Case Study 2: The Community Panels Project—Institutionalizing Social Science
Data Collection

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Federal regulations

- Definition of a fishing community: “a place which is substantially dependent on or substantially engaged in the harvest of processing of fishery resources”
- National Standard 8 says that “conservation and management must take into account the importance of fisheries resources to communities”
- NEPA
Profiles

New England's Fishing Communities

Madeleine Hall-Arber
Christopher Lyster
John Pogge
James McNally
Renee Gugne

MIT Sea Grant College Program

Community profiles

Census data is used to develop the context:
- Numbers of people
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Educational levels
- Employment trends, etc.

Other secondary data sources
Profiles-continued

- Primary research or community participation must be involved!
  - (Needed to supplement the collected secondary data)
- Resulting profiles can then be used to identify issues of importance to the community and potential impacts of regulatory change.

Place-based community is a good place to start.
Collaborative Research

- Academics as partners with fishing industry participants and other community members
  - Massachusetts Fishermen’s Partnership
    - An umbrella organization with 17 fishing industry associations as members
  - MIT Sea Grant College Program
  - Rutgers University
Collaborative Approach: Community Panels

- Advisory Panel from 6 communities
  - Maine: Portland and Beals Island
  - Massachusetts: Gloucester, Scituate, New Bedford
  - Rhode Island: Pt. Judith
- Representatives from different sectors
- Community members as Coordinators
Community Panels

- Practical application of Panels’ results was high priority
  - Comments on Economic Needs
  - Comments on Amendment 13 to the Multispecies FMP
Overriding Issue: Infrastructure

- Physical—businesses, structures, & space
- People
- Intangibles
A. Businesses, structures, space

- Mooring space
- Repair facilities
- Gear & supplies
- Open space for gear work
- Fueling facilities
- Ice plants
- Fish buyers/auction
- Fish processors
- Transportation
- Coast Guard/port security
B. People

- Experienced fishermen
- Young fishermen
- Gear technicians
- Lumpers
- Skilled trades
- Welders
- Electricians
- Woodworkers
C. Intangibles

- Markets for seafood
- Financing for shoreside businesses
- Fishing industry organizations
- Voice for the city in fisheries management
- Vision for the harbor
- Positive public relations
- Communication lines between city/industry and government decision-makers
Gloucester is:
A full service, hub port

- “One of everything”
- Industry members fear cascading effects of regulations
Clearly a fishing community since the mid-1600’s, Gloucester may or may not be “fisheries-dependent”
Scituate>South Shore (of Boston)

- Parallels among small ports
- Critical linkages
- Not “fisheries-dependent” but an important year-around component of the town’s economic base
Essentials for the Periphery

- A mooring (to tie-up their vessel),
- Access to a winch (to facilitate unloading their catch),
- A parking place (for their trucks/cars),
- Access to a wharf sufficiently sturdy to allow a fueling truck and/or dealer’s truck to come alongside the vessel, and

**Access to a full-service port**
Tourism as Panacea

Marinas, ramps, hotels, tourist activities pushing fishing industry away from physical access
What else do fishing communities know?

Looking beyond the boundaries:
- Voluntary associations
- Communities on the water
- Communities of knowledge (Virtual communities)

If communities extend beyond the boundaries of place, then it is highly likely that impacts also extend beyond such borders.
Dynamic Approach Needed

- Networks link communities
  - Movement of goods, services, people (i.e., capital)
  - Mutual reliance
- Cumulative impact analysis is critical
  - Effects of regulations over \text{TIME AND SPACE}
Consequences

The rigid interpretation of the definition of a fishing-dependent community based on the boundaries of place may lead to unnecessary and unacceptable losses of economic, social, and cultural diversity.
Massachusetts has:

- 52 places listed as homeports
- 2 are full-service hub ports
- 1,518 lobster permits holders landed 15 million pounds worth at least $55 million.
- 202 lobstermen fished out of Gloucester
- 200 out of New Bedford
- The rest fished out of the 50 satellite ports
Bottom Line

- In Massachusetts, the fates of full-service ports and satellite ports are intertwined.
- Accommodation of their mutual dependency has consequences for zoning, infrastructure construction & maintenance, and facilities for transient use.
Moreover

- Communities are not isolated—not “single species”
- Fishing communities are diverse with fluid boundaries
- This diversity contributes to the industry’s and Northeast region’s resilience
- While the place-based community is a useful construct, it may be that a community’s value relies in part on its interactions with other communities—at least in the Northeast.
Benefits of community collaboration:

- Collaboration and participation leads to better information.
- Communication is key to improved decision-making.
- A group of community members working with a social scientist may lead to observations that neither would have recognized outside the group process.
Challenges to collaboration

- Achieving consensus
  - Not everyone has similar goals, values, ideas
  - Even with same objectives, different paths chosen
- Time
- Confidentiality
- Lack of long term, consistently collected data
Suggestions:

- Identify and focus on common interests
- Both community members and social scientist must commit to spending time on the effort.
- Individual interviews can help develop more detail, but all data must be reviewed by the group and the analysis agreed to.
Epilogue: Recent outcomes

- Gloucester’s harbor plan sensitive to the needs of the industry
- A lobster pound saved
- Parking places subsidized