

HUMAN ECOLOGICAL SOURCES OF FISHING HERITAGE AND ITS USE IN AND IMPACT ON COASTAL TOURISM

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Abstract.—Commercial fishers and fishing-dependent communities are experiencing tremendous challenges. For at least a decade, commercial fishers have seen increasing regulations, rises in operational and capital costs, increasing foreign competition, resource depletion, environmental degradation, changing allocations from commercial to recreational use, and coastal gentrification. We found that all members of commercial fishing families are involved in production, not just the fisherman. Natural resource production occupations, such as commercial fishing families and family farms, are perhaps the last sector of the economy where the traditional family is an economic unit. Traditional family structures once aided economic production in extractive jobs. Now fishing and farming can only rarely support a family and its labor resources. What we have lost is not the commercial fisherman, but rather a stable and traditional family structure that supported local seafood production and helped form the identity of the local community. This paper begins by examining the successful development of heritage tourism among farmers and the Amish. From these examples, we then outline strategies that might be of use in the development of heritage tourism in fishing communities so as to help preserve this way of life.

1.0 INTRODUCTION: LOSS OF FLORIDA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

In times past, some coastal villages and communities in Florida were founded and organized around supporting commercial fishermen and the economy of such places was primarily geared toward fishing income. Now, few communities are organized around the commercial industry and even fewer places are heavily dependent upon commercial fishing income (Jacob et al. 2001). Though commercial fishing families are still actively

fishing, the communities around them have shifted in orientation. This transformation of communities' economies can be characterized as a transition to other industries, such as retail and services. In many coastal communities, this transition has included the development and promotion of tourism and recreational fishing. Commercial fishing families have endured these changes, and worked hard to adapt to the many additional regulations that have impacted the industry. Now, a once vibrant fishing industry is reduced to a dwindling number of families who are no longer a central part of the greater community's economy. Many commercial fishing families have maintained their way of life, but the very communities around them have changed. Now, local communities do not always support commercial fishing, and many actually may hinder seafood production. These changes have hastened the transition of coastal communities so that this once important part of Florida's cultural heritage has been lost.

We had heard from some of our key informants that "taking the commercial fisherman out of Florida is like taking the Cowboy out of Texas." For many, the American cowboy represents rugged individualism: pitted against the elements, the man is tired and weathered, but formidable and resilient. The commercial fishermen in our study often portrayed this image, but we also saw fishing families that did not fit the stereotype. We found that all members of commercial fishing families are involved in production, not just the fisherman. In fact, (Smith et al. 2003) found most fishermen were dependent upon their wives' non-fishing income to continue fishing. Recent research indicates in a five-year period, Florida fishing families' reliance on income from fishing fell from 79 percent of family income to only 58 percent, with the majority of non-fishing income being contributed by wives (Smith et al. 2003). Natural resource production occupations, such as commercial fishing families and family farms, are perhaps the last sector of the economy where the traditional family is also an economic unit. Traditional family structures aided economic production in extractive jobs. Now fishing and farming can only rarely support a family and its

labor resources. What we have lost is not the commercial fisherman, but rather a stable and traditional family structure that supported local seafood production and helped form the identity of the local community.

There has been a significant cultural loss in the passing of the traditional way of life for Florida's commercial fishing families and communities. However, these families have shown great resourcefulness in continuing in an industry (and consequently a way of life) that has not been kind to them recently. It seems likely that fishing families will prevail, but not in the numbers we have seen in the past, nor will they look like they once did. Any opportunity to earn additional income from fishing-related activities would help these families and possibly help preserve this heritage. Following this section, we will review forms of cultural heritage to examine if fishing heritage tourism is a potential source of "fishing related - off water income" with survey data from fishers and residents of six coastal communities in Florida.

2.0 HERITAGE TOURISM AND EXEMPLARS

Cohen (1984) suggests that tourism for many is the modern equivalent of the religious pilgrimage in that they both are quests for authentic experiences, in contrast with the shallowness and inauthenticity of modern life. Often in tourist areas, authenticity is "staged" in tourist space, and this process leads directly to the commoditization of cultural heritage. As part of this process, according to Cohen (1984) tourism generates four stages of reactions among locals as it develops: 1) euphoria, 2) apathy, 3) annoyance, and 4) antagonism. Cohen (1984) suggests that tourism reinforces or generates inflationary tendencies on any scarce resource from the fish themselves to a space at the local diner. Thus, while tourism benefits those locals directly involved, it impacts everyone else negatively. In addition, the development of a tourist industry often leads to investment from outside the community and sometimes leads to loss of control over the industry (Cohen 1984).

According to Cohen, where small-scale, locally owned "craft" tourism is slowly introduced into a less-developed context, gross earnings may be smaller but a greater percentage will be retained and there will be fewer

disruptive effects. Unfortunately, there is usually a lack of entrepreneurial skills and resources, including capital, among locals. Tourism could provide additional jobs to retain children, but often just attracts outsiders who come to be employed and live in the locale. Cohen notes that there is little evidence of any effect on social mobility. Small-scale locally owned tourism ventures probably make a greater contribution to sustainable development but make deeper penetration into the social and environmental fabric, more so than large-scale ventures confined to clearly defined locations (Cater 1995, p. 25). Tourism demand has diversified; small towns and rural areas beyond the borders of many major cities have been recognized as containing many potential resource assets for tourism. Indeed, many such places are actively attempting to capture the economic benefits of the tourism industry as a means of diversifying and bolstering their fragile economic structures (Luloff et al. 1993).

However, if tourism development in fishing communities is to be successful, it must be approached with an eye towards maximizing the positive impacts while minimizing the negative impacts associated with such economic development. That is, fishing communities need to recognize that "ill conceived and poorly planned tourism development can erode the very qualities of the natural and human environments that attract visitors in the first place" (Inskeep 1991, p. 460). It is here that some authors have applied the notion of sustainability (French 1992). In this context, sustainability refers to a philosophy which emphasizes cultural and community diversity, concern for social justice and fairness, and a strong orientation toward stability (Dehart 1991).

Social justice and tourism are tangible issues in Florida. In 1994 a public referendum that altered the Florida constitution outlawed the use of gillnets in inshore waters (Smith et al. 2003). The use of a public referendum to influence natural resource policy by circumventing the agencies that manage the state's marine resources was unprecedented. In effect, through a political process, the net ban amendment permanently altered the allocation of marine fisheries resources from primarily commercial to recreational user groups. This was achieved by a campaign that painted commercial fishers as destroying

the marine environment. So in addition to the loss of effective gear to fish, fishers were stigmatized by these characterizations as destroyers of the fragile ecology. Many fishing families, both men and women, continue to feel a great deal of anger and resentment over this unique resource reallocation process (Smith et al. 2003).

Kneasfey (1998) suggests that cultural heritage tourism in Europe has been a trend towards the conversion of production spaces into spaces of consumption. "Coalmines become museums, factories become visitor centres and, most relevant to the case of Ireland, countryside becomes leisure landscape (Kneasfey 1998, p. 111)." The emphasis in these leisure landscapes focuses on soaking up the atmosphere of the place. In a real way tourism constructs and reconstructs place identity and provides a native self-image (Kneasfey 1998). A major theme in this literature is the idea that tourism destroys unique place identities (Kneasfey 1998). This is akin to the destruction or prostitution of once unique cultures (Kneasfey 1998). "An over-arching theme of these criticisms is the idea the heritage centers contribute to the 'trinketisation', commercialization, and trivialization of culture" (Kneasfey 1998, p. 113). This is a movement from an authentic community to one that commoditizes cultural heritage in tourist space (Cohen 1984).

2.1 Farm or Agro-tourism

Farm tourism in the United States has not received a great deal of attention in the social science literature. However, there is great evidence it is growing and becoming an increasingly important strategy to supplement marginal farming operations and maintain family farms. Part of this emergence has been interest in niche marketing of special products, growing interest in the cultural heritage of farming, and a relatively unique set of endowments that potentially meet tourist demands. Farm tourism can also help preserve the visual and cultural landscape. Agricultural regions' natural endowments are an important draw for tourists. Their scenic vistas and cultural charms offer an important respite to those living in more densely settled areas. The United States has had limited experience with farm tourism as a means of assisting farm families with new economic opportunities. Unlike France, which has had a farm tourism policy since 1955, or the United Kingdom, Germany, and Denmark,

where farm-related tourism has been recognized as a legitimate economic activity and studied extensively (Dernoi 1983, Dower 1973, Frater 1983, Urry 1992) or Italy, where the state has had laws governing farm tourism since 1985 and instituted a special tax law related to this sector in 1992 (Vellu-Zat 1992), the American experience has received far less attention.

2.2 The Lancaster County Amish

Tourism in Lancaster County is largely based on the exploitation of Amish cultural heritage and is clearly done on a very grand scale. Lancaster County attracts visitors from nearby cities, including New York; Philadelphia; Baltimore; Washington, D.C.; and other nearby densely populated areas. It is estimated that the county receives between three to five million visitors annually who spend in excess of \$500 million annually (Kraybill & Nolt 1995). Certainly, tourism is big business in Lancaster County, but at least initially, it was not anything the Amish themselves would have wanted or promoted. However, a variety of factors are squeezing the Amish, and as a consequence, the Amish have become at least partially dependent on the flow of tourist dollars to make it possible for them to remain in Lancaster County (Kraybill and Nolt 1995). Increasingly, the Amish have participated in the tourism industry willingly as entrepreneurs, or unwillingly as cultural icons for tourists to view.

There has been a dramatic shift in occupations from farming to what Kraybill and Nolt (1995) describe as Micro-enterprises. The rising cost of farmland, increasing residential development, growing tourism, and rapidly growing Amish population have limited new Amish entries into farming (Kraybill & Nolt 1995). This poses problems because the Amish have a strong preference for farming occupations, which require a great deal of hard work and family unity, and offer relatively modest financial reward. Kraybill and Nolt (1995) that three classes of Amish have now emerged: 1) farmers, 2) entrepreneurs, and 3) day laborers. They note that nearly half of all Amish in Lancaster County are no longer employed in farming, and fully one-quarter of all households had at least one entrepreneur conducting a micro-enterprise (Kraybill & Nolt 1995). Interestingly, these businesses have a failure rate of less than four

percent, and the majority of these enterprises produce income in excess of \$50,000 annually, with many exceeding \$500,000 annually (Kraybill & Nolt 1995). This financial success is seen by many as a potential threat to the Amish rejection of worldliness (Kraybill & Nolt 1995). This success has come in spite of only an average of an eighth-grade parochial education, an absence of most modern technology such as computers, and a rejection of any form of governmental assistance (Kraybill & Nolt 1995). To their advantage is the fact that the enterprises are small, have low overhead, and most consistently avoid the temptation to grow large (Kraybill and Nolt 1995).

Even the earliest forms of tourism in Lancaster County commoditized Amish culture. In the early 1900s tourists guides appeared—complete with apocryphal descriptions of Amish culture and suggestions on photographing Amish children by bribing them with candy bars (Luthy 1994). Next were organized large-scale bus tours of Amish areas. As early as the 1930s, restaurants with a “Dutch” theme had emerged along with Amish greeting cards and other “Dutch Stuff” (Luthy 1994). Now one can find the full complement of trinkets relating to Amish culture, most made cheaply and imported from distant places, including things like felt and straw hats, Amish dolls, cookbooks, and popular books of Amish wit and sayings.

The influx of tourism in Lancaster County, according to Buck (1978), had initially served to strengthen Amish boundaries and highlights differences between the Amish and the larger society. The emergence of large-scale exploitation of Amish culture in many ways served to protect the Amish, as tourist centers agglomerated development in a central area, away from the authentic Amish residential and agricultural areas. Having commercially operated “Amish” farms and one-room school houses, complete with wax figures, served to relieve pressure on the Amish and to shield the Amish from the majority of tourists. More recently, however, things have changed as the Amish now have many specific micro-enterprises that are dependent on tourist dollars. Interaction between tourists and the Amish has increased greatly. This undoubtedly is more economically advantageous and allows greater tourist access to

authentic culture, but also allows greater penetration of social boundaries. Kraybill and Nolt (2001) sum up this experience: “Their move toward entrepreneurship marks a pivotal moment in their history as a people---a most significant adjustment to the modern world. They have struck a bargain that nourishes their economic health without conceding their cultural soul---a bargain that appears to be a good one, at least for the present generation.”

2.3 Fishing Communities and Heritage Tourism

There are very few studies in the academic literature about fishing communities and heritage tourism. Much of what we write here comes from direct observation of the six communities in our study or from generalizations from a more general heritage tourism literature. Interestingly, in most forms of farm tourism, the farmer is a direct beneficiary in the endeavor. In the case of the Amish, initially they were exploited, but now tend to more actively engage in the industry in a very profitable way. Fishers seem to be more like the Amish during initial tourist development, not yet extensively engaging tourists. Many in their communities who do not fish directly, however, are marketing the local cultural heritage and benefiting, while passing many of the negative externalities onto fishers.

The vast majority of our respondents find commercial fishing to be an attractive part of the landscape. This landscape is appealing to tourists as it lets them imagine a simpler time and place when communities were dependent on resource extraction (Hopkins 1988). These feelings are dependent on the cultural landscape, including the built environment, so the majority of communities in this study have central places near the water to attract tourists with an overdone nautical theme. When these inauthentic spaces are interspersed with workboats, docks, and fish houses, it generates the overwhelming idea that one is in an area completely dominated by commercial fishing (Jacob et al. 2005). However, in our study commercial fishing is a relatively small component of the overall economy of the communities. We have also observed great diversity in the types of tourists and related development that occurs in fishing communities. Observed forms of tourists include:

1) festivals, -goers 2) day visitors, 3) niche marketing of seafood, 4) overnight guests, 5) snowbirds, 6) recreational fishers, and 7) eco-tourists. All of these forms of tourism were thought to lead to growth of newcomers in the local community by our key informants.

Fishing culture is directly marketed and sold to many tourists. Shanty boutiques sell “nautical crafts” for interior decorating. Fish nets of wrapped plastic to be placed on a wall, marker buoys that are “distressed” with faux paint, and rowboat shelves are common in these stores. Trinkets targeted for children are also common, with rubber sharks, plastic bathtub boats, and captain’s hats being among the favorites. In addition, many local restaurants specialize in seafood (usually with a nautical motif), but when we inquired if the fish and shellfish come from local sources we usually were told the seafood was imported.

3.0 METHODS

We used a typological approach to identify communities to study. We began in 2000 by placing all Florida coastal communities into six categories: 1) Atlantic Coast—gained commercial fishing employment; 2) Atlantic Coast—lost commercial fishing employment; 3) Atlantic Coast—neutral; 4) Gulf Coast—gained commercial fishing employment; 5) Gulf Coast—lost commercial fishing employment; 6) Gulf Coast—neutral. This determination of whether fishing employment was growing, declining, or holding steady was made for the time period 1994 -1996, a year before and a year after the 1995 Florida net ban, restricting the use of nets in inshore coastal waters (See Smith et al. 2003 for a review). One community from each of the six potential categories was chosen for intensive case study. Secondary data analysis as well as site inspection was used to select the six communities for the in-depth study. In addition, the research team felt that it was necessary to select communities from different regions throughout the state in an attempt to capture the diversity of fishing that exists in Florida. The case study sites were chosen on the following criteria: 1) maximizing geographical distribution within the state of Florida; 2) maximizing variation in population size; and 3) maximizing variation in economic structure (recreational/commercial fishing).

A telephone survey was conducted in 2001 in each of the six fishing communities to establish the perceptions of fishing dependence of residents of each community. The questionnaire included 79 questions and covered such topics as place attachment; fishing dependency; and community involvement. The responses to the questionnaire required between 20 and 40 minutes to complete by phone. Identical questionnaires were used in each study site. The full sample included over 1,200 respondents with a 65% response rate (completed divided by the number eligible). The sampling frame of the survey was drawn from randomly selected phone numbers within the zip codes for each community. The non-respondents were contacted five times on different days and different times. There were multiple reasons for non-response including 580 non-viable numbers (non-working, wrong number, and non-household), 49 were unavailable (out of town or deceased), and 11 did not speak English. Duplicates from the sampling frame were removed.

4.0 RESULTS

Table 1 presents a comparison of fishers’ and community members’ opinions on some components of heritage tourism. The items assess whether commercial fishing: 1) is important to the local culture, 2) attracts tourists, and 3) is an attractive part of the landscape. Over 94 percent of residents and 96 percent of fishers agreed that fishing was important to the culture of the area. Over 60 percent of residents and 73 percent of fishers felt that commercial fishing was an important tourist draw for the community. Last, 68 percent of residents and 83 percent of fishers felt commercial fishing was an attractive part of the landscape. For all three questions fishers were more likely to agree with the statements, and in every case the results were statistically significant. Both fishers and community members were very supportive of these statements, indicating they value the cultural heritage of fishing. These results suggest the residents and fishers recognize a potential for heritage tourism development.

Table 2 addresses community problems as viewed by fishers and community members. The first issue, growth of tourism, indicates that well over half of fishers (54 percent) felt that tourism was “somewhat of a problem”

Table 1.—Comparison of residents and commercial fishers views on culture and tourism

	Community N=999 Percent	Fishers N=222 Percent	χ^2	D.F.	P
Fishing is important to the culture of this area			5.6	1	.018
No	5.4	1.7			
Yes	94.6	98.3			
Commercial fishing is an important draw for tourists to the community			8.9	1	.003
No	38.1	27.2			
Yes	61.9	72.8			
Commercial fishing is an attractive part of the landscape			18.2	1	.000
No	31.9	17.4			
Yes	68.1	82.6			

or a “serious problem” locally while only 38 percent of community residents felt similarly. This difference was statistically significant, and suggests some possible antagonism related to tourism development and possibly related to the net ban issue. Increasing residential development was seen as “somewhat a problem” or a “serious problem” by 56 percent of residents, while 64 percent of fishers were concerned about this issue. This difference was statistically significant. Loss of commercial dockage was seen as “somewhat a problem” or a “serious problem” by only 48 percent of residents, while 71 percent of fishers were concerned about this issue. This difference was statistically significant. Obviously this is a salient issue for fishers and was often mentioned as a harmful consequence of tourist development by our key informants. For the item “increasing land values,” 64 percent of residents and 68 percent of fishers indicated that this was a problem or a serious problem. The difference was statistically significant. Concern over increasing property taxes and unemployment were very similar for residents and fishers and were not statistically significant. However, fishers were far more concerned than residents about traffic congestion (58 percent compared to 44 percent) and increasing new-comers (57 percent compared to 50 percent), and both were statistically significant. Our key informants confirmed that they thought that tourism was responsible for increasing traffic and for new people moving to the area, which they felt made fishing more difficult.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION OF THE LITERATURE AND ANALYSIS

It is clear from the empirical data that fishers do not want to see large-scale tourist development that might increase traffic, land values, residential development, and newcomers. However, fishers strongly believe that commercial fishing is important to the local culture, is a tourist attraction, and produces an attractive landscape. If tourism could help support the fishing enterprise with off-water income, it is likely that many families would participate, thus helping preserve or restore a traditional way of life.

A significant hurdle to the increasing engagement of fishers in the tourist industry is that they generally harbor a great deal of animosity over the net ban referendum, which reallocated the in-shore fishery from primarily commercial to recreational use (Smith et al. 2003). In that process fishers were described as destroying the environment. In addition, fishers are documented as having a high degree of occupational satisfaction, primarily derived from working alone and out on the water (Smith et al. 2003). This is not compatible with interacting with tourists, especially those who are recreationally fishing. However, fishers are more inclined to have a traditional family structure, with many family members engaged in some way in fishing operations—even if spouses and children hold outside jobs. Like farm tourism, development of income opportunities might

Table 2.—Comparison of residents and commercial fishers views on potential community problems

	Community N=999 Percent	Fishers N=222 Percent	χ^2	D.F.	P
Growth of Tourism			25.3	2	.000
Not a Problem	61.5	46.5			
Somewhat of a Problem	25.5	28.5			
Serious Problem	13.0	25.0			
Increasing Residential Development			14.4	2	.001
Not a Problem	43.6	36.4			
Somewhat of a Problem	33.2	28.5			
Serious Problem	23.1	35.1			
Loss of Commercial Dockage			58.4	2	.000
Not a Problem	52.5	29.4			
Somewhat of a Problem	26.2	25.3			
Serious Problem	21.3	45.2			
Increasing Land Value			15.4	2	.000
Not a Problem	36.1	32.0			
Somewhat of a Problem	26.8	17.6			
Serious Problem	37.0	50.5			
Increasing Property Taxes			0.8	2	.671
Not a Problem	26.0	23.1			
Somewhat of a Problem	27.0	28.0			
Serious Problem	47.0	48.9			
Unemployment			0.01	2	.961
Not a Problem	51.9	50.9			
Somewhat of a Problem	27.5	27.9			
Serious Problem	20.5	21.2			
Traffic Congestion			15.26	2	.000
Not a Problem	55.7	42.4			
Somewhat of a Problem	25.3	29.3			
Serious Problem	19.0	28.4			
Increasing New Comers			16.06	2	.000
Not a Problem	49.7	43.0			
Somewhat of a Problem	33.0	28.1			
Serious Problem	17.3	28.9			

keep the family more directly linked to fishing rather than to outside employment. This would enhance the traditional economic structure of the family, a prime cultural component of fishing heritage.

Lessons from the reviews of different forms of heritage tourism suggest that many problems of enterprise development can be avoided if efforts are kept small (at least initially), overhead is limited, and the business grows slowly (if the family chooses to do so). These lessons from Amish enterprise will maximize the possibility of success. In addition, these are good practices for those who do

not have any specific business training or entrepreneurial experience, which the Amish and fishers are likely to have in common.

Somehow the antagonism of fishers with tourists must be healed. There is some indication that small-scale tourism interaction could actually accomplish this as a side benefit. If off-water family income can be increased, the main fishing enterprise can continue, as well as the traditional family structure where all family members support the economic endeavor of fishing. If this way of life could be preserved, perhaps fishing families

would not feel so threatened and antagonism could be reduced. Any formal program to help foster off-water income related to fishing should probably target a female audience. First, women were less likely to see tourism as a problem. Also, this is because the female partner is likely to hold outside employment. This transition from the traditional family-economic structure took place in fishing families in the early 1990s as increasing fishing regulations forced many families to seek outside employment, often for health insurance and to supplement family earnings (Smith et al. 2003). By 1997 almost three quarters of fishing families had the female partner working off-water jobs. Giving these families an opportunity to generate income related to fishing would greatly preserve the traditional family structure.

Heritage tourism can serve the dual purpose of providing economic benefits while enhancing identity of communities with their fishing traditions. Equally important as the economic benefits of heritage tourism is its potential to foster community development. Heritage tourism can enhance the identity of communities, as well as reinforce the importance of fishing to the local area and economy. With such recognition, fishers might come to feel more appreciated, contributing to an increase in their job satisfaction—no small feat for a sector of the economy that has experienced a great deal of insecurity, stress, and strain.

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