support your household?
9. How many individuals are dependent on your household income?
10. Does anyone working on the farm/ranch have another source of income? If so, what are the additional sources of income?
11. If so, is this vital income?
12. Do you have a main crop/livestock? How do you sell it?
13. Do you participate in farmer's markets? (Why/why not? If so, how many?)
14. If yes, what is the main purpose of participation? (earnings/advertising/mingling, etc...) If earnings, is this vital income or extra/'cushion' income?
15. What level of formal education do you and your spouse have?
16. What level of formal education do your children have?
17. Do you feel like your farm/ranch is stable or unstable right now? What makes you feel that way?

II. Amenity Migration

1. What changes have you seen in the Valley recently?
2. Do you have any concerns with any of these changes? What are they? (Do you have concerns with people moving into Teton Valley?)
3. (In what ways do you think these "newcomers" are changing the Valley? (physical, social, economic))*If brought up*
4. Do you feel like these changes are positive or negative for the Valley as a whole? For farmers/ranchers? Why?
5. How do you feel the community has changed as a result of people moving into the Valley?

III. Subjective Well-being

A. Defining Well-being

1. What is your desired way of life?
2. Do you feel like you have your desired way of life or that this is attainable? Why/why not?
3. What do you think it takes to be happy? (What do you think contributes to being happy?)

B. Life Evaluation

1. How would you rate your quality of life? Why?
2. What factors did you consider when rating your quality of life?
3. Are you satisfied with your life? Why or why not?
4. What do you think makes a good life?
5. Do you feel like you have a good life? Why or why not?

C. Affect

1. Can you please tell me about your community and what it's like to live here?
2. What do you like/dislike about living here?
3. If you could go back in time, would you choose this lifestyle in Teton Valley again? Why/why not?
4. How do you feel about being a farmer/rancher in Teton Valley right now? Why?

D. Social Ties

1. What kind of social ties do you have in the Valley?
2. Have these changed recently? How so?
3. Why do you think these have changed?
4. Do you feel like the people moving into the Valley are supportive of your goals as a farmer/rancher? Why or why not? How?
5. Do you feel like the people moving into the Valley have changed the amount of community support you have as a farmer/rancher? Why or why not? How?
6. How do you feel your ties to the community have changed over time? Do you feel like these changes are positive or negative? Why?
7. Do you feel like the people moving into the community have strengthened your relationships with other farmers/ranchers in the Valley?
8. How do you feel your support system within the community has changed recently?

E. Sustainability

1. What do you think the future of farming/ranching in the Valley looks like?

2. What do you think the future of your farm/ranch will be?
3. Do you feel like there are things that can be done to encourage future small family farms/ranches in the Valley? If so, what are they?
4. What are your biggest challenges and concerns with being a farmer/rancher in the valley? Are these new? What do you think is creating these challenges (if new)?
5. Are there any local groups/activities that help support you as a farmer? What are they?
6. What kinds of support would you like to have locally to better support you and other farmers/ranchers in the valley? (activities, groups, policies)
7. What advice would you give to current/future farmers/ranchers in Teton Valley?

F. Place Attachment

1. As a farmer/rancher, do you feel like you have a connection with the land you own/work? How would you describe this?
2. Do you feel like you have a connection with the physical components of the Valley (open spaces, roads, stores, businesses, etc...)? How would you describe this?
3. How do you feel the increasing population in the Valley has changed things for people who live here? Different for farmers/ranchers?
4. How do you feel about the physical changes happening in the Valley?

G. Sense of Belonging

1. Do you feel like you belong here? Why/why not? What makes you feel that way?
2. Have your feelings about belonging changed recently? If so, how?

***Is there anything I've missed that you feel is important for people to know?**

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent for Farmer and Rancher Subjective Well-being in Teton Valley

You are invited to participate in a research project as part of Idaho State University, Department of Anthropology by Melissa Wilson (Graduate Student of Anthropology at Idaho State University) and Dr. [Sarah Ebel](#) (Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Idaho State University). The purpose of the interview is to learn about your experience as a farmer/rancher in Teton Valley and how the changing economy and local community structure is, or is not, affecting that experience. The interview will be conducted by Melissa Wilson. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer questions about yourself including your applicable history/background and your experience as a farmer/rancher in Teton Valley. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete, depending on your willingness to elaborate on each question. The interview will, preferably, be recorded by a voice recording application on the interviewer's phone and you may change your mind about participating and/or stop the recording at any time throughout the interview process.

Are there any risks or benefits?

The risks associated with this study include: inconvenience, loss of time, and the possibility that members of your community may see and/or hear you participating in the interview based on where and when you choose to participate in the study. The interview is anonymous and no directly identifiable information will be collected, however, information such as your applicable personal background and personal experience with farming/ranching in Teton Valley will be collected. In order to minimize the risk of collecting sensitive data, no directly identifiable information will be collected and your interview will be recorded in documents as a number. Only members of the research team will have access to the interview itself.

Benefits to you include an opportunity to anonymously share your experiences and express your feelings about being a farmer/rancher in Teton Valley and to help document changes that have or are taking place with your lifestyle within your community.

Note of confidentiality

Your name will not appear on any documents or reports to maintain confidentiality. No directly identifiable information will be collected as part of the interview process. This project

may last until May 1, 2023 and the paper linking your name and the code number will be destroyed by March 1, 2023.

Voluntary

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this interview, you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact the PI Melissa Wilson or the co-PI Sarah Ebel in the following ways:

Melissa Wilson

Phone: 208-705-4878; email: melissawilson@isu.edu

Dr. Sarah Ebel

921 S. 8th Ave, Stop 8005, Pocatello, ID 83209

Phone: 207-400-9425; email: sarahebel@isu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Deb Easterly, Assistant Vice President for Research Outreach & Compliance.

Phone: 208-282-2618; email: eastdebb@isu.edu