HERITAGE TOURISM IN THE WATERMEN COMMUNITIES OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

by

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(Under the Direction of THEODORE GRAGSON)

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the vulnerabilities facing commercial fishing communities as they work to maintain livelihoods based on and around the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. It focuses on how recent initiatives in Maryland to involve watermen in heritage tourism projects address these vulnerabilities and how watermen are choosing to participate in the program. Additionally, it investigates the watermen characteristics associated with success in heritage tourism ventures and if participation in heritage tourism challenge traditional harvesting-based livelihoods and identities. This research pursues these lines of inquiry through semi-structured interviews and ethnography and concludes that heritage tourism is a means through which fishing communities can increase their resilience.

INDEX WORDS: Chesapeake Bay, Commercial fishing, Heritage tourism, Vulnerability

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the hardworking men and women making a living on the waters of the Chesapeake Bay.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is based on ethnographic research I undertook over the course of one year in a number of commercial fishing communities in the Chesapeake Bay region. It is grounded in the large body of social science literature that has developed around commercial fishing communities and specifically draws on theories focusing on vulnerability. I use a qualitative approach to investigate a new initiative in the state of Maryland that attempts to supplement income gained from commercial fishing with income generated through heritage tourism ventures. I present this work as a case study on the development of this initiative and the potential it has to impact commercial fishing communities in the Chesapeake Bay region. I use ethnographic data from my experiences living and working in the region, my professional involvement in the development and implementation of the heritage tourism initiative, and semi-structured interviews to pursue three primary lines of inquiry. These lines of inquiry are:

1. What are the vulnerabilities within the commercial fishing communities of the Chesapeake Bay and how do recent initiatives promoting heritage tourism address these vulnerabilities?
2. What characteristics of commercial fishermen are associated with success in heritage tourism ventures?
3. Are the identities of individual commercial fishermen or commercial fishing communities challenged by participation in heritage tourism ventures?

In asking these questions I aim to generate a work that provides practical information for the improvement of the initiative as well as adding to the body of theory that explores the challenges facing commercial fishing communities and the unique capacities of the men and women making their living off of the water.

This work has implications beyond the Chesapeake because commercial fishing communities in the United States and abroad are becoming increasingly threatened as harvestable stocks disappear, selling prices decline, and costs of operation steadily increase (Clay and Olson 2008). When combined with the dearth of young fishermen entering the trade, the drug and alcohol abuse invading many of these communities, the disappearance of the working waterfront, and the lack of other employment opportunities, the future of many of these unique coastal communities is in question (Gale 1991). Despite these challenges many citizens, government agencies and non-governmental organizations agree that these communities have unique characteristics that are worth preserving and are taking proactive steps to ensure the continuation of fishing communities in the Unites States.

In the Chesapeake Bay, commercial fishermen[1], known locally as watermen, have been listed by a statewide preservation agency, Preservation Maryland, as an endangered element of Maryland's culture. All of the broader challenges to fishing communities listed above face the small communities of watermen in the Chesapeake. Despite these foundational problems, these communities still attract tourists to their quaint waterfront towns, and heritage tourism is being held up as one of the possible means of sustaining the communities. Now many in the region wonder if the men and women of these maritime communities will continue pursuing livelihoods

[1] Throughout this work I use the word fishermen/fisherman and watermen/waterman to refer to both male and female commercial fishers. This is consistent with other works that avoid the terms "fisher/fishers" because members of the commercial fishing communities themselves do not use these terms.

based on working the water or if they will become more like living museum pieces used to attract visitors to these historic, but no longer working, watermen towns.

The following sections provide a detailed overview of the findings I have reached regarding the lines of inquiry I pursued and how I came to these conclusions. I begin with some background information specific to the context of the research that includes my capacities as a researcher and my involvement with this particular heritage tourism initiative. I follow this with the details of the heritage tourism initiative and descriptions of the overall setting for the research. Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature that informs this thesis including how a fishing community is defined and how the concept of vulnerability can be applied to these communities. Chapter Three describes methods and analyses that I used over the course of this research. In Chapter Four I provide a detailed discussion of my findings and how they were informed by and relate to the existing body of literature surrounding the concepts of vulnerability and heritage in fishing communities. I present my results in three different sections corresponding to the three lines of inquiry presented above. Alongside my results I will use direct quotes and will also paraphrase the responses of my interviewees in order to support my findings. Additionally, I will draw on ethnographic data from my experiences to highlight various elements of my results. Finally, in Chapter Five I will conclude this thesis with a summary of my overall findings, explain how they contribute to both the theory and practice behind the study of commercial fishing communities, and lay out some potential next steps for research on this and similar topics.

Research Context

Formal research for this thesis began in 2012 when I completed my coursework and moved back to a small commercial fishing town on the shores of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay. I had lived in this town before and had developed a rapport with many of the commercial fishermen, or watermen, as they are known locally. This rapport grew out of my previous work as a carpenter in the community as well as when I worked in the oyster aquaculture industry. Both of these positions connected me with watermen who worked on the water for part of the year and in various trades for the remainder of the year, grew up working the water, or had moved off the water looking for other full-time work in the rural community in which we all lived.

I began preliminary interviews and background research immediately after moving back to the area. Initially, I was focusing my research questions on the transition from the wild-harvest oyster fishery to private aquaculture holdings. Interesting research by Keiner (2010) had begun to examine how this radical change in management regimes would impact the ecology of the Bay as well as the cultural and social fabric of Maryland's watermen communities. My research interest had always been focused on the balance contemporary societies try to strike when it comes to preserving traditional livelihoods and at the same time sustaining ecological systems. The conflict that abounded in Maryland's fisheries exemplified the challenge that state officials and regulators faced when it came to preserving the declining stocks of oysters, crabs, and rockfish in the Chesapeake but at the same time preserving the dwindling numbers of commercial fishermen. The way in which watermen used concepts of tradition and heritage as a means of resisting policy changes and defending their occupations over the interests of those that "care more about the oysters than they do about people" was an interesting means of

incorporating theory into this practical work. However, after a number of preliminary interviews it was apparent that the transition to aquaculture was still so new in Maryland that watermen had not yet begun to be involved in the initiative outside of protesting the closing off of certain areas for harvest (White 2010). I began to rethink my research and how I could continue to pursue the interests stated above.

By chance, in my capacity as a lecturer at a local college in Maryland, I met the Director of the Coastal Heritage Alliance (CHA). He had recently completed training dozens of Maryland watermen to participate in heritage tourism, specifically related to the newly designated John Smith National Historic Trail. The Director was specifically chosen for this task because of his background as a commercial fisherman, master shipwright, local-level politician, and educator. As I learned more about the initiative to promote heritage tourism in watermen communities, I realized that this could be an ideal context to pursue my graduate research interests dealing with heritage and vulnerabilities in commercial fishing communities. After discussing my research interests with him, I became a consultant for CHA and, in the classic anthropological sense, I found myself as both a researcher and a participant in the maritime and commercial fishing industries I was studying.

My previous background with commercial fishermen and my current position with CHA has been of tremendous benefit when it comes to developing a broad understanding of the commercial fishing culture in the Chesapeake, meeting and befriending watermen, learning about the different gear types and fishing techniques, and seeing the challenges facing the industry at large. Over the course of this research my ability to combine my professional and scholarly interests has made it possible to develop a relevant set of questions that successfully narrows down my research while still embodying my deep connection and involvement with the

communities I am trying to study. The following section provides a detailed look at the heritage tourism initiative that is at the center of this study.

Background

As the numbers of men and women making their living fishing, oystering, clamming, and crabbing in the Chesapeake steadily declines the state of Maryland finds itself in a position where it must protect this iconic traditional livelihood associated with the Chesapeake's unique maritime communities (Horton 1987). At the same time state regulators and fishery scientists must confront the reality of declining fish stocks and the need to divert fishing pressure away from threatened species (Wilberg et al. 2011). This situation came into focus in 2008 when Governors Martin O'Malley of Maryland and Tim Kaine of Virginia requested disaster funding in response to the significant declines both states were experiencing in the blue crab fishery. Together they applied for disaster relief from the Department of Commerce, which oversees the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) (Blue Crab Disaster in Chesapeake 2008). Because of the 41% decline in blue crab catches the fishery was declared a disaster under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). This designation resulted in $15 million being directed towards the commercial fishing industries in both states.

Maryland's $10 million portion of the funding was diverted to a number of programs that included research, increasing law enforcement, electronic catch reporting systems, license buy-backs, and the further promotion of aquaculture in the state. About $1.5 million eventually ended up directly paying watermen for a variety of tasks in order to counter the immediate economic hardship brought on by the low blue crab harvest. Watermen were paid to retrieve

derelict fishing gear from the Chesapeake's waters, participate in cooperative research projects, and take part in training sessions focusing on heritage tourism (MD DNR 2008).

The Watermen Heritage Tourism Training Program (WHTTP) paid watermen a few hundred dollars per day to attend a series of 5-day workshops focusing on training them to become heritage tour guides. These workshops were facilitated by three non-profit organizations: Chesapeake Conservancy, Coastal Heritage Alliance, and Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. In addition, local watermen's associations and state officials supported the program and helped to recruit participants. Although the leaders of workshops readily admit that plenty of watermen were there only to collect the money they were paid for attending, at the end of the year-long series of workshops nearly 80 of the 120 watermen who participated received certification as heritage tourism guides. These certified watermen were meant to be interpreters of the newly completed John Smith National Historic Trail, and creators of the program hoped this would provide alternative income for watermen and possibly alleviate some fishing pressure from the commercial fishery stocks.

Federal funding for the program dried up after the initial NOAA funds were spent, but both the Chesapeake Conservancy and the Coastal Heritage Alliance continued to raise money to keep the program running and in February 2013 began a second phase of the original program. The Watermen Heritage Tour (WHT) program is an initiative that partners the non-profit organizations with a network of watermen who participated in the initial training program who are willing and able to provide paid tours to the public. These tours cover a wide variety of themes and locations on the Chesapeake Bay, but are all tailored to a public interested in the lives of commercial fishermen. Watermen generally offer tours focusing on the typical workday of commercial fishermen, the region's history and ecology, or simply provide an opportunity to

be out on a boat with someone with local knowledge of the region. To date, the 14 participants in the WHT program have led 157 tours and connected with 1874 members of the public since the launch of the Watermen Heritage Tour website in February of 2013 (Ogburn unpublished). My role as a consultant for CHA and the program was to work with watermen to better understand the challenges they faced in implementing their tourism business ventures and convey these concerns to the appropriate state officials. The fact that much of the programs current funding came from state organizations like the Department of Natural Resources, an organization with a bad name amongst watermen, made this a tough job. I had to balance my relationship with watermen and voice their concerns while not alienating myself from those controlling the purse strings in Annapolis, the state capital. This position placed me into daily contact with watermen, state officials, and heritage tourism representatives all around the Chesapeake Bay.

Research Site

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States. Its watershed spans 64,000 square miles, it has 11,000 miles of shoreline. There are 17 million people living between its headwaters in Cooperstown, New York and its Atlantic outlet in the Virginia tidewater. Estuaries are noted for their ecological productivity and the Cheseapeake Bay is no exception. The shallow waters, salt and fresh water mixing, and ecological variability from its northern to southern ends and eastern and western edges make for a unique and productive system. When these ecological factors are viewed alongside the political and social systems that exist within the region, a truly complex system, with myriad challenges, emerges.

The majority of my ethnographic research was done in one distinct region of this vast geographic area, the Eastern Shore. The Eastern Shore is Maryland's portion of the Delmarva Peninsula, which is surrounded by the Chesapeake Bay to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. While it is hard to make an argument that a region only an hour and half from Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia is remote there is a degree of isolation and separateness inherent in Eastern Shore communities. This isolation is geographical as well as cultural. The region, although it makes up a third of the state's land mass, is connected to the rest of Maryland by only two points: the Chesapeake Bay Bridge connecting Annapolis to Kent Island and the bridge spanning the Susquehanna River at Havre de Grace. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge was not built until 1952 and an additional span was not added to the original two-lane bridge until 1973. Times of ferries crossing the Bay to Baltimore from the Eastern Shore are well within the memory of many.

This geographic isolation more or less halted the rapid urbanization that sprung up along the Interstate 95 corridor in the rest of Maryland. The Eastern Shore has remained a rural region with a population according to the 2010 census of only 420,792 or 8% of the state's total population. Interspersed among the small agriculturally oriented towns inland are equally small communities along the shores of the Chesapeake and its tributaries. These towns were historically centers of commerce, transportation, and commercial fishing but are increasingly becoming tourist destinations, second home communities, and places for people to retire. Despite these changes there is still a visible community of working watermen who manage to live in these towns and make a living off of fishing the surrounding waters.

Over the course of my field research my time has been primarily spent in three waterfront communities on the Eastern Shore: Rock Hall to the north, St. Michaels in the center, and Deal

Island to the south. These communities would have been very similar 50 years ago when they were all primarily commercial fishing communities but have since gone in different directions (White 2009). Focusing my fieldwork in these three communities has given me a broad understanding of the challenges that face commercial fishing communities at large but has also given me the opportunity to focus on the unique challenges faced by individual communities and the watermen who work out of them.

Rock Hall is a working class town with a visible community of watermen and working waterfront industries including boat repair facilities, marinas, tackle shops, and a working fleet approaching 100 boats. Rock Hall is considered one of the rougher watermen communities, and its problems with drugs and crime are known around the Bay. Natural Resource Police logs show a large percentage of the town's licensed watermen cited for infractions every year (Natural Resource Police Blotter 2014). The surrounding area is a desirable place for people to live because of the open agricultural space, well-known hunting opportunities, access to the waters of the Chesapeake, and relative proximity to metropolitan centers about 90 miles away.

Rock Hall is gentrifying, however, although the shift has not yet displaced the town's watermen who still receive priority for docking privileges and still maintain access to the waterfront for unloading their catch. The town celebrates its commercial fishing heritage with a small museum, recently renovated community "clam house", fishing-themed murals, and a carved statue of a waterman in the center of town. Politics and commercial fishing are intertwined in Rock Hall as it was where the primary advocacy and commercial fishing lobbying organization, the Maryland Watermen's Association, was founded nearly 40 years ago.

St. Michaels is also relatively close to the Bay Bridge and access to the metropolitan centers of the Western Shore, but it has become much more of a tourist destination and place for

the wealthy to retire and vacation than Rock Hall. Home values in St. Michaels have sky rocketed and few watermen live within the town limits. Access to the working waterfront has all but disappeared for commercial fishermen and luxury marinas and restaurants line the waterfront. Despite no longer being very conducive to commercial fishermen, St. Michaels is home to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, which has a large collection dedicated to the history of commercial fishing in the Bay. Watermen may not live in or work out of St. Michaels, but they are still very visible within the town. The main artery of the Bay Hundred Peninsula, which encompasses nearly a dozen small watermen villages and piers, runs through the historic downtown shopping district of St. Michaels and is used by watermen to transport their catch.

Deal Island is the most geographically isolated of the three towns. It is at the end of a peninsula, 15 miles from the nearest town with any real amenities and 3 hours from Baltimore. Deal Island is home to a large number of watermen and there are few other jobs available in the immediate community. Tourism does not play a large part in the everyday lives of Deal Island residents, but it is home to a growing number of people looking to get an inexpensive home on the water. Unlike St. Michaels where waterfront goes for millions of dollars, people can find homes on the water in Deal Island for less than $200,000. Deal Island is also home to the majority of the remaining oyster harvesting fleet, including the historic sail-dredging vessels called skipjacks. Despite the apparent health of the fisheries surrounding Deal Island, it is the most economically depressed community of the three in which I conducted research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following sections provide an overview of the key bodies of literature used to inform this thesis. Specifically, I rely on how previous researchers have determined how a community can be defined as a "fishing community" and how the concept of vulnerability has been applied in such communities.

What is a Fishing Community?

Fishing communities, indeed the concept of community itself, are difficult to define. The simplest definition rests on a combination of social interaction in a shared geographical space. However, as applied fishery anthropologists Clay and Olson point out, this definition "ultimately tells us very little and suggests community is not easily defined" (2007:28). Clay and Olson provide a definition for applied practice: The production of space and place, the practice of fishing, notions of identity, and other cultural, political-economic, and geographic processes all inhere in shaping something we might call a 'fishing community' (2007:28). Central to this definition is the shared act of fishing and the identity that comes with it. As Poggie and Gersuny (1974), and Pollnac and colleagues (1975) show in their studies of millworkers and fishermen from the same small town, individual occupational identities have an important influence on how the community is defined as a whole. Jacob and colleagues (2001) argue that the economic focus of natural resource dependent communities makes it difficult to confine these types of

communities within traditional municipal borders. A more fluid approach to delineating community must be taken.

The shear number of small communities, their dispersal over a wide-ranging geography in the Chesapeake region, and the variety and degree to which fishing activities took place historically and take place now, make defining a fishing community a challenge. Clay and Olson (2007:29) argue that despite these challenges there are certain commonalities that can aid researchers in defining a fishing community including:

> (1) a variety of linkages of common residence on land with common place of work at sea (Clay 1996; Poggie and Gersuny 1974; St. Martin 2001); (2) strong cultural beliefs about the importance of fishing to the community even when fishing revenues are only a small fraction of gross revenues (Jacob et al. 2005; cf. Olson and Clay 2001); (3) women's strong involvement in the resource enterprise—although that is changing (Blinkley 2000; Davis and Gerrard 2000); and (4) crew members as coventurers and—although not universal—kinship is an important hiring criterion creating a unique relationship of capital to labor (re. Davis et al. 2002).

In addition to these characteristics, there is a legal definition of 'fishing community' in the United States that comes out of the Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The MSA defines a fishing community as "substantially dependent on or substantially engaged in the harvest or processing of fishery resources to meet social and economic needs, including fishing vessel owners, operators, and crew and the United States fish processors that are based in such a community" (MSA National Standard 8). In addition to

managing US fishery stocks, the MSA is also tasked with mitigating social and economic impacts on fishing communities based on management decisions (MSA section 3(33)B). This aspect of the regulation is meant to protect and sustain fishermen and the communities they define as "fishing communities." With the definition of a fishing community including not only economic, but social factors as well, it becomes more difficult to define a community solely on quantitative data.

For instance, judging from the economic impact of commercial fishing in Maryland, one would not imagine the industry to be as valued as it is. Maryland has a GDP figure of approximately 300 billion dollars and the estimated value of all Maryland seafood is around 600 million, or .2 percent of GDP (Southern Maryland Online 2007). The proportion of this total comprising dockside value, or the price watermen are paid for their catch, is even less at an annual average 60 million over the past 10 years (MD Seafood 2012). This equates to a gross income of only $100,000 to each of the roughly 6,000 licensed commercial fishermen in the state. After subtracting fuel, bait, crew-shares, and other operational expenses it is clear that fishing in the Chesapeake is not a primary economic driver of the region compared to the real estate, government, and professional sectors that make up 15.7%, 11%, and 18.3% of the state's GDP, respectively (MD Department of Business and Economic Development 2011).

However, when this economic impact is compared to the iconic status watermen and seafood receives it is clear the industry has high social value. A waterman is prominent in the state seal of Maryland. The skipjack, a commercial oyster-dredging vessel, is the state boat. Many of the state species are commercially harvested and watermen and maritime festivals are commonplace in the summer and fall as are billboards advertising the importance of supporting Maryland's seafood industry.

Based on the criteria above, both what has been laid out by previous researchers and what is described in the MSA, the communities in which I conducted field research can be defined as fishing communities. Watermen, despite involvement in different seasons, use of different gear types, and exploitation of different geographic locations on the water, all share common residence in a community on shore. In these towns the watermen go to the same restaurants, churches, and bars. They keep their boats at the same piers and shop for marine supplies at the same stores. Their children attend the same local schools and play on the same sports teams. These communities, unlike other communities of fishermen that are only brought together on certain boats for certain seasons, have longstanding ties that stretch well beyond their shared occupation on the water (Acheson 1981).

Economically, fishing has a varying impact in each of these small towns, but it has clear cultural value. Each community has some sort of Watermen's Appreciation Day in which the life of the commercial fishermen is celebrated and watermen get to show off some of their skills in boat docking contests, oyster shucking races, and anchor tosses. The most well known of these events will happen for the 55th year this Labor Day in Deal Island. The Deal Island Skipjack Race attracts visitors from all over the state to watch the working skipjacks race one another in a heated competition for cash prizes. The residents of Deal Island take full advantage of the onslaught of visitors and nearly every home along the road to the races has things out in the front yard to sell to tourists. Much like Deal Island, Rock Hall wears its commitment to its watermen on its sleeve. The town seal includes crabs, oysters, and the town's namesake, rockfish. There are two historic wooden boats in front of the town municipal building and murals with fishing themes cover a number of cinderblock buildings scattered throughout the community. Watermen serve in prominent political positions and still control a large area of the

town's waterfront despite pressures from developers, sailing marinas, and restaurants catering to tourists. In St. Michaels, the commitment to watermen is a bit different. The remaining watermen have only one pier on the outskirts of town where they still have a place to cheaply tie up their boats and unload their catch. In the past 40 years, the prime waterfront area has turned from a collection of seafood packing houses, boatyards, and commercial wharves to expensive marinas, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and a museum. Although there are few working watermen remaining in the town, St. Michaels is home to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. This museum boasts of having the largest collection of Chesapeake Bay work vessels in the world, and capitalizes on tourists coming to the area to learn about the history of commercial fishing in the region. There is still cultural value associated with watermen in St. Michaels, although it may be based on watermen of the past and not the contemporary men and women who still live in the community.

Clay and Olson (2007) discuss the importance of women in defining a fishing community, and it is often argued that the role of women is not adequately explored in natural-resource dependent communities, especially fishing communities. In general, women are typically associated with construction of fishing gear, adding value to products (i.e. picking crabs, shucking oysters in order to sell), and serving as overall advocates for the commercial fishing industry within their communities (Davis 1986). I have seen all of these roles filled by women, in addition to serving as captains and crews, but the most important role for women in the communities where I worked seemed to be their contributions to the overall household income. This is especially valuable for watermen who typically would not have health insurance or any other benefits were it not for their wives working at banks, schools, hospitals, service industries, etc. Although one does not see women in the Chesapeake as actively involved in

traditional “fishermen’s wives” clubs, they are still an essential, and under-explored, element that allows for the continuation of the contemporary fishing community in the Chesapeake (Conway et al. 2002).

Clay and Olson (2007) suggest the final defining characteristic of fishing communities is the unique relationship between capital and labor. This comes out of the traditional share system used to pay crew. Crew are considered coventurers, and not wage labor, and are usually made up of one’s kin. Working the water in the Chesapeake is certainly a family occupation. Only one waterman that I interviewed did not come from a watermen’s family, and most watermen began working the water with fathers, uncles, or cousins. Payment to crew varies dramatically depending on the targeted species and the gear type being used. For instance, watermen working on a skipjack dredging for oysters are paid by the share - the total value of the days catch is calculated and one third goes to the boat, one third goes to the captain, and one third is divided equally among the six crew members. This equates to between $200-$300 per day for each crewmen, although most boats only go out two days a week. During crab season, captains may pay crew a daily wage. This is typically around $100-$120 a day but can be up to six days a week of work. From my interviews, captains balance on a fine line between getting crew that really need the work so they will take a lower wage with individuals reliable enough to show up to work without being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Hardworking and skilled crew are sought after but hard to find because most people that have a license and have access to a boat would rather work for themselves than crew for someone else.

Vulnerability and Fishing Communities

In addition to the shared characteristics that define fishing communities, these communities across the globe and specifically in the United States, face a similar set of challenges in maintaining their existence. Fish stocks are declining from pollution and overfishing; the coast and coastal waters are being privatized leading to the lost of the working waterfront; the rate of poverty and drug use is high, and few young men enter the trade. In combination, these actors seriously threaten the continuation of this occupation and the communities that depend on it (FAO 2010, Apostle et. al 1998, McGoodwin 1990, Johnson and Orbach 1990).

One of the fundamental questions I pursued in this research was: "What are the vulnerabilities within the commercial fishing communities of the Chesapeake Bay and how do recent initiatives promoting heritage tourism address these vulnerabilities?" Vulnerability refers to the way a social-ecological system is likely to be exposed to harm from specific hazards (Kasperson et al. 2005, Turner et al. 2003, Tuler et al. 2008). Put more simply, vulnerability is the "differential susceptibility to loss from a given insult" (Kasperson et al. 2001: 24). The groundwork for current understandings of vulnerability was established in early studies by ecological anthropologists interested in adaptation and homeostasis (Netting 1981, Rappaport 1967) and has a place in the broad tradition of anthropology because it "highlight[s] the role of people, in relation to each other and to the environment, in creating and coping with risk (Clay and Olson 2008). More recently the concept has been expanded on by a contemporary generation of researchers contributing to the theory and method behind the resilience framework (Nelson et al. 2007). Nelson and colleagues define vulnerability as "the susceptibility of a system to disturbances determined by exposure to perturbations, sensitivity to perturbations, and

the capacity to adapt (2007: 396). Similarly, Tuler and colleagues (2008) operationalize the three components of the definition (exposure, sensitivity, and resilience) specifically for their research into fishing communities and say that although "within a system these can be considered analytically as separate features…the factors and processes that create them are often inter-related and inter-dependent (2008:173).

It should further be noted that vulnerability also has a political element and must be looked at as a social construction and not just as a product of the interaction between humans and the environment (Oliver-Smith 2001: 111). It is thus influenced by the "politics of its representation" (Oliver-Smith 1996: 309-310) and "marked by the potential to redress or recreate extant power relations" (Clay and Olson 2008: 148). Vulnerability does not translate equally across all people within a community and resilience, the amount of change a system can undergo and still retain the same function and structure while maintaining options to develop (Nelson et al. 2007: 396), varies between different stakeholder groups and socio-economic classes within individual stakeholder groups (Tuler et al. 2008). Understanding that individual fishermen are differentially impacted by community-level regulations or ecological perturbations is an important fact to consider when investigating vulnerability within fishing, and other resource-dependent, communities.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

The following sections provide an overview of the methods and analyses used to pursue the three primary lines of inquiry set forth in this research:

1. What are the vulnerabilities within the commercial fishing communities of the Chesapeake Bay and how do recent initiatives promoting heritage tourism address these vulnerabilities?
2. What characteristics of commercial fishermen are associated with success in heritage tourism ventures?
3. Are the identities of individual commercial fishermen or commercial fishing communities challenged by participation in heritage tourism ventures?

In order to investigate these questions I employed a mix of informal and semi-structured interviews with watermen and other stakeholders involved in the heritage-tourism initiative central to this study. Additionally, I used traditional ethnographic approaches to collect data in a variety of settings including within the firehouses, bars, and hardware stores of watermen communities, on commercial fishing vessels, in boatyards and wharves, and at state-level meetings focusing on the development of heritage tourism in Maryland. I will describe how I gained access to this variety of settings and the information this access yielded. Finally, I will discuss the means that I used to analyze the information collected.

Preliminary Research

Preliminary research began in the fall of 2011 upon returning to the Chesapeake Bay region. Although at the time I was still in the process of refining my research questions I knew that I would be interacting with watermen as well as state-level officials, non-profit organizations, and fishery managers. For this reason I wanted to establish myself in a position that would allow me access to informants both within and outside of the watermen communities that would be central to my study. I built on the rapport I previously established in watermen communities mentioned in the first chapter by arranging to live in the rental home of a well-respected waterman and seafood buyer in exchange for fixing up the home for him. This agreement worked out very well because it gave me credibility in the community not only because "Bill" allowed me to live in the house but because it showed he trusted me to put a new roof and addition on it. With Bill's seafood retail and wholesale business right around the corner it also was easy to become a familiar face to the watermen who dropped off their catch at the shop everyday where I helped out packing up fish and oysters and assisting with building an expansion on the shop. Eventually, I began to help out as a deckhand on Bill's boat and was able to meet even more commercial fishermen.

Although everyone knew that I was working on graduate research, I still gained some measure of respect by the fact that we all participated in the same type of physical labor. Nelson (1969) discusses the importance of establishing a "normal" role in society and that shared participation in physical labor can help to eliminate outside status for the ethnographer. While I certainly would not suggest that any watermen thought I was a true "local", my willingness to

pack oysters, tear off a roof in the heat of the summer, and get up early to go check catfish pots helped to break down barriers that otherwise would have existed had I only worn the hat of a researcher and not as a participating ethnographer and anthropologist.

At the same time I was attempting to become less of an outsider in the watermen community, I was working to gain access to state-level officials, non-profit organizations, conservation associations, and fishery regulators and managers. Upon moving back to Maryland I was offered an adjunct position at a small liberal arts college on the Eastern Shore. Although in the beginning I only taught one introductory Anthropology class I found myself introduced as a "professor" when I attended meetings and met with non-fishermen involved in the fishing industry. At first I would correct people as I was introduced and say I was a graduate student doing research, but this became more tedious than it was worth and I found myself accepting the designation of a "professor" doing research into the commercial fishing industry in the Bay. I feel this designation gave me a degree of standing when I was present at various public and private meetings that may not have been afforded me had I just been introduced as a graduate student.

The rapport that I built with a variety of stakeholders involved in the commercial fishing industry during preliminary research was of great benefit as I refined my research focus and undertook the data collection that informs this thesis. Johnson and colleagues (2006) write that "in choosing a social role, the potential ethnographer should be aware of how these factors will influence the kinds and diversity of data collection respective to each position (115)." I found that my involvement in two somewhat distinct communities (watermen and managers) provided more access to information of different types and somewhat more power within the different settings (Johnson et al. 2006). My standing was beneficially impacted when the managers knew

that I had close relationships within the watermen community and the watermen appreciated, and even joked about the fact, that I was a "college professor" that still did roofing on the side.

Sample

For interviews, this research uses a complete sample of the 14 watermen actively participating in the Watermen Heritage Tour Program and uses non-probability sampling techniques for additional interviews with watermen not actively participating in the program and experts involved in the heritage tourism initiative. Non-probability samples are used for two primary reasons: 1.) This research is a case study of the development of one particular heritage tourism initiative and I therefore need to gather data from watermen who were actually involved in the program, and 2.) It aims to collect cultural data from a relatively small number of experts that are either involved in the development of the program or are potentially impacted by the program (Bernard 2006).

To gather the complete sample of watermen that were active in the program at the time of the study I used my position as a consultant for the Watermen Heritage Tour program to access the list of current participants. I then initiated contact with these individuals by phone and set-up times for interviews. For additional interviews with watermen familiar with the program but not actively engaged in the project I used a purposive sampling technique. For the sake of this research I wanted a variety of watermen familiar enough with the heritage tourism initiative that they would have an informed opinion about the potential impacts of the program and at the same time explain why they were not actively involved. I began with interviews with watermen that I knew personally and then used chain referrals from these watermen to set up interviews with other watermen in the communities I was working in. The chain referral technique is especially

useful when you have trusted key informants who can recommend additional interviewees and at the same time vouch for the credibility of the researcher. This is especially important in small groups whose members may not particularly care about one's need for data (Bernard 2006). While this approach does not provide a representative sample of all watermen in the community, it did put me in contact with leaders in the community who were respected for the fact that they represented the views of watermen at different ends of the economic spectrum. In much the same way, I used a key informant involved in the development of the heritage tourism program to gain access to other experts at the state-level involved in the program development. These interactions are largely convenience samples and consist of talking with whoever was present at certain meetings and had the opportunity to talk with me, but because of the relatively small number of people actively involved in the development of the program, I was able to talk to most of the major players involved.

Key Informants

I was lucky enough to develop two close relationships with key informants who were essential to the data collection presented in this research. The first was the waterman and seafood buyer previously mentioned, Bill. Bill and I interacted often because I was living in and renovating a home that he owned and I would hang out and help out at his seafood shop. He had a wealth of knowledge about the ins and outs of the industry since he was both a waterman and a buyer, and therefore understood fishing beginning with the catch and going all the way to the sale to the end user and all of the regulations that went along with this chain. Another characteristic that made Bill a good informant was the fact that he was middle-aged. He had been in the industry since he was a teenager and had seen the ups and downs of the past 30 years,

but unlike the real "old-timers" of the industry he was never witness to the real glory days of commercial fishing in the 1940s-1960s. Bill still had hope for the industry and was entrepreneurial in how he was going to continue to make a living working the water, whereas many of the older generation considered the Chesapeake beyond saving. At the same time, younger watermen did not have the experience to tell me how the industry had changed much beyond a 5-10 year time-scale, and many of them were struggling to figure out how they would ever own their own boat and license, much less be able to work the water full-time and support young families.

I also developed a close relationship with a key informant involved in the development and promotion of the heritage tourism initiative central to this study. I described how my relationship developed with the Director of Coastal Heritage Alliance, "Matt," in Chapter 1 and will now briefly describe how he evolved into a key informant for this research. Matt's ability to jump between the communities of fishermen and managers was based on his life experiences as a commercial fishermen on the West Coast, shipwright, graduate student, storyteller, and local politician. He was initially interested in me because I was a PhD student that he thought might be able to benefit his organization and the work they were conducting. He quickly realized that I could also bounce between worlds of commercial fishermen and managers and began to open up more about the challenges facing the heritage tourism initiative he was spearheading. Matt framed the conflict between commercial fishermen and managers as a social justice issue because of the fact that the livelihoods of entire communities were being threatened. At the same time, he showed me that communities of commercial fishermen had bad apples like any other community and that there were plenty of poachers, thieves, and drug addicts within the ranks and that this presented a real challenge when promoting the heritage tourism initiative.

Tracking down public-funding to develop and promote a program to support an occupational group many in the public thought were "outlaws" was a major challenge and one that Matt did not suggest would be easy to overcome. In general, Matt provided a very real look at the good and bad elements present within commercial fishing communities in a way that was more nuanced than I could gain simply by befriending watermen or reading what was written about them in books or newspapers. In addition, Matt introduced me to all of the key participants in state-level agencies and non-profits that he was collaborating with in the development of the heritage tourism program. When he brought me on as a consultant to the program it was a key moment in expanding my access to interview and ethnographic data.

Data Collection

This research used a combination of interview styles and ethnographic approaches in order to collect data to answer the questions posed in this thesis. This data was systematically recorded in my field notes that were the basis of my analysis in this work. The following sections provide an overview of the means of data collection and a justification for their use.

Interviews

The primary means of data collection for this research were interviews. I used a variety of informal, unstructured, and semi-structured approaches in my interviews with watermen and participants in the heritage tourism initiative. Informal interviews were used during all stages of the research process to both build rapport and validate information I gained during more structured interviews with informants. The nature, hours, and intensity of the work of my informants often made it difficult to take up too much of their time with sit down interviews so

informal interviews became very useful. By their nature, informal interviews are conversations and thus can cover a wide variety of topics and I could have as many as a dozen of these conversations a day when I was working within a boatyard or other environment with a large concentration of watermen. In order to keep track of this information I would rely on field notes taken throughout the course of the day and when it was difficult or impossible to take notes because I was working along with the watermen I would record field notes when I returned home in the evening. In the case of my informal interviews I did not seek to deceive watermen about my role as a researcher as well as a deckhand/carpenter, but did not always explicitly state my reasons for being interested in discussing certain topics. For this reason, data collected in this way will not be referenced to specific people or specific communities for the sake of anonymity.

After preliminary research had been conducted and I received IRB approval for this research I began to conduct unstructured interviews. My unstructured interviews may have still taken place in informal settings like over a beer in a bar or while I was working alongside watermen, but in this case I made my interests in topics relevant to the fishing and heritage tourism industries clear and sought out interviewees who I felt would posses knowledge on the topics of interest. These unstructured interviews were important ways of gaining information as well as developing relationships with informants who I could do follow-up interviews with specifically for their level of knowledge on the topics I was researching. Although I would not consider them key informants, I did have approximately 6 informants that I conducted multiple unstructured interviews with because of their expertise in a variety of areas. The majority of these interviews were not recorded and instead I took notes during the interviews and when that was not possible I added to my field notes in the evenings after the interviews. Unstructured

interviews were valuable in refining my research questions to better reflect the concerns, beliefs, and behaviors of the watermen I was researching when I conducted semistructured interviews.

Semistructured interviews were conducted with all 14 watermen represented on the Watermen Heritage Tour website. I used a mix of face-to-face and phone interviews, and I had face-to-face interaction with all but two interviewees at some point during the course of the research. My first interview schedule included over 30 questions, which I quickly found was far too many to cover over the course of even multiple interviews. Additionally, I found that many of the watermen I was first interviewing with the original interview schedule were providing only short answers to my questions and interviews were relatively labored with little useful data produced. I modified my approach and limited my questions to three primary lines of inquiry, which provided more useful data and less strained interviews. I believe that this approach allowed the watermen to feel that they were in control of the conversation. Watermen are increasingly interviewed by students, researchers, state officials, the news media, and natural resource police officers, often about their role in declining fishery stocks, and this may put them immediately on the defensive when asked to be interviewed. I also found that some watermen were reluctant to be audio recorded during our interviews. I expected watermen to be reluctant to sign consent forms and planned accordingly when I applied for IRB approval requesting exemption from signed consent forms, but I assumed my rapport with them would make them more comfortable being recorded. In the end I found that it was much more effective to take notes during interviews and then immediately transcribe notes and elaborate on themes in private, rather than attempt to record conversations. Many of these interviewees were watermen who served on various boards or in other public capacities in which they were accustomed to audio/video recordings so I was initially surprised by their reluctance to be recorded, but I

realized that it was based more on the nature of their responses and their desire to not jeopardize their political standing by having candid responses recorded.

Official Group Meetings

Another important arena for data collection was a series of meetings I attended in my capacity as a consultant for the non-profit organization leading the development of the heritage tourism initiative. These meetings were with a varied audience that included representatives of non-profits, state officials, academic researchers, and watermen. All of these meetings generally revolved around how the heritage of these small watermen communities can be protected and at the same time capitalized on for the benefit of the local residents. These meetings took place in Deal Island, St. Michaels, and Maryland's state capitol, Annapolis. These meetings were very valuable because they placed the views of the watermen in direct contrast with the other groups and helped me to realize that there are always at least two sides to a story. Since I did not always have consent from all members of the meeting to use their identities I will not use direct quotes or names of participants in the meetings.

Participant Observation

In addition to my role as a consultant for the non-profit in its efforts to develop the Watermen Heritage Tours program, I also worked as a boat carpenter and occasionally as a deckhand on commercial fishing boats in the Chesapeake. This time spent onboard and in boatyards with fishermen and other members of the maritime industry was an essential element informing this study. This work provided an ideal means of approaching watermen and led to a number of informative interviews that I do not believe would have been possible with some

interviewees had I contacted them as a researcher or as a consultant to a non-profit organization. Johnson makes reference to his experiences working in fishing communities and the value of gaining rapport when he says:

> One afternoon during a "mug-up" (coffee break), two social science researchers came into the mess hall to interview some of the fishers. During the course of the interview, some fishers gave information that was somewhat untrue, and on one occasion, a fisher winked at Johnson as he was relaying a story to one of the interviewers. This incident made Johnson aware of how important his active participation was in establishing rapport with his informants, rapport that would have been much more difficult to establish with an outsider's status, particularly in this geographically isolate, ethnically diverse, well-bounded work context. (Johnson et al. 2006:123)

Interestingly, I worked as a deckhand on a salmon fishing boat out of the same "fish camp" Johnson describes above and had many a cup of coffee in the same mess hall in which he witnessed the exchange between the fishers and researchers. Although the men and women I worked with for this research were not as overtly deceptive as Johnson describes, there is a certain degree of fatigue that was displayed by watermen when it came to providing interviews/stories to researchers. I often noticed that watermen treated attention from researchers as an opportunity to elaborate and embellish stories that they had been telling for years. Commercial fishermen are known in the Chesapeake for their humor and story-telling ability and therefore are sought out by folklorists, journalists, and museum personnel. While I am sure they "pulled the wool over my eyes" on occasion, my shared experience of working on

their boats either doing repairs or assisting them in commercial fishing operations helped to provide a level of connection that went beyond simply being a researcher coming to them and asking them to give up some of their time to talk to me. This relationship helps me to feel comfortable with the validity of the information I gathered. In this sense I defined my work as both a boat carpenter and as a consultant as following Johnson and colleagues (2006) definition of an active participant in which researchers engage in traditional occupational roles within the group being studied. Although in some instances such as public meetings I remained at the other end of the spectrum as simply an observer for the most part I consciously tried to engage in my research as an active participant. This approach has a number of benefits including the type and quality of information that is made accessible, especially in settings in which researcher and informants share elements of a culture. Johnson and colleagues suggest:

> Ethnography in contemporary settings increasingly involves the study of people in one's own culture in settings that, for example, often stress work and display spatial diffuseness and ethnic heterogeneity. In such contexts, the ethnographer's ability to develop a social role that is recognizable by the community may be particularly important. In some contexts, active participation may be a prerequisite to the ultimate success of the study. (2006:132)

Data Analysis

This research uses an inductive approach to analyzing qualitative data gathered during interviews and participant observation. In order to undertake a qualitative analysis of this data I used a grounded theory approach to explore the emergence of themes from within my field notes and interviews (Strauss and Corbin 1990). I took detailed notes during semi-structured

interviews and when impromptu opportunities for interviews or interaction with informants came up when taking notes was not feasible I would record notes as soon as possible when I returned home for the evening. I then transcribed these hand written field notes into a typed electronic document during which time I added additional thoughts, reflections, and connections with broader theoretical issues laid out by previous researchers. This body of information became the source I explored for themes that ran across interviews and my experiences interacting with watermen and state-level officials. This was an iterative process during which time my thematic categories changed as I added additional data and more clearly refined my own understanding of the themes I was finding in this data.

This approach complemented the overall aims of this exploratory research into the development of this particular heritage tourism initiative. Instead of approaching the research with an a priori framework that sought to support a set of hypotheses, my approach was to gather information from relevant informants and then analyze this data for the presence of themes relating to my overall lines of inquiry. While issues of replicability can be raised with this type of qualitative analysis of qualitative data I found that a grounded theory approach provided a systematic means of investigating data and applying it to the real world case study I was involved in. I cannot necessarily make broad generalizations about my findings and apply them to other fishing communities outside of the Chesapeake Bay, but I can speak to the experience of the commercial fishermen I studied and compare these findings to the works of other scholars working in maritime communities. This approach adds to our collective understanding of these types of natural-resource dependent communities and also contributes to the overall construction of theory related to them.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In the following sections I present the information I collected over the course of this research and discuss how this information relates to the three primary lines of inquiry I pursued. My aim is to convey my results in a format that provides practical information for the improvement of the heritage tourism initiative as well as relates my findings to the larger body of literature that surrounds commercial fishing communities and the concepts of vulnerability and identity. I will organize this chapter by dividing it up into three sections relating to each line of inquiry.

Vulnerability

In the first chapter I discussed the means through which a community is specifically designated a "fishing community" and how I applied these designations to the communities I studied. In addition to the shared characteristics that define them, fishing communities across the globe, and specifically in the United States, face a similar set of challenges in maintaining their existence. Declining fish stocks from both pollution and overfishing, privatization of the coast and waters, gentrification and the loss of the working waterfront, poverty and drug use, and the lack of young fishermen entering the trade all combine to seriously threaten the continuation of this occupation and the communities that support it.

One of the fundamental questions I pursued in this research was: "What are the vulnerabilities within the commercial fishing communities of the Chesapeake Bay and how do recent initiatives promoting heritage tourism address these vulnerabilities?" I will approach this question one part at a time by first describing the framework through which I explore vulnerability and conveying the information gained regarding the vulnerabilities mentioned by my informants. This research approached the concept of vulnerability by inviting watermen to describe what they see as the vulnerabilities of their communities and combines this with my observations as an ethnographer about additional vulnerabilities facing the community. From my interviews, three primary themes emerged in regards to my questions about vulnerabilities within watermen communities: regulation, dependence on nature, and public image. All of these themes fall into one of the seven broad categories proposed by Tuler and colleagues (2008) about the driving forces behind vulnerability in fishing communities. The following sections elaborate on each.

Institutional Vulnerability

Typically the first and certainly the most often mentioned factor influencing vulnerability within fishing communities mentioned by watermen was the regulation and institutional control over their livelihoods by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). When asked about the vulnerabilities of their watermen communities, respondents nearly universally answered with "DNR", "overregulation", or "the state government". This type of resistance to institutional control is considered a characteristic of natural resource-dependent communities. Kirschner (2010) and Apostle and colleagues (1998) have shown the way that institutions can promote or limit vulnerabilities in fishing communities. The conflict between watermen and

DNR has been well documented (Paolisso 2002, Orbach 1980, Beem 2007) and is evident in the popular press and trade association publications associated with each stakeholder group. When pressed about what this concept of "overregulation" actually meant for them individually and as a community, watermen responded in a variety of ways. The most common response was simply one of being "regulated and taxed to death" or the argument that "DNR gets in my way everytime I turn around". These responses have started to become platitudes to non-watermen involved in the industry attempting to be advocates for fishing communities. At one meeting, the leader of a state agency suggested that watermen had to stop hiding behind the fact that they were heavily regulated and find creative ways to continue to work the water. He said, "You aren't going to be able to do it like your father and grandfather did it. You need to find different ways of surviving." While not an easy pill to swallow for the watermen, some of my interviewees did see it this way when they described specific elements of regulation that were causing declines in the number of young people entering the trade. One of my youngest informants made note that "the last of us are out here…you don't see anyone [young watermen] just goin' out and buyin a boat anymore." He said this was related to the fact that the catch limits that DNR has set make it impossible to make a "real living". He said previous generations were able to go out and catch a lot of crabs, oysters, and fish and make good money that allowed them to pay off their initial start-up costs and get them through bad seasons, but now you just cannot catch enough because of catch limits and shortened seasons to make anything more than just a "standard income" and this means that "there is no room to grow". He suggested that for many young watermen it made more economic sense to sell the licenses they inherited from their family than to use it to work the water.

Suggesting the same thing, but from a different generational perspective, one of the oldest watermen I interviewed told me that, "youngsters ain't got a prayer" and "there ain't no future in it". He mentioned how he already had his boats, trucks, shop, and equipment paid off, but that it will just never be possible for young guys because of the catch limits and the fact that they are limited to working eight hours a day. He said, "an eight hour day is hard on a guy trying to support a family" and "no oystering on Saturday…all this stuff [catch-limiting regulation] hurts families". With the costs of entering the business increasing dramatically and the prices for seafood only incrementally increasing combined with the fact that watermen must now operate less it does appear to be a threat to the continuation of the occupation.

Other vulnerabilities expressed in relation to regulation and DNR were issues of access. Issues of access have been largely investigated by geographers interested in privatization of resources such as oceans and fisheries (St. Martin 2007, Mansfield 2004, 2007), by anthropologists investigating conflict between fishery user groups (Johnson and Griffith 2010, Paolisso 2007), and by state agencies interested in the economic and cultural importance of working waterfronts (Colgan 2004). Watermen expressed concern over the continued push toward privatization in the fisheries through oyster aquaculture and catch-shares or individual transferable quotas (ITQs) in the blue crab fishery. In addition, access to the fishery in general was listed as a concern because of potential user conflict between commercial fishing interests and recreational and sport fishing (charter) interests. Finally, access to the working waterfront for docking boats, unloading catches, working on and storing gear was listed as a concern. In general, an uncertainty about the future was the defining characteristic of the concerns over the institutional control over the resources, and thus the livelihoods, that DNR has.

Acheson (2003) discusses how different regulations impact fishermen in different ways and warns against the homogenization of fishing communities because of the variety of gear types, locations, access to fisheries, boat size, etc. While this certainly applies to comparisons across fisheries as potentially diverse as the Chesapeake Bay oyster fishery and the Bristol Bay salmon fishery, I found that the watermen of the Chesapeake are relatively homogenous when it comes to the exposure they have to impacts from regulation. This is not to say that the activities they participate in or the challenges that they face do not vary, but in the end, in order to be truly considered a "waterman" by members of the community one must participate in fishing for most, if not all, of the year. This means that one is participating in a number of different fisheries during different seasons. Although they may use different gear types, watermen typically move through an annual round of fishing in unison. This may change slightly based on market and ecological forces, but typically watermen move from summer crabbing to fall fishing to winter oystering to spring fishing/crabbing. In this sense, I am able to look at watermen at the community level in regards to the potential impacts of regulatory institutions. This is not to say that a regulation is not going to affect individuals differently when it comes to their individual expenses and economic decisions, but regulations do not necessarily preference one type of waterman over another type. This can be seen in the relative uniformity of responses regarding the control DNR has over their livelihoods, but it may reveal itself differently in terms of the sensitivity that individual watermen have in regards to institutional control. An analysis of the impact of institutional decision-making at the individual level would be an important area for future research and would provide more insight into sensitivity of the individual.

The final element of vulnerability is the amount of resilience, or ability to withstand stressors and adapt to future stressors, inherent in the community being investigated. My

interest is in understanding how the heritage tourism initiative central to this study relates to the vulnerabilities conveyed to me about the feeling of institutional control felt by watermen regarding their livelihoods. During the course of my fieldwork the answer to this question has changed dramatically. Initially, the heritage tourism initiative became another element that fueled distrust and feelings of lack of control in watermen towards DNR. This was exemplified in a meeting I attended in my capacity as a consultant for one of the participating non-profits in which DNR officials said that it was not clear if it was even legal for watermen to take paying passengers out on their boats during commercial fishing operations. Despite the huge amount of funding DNR and other state and federal agencies put into the heritage tourism training program, when it came to watermen actually beginning to offer tours, DNR officials said that this type of operation fell into a "gray area". The basis of this reasoning is that if you are a licensed captain and taking out paying passengers on your boat then it is considered a charter and you must abide by recreational catch limits, gear types, fishing days, and hours. However, this becomes problematic when a licensed captain takes paying passengers interested in witnessing commercial fishermen in action. This type of educational trip was the basis of the program, not the desire to take people out like a traditional charter boat that is focused on providing passengers with fish or crabs to catch.

A prime example would be the case of someone paying to go out on a skipjack. Skipjacks are the last remaining sail-driven commercial fishing vessels in North America and they are used to dredge oysters. They are a cultural icon and are regularly featured in magazines and newspapers, and are at the center of many community restoration projects (Williams 2014, Peffer 2013). Skipjack captains regularly host photographers, journalists, and adventuresome tourists onboard. This was an activity that the heritage tourism program hoped to promote and

encourage as a means of adding additional income to watermen communities and educating the public. However, as the law stood a skipjack that had even a single photographer who brought lunch for the crew or gave the captain 50 dollars for the experience would be considered a charter trip and limited to recreational catch limits, or two bushels of oysters worth about 60 dollars, versus the 150 bushels the boat would be legally allowed to harvest commercially. Clearly, no captain is going to forgo thousands of dollars in income in order to invite interested tourists onboard while oystering. DNR said that in the end, it would be up to a judge to decide if the trip would be considered a charter or a commercial fishing venture. The non-profit organizations involved in the promotion of the heritage tourism concept worked with DNR on behalf of the watermen to change this law and formally allow watermen to take paying customers during their normal commercial work days. At the time of this writing, this regulatory change is in process and should take effect in the spring of 2014. The watermen I have spoken with regarding this change have been encouraged by it and see it as a sign that DNR believes in finding alternative ways of helping watermen continue to work the water.

Ecological Vulnerability

The second theme I discovered from my fieldwork was vulnerability related to what Tuler and colleagues call "environmental factors" (2008:175). In the case of my interviews two distinct parts of this type of ecological vulnerability were mentioned: weather and the availability of the resource. Weather was mentioned by around one third of my interviewees as being something that presents a unique challenge to commercial fishermen. Other researchers have investigated the way in which psychocultural characteristics of fishermen influence the way they are prone or averse to risk (Pollnac and Poggie 2008) and how these behavioral traits can

influence safety at sea (Hall-Arber and Mrakovcich 2008). In the case of the Chesapeake fisheries, there are fewer factors driving fishermen to put their lives in danger than in fisheries in Alaska and the Northeast where the "race to the fish" still persists. In general, most watermen have similarly sized boats that are equally seaworthy and from my observations when it is bad weather the entire fleet stays in, and I never noticed some watermen going out when others were not. Bad weather days were useful times to collect interview data because watermen were more accessible when they would stay tied up at the dock and do routine maintenance or come down to their boats a few times a day to check lines and bilge pumps. In general, I found that weather can really be a stand in for a variety of different elements of chance that influence the livelihoods of watermen. A mechanical problem, a crew member not showing up, or a weather event blowing in could all ruin the potential to harvest that day and these types of chance factors drive watermen to catch the most product they can when they are able to go out. This type of behavioral study was not part of this research but it could be an interesting avenue for future research that seeks to add to the theory behind the classic "fishermen's problem" formulated by Gordon (1954).

Although income generated through heritage tourism could carry watermen through hard times caused by weather or other occurrences, I really found no direct benefit that heritage tourism has for dealing with the vagaries of weather. It could be just as easily said that painting houses could help limit watermen vulnerability to weather, but this is simply because it helps to provide an alternative income not increase inherent resilience in relation to the actual hazard. However, I did find that watermen did believe that another form of ecological vulnerability, the actual availability of the resource, could potentially be reduced through heritage tourism. Much like regulation, nearly all my informants said that the fact that they were dependent on a

naturally fluctuating resource made them vulnerable. This idea was articulated in two primary ways. The first was simply that watermen are dependent on harvesting a resource whose availability is difficult or impossible to predict. This is a classic problem in fisheries management and is one for which anthropologists have used case studies to argue for an alternative parametric approach that acknowledges the unpredictability of the systems instead of attempting to rationalize them (Acheson and Wilson 1996).

The second related theme in this ecological vulnerability was that the livelihoods of watermen are dependent upon harvesting a resource whose availability is determined by factors outside of their control, but also not wholly natural. In this case what my informants were alluding to was water quality. Water quality was mentioned nearly universally as a primary vulnerability facing the fishing communities of the Chesapeake. Declines in water quality in the Chesapeake have been well documented and have been shown to have an impact on commercially harvested species (Boesch et al. 2001). In a watershed with 17 million people the Chesapeake does have a tremendous amount of nutrient runoff from sewage treatment plants, agricultural, and development projects. Dead zones spring up every year because of eutrophication, and siltation covers productive oyster and sea grass beds. During interviews watermen made mention of how overflows from sewage treatment plants "have killed the river" and how runoff from intensive agriculture contributes to water quality declines. These ecological factors clearly have political and cultural undertones and I found that watermen often felt as if overfishing got more of the blame for low populations of harvestable species than was deserved. One interviewee made note of how there were only a couple of hundred full-time watermen remaining in the Chesapeake and yet there were millions of people living in the watershed. He felt that it was unjust to make watermen shoulder the entire burden of low fish

stocks when everyone living in the Bay watershed is responsible. An older waterman provided an interesting perspective during his interview when he complained of state scientists being unwilling to fix the problem of water quality because then they would be out of a job. He said they have no incentive to fix the problem, especially when they have an "easy target to blame" in the watermen, and they "just keep on studying instead of fixing anything". I did find that it was a majority of older watermen who focused on water quality and pollution as being a key vulnerability and younger watermen who would first mention regulation. I discussed this with one young waterman and she alluded to the idea of shifting baselines. She said the "old timers would probably rank pollution higher because they saw what the Bay was like in the old days" whereas she "takes it for granted" that it is in the state that it is in currently.

Watermen did feel that heritage tourism could be an important means of reducing vulnerabilities related to declines in water quality. First, heritage tourism is an opportunity to work on the water but take pressure off of the resource. One of the more entrepreneurial watermen I interviewed said, "for me it's [heritage tourism] the answer because stocks are not "rebounding to keep up with demand" and otherwise "the future is not bright for the traditional waterman". Another potential way for heritage tourism to help limit sensitivity to declines in harvests caused by water quality is to have the option of catching less product but adding value to what one does catch. The 2013 crab season was considered one of the worst in recent memory and one waterman told me it was the worst season he ever had in 50 years of crabbing. Heritage tourism gives watermen the option of catching fewer crabs during hard seasons because they are adding value to their trips by having tourists on board. This scenario does not work in all cases and I interviewed one waterman who ran crabbing charters during the 2013 season and the crabs were so scarce he ended up having to buy crabs from a wholesaler at the end of the trip in order

to provide the "crab feast" included as part of the charter package. He said that he ended up breaking even on this venture, but felt that he at least remained in good standing with the customers for future seasons when the population rebounds. Additionally, watermen mentioned being able to run photography or history related tours that were not dependent on harvesting during slow times of year. Again, this is a means of reducing vulnerability by earning additional income and the same could be said about painting houses, but the difference with this example is that it is still an on-the-water type of income generation that supports the social, economic, and cultural elements that go into defining a fishing community by decreasing sensitivity and increasing resilience.

Public Image Vulnerability

The final theme I discovered during my interviews with watermen relating to their perceptions of vulnerability within their communities relates to the image they, as an occupational group, have in the eyes of the public. Commercial fishermen have been termed rugged individualists and are some of the last remaining "hunter-gatherers" in the United States pursuing an elusive prey in a dangerous and unpredictable environment (Jentoft and Davis 1993, Greenberg 2010). Shows like *Deadliest Catch* dramatize the repetition, boredom, and monotony that come along with commercial fishing and highlight the very real elements of danger that are inherent to the profession. Commercial fishing jockeys back and forth with logging between the first or second most dangerous profession in the United States (Morel et al. 2008), but commercial fishing in the Chesapeake Bay is much different than in the Bering Sea. While there are routinely injuries onboard, deaths are rare, and more often than not it is recreational boaters and fishermen that die each year from drowning or exposure. Despite not necessarily having the

same level of danger that fishermen in other parts of the country face, commercial fishing in the Chesapeake still has become iconic for the oftentimes romanticized independence that accompanies the work. The work is mysterious and exciting to outsiders and this is something that participants in the heritage tourism industry are attempting to capitalize on. At the same time they are portrayed as iconic figures of the Chesapeake, watermen are often stereotyped as outlaws and poachers. Although this stereotype cannot be justified across the entire community it is significant that nearly 40% of watermen receive some sort of citation from the Natural Resource Police each year (Keiner 2010). These citations often are minor infractions, which watermen often argue are impossible to avoid in order to efficiently harvest fish, crabs, or oysters, but in some cases they are major operations that mirror organized crime rather than simply catching a few undersized oysters. Recently, four watermen were indicted for illegally harvesting a half million dollars worth of striped bass and establishing illegal networks to sell the catch. Pictures of DNR officers pulling up gill nets loaded with striped bass were on the pages of local and state newspapers and sport fishing organizations and conservationists capitalized on the event to make a major push toward outlawing net fishing in the Bay. Although those efforts failed, it did spawn a whole new era of monitoring of commercial fishing activity with radar and cameras being mounted at observation sites that made it possible to observe commercial fishing activity throughout the Bay without having to deploy additional Natural Resource officers.

Controlling public perception has clear political implications for watermen as they attempt to continue to make a living harvesting fishery resources and media attention to poaching does not help in their lobbying efforts. Additionally, watermen must deal with the image that often comes when members of their community are perceived as involved in drug and alcohol abuse, living in poverty, or not attending to their boats, trucks, and homes. All of these elements

stack up against watermen and make them vulnerable to arguments from conservationists and environmentalists who see the occupation as something that does not hold value when it comes to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay or even sustaining viable communities. This problem is not unique to the watermen of the Chesapeake but reflects a larger shift in society that holds up nature as something to cherish and recreate in as opposed to something that is relied upon for livelihoods (White 1996, Paolisso 2002). One informant discussed the fact that "5% of them [watermen] are crooks that I wouldn't even eat dinner with" but it is these watermen that get the media attention and are focused on by politicians, but in the end the politicians "aren't doing anything to stop them" because they are the "softest targets" to use for ending commercial fishing in the region. Another informant suggested that by focusing on poachers the issue becomes "about overharvesting and not about the real problems of disease [fishery-related] and pollution". In addition to illegal fishing practices, cultural norms of some members of the watermen community are also viewed as a threat. One informant suggested that the "drinking and drugs" that permeate the communities make it difficult to find reliable crew and make it difficult to show the public "that we aren't all bad". At the same time this informant suggested that the only way he can afford to hire crew is to hire guys who are desperate for cash, hinting that there is a balance that he has to strike between finding cheap labor that is also reliable enough to show up every morning.

Overcoming stigmas associated with poverty also presents a challenge for watermen communities. Recently, a small watermen community outside of a more affluent former watermen community made local papers when it was announced that 62% of its school children qualify for free or reduced lunches and that schools were going to start serving dinner because community members feared students were not getting enough food at home (Moore 2014).

When news like this comes out in the same community where the poachers were indicted for the striped bass poaching scandal a real battle begins regarding the viability of commercial fishing as an occupation that can support communities in the Chesapeake.

By and large my informants felt that heritage tourism was a way that they could have an impact on the way they were perceived by the public by giving them an opportunity to tell their own story. One informant who actively ran sailing charters aboard his skipjack when he was not oystering with it used this interaction with the public to discuss the challenges that face managers and watermen alike when it comes to predicting stock abundance. With a background in environmental education, this particular captain attempts to persuade the public about the validity of local ecological knowledge alongside that of scientific predictions. Another informant said heritage tourism trips allow her an opportunity to "voice our side" and show that watermen are not "museum pieces" but still work at livelihoods that provide for themselves and their families. She said that although "[I] wouldn't want to call myself a voice for watermen I would consider myself an ambassador" and she uses this position to argue for the watermen's side of the "user conflict issue" she sees as a main threat to her community. One of the oldest and most experienced watermen I interviewed wanted to take passengers out specifically to show how difficult it was not to break any of the DNR's rules regarding harvest. His tours demonstrate how quickly one has to move in order to keep up with the crabs that are coming onboard and how challenging it is to "cull", or sort through the catch for legal crabs, and that they "aren't out to break the law it is just part of doin' business sometimes." He says that at just about any point DNR could give nearly every watermen a ticket for some minor infraction if they wanted to and by showing the public this it helps them to look a little more critically at the figures presented in the media about the "lawlessness" of commercial fishing in the Chesapeake.

In this sense, heritage tourism can contribute to resiliency in watermen communities in non-monetary ways. By having a platform to interact with the public watermen are able to convey the challenges that face their communities and counteract stories they belief portray them in a negative light.

Characteristics Associated with Success

My second line of inquiry asked, "what characteristics of watermen are associated with success in the heritage tourism industry?" My interest in this topic relates primarily to the practical information that I hoped it could yield for the improvement of the heritage tourism program as a whole. I took a qualitative approach to gathering data that combines interviews with watermen and my own observations over the course of my fieldwork. The main characteristic I observed associated with success in a heritage tourism venture was location. Watermen who were located near popular tourist destinations clearly have an advantage when it comes to attracting customers. This was supported with interviews with watermen who had the resources required to run operations but were just not located near a customer base. One such waterman had a skipjack capable of providing sailing tours and the access to family capital to start an operation, but he lived in a community that was simply too far away from population centers to be a viable tourist destination. He just "wasn't getting the calls" because he was "so far off the beaten path". Another waterman with a similar set of resources had been successfully running sailing charters on board his skipjack for nearly 20 years, but he lived in a watermen community in a wealthy county that was frequented by tourists from metropolitan centers such as Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia.

Another trait that I associated with success based on my observations was the willingness to take an entrepreneurial approach to the occupation that so many considered traditional. One informant said that "heritage tourism is the best kept secret out there" when it comes to making a living as a waterman. He said that he can go out with a group and catch two bushels of crabs in an hour and make the same amount of money he would have if he had caught 40 bushels of crabs. By making just as much money and catching fewer crabs he argued he was taking pressure off the resource so that it would still be there when he did need to fall back on catching more crabs. He said "nobody wants to be out there on a dead Bay" and heritage tourism is a means of educating as well as giving populations a chance to recover.

This particular waterman is very entrepreneurial and has other operations at his waterfront property including a guest house for overnight visitors, kayaks, hunting party packages, a charter fishing operation, in addition to the traditional commercial fishing he does. He acknowledged that he is not like a "traditional" waterman but he says that he believes people "really do look at me as a success" and that this type of success story is what is required to convince the watermen who may not be as entrepreneurial to delve into the heritage tourism business.

Other watermen voiced the need for success stories too. One interviewee said that he was worried that some members of his community were starting to get jealous of his success in running heritage tourism trips because he was making as much money running three trips a month as he did in two weeks of crabbing. He felt that "once people start making a buck" at these enterprises others will follow suit. Another waterman I interviewed realized that it would be better for him to partner his business with a local restaurant and hotel in order to gain customers than start something completely on his own. By his own choosing he only runs

around a dozen trips each summer because he does not want to give up commercial crabbing but he said that this can add up to significant income when he does not need to invest in advertising, marketing, or accounting.

The third characteristic I found associated with success in heritage tourism ventures was versatility. This was most apparent in watermen who were able to switch between seasons and take advantage of opportunities that presented themselves, often at the last minute. All the captains I interviewed had opportunities to take groups out but not all of them ended up taking trips. This was for a variety of reasons but mostly because they had a crew that was relying on going crabbing or oystering that day or the captain him/herself was relying on the money brought in through harvesting that day. Other captains sacrificed a day of traditional harvesting in order to take a trip that may not have generated the same income but led to trips in the future.

Talking to a well established charter captain and lifelong waterman he said that the only thing you need to worry about when running a charter business is taking people out. No matter if it was two people or 30 people who wanted to go on a trip he said you need to take them or else they will not ever call you again. The programming and the experience on board is secondary to simply providing the trips. Watermen who could take a trip at the drop of a hat when a state tourism agency called them or they got a call from a visitor looking to go out on the water were more successful than those who could not afford to miss a day of traditional commercial harvest. One of the more successful heritage tour operators I interviewed said that many of the watermen not willing to experiment with heritage tourism were just "stuck in their ways" and were unwilling to change their typical annual round of harvesting activity that they learned from the watermen they came up under.

This line of inquiry would benefit from a future quantitative study that explores the characteristics of successful tour operators that leads to increased entrepreneurialism and versatility. Clearly as the program continues, supporters of the program will need to think creatively about how to attract potential clients to out of the way destinations and operators will need to partner with other members of their community to determine how to draw visitors.

Challenges to Identity

The final line of inquiry I pursued over the course of this research relates to identity. I was curious how the identities of individual commercial fishermen or commercial fishing communities were challenged by participation in heritage tourism ventures. I have long been interested in the concept of identity amongst watermen and how it relates to their contemporary existence as an occupational group and how they use it as a tool to continue into the future despite major challenges. During preliminary research I investigated the concept of identity as it applied to the beginning of the transition from a wild harvest oyster fishery to one based on aquaculture. As others have mentioned this transition from fishermen to farmer can have dramatic impacts upon communities (Pitchon 2011, Keiner 2010).

Upon transitioning my research focus to heritage tourism in watermen communities I predicted that the push to supplement income from traditional harvesting with income generated through heritage tourism would generate equal resistance from watermen. None of the watermen I spoke with were willing to give up their traditional commercial harvest, even if it was for potentially more money running heritage-based tours, however, when asked about how they imagined participating in heritage tourism would impact their identity I was surprised by the answers I received. One interviewee told me that it was not difficult for him to split time

between traditional commercial harvests and running tours and that watermen just needed "to be willing to do it". He suggested that it certainly would not be for everyone and that you needed "to be a people person". This was supported by another interview in which the waterman told me that it was not for all watermen but it would certainly work for some and that it was similar to the building trades in which some contractors are able to deal with people and participate in the home renovation side of things while others would rather just be out building a new house where they do not need to deal with the homeowners. Another waterman suggested that many of his peers just "hadn't smartened up yet and realized the potential" in heritage tourism.

While I wondered about the concept of the fishermen as a rugged individualist (Jentoft and Davis 1993) aligning with the need to be a "people person" it became clear that the majority of watermen running tours were doing it to protect their future ability to harvest. Sharing elements of their identity with visitors helps inspire an appreciation for the life of the watermen. One interviewee said, "I have had some people onboard that had no idea there was life before sunrise". He said "the days of the traditional watermen are numbered" and that "exposing people to the sights, smells, tastes, and feel of life on the water" only helps to protect his future working the water. When I asked one informant about the potential for losing watermen identity by increasing participation in tourism he explicitly said he is not worried about losing identity and sees tourism operations as key to protecting his community's identity by sharing it through their own words.

My interviewees also raised questions about authenticity regarding balancing their work in heritage tourism with their work as commercial fishermen. One of the most informative interviews I had was with a female waterman who when asked about how she balances her identity as a commercial fisherman with her desire to interact with and educate the public she

said, “that’s the trick…wearing two hats”. She said, “you start to lose authenticity when you do too many tours…and you become a charter boat”. For her it was important to provide an authentic look at her life as a waterman and her trips were “real because they are built around our world and not tailored to guests” unlike charter sport fishing trips that are led by “second career guys” who were not ever full time commercial fishermen. Another waterman supported this idea by referring to the differences between charter sport fishing captains who are more like guides whose primary aim is to put sportsmen onto fish versus full time watermen who are taking out guests to inform them about the watermen lifestyle. He said that a lot of the charter captains are retired from another career and have additional incomes to support what amounts to a hobby whereas a true waterman earns his living solely through working the water. For this waterman taking tours out related to his livelihood did not impact his identity because he said the most important element of his identity was the ability to make a living off of the water. Taking tourists out and being an educator was one means of accomplishing this.

My interviewees expressed the fact that if anything heritage tourism was protecting their identity and not challenging it in the way I initially expected it would when I began this research. This conclusion is supported by what Chambers (2006) has found over the course of his career as an anthropologist in the Chesapeake region. Chambers argues that the most defining characteristics of watermen is not the tradition or history related to commercial fishing that is celebrated by the public, but the resiliency of watermen to do whatever it takes to maintain their communities and continue their association with the water and traditional livelihoods. This means that in many cases watermen are pushed into other occupations in order to get by when times are hard on the water, but it does not mean that they stop being watermen or are viewed differently by the members of their community. In reference to the way in which the public

views watermen from a nostalgic perspective and the reality that this occupational group lives Chambers says:

> The labor practices of many Eastern Shore men and women were and still are characterized not so much by dependency upon a single occupation, as they are by an *inherent* resilience which has enabled them to adapt readily to changing economic and environmental conditions (5).

This research supports the idea that watermen, despite being viewed as a static cultural group by the public at-large, are actually versatile and willing to adapt to alternative occupational strategies. These strategies must be in line with existing values and complement existing occupational identities, but they can at the same time be innovative and responsible for increasing the resilience of the commercial fishing community as a whole.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research has been to contribute practical information for the further development of the heritage tourism program being implemented in the watermen communities of Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay. In addition, the data collected for this thesis contributes to developing the theory behind the concept of vulnerability as applied in social science research regarding fishing communities. In this chapter I will provide a summary of my findings and will end with a few suggestions about avenues for future research in the Chesapeake Bay and fishing communities in general.

Summary of Findings

The three primary lines of inquiry pursued during this research yielded a variety of information regarding the specifics of the heritage tourism program being implemented in Maryland. While this research was not designed so that I could make broad generalizations about my findings and apply them to other regions, I do believe that there is some information that upon future research will prove to be applicable to other fishing communities.

What are the vulnerabilities within the commercial fishing communities of the Chesapeake Bay and how do recent initiatives promoting heritage tourism address these vulnerabilities?

When I began this research I assumed that lack of educational and economic opportunities and poverty would be the primary elements mentioned by watermen contributing to

vulnerability within their communities. Looking back I realize that this was an etic perspective that did not adequately incorporate the worldviews of the watermen I was working with. I am certainly not the first to make such a mistake, and it has been an interesting process to refine these misassumptions through the course of this research. In reality, the watermen I interviewed and worked with felt that the primary challenge to the continuation of their communities was the institutional control held over their livelihoods, and thus their communities, by state officials who did not often share the same perspective on the resource as the watermen. Addressing these fundamental differences in perspective on management of the resource will be a challenge, but both the watermen and state officials expressed optimism about the heritage tourism initiative being a means through which both parties could begin to find common ground.

Additionally, watermen felt their communities were made vulnerable by the fact that they relied on the vagaries of not only the economy, but also, the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay. This challenge is not unique to fishing communities but it is unique to those communities involved in other primary sector industries such as farming and forestry. The fact that fishermen pursue a resource hidden by water whose availability is highly related to other issues such as water quality, weather, and chaotic natural processes makes the industry, and the communities reliant on it, highly vulnerable to ecological processes.

Finally, watermen felt that the fact that they were so much in the public eye made their communities vulnerable. With headlines focusing on the lawbreaking aspects of watermen behavior, other struggles the communities are contending with are overshadowed. Public support can rapidly be swayed to focus on the preservation of the resources as opposed to protecting the culture associated with harvesting the resource.

These elements of vulnerability mentioned by my interviewees reflected more proximate and tangible concerns than what I went into the research expecting to hear. Unlike the "poverty", "education", and "economic development" I expected to hear about, these vulnerabilities can be more immediately and readily addressed. I am not suggesting that it will be easy to address the management regimes that are in place, the challenges of harvesting a resource susceptible to detrimental ecological change, or promoting a positive public image of an entire occupational community, but these are real issues that can start to be addressed.

This research aimed to investigate how the heritage tourism initiative currently underway in Maryland addressed the vulnerabilities set forth by the watermen I interviewed, and again I was surprised by the real benefits my interviewees felt the program could have on their communities. This project has improved relationships between the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and watermen communities by providing an opportunity for dialogue. In the meetings I attended DNR representatives made it clear that they wanted to see watermen continuing to work and at the same time ease pressure on the resources. Watermen also made it clear that they wanted to continue to work and did not want to see resources decline but still needed to make enough money to support their families. The two groups worked together to actually make legitimate the watermen's ability to take paying tour and educational groups out while they were commercially fishing. Previously, watermen would have been forced to choose between catching a commercial limit or taking out a paying charter and catching a recreational limit. As discussed in Chapter 4 no watermen would ever be able to forgo the money they would earn commercially harvesting to take out an educational tour. The watermen were encouraged by DNR's action to actually change this regulation and it was suggestive to them of the fact that DNR did in fact want to see commercial fishing continue to be a part of the Chesapeake.

The heritage tourism initiative is not capable of directly addressing the vulnerabilities inherent in a community reliant on harvesting natural resources impacted by factors such as weather, pollution, water quality, and unpredictable shifts in species abundance. These are issues that commercial fishermen around the world have been forced to contend with since the origins of the industry, however, in the case of the Chesapeake, the watermen I interviewed felt that any opportunities to continue to work on the water and earn additional income while taking some pressure off the resource was a means of limiting vulnerability. Finally, the watermen I interviewed believed that taking the public out on tours and sharing the experience of the way they make their living was a key part of protecting their overall public image and making sure that their livelihoods in general were not looked at as outdated and lacking in cultural importance.

This research suggests that the heritage tourism initiative does begin to address some of the primary vulnerabilities expressed by members of commercial fishing communities. It is not the only solution to the problems facing the continuation of these communities but it is one means of beginning to limit vulnerabilities, allow for stocks to recover, and give communities an opportunity to vision for their future.

What characteristics of commercial fishermen are associated with success in heritage tourism ventures?

The simplest answer to this question appears to be location. As the program matures and continues to receive support from the state, tourism agencies, and other educational organizations I would expect that watermen in more remote communities will have more success. However, for now it appears that the most successful heritage tourism ventures are in communities that are

accessible to visitors from surrounding metropolitan areas. These visitors have the resources to spend on a trip and the interest in learning about a way of life that is dramatically different from their own. In addition, there were certainly personal characteristics associated with success such as access to resources, personality and willingness to take risks, and the ability to remain versatile to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Currently the Watermen Heritage Tour program is seeking additional tour guides to feature on its website and that will provide another opportunity for research into who chooses to participate in the actual implementation of the program and who does not.

Are the identities of individual commercial fishermen or commercial fishing communities challenged by participation in heritage tourism ventures?

This question revealed one of the more surprising findings of this study. I assumed that watermen would feel that their identities as commercial fishermen would be challenged if they were asked to be tour guides as well. This assumption was largely based on my previous research interests into the transition from the wild harvest oyster fishery to a privatized aquaculture industry currently underway in Maryland. In this scenario, watermen voiced fears of losing their independence and being forced into wage labor for large aquaculture firms. I expected to hear similar concerns about the State of Maryland's push to supplement harvesting incomes through tourism generated dollars. However, I was surprised that the majority of the watermen I interviewed and interacted with looked on the initiative hopefully.

Instead of being threatened by a transition they did not want and could not control, watermen expressed excitement about the opportunities that they could potentially capitalize on through the state's desire to assist in developing the program for the watermen. This type of

heritage tourism relies on providing an authentic experience so watermen will need to keep harvesting resources, and the watermen look at this fact as some degree of investment by the state in the continuation of commercial fishing. The willingness of the watermen I interviewed to do whatever it takes to continue working on the water and keep their commercial fishing communities viable seemed to be more important to their collective identity than the specifics of how they were doing it. This conclusion supports the finding by Chambers (2006) that suggests it is the inherent versatility and resilience that is the key element of the identity of Maryland's watermen, and not necessarily any one element associated with their occupation.

Future Research

This thesis project lays the groundwork for a number of potential future research projects. Of primary importance is further investigation of the management regimes being implemented in the Chesapeake Bay fisheries. Much research has been done regarding comanagement, privatization, protected-areas, and the culture of commercial fishing, but little has been conducted specifically in the Chesapeake. Beem (2007) and Paolisso (2002, 2007) are notable exceptions and combining their research with those applying the resilience framework could produce interesting additions to theory and practical elements of managing the region's fisheries.

An additional avenue for research will be into the concepts of authenticity and heritage of the participants as the program continues. Concerns regarding the impact of tourism on local communities have been voiced previously (Stronza 2001, Brink 1998) and attention will need to be paid to this program as it continues to see what the long-term implications of it are. Continuing to develop and implement innovative solutions that are culturally sensitive and

protect the social and ecological elements that we value in our systems will be a primary task of social scientists in the Chesapeake and further afield.

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