

PINE ISLAND AFTER THE NET BAN:  
RESIDENT PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TOURISM

By

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2011

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To the island for shaping me and supporting my education, my family for nurturing my intellectual curiosity, and to my husband for his unconditional support in my endeavors

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people that I would like to acknowledge for their guidance and support in completing this study. I have sincere gratitude for everyone that has helped me during my long, scholarly journey to achieve this milestone. Firstly, I would like to thank Dr. Heather Gibson for her inspiration as a professor and her long hours spent guiding me in this process as my committee chair, without whom I would not have completed this study without. I would also like to thank the members of my committee--Dr. Stephen Holland and Dr. Mark Brennan—for their admirable patience and valuable insight.

I would like to extend my warm gratitude to my dear friend, Ja'Net Glover, for all of her support in the office and for her optimism when it was needed most. Additionally, I would like to thank my parents and brothers for their affirmation for my studies and for their aid in recruiting study participants. I also graciously thank the study participants for their welcoming island spirit and honest opinions during each of the interviews. This study would not have been possible without their eagerness to share so openly.

Finally and above all, I am forever appreciative of my unconditionally loving and supportive husband, A.J., for his constant encouragement and comfort. I could not have completed this study without his reinforcement and helping hand, for which I will be eternally grateful.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

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By

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August 2011

Chair: Heather Gibson

Major: Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

The purpose of this study was to evaluate Pine Island, FL residents' perceptions of tourism following the ratification of Amendment Three in 1995, also known as the Net Ban. Specifically, perceptions of the economic, environmental, and sociocultural consequences of tourism were examined among the community. Nineteen semi-structured interviews from residents with various backgrounds were conducted to understand the potential influences of resident history about the transition to tourism following the net ban on the once notable fishing community. Snowball and theoretical sampling were employed to achieve balanced representation in terms of length of residency, occupational history (or relationship to the tourism and fishing industries), and gender to attain saturation of the data. The investigation was guided by two theories, the Destination Life Cycle model and the Social Exchange Theory.

Grounded theory methods were employed to analyze the data and understand the connections among resident demographics and histories and themes. Upon completing the interviews, five macro themes emerged: the net ban, tourism, economic impacts, environmental impacts, and sociocultural impacts. Among the five macro themes, 16 micro themes also emerged in discussion with the residents.

The results of this study suggest that there are two main factors influencing resident perception: their length of residency on the island and their residential and occupational proximity to the main tourist destination on the island. The most prevalent themes that emerged during the interview process were the dramatic lessening of the fishing community followed by the evolution of tourism and the residents' strong desire for the island to limit growth and maintain its quaint appeal. The results also found that residents do not believe that tourism results in many negative consequences for their community. Generally, it was recognized that Pine Island has experienced quite a dramatic sociocultural shift since the net ban but has only experienced limited environmental and economic changes.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge regarding communities transitioning to tourism by providing insights into the reasons for the introduction of tourism into a community, tourism impacts, and resident's perceptions of the transition and resulting impacts. Future research suggestions include further examination of the island's phase in the Destination Life Cycle. This information may provide significant suggestions for other communities in a similar stage. Additional research suggestions include studying a community during the transition to tourism as well as studying the community at later stages in the Destination Life Cycle. By and large, understanding the reasons for such a shift and the resident response can have important implications for other destinations experiencing a similar situation.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The economic focus for many communities has changed. Tourism has become the focus of economic development for many. In most states in the U.S., tourism is recognized as one of their top industries, which means that many communities, both rural and urban, have accepted and adapted to its presence and its many effects, both positive and negative (Johnson, Snepenger, & Akis, 1994). This is especially pertinent in Florida because tourism is classified as its largest industry (Milman & Pizam, 1988). Tourism encompasses many other industries besides the primary attractions in a community, including transportation, places of accommodation, and restaurants. Studies have shown that a decline in visitor spending of just 10% can have a significant impact on indirect tourism businesses in an area (Zhou, Yanagida, Chkavorty & Leung, 1997). As Williams and Lawson (2001) note, tourism can be defined as “tourists, a business, and an environment or community in which the industry operates” (p. 269).

The impacts of tourism have been researched for decades (Boissevain, 1979; Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Milman & Pizam, 1988). Fagence (2003) illustrates that “no matter what the ‘real intention’ of visitors [...] there are particular interactions between visitors (or guests) and the local community (or hosts), which generate identifiable impacts” (p. 58). Impacts include not only the often recognized economic impacts, but the environmental and sociocultural ones as well which were only recognized as important years after tourism impact research began and is sometimes referred to as the Triple Bottom Line (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Fons, Fierro, & Patino, 2011). The Triple Bottom Line is a ‘paradigm of sustainability’ where residents, businesses, organizations, etc. are accountable for economic,

environmental, and social impacts they incur (Fons, et al., 2011, p. 551).

Understanding the interrelationship among all impacted components is essential (Diedrich & Garcia-Buades, 2009; Williams & Lawson, 2001). Many perceive the environmental and sociocultural impacts as neutral or negative and the economic impacts as positive (Tosun, 2002). After comparing three case studies, Tosun also noticed that no community perceives tourism's impacts similarly because impacts are not "universal."

The introduction of tourism into an area can be an effective strategy for stimulating a community, both economically and culturally (Carte, McWatters, Daley, & Torres, 2010; Park & Yoon, 2009). The successful introduction of tourism to an area requires an evaluation of all these impacts and support from all sectors of the community including business owners, government officials, and especially the residents (Perez & Nadal, 2005). Tosun argues that awareness and intentional actions should be taken to ensure that the community can benefit from tourism if the community intends to have a sustainable tourism industry. Residents' perceptions of, and attitudes toward tourism's impacts, can play a vital role in its success for their community. Kim and Lennon (2008) defined attitude as "a function of responses to the attitude object and the second characteristic is related to the evaluative nature of an attitude categorized as either good or bad" (p. 8). Williams and Lawson (2001) defined attitude as "the aggregate of beliefs about the object and the corresponding evaluations of them" (p. 272). Williams and Lawson argue understanding how these perceptions and attitudes are formed and their importance can be very beneficial to business and community leaders seeking to develop tourism. Understanding the perception of all the impacts together rather than

focusing on one is important because changes in perception for one impact is likely to affect perception of the others because research suggests that they are not “mutually exclusive” (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004, p. 509).

Economic and environmental impacts are more easily understood than sociocultural impacts. As Dogan (1989) stated, tourism has the opportunity to provide intercultural contact which can foster many changes within the dynamic of the community. Sociocultural impacts have more of a long-term effect, having the ability to influence a community's beliefs and values (Brunt & Courtney, 1999). One such community that has undergone various changes from tourism is Pine Island, Florida. Pine Island has experienced a transition from a fishing dependent lifestyle to one now reliant upon tourism due to the ratifying of Amendment Three in 1995, otherwise known as the “net ban.” To examine the multidimensional impacts of tourism, a small Florida community namely Pine Island was examined.

**Study site.** Pine Island is 17 miles long and two miles wide, located in Lee County on the Southwest coast of Florida (Lincoln, 1995). Pine Island consists of Bokeelia, St. James City, Pineland, Pine Island Center and Matlacha. These areas host a residential year-round population of 10,000 and 16,000 in the winter with an annual population growth of 3% ([www.pineislandchamber.org](http://www.pineislandchamber.org)). Pine Island has a rich history dating back to inhabitation by the Calusa Indians around 300 A.D. Ponce de Leon was believed to have landed on the island in 1513. Pine Island can now be considered a folk and popular culture destination known for its fishing, arts, water-based activities, wildlife, festivals such as the famous MangoMania, day excursions, and its indigenous history (Fagence, 2003). Pine Island is a community that welcomes tourists and advertises a

variety of opportunities in the scenic area. They have trademarked themselves as “Florida’s Creative Coast.” Just as the Aragonese people in the Basque region of Spain created their own destination slogan to face the tourism market, Pine Island has as well. The Basque’s effort was recognized as an action of pride in creating their own differentiating identity that strengthens their own character and lifestyle which could be said of the residents of Pine Island as well (Fons, et al., 2011). Besides Pine Island’s aesthetic qualities, its biggest draw is fishing. Matlacha is home to the “World’s Most Fishingest Bridge” and the official website to the Pine Island Chamber of Commerce states, the “Pine Island coast has supported many generations of island commercial fishing families, but sport fishing takes no back seat” ([www.pineislandchamber.org](http://www.pineislandchamber.org)): charter fishing is very evident on the island and attracts people year-round to its waters. The island’s chamber of commerce website claims the best sport-tarpon fishing in the world can be found near the island and is also home to great fishing for redfish, grouper, trout and snook. The chamber website notes that farming of the tropical trees and fruits as well as commercial fishing are the main industries on the island. This statement may be open to debate as tourism has eclipsed many of these older industries in recent years.

Pine Island seemed to shift its economic focus from commercial fishing to tourism after the passing of Amendment Three in November 1995 that would eventually become Section 16, Article X of the Florida Constitution, otherwise known as the “net ban” (Levitt, 2006). This amendment signified the conclusion of a two year battle between commercial and recreational fishers that made the use of gill nets whose mesh was larger than 500 square feet illegal. This piece of legislation was aimed at limiting

the amount of unintended bycatch (Adams, 2000; Smith, Jepson & Israel, 2003). The battle dichotomized into two sides the “Save our Jobs” versus “Save our Sealife” (Renard, 1995). The amendment was put on the ballot as a referendum and passed with 71% of the vote. Approximately 1.3 million voted against the ban versus 3 million that voted for its ratification (Jones,

<http://www.southeasternfish.org/Documents/commfish.html>) Texas, California, Georgia, New York and South Carolina are other states that have enacted similar legislation (Renard).

The net ban went into effect July 1, 1995 affecting the \$1.5 billion dollar commercial fishing industry and 1500 families in the state of Florida. Documents note that 300 commercial fishing families existed in Lee County at the time of the ban, including many on the island. The only net collection site in Lee County occurred at the Fishers of Men Lutheran Church on Pine Island, signifying the epicenter of the net ban for the area. The law required a smaller mesh size, eliminating the ability to catch mullet by the gills. This had a detrimental effect on all of the commercial fishermen that relied on landing mullet, which accounted for the main catch for many of the families on the island. The ban not only affected the families, but the five fish houses, restaurants, marine and tackle suppliers, and seafood customers as well on the island. Mullet landing trips decreased by almost 50% and actual mullet landings decreased by 60% (Adams, 2000). These decreases happened with many other finfish and forced many fishermen to shift their catch to shellfish, such as blue crabs. The net ban had a drastic effect on many commercial fishing communities in Florida.

In an effort to help alleviate the burden of the commercial fishing families due to the net ban, the Florida state government allocated millions of dollars to various assistance programs (Adams). The most widely used program was the net buyback, with 82% of fishermen participating. Other programs offered were job retraining, unemployment reparation, and other services from the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Less than 30% of those eligible collected unemployment and participated in job retraining courses. As various researchers point out, “these programs, for the most part, failed to meet the needs of many families” (Smith et al., 2003, p. 4). They felt that this was due to a lack of information given to the fishermen, funding for alternative employment foci and organization among all of the services. The local News-Press story on September 6, 1995 stated that a little less than \$30,000 was allocated to the Lee County Division of Social Services for the Net Ban Emergency Assistance Program and funding would be limited to a \$250 stipend per household. With these developments, it is understandable how a community would have to radically alter not only its economic focus, but lifestyle, from one industry to another. In the case of Pine Island, it was from the commercial fishing industry to the tourism industry.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Many communities are often apprehensive about developing tourism as the main industry in the area because it is often thought of as being a low-paying industry that provides “second class work” for its employees (Johnson, et al., 1994, p. 638). The value a community places on an industry can have a major influence on residents’ perceptions of it (Teye, Sonmez, & Sirakaya, 2002). Transforming dependence from one industry to another can have heavy implications on resident’s attitudes. Aside from the more often noted physical environmental damage and economic benefits that

tourism can bring, it also has the ability to alter a society in the form of “changes in the value systems, individual behavior, family relationships, collective lifestyles, traditional ceremonies, or community organization” (Milman & Pizam, 1988, p. 191). Research on tourism development in many areas has illustrated that it can drastically change the sociocultural configuration of a society (Dogan, 1989). Tourism has the ability to reinforce or destroy traditions and community culture and values (Boissevain, 1979). All of these effects have the capability of being both positive and negative. Because these effects are not direct and frequently confused with other impacts, they are often harder to measure but can still have very noticeable, profound impacts on a host community. Tourism’s possible variety of effects on Pine Island should be studied to determine feasible long-term consequences for the community.

In Pine Island’s transition from the commercial fishing industry to the tourism industry, it is likely that the residents experienced many of these impacts. As Dogan (1989) stated, “investing in tourism means investing in dependency” (p.219), whether this is economically or socioculturally. The costs and benefits of tourism are not evenly distributed and communities often alter their opinion of tourism from positive to negative on a continuum (Dogan, 1989; Tosun, 2002). A diversity of reactions is likely to occur as tourism development materializes in the community and groups with similar attitudes eventually form. This can be witnessed with various groups on Pine Island. It would seem that Pine Island had limited options when making the transition to tourism and the residents had to learn to accept and adjust to the new industry and its impacts.

Smith, et al. (2003) study of fishing communities made mention of the dependence of communities on tourism for economic benefits when the primary industry

in a community evolved to the services sector, such as tourism. They also noted that this evolution to tourism, especially in the form of recreational fishing, occurs in many coastal communities. Multiple fishing charters, fishing tournaments, art galleries, museums, kayak rentals, nature tours, ghost tours, aerial tours, day cruises, hotels, island-themed restaurants, festivals, etc. can now be found on Pine Island. Pine Island centers its image around a visitor-friendly, island atmosphere that offers opportunities for many visitor types. The Chamber of Commerce website even lists “friendly natives” as one of its main descriptors. They also have a “tourist links” section listing accommodations, properties for sale, restaurants, attractions, galleries, and shops. Pine Island’s Chamber Board of Directors also developed a new image in 2004, “Pine Island—Florida’s Creative Coast”, characterizing the arts and creative activities that can be found on the island. There is a minimal amount of information on the island’s current commercial fishing industry compared to the abundant visitor and tourist information that can be found on Pine Island’s various community information websites.

It is not a new phenomenon for a community to switch its economic focus to the tourism industry. This has occurred in many communities, such as ones once dependent upon agriculture (Dogan, 1989; Tosun, 2002). Dogan identified a series of coping strategies that residents may assume when tourism is introduced. These include retreatism, resistance, revitalization, adoption and boundary maintenance. He further explained that every community has a different carrying capacity for tourism development and many factors influence this threshold from both the community and the tourists. Understanding how such a transition occurs and the response to the impacts can help future areas prepare for a similar situation.

The present lack of information about this transition has implications for residents, governments and policy makers, and business owners in the tourism industry (Murphy, 1983). Murphy discovered that these three groups have different responses toward the development of tourism and should therefore be examined independently. As Williams and Lawson (2001) suggested, “if it is known why residents support or oppose the industry, it will be possible to select those developments which can minimize negative social impacts and maximize support for such alternatives” (p. 270). Separation of the residents from the tourism development process can lead to negative attitudes toward the industry (Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Tosun, 2001). Knowledge of resident perceptions and attitudes toward tourism impacts can be significant to not only tourism development, but marketing and maintaining current projects in the community (Brunt & Courtney). Governments and policy makers are vital in helping a community in their attempts to deal with tourism development and if the information presented in this investigation is available it can help officials deal with future similar situations (Dogan).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impacts of tourism on a rural community, notably Pine Island, Florida and to assess the residents' perceptions of three impacts: social, environmental and economic. The attitudes and perceptions of the residents towards these impacts were also examined. These attitudes and perceptions were examined in the context of their role in the tourism industry, gender, age and length of residency.

### **Theoretical Rationale**

There are three theories in the literature that appear to be relevant to a study of Pine Island resident's attitudes and perceptions towards the impacts of tourism after the

net ban. These are social exchange theory (Makoba, 1993) and Butler's (1980) destination life cycle, and Plog's (1974, 2001) related theory of destination evolution.

Previous studies suggest that gender, age, role in the tourism industry, and length of residency of the residents also appear to play a significant role in shaping attitudes and perceptions such as these and were also used as independent variables to further understand the development of the attitudes and perceptions.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory has been studied and debated for decades and centers upon the idea of reciprocity in a community. Makoba (1993) explains that social exchange behavior "results from the complex interplay of social, psychological and economic forces that occur at both the interpersonal and intergroup levels" (p. 229). This is seen as crucial for the constant and smooth transaction of benefits among a community's residents.

Social exchange theory can be broken down into individualistic and collectivistic approaches. Makoba defined the individualistic theory as:

society [existing] for the benefits of individuals whose desires, interests and needs or wants are perceived to be central to social exchange behavior.

This approach puts emphasis on face-to-face exchange behavior which is considered to be primarily motivated by individual, material or psychological needs (p. 228).

He also explained that:

the collectivistic theory of social exchange emphasizes indirect exchange behavior which is motivated primarily by social needs and mediated by other members of the group or society. Individuals are said to exist for the benefits of the group or society (p. 228).

The individualistic approach illustrates a community of individuals mainly concerned with material self-gain, whereas, the collectivistic theory recognizes

individuals concerned with the advancement of the community as a whole. These two perspectives were noted as being able to exist on a continuum and that both short-term and long-term exchanges exist (Makoba, 1993). Understanding these two facets of social exchange theory provides an outline for understanding the levels of and types of reciprocity, and their significance for a particular community.

Recognizing the variances of exchange within social exchange theory is important in analyzing the interactions and exchanges among the residents of Pine Island and therefore the development of their attitudes and perceptions towards these exchanges. For instance, the general, indirect exchanges that occur establish large levels of trust and community solidarity which then encourages further future exchange. For a later idea, this also describes social capital (Putnam, 2000). This trust is “necessary because the nature of the favors or benefits to be reciprocated are never stated in advance and cannot be bargained or enforced coercively” (Makoba, p. 231). Determining the face-to-face and/or indirect exchanges on Pine Island can aid in identifying the level of trust that exists within the community.

Understanding the degree and types of exchanges within a population can also help identify expectations and satisfactions or dissatisfactions. For example, if Pine Island has limited mutual trust after the net ban, they may not receive adequate economic and sociocultural community benefits which could then influence their attitudes and perceptions toward the situation and eventually any impacts from tourism in the community as well.

### **Destination Life Cycle**

Another concept has been found to influence resident perceptions is the state of tourism development in a community. Butler (1980) proposed that communities go

through different stages in their tourism development. As part of his destination life cycle model he explained that tourist areas experience an evolution through the stages of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and either rejuvenation or decline based upon the number of visitors as shown in the model (Figure 1-1).

The exploration stage reflects a small number of visitors attracted by the area's uniqueness. They plan their own visit and do not experience tourist specific facilities. Graduating to the involvement stage exhibits facilities specific to tourism and interaction between locals and tourists occurs often. Adjustments to the local's social patterns emerge during tourist season when experiencing this destination life cycle stage. A community experiencing the development stage can be thought of as an increasingly self sustaining destination where large amounts of tourist advertising occurs. This stage witnesses the loss of local influence in the tourism industry to large entities seeking to commoditize the tourism market. Additionally, original attractions are augmented or even replaced by tourism facilities or created activities and tourism population may exceed local populations illustrating the need for outside labor sources. The consolidation stage signifies the community's large economic dependence upon tourism and also brings some dissatisfaction from residents. The stagnation stage is reached when the tourist population achieves its peak "with attendance comes environmental, social and economic problems" (Butler, 1980, p. 9). The decline stage represents the area's inability to contend with new tourist markets, but sees significant weekend or day trips. This stage also experiences loss of tourist facilities and high residential property

turnover. And finally, the rejuvenation stage is only achieved when a drastic change in tourism facilities occurs and again attracts the desired tourism market to the destination.

Each stage is determined by the number of visitors to a community and moving between stages can depend upon the type of tourists drawn to the community and the environmental and socio-economic attributes of the destination (Diedrich & Garcia-Buades, 2009). The destination life cycle cannot be discussed without mentioning Plog's (1974) and (2001) allocentric (venturers) and psychocentric (dependables) travelers. Plog explained that knowing the presence of each traveler type in a destination can aid in determining the stage the destination is experiencing in Butler's destination life cycle.

The allocentric or venturer types are the curious travelers that want to explore unknown areas without the comforts of home and are ready to spend their discretionary income gladly. The psychocentric or dependables are the travelers that seek popular, well-known destinations that are cautious and prefer the familiar comforts of home. Near-dependable, centric-dependable, mid-centric, centric-venturer, and near-venturer fill in the continuum between the polar opposite venturers and dependables. Plog (1974) illustrated that these types can explain why a destination goes through levels of popularity and therefore the destination life cycle. Plog's different types of travelers are attracted to a destination based upon its stage in the cycle. Venturers seek destinations that are in the early cycle stages like exploration. When they return from the destination they then tell their near-venturer friends that then visit and they then tell their centric-friends. The psychographic groups increase in size as you move along the continuum meaning more visitors visiting the destination. The destination then realizes that they

can improve their infrastructure and tourist attractions to draw in more visitors which then appeals to the psychocentrists, or as they are now called, the dependable (Plog, 2001). The increase in community services and infrastructure demanded by the dependable tourist types creates inevitable impacts and changes in environmental, economic, and sociocultural areas of the destination. An increase in tourist popularity for Pine Island could exhibit unexpected compound consequences in these three areas for the residents of the island.

Understanding the destination's position on the destination life cycle continuum enables the destination to also understand the type of tourists they are attracting and make adjustments accordingly. Butler (1980) and Plog (1974) explain that without special considerations for each group, a destination may go into a decline instead of a rejuvenation. Knowledge of Pine Island's stage may further a better understanding of resident's perceptions toward their transition to the tourism industry. This is the key to why the destination life cycle was suggested as a theory.

### **Gender, Age, Role in the Tourism or Fishing Industry and Length of Residency**

Previous studies have suggested that gender, age, role in the tourism or fishing industry and length of residency influence resident's perceptions of tourism and as such are the independent variables for this study. Age may also be an index of length of residency. Each of these variables may influence residents' attitudes and perceptions and were examined during the study.

Response differences among male and female residents on Pine Island were very evident after the net ban and could also play an important role in understanding responses to tourism (Smith et al., 2003). Milman and Pizam (1988) measured perceptions of social impacts from tourism with dependent variables such as "feelings

about the presence of tourists" in Central Florida and found gender to be a notable influence with females reporting less support for the tourism industry than males in their community (p.198). Swain (1993) points out, "gender values [shape] the group's response to commoditization" and "gender ideology shape(s) an indigenous group's response to ethnic tourism" (p.33). She discovered that the lack of success of the Hmong society establishing a tourism venture in California was due to the ethnicity and gender values that shaped their reaction to commoditization. The men had difficulty sharing economic control within the society. Their inability to balance their society's internal gender characteristics led to a failed external tourism venture. Gender differences on Pine Island in response to the net ban could possibly be attributed to the changes in bread-winner roles within the families. In Diedrich and Garcia-Buades (2008) study of Balizean residents' perception of tourism impacts, they found tourism produces significantly more economic opportunities, especially for women in their community. Smith et al. (2003) explain that within all fishing families, men have always assumed the role of the primary source of household income. They further explain that in their study of fishing community men and women, they had "complementary and coordinated roles" with women dealing with the affairs of the home on land and the men dealing with affairs on the boat at sea (Smith et al., p. 41). This was echoed in the assessment of change in the social structure of Sennen Cove, U.K. where the fishing and farming community experienced the introduction of tourism into their parish (Ireland, 1993). An undersized group of entrepreneurs benefitted from visitors to the area and soon "the growth of tourism brought women a recognized place within the local economy" (Ireland, p. 113). Women also act as mediators between locals and visitors so the "Covers",

otherwise known as their fishermen, would not have to interact with the tourists. They assumed roles as housekeepers and other entrepreneurial hospitality duties and gained freedom from the responsibilities associated with their community's former economic structure. Women have not only been recognized as intermediaries, but also as the main family member that take on the emotional burdens—both economic and social. Knowing this, the obvious stressors from the net ban on families in Florida may have had very different implications for women than men. If these roles were not flexible within the family during this time then families would often end in divorce (Smith et al., 2003).

Adapting to the new gender roles means women taking on employment and often second jobs to support the family. For the women on Pine Island, new employment may have occurred in the tourism industry. Women assume “the ranks of tourism works as domestics, service employees, prostitutes, and handicraft producers in “low-skilled” or “untraditional work” (Swain, 1993, p. 34). There are more opportunities for women in the tourism industry (Brunt & Courtney, 1999). Opportunities such as domestic positions that could be considered gendered roles that women do in the home and therefore are deemed female’s jobs in the commercial setting. This can be exemplified as laundry service, cleaning guest rooms, and positions within the food and retail sectors and can also account for low pay. Swain (1993) found examples in the Kuna society in which women were forced to enter in arts production for the community while the men had to adjust to marketing and supporting the women and their new wage-earning roles within the family. In the artistic tourism trade now dominated by women in the Kuna society “men are now helpers of women, while before women helped men” (Swain, p. 42). This

not only shifts the role within the family, but the society as well. As Swain witnessed with the Kuna women, they can delay the necessity of marriage and are financially independent. Swain also observed their ability to command domestic assistance within the household as well as the larger population in their area and state. These differences in gender roles illustrate the possible influence on attitudes and perceptions and how this can be significant to this study.

Other possible important influences are age and length of residency. Age can be an indicator for length of residency and has been linked to increasing a sense of place attachment (Cui & Ryan, 2011). Age may be a factor as younger residents may be more open-minded regarding the tourism industry and its impacts as there was a direct correlation for both perception that tourists were intrusive and age (Gu & Ryan, 2008). Through the study, we may find that most older residents have lived on Pine Island for a considerable amount of time and therefore may have “stronger attachment to past patterns of place” (Gu & Ryan, p. 643). Many studies that have examined residents’ attitudes and perceptions have included age as a variable for study. Of the 44 items in Gu and Ryan’s study, 22 show statistical differences regarding length of residency. For some it was their primary variable. Lindberg, Andersson and Dellaert (2001) found people 55 years of age and older exhibit signs that their age group would not experience advantages from increased employment related to the tourism industry as well as increased general tourism opportunities. Age not only affects length of residency and therefore attachments to the community, but may also influence the resident’s stage in the destination lifecycle. Gender, role in the tourism or fishing industry, age and length of residency are all significant variables in conceptualizing this study.

## Research Questions

Thus, guided by these theories and social constructs, this study sought to answer two main research questions:

**Research Question 1:** What are the residents' perceptions regarding the impacts of tourism on Pine Island after the net ban? Specifically, what are the residents' perceptions regarding three types of tourism impact:

- 1a: Economic
- 1b: Environmental
- 1c: Sociocultural

**Research Question 2:** What role do the residents' characteristics play in shaping their perceptions of the three types of tourism impact? Specifically, do residents' perceptions vary by

- 2a: Their role in the tourism industry
- 2b: Gender
- 2c: Age
- 2d: Length of residency on Pine Island
- 2e: Role in the fishing industry

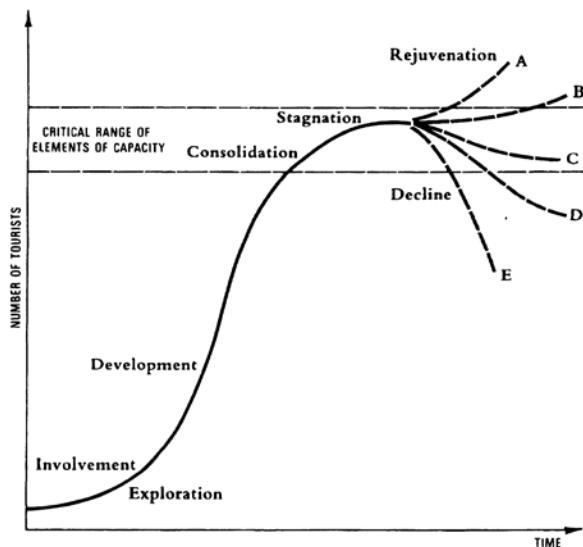


Figure 1-1. Destination Life Cycle (Butler, 1980, p. 7)

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Many existing studies have addressed the impacts of tourism on the following dimensions: economic, sociocultural and ecological or environmental (Liu & Var, 1986). This chapter reviews background literature on each of these concepts in term.

The study of host community, or what are now more commonly called resident perceptions of tourism, has a long history in the tourism literature (Vargas-Sanchez, Porras-Bueno, & Plaza-Mejia, 2011). In the 1970's, most of this work was conducted by anthropologists and sociologists and tended to adopt a critical perspective towards understanding the economic and social changes in communities as a result of tourism (Smith, 1977). More recently, the term residents has replaced use of the term hosts and has been used to describe the people who live in tourist communities. Despite the change in terminology, the foci have remained consistent with researchers examining the social and economic impacts of tourism on communities as perceived by residents. In addition to social and economic impacts, in recent years there has been a growing interest in the environmental impacts of tourism.

#### **Economic Impacts of Tourism**

Probably the most prevalent impacts in the discussion of tourism are the economic consequences that tourism may bring to an area. Diedrich and Garcia-Buades (2008) pointed out that once a community becomes reliant on tourism that a decline in the tourism market can become devastating to their economy. Fifty-nine percent of study respondents in Spain believed that if tourism were to face a decline, that their community would experience a setback (Perez & Nadal, 2005).

In studies by Liu and Var (1986) and Perez and Nadal (2005), respondents recognized that tourism increases the standard of living in their community, yet the costs associated with the industry also increase. Study respondents weighed the positive effects associated with standards of living more than the negative effects of the costs brought by the tourism industry to their community (Vargas-Sanchez, et al., 2011). Few were willing to exchange benefits for relief of the costs, such as environmental costs. Such positive and negative effects could be attributed to tourism's direct and indirect impact on employment opportunities and "therefore, affects the attitudes of those dependent on it" (Milman & Pizam, 1988, p. 192). Studies of tourism's impacts in Antalya, Turkey and the Balearic Islands in Spain both reported very high agreement from the residents that the industry yielded more job opportunities and attracted investment whilst at the same time increasing the cost of housing and land (Korca, 1996; Perez & Nadal, 2005). This investment demonstrates the full awareness that residents have regarding tourism's economic impacts in their community. Gu and Ryan (2008) echoed the associated economic costs noting that tourism's economic growth often results in increased property prices.

Reviewing further, Milman and Pizam concluded that residents in Central Florida viewed tourism as making little contribution to the community's tax income and hence, perceived it negatively. Approximately 40% of the respondents in a study by Johnson, et al. (1994) study of Silver Valley resident respondents reported that tourism will not produce a positive impact on the number of employment positions available to the community, while 40% also responded that tourism would not positively draw in spending and that prices within the community would increase as a result of tourism.

Additional negative consequences may include tax burdens, local government debt in supporting tourism infrastructure, and inflation (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005). Similarly, 62% of Swedish study participants experienced more costs due to tourism than benefits, whereas 38% of respondents experienced otherwise (Lindberg, et al., 2001). As Liu and Var (1986) illustrate, residents' value of high living standards is greater than environmental protection, which is greater than economic benefits, which is greater than social costs, which is greater than cultural benefits.

When discussing tourism benefits, Swain (1995) illustrated that tourism is viewed as a main economic tool for both financially developed nations and developing nations. Outcomes of tourism development can include: changes at the family level with the increase in level of income and at the community level with additional sources of financing, adjustments in investment priorities, business ownership patterns, and ultimately employment structures, and the role of government (Fagence, 2003). In a case study of Cape Coast and Elmina, Ghana, Teye, et al. (2002) found that when the residents of the area initiated their tourism project, they primarily sought economic advantages such as an enhanced infrastructure. But afterwards, improvements can include city services and public transportation (Andereck, et al., 2005). Fagence (2003) recognized that tourism can have not only a constructive, but a sustainable impact on a society through enhancing levels of economic wellbeing. Furthermore, Haley, Snaith and Miller (2005) found support for a consistent theme in similar studies that residents who perceive economic benefits from the industry are more supportive of additional development related to tourism. Diedrich and Garcia-Buades (2008) found that when

resident's income level decreased, the more their support for the tourism industry increased.

These study outcomes and statistics illustrate the importance of both the residents' current economic status and the tourism industry's economic consequences. All economic factors resulting from the tourism industry in a community appear to play a major role in developing residents' attitudes and perceptions.

### **Environmental Impacts of Tourism**

The environment and tourism industry are interrelated (Dowling, 2003; Fons, et al., 2011). In a study of residents of gated communities it was found that the environment was more important than economic or socio-cultural attributes (Frauman & Banks, 2011). Environmental impacts are often viewed negatively as a result of tourism's establishment in an area, especially considering that tourism is often developed in "attractive but fragile" environments (Andereck, et al., 2005, p. 1059). Environmental impacts from tourism development include noise, waste, over-population, damage to property and infrastructures, and the resulting decrease of animal and plant populations (Andereck, et al.; Liu & Var, 1986; Perez & Nadal, 2005). The seasonal pressure on infrastructure and crowding resulting in traffic congestion, and therefore more pollution, distresses residents and reinforces a negative outlook towards tourism therefore, making them reluctant to adopt more development (Perez & Nadal, 2005). On the other hand, many studies conclude that residents also recognize the environmental benefits of tourism such as preservation of quiet, beauty, and natural resources and conservation with an economic rationalization (Andereck, et al.; Dowling, 2003; Gu, et al., 2008). One community dependent on four major commercial activities, including commercial fishing, concluded 83% of respondents recognized that tourism is the most

environmentally compatible industry (Dowling, 2003). Fifty-eight percent of respondents in a former commercial fishing community in the Gascoyne region of western Australia expressed that generating revenue from tourism was equally as important as protecting the environment (Dowling). Seventy-nine percent of Hawaiian residents studied felt that the financial gains brought by the tourism industry were not more important than the harmful effects caused to the environment (Liu & Var, 1986). Almost half of Hawaiian residents believed tourism did not harm their ecological system, but 90% believed that the government had the ability to control the environmental impacts. Urry (1996) reiterates the congestion costs caused by tourists as including the undesirable impacts of overcrowding, noise and the obliteration of the landscape.

Silver Valley resident responses to a survey by Johnson, et al. (1994) regarding environmental impacts showed 49% somewhat disagree that tourism would facilitate restoration within their community and 34% somewhat agree that traffic and environmental and noise pollution will result from tourism. The study's conclusions by Johnson et al. mirror resident sentiment:

Resources can be allocated to sewer systems, highways, and other infrastructure, as well as to maintain and upgrade trails and other recreational facilities. But, issues of water quality, congestion of scenic areas, and protection of wildlife are more difficult to preserve because nature does not have a direct voice in the tourism market place. Thus, impacts on the natural environment may serve as the paramount constraint for tourism development in a region (p. 640).

Dowling (2003) argues that it is essential that areas of tourism development garner resident participation regarding issues concerning their physical environment as they provide a more balanced approach than conventional development rationales. Although, environment-friendly development plans frequently come into disagreement with

expansionist strategies generating disputes among the host community (Perez & Nadal, 2005). Many residents conclude that tourists should ultimately financially compensate the community for any environmental damage (Perez & Nadal).

### **Sociocultural Impacts of Tourism**

Another very relevant impact to host communities is sociocultural influences that have the “great potential” to impact the lives of residents (Andereck, et al., 2005, p. 1057). One example of a large potential impact is the residents’ sense of pride regarding their community image as a result of tourism increasing amenities such as awareness of heritage and increase in events (Andereck, et al.). Liu and Var (1986) suggested sociocultural benefits include entertainment variety, gaining knowledge from tourists about culture, etc., more parks and recreation, improved public facilities, the increase of cultural and historical exhibits in the community, and cultural exchange. Of course this is inevitable as there is a continuing movement in several “tourism destinations for native residents to increasingly live alongside newcomers who have either moved to the area to work within the industry or simply to retire to a place they fell in love with originally as tourists themselves” (Frauman & Banks, 2011, p. 129). Besculides, Lee and McCormick (2002) recognized sociocultural benefits as a possible tool for improving economic permanence.

Besculides, et al. note that not all sociocultural influences are beneficial. Negative sociocultural effects may include “over-development, assimilation, conflict, xenophobia, and artificial reconstruction” (p. 307) which can all be very harmful to the cohesion of a community. Two major sociocultural results of tourism may be eventual assimilation and acculturation, or gradual homogenization, as the new manufactured ‘original’ community can steadily replace the traditional lifestyle of the host (Jafari, 1987; Simpson, 2008).

Fagence (2003) echoes the possibility of tourism as harmful to local communities “by trivializing culture, by drawing local economies into a dependence on the whims of consumers (the tourists), and by creating a diversity of unwelcome social pathologies and behaviours” (p.55). He goes on to explain that communities may be susceptible to modernization, stereotyping, exploitation, and modification that may eventually lead to transformation. All of these consequential sociocultural impacts therefore affect so many segments of a community, including short-term interactions and long-term traditions and values—potentially signifying a need to move toward limiting “social carrying capacity” (Diedrich & Garcia-Buades, 2008, p. 516) .

The study of resident perceptions and attitudes toward tourism have often been framed in a number of theories, including: dependency, attribution, play, compensation, conflict Adams' (2000) Equity Theory and Fagence's (2003) guest-host interaction occurring in domains of space, time and responsibility/respect (Haley et al., 2005). Additional frameworks include Fagence's use of the demonstration effect illustrating a host community adopting traits of visitors and adapting to tourism including changes in their methods of service. Finally, the most prevalent theory, as documented in at least thirteen research publications—social exchange theory (Makoba, 1993; Vargas-Sanchez, et al., 2010). Teye et al. (2002), illustrate social exchange theory in relation to residents' attitudes as residents seeking:

benefits in exchange for something estimated as equal to the benefits they offer in return, such resources provided to tourism developers, tour operators, and tourists. What residents offer additionally in this exchange includes their support for appropriate development, being hospitable, and tolerating inconveniences created by tourism such as pollution, traffic congestion and queuing for services (p. 670).

In other words, they stated that tourism's supposed benefits in a community would result in optimistic outlooks by the residents. Cui and Ryan (2011) even asserted "the notion of tourism as a proxy for modernity" (p. 605) as exemplified in the study of Antalya, Turkey where tourism increased resident's standard of living (Korca, 1996). This is exemplified in a study of resident attitudes toward tourism in Huelva, Spain where Vargas-Sanchez, et al. (2010) found that the more positively residents experienced tourists' respect toward the community, the greater their overall perception of tourism will be positive rather than negative. Haley et al. echoed the dominance of social exchange theory in understanding community tourism development reactions. They similarly defined it as focusing on the degree to which residents are compensated for the burdens that the tourism industry may place upon them.

On the other hand, some researchers question the ability of social exchange theory to produce a full explanatory framework or to be a universal model. They often suggest that the theory should be supplemented with other concepts such as the residents' contentment with their community (Andereck, et al., 2005; Vargas-Sanchez, et al., 2010).

Besculides, et al. (2002) explain that residents can experience sociocultural benefits in two ways. Residents can realize benefits such as acceptance when interacting with visiting cultures. Residents may also experience benefits such as increased community identity and unity when conveying the unique qualities of their community to tourists which reinforces the significance of living within their own community. Liu and Var (1986) found that only a small number of Hawaiian residents (22%) felt tourism was harmful to their cultural identity. Besculides, et al. in a study of

residents living in Southwestern Colorado discovered that when Cajuns presented their history and traditions to visitors that they in turn became tourists of their own culture because they discovered many things about their heritage that were disappearing. Their research concluded that residents understand that tourism fosters their discovery, sharing, and protection of their customs. Fostering an awareness of heritage and culture often leads to social sustainability for a community (Fons, et al., 2011). Tourism is considered to play a key role in bringing about social transformation, greater so if residents are involved in tourism initiative planning (Perez & Nadal, 2005; Simpson, 2008).

### **Resident Characteristics**

Besides discussing economic, environmental and sociocultural impacts, resident characteristics such as gender, age and role in the tourism or fishing industry must also be examined when determining attitudes and perceptions. According to Teye, et al. (2002), factors that influence resident perception and attitude include such variables as the value of tourism to the area, the level of residents' dependence upon the industry, the extent of tourism development in the area, whether residents were born in the community, residents years residing in the community, the amount of contact between the residents and visitors, resident location in relation to the central tourism area, the community's economic dependence on tourism, the degree of tourism influence in the community, and the overall presence of tourism industry development in the area.

### **Gender and Tourism**

Gender is a significant part of the discussion when examining Pine Island resident's perceptions toward tourism. Swain (1995) defines gender as a "system of cultural identities and social relationships between females and males" (p. 247). As

such she notes that gender is a major component in any discussion of human affairs. She explains that local and universal gender relations are a crucial component to tourism because tourism is based upon human relations. Haley, et al. (2005) contradict this by stating “researchers can rarely state with confidence whether or not socioeconomic and demographic variables are significant indicators of distinct attitudes” (p. 663). According to Swain, gender “is expressed in motivations, desires, traditions, and perceptions; and is therefore a factor in all tourism development and underdevelopment” (p. 251). She goes on to note that “distinctions among kinds of people and their behaviors in demand and supply roles as leisured consumers (guests) and working producers (hosts) have become basic units of analysis” (p. 247). The effects of gender in tourism can vary from community to community because of expectations, traditions, and values the community may hold. Gender is a “process” that involves behaviors that are learned with distinctions that define each male and female role (Swain, 1993, p. 253). Indeed in terms of tourism, Swain notes that:

gender can be analyzed as an independent variable influencing tourism and as a dependent variable responding to tourism activity. Gender is primarily a dependent variable for tourism producers (hosts) (p. 260).

Gender not only impacts the consumption of tourism, but also impacts the gendered views and relations among the host community as well. It shapes the tourist area, practices and products.

The tourism division of labor when producing ethnic arts, such as those that can be found on Pine Island, impacts income and therefore, also affects gender relations (Swain). Williams and Lawson (2001) concluded that gender was not anticipated to be a main factor in the perception of tourism and that, “a more plausible explanation might be

that people of different genders are likely to place a different emphasis on various guiding principles and desirable end-states of existence, which will in turn influence their perceptions, opinions, and attitudes" (p. 273).

However, Milman and Pizam (1988) found gender is the only demographic exception when investigating resident's level of support for the tourism industry in Central Florida, which suggests it might be influential in this study. Milman and Pizam's study exemplified the importance of gender when investigating resident perception, contrary to Williams and Lawson's study which did not find it be significant. A community must find gender equilibrium in appealing to both genders with community initiatives in order to maintain their cultural identity (Swain).

Women and men's "gendered realities" impact their tourism participation (Smith, 1995, p. 249). This can be witnessed in their motivations, actions, and even through marketing plans created for each gender (Smith). For example, gendered marketing portrays control, authority, and action in connection with men, whereas women are depicted as being obtainable, passive and controlled. Swain concluded that "market destinations are seen to often reinforce stereotypes and hierarchical divisions of labor" (p. 249). Ireland's (1993) study of the transition of Sennen, Cornwall (UK) from a fishing community to a tourism community noted that women's role in the tourism industry increased principally when the male-dominated fishing industry experienced financial adversity. Ireland also concluded that these women found their individuality with women in the same situation and not within the "restructured division of labor within the family, resulting from employment in tourism" (p. 668). Sennen women remained subordinate to men in public, but directed the household economy in private.

The influence of gender is evident in the segmentation of tourism employment (Swain, 1995). Swain's (1993) analysis of women as producers of ethnic arts concluded that women are either "empowered by economic gain, or exploited by the patriarchal drive of global capitalism epitomized by international tourism" (p. 32). In many global tourism destinations, women serve as "domestics, service employees, prostitutes, and handicraft producers in "low-skilled" or "untraditional" work" (Swain, p. 34). There are often more employment opportunities for women in the tourism industry because many of the jobs are associated with traditional female roles (Brunt & Courtney, 1999). After Brunt and Courtney examined various studies, they found that participants felt divided that women were the preferred gender in tourism employment due to the flexible demands in employment opportunities in the tourism industry. In Swain's analysis of the Kuna people, she discovered that women were responsible for the production of their unique artwork, while the men were responsible for the marketing of it. Swain also noted the Sani women and their lack of dependence upon males in their society for tourism production and how this has translated into a tool of empowerment. Gibson and Yiannakis (2002) explain that there are "cultural constraints associated with being female, such as those imposed by motherhood, and the subordination of occupational goals and aspirations to those of their spouse" (p. 377).

Noticeable effects for each gender were discovered when examining literature on Florida residents affected by the net ban (Eversole, 1999; Smith et al., 2003). These studies revealed that the impacted women had an average of over a year more of formal education than the men and thus, had more employment options. The men in the

fishing industry were often the third generation or more of men in the fishing industry who knew no other transferrable skills.

Men have traditionally held the primary income earning role for the family (Smith et al., 2003). Spouses have had “distinct but complementary and coordinated roles” with women conducting domestic affairs on land and men working at sea for their income (Smith et al., p. 41). This change in roles amplified struggles within the family and therefore, lessened marital happiness. Smith et al. conducted a study of 44 families before and after the net ban. After the ban, 52% of women stated that they were forced into employment and 32% had to find second jobs. Eighty-three percent of the men holding second jobs stated it was a direct result of the ban. Women held the role of the family’s “emotional anchor” and were often looked to lessen the impact of both the economic and social changes that resulted from the ban (p. 41). The men not only lost their role as fisherman and provider, but the women also lost their role as their husband’s supporter, in other words, a “role reorganization” occurred (p. 43). Wives of fishermen demonstrated an internalization of burden when a change in the industry was even slightly perceived. Smith et al. concluded that both the men employed by commercial net fishing and their wives experienced mental health issues due to the net ban and that the impacts varied by gender. Women were shown to have higher depression scores and were ultimately shown to bear more of the impact than the men. This illustrates that women, and not only men, were directly impacted by the ban contrary to what many may have thought.

The ban and its resulting impacts on husbands and wives created many changes in the family structure for Florida fishing families. The stressors (which included

depression, anxiety, and anger) on the family often forced couples apart and resulted in many single-mother households (Smith et al., 2003). Families that were observed to be more flexible with their roles were shown to be more resilient when coping with the changes. Women's support systems of friends as well as gender role flexibility were both key factors in the durability of a family's cohesion.

Swain (1995) believes gender biases in tourism may change only after tourism's sociocultural consequences are researched because as she noted, "the bottom line is that the tourism industry is built on relations between people, all of whom are gendered" (p. 251). She believes it is an underrepresented focal point in tourism studies, but that it is slowly increasing.

### **Role in the Tourism Industry**

Another significant variable in the discussion of resident attitudes and perceptions to tourism is the resident's relationship to the tourism industry. Haley, et al. (2005) found the main contributor of how residents' perceived tourism was the significance of their occupation to the industry. In Liu and Var's (1986) study of Hawaiian residents, ethnicity and length of residency were found to be the only significant demographics when evaluating residents that held positions directly influenced by tourism. Similarly, Lindberg, et al. (2001) realized that the Swedish residents in their study participating in tourism in the local area were more likely to support more similar tourism establishments. For example, residents who ski are more likely to support new ski slopes in the area.

Besculides, et al. (2002) found that those living close to tourism events demonstrate more apprehension about tourism impacts even when the overall community shows approval towards tourism in their area. In their study of the LCA

byway in a Hispanic community, they found that in order for tourism to be successful the “management must reflect the views of the residents who live there” (p. 310). They concluded that all further tourism community resident perception studies should connect resident attitudes “with the strategies of policy-makers in a way which can provide a basis for policies more securely rooted in the needs of the host” (p. 665). They noted that the residents were not classified according to racial or ethnic identity but were recognized by their geographical location, and therefore, were entirely concentrated on sense of place when discussing culture.

Teye, et al. (2002) noted that members of the Cape Coast community had a negative outlook towards tourists when they indicated that a family member was employed by the tourism industry. Unpredictably, Liu and Var (1986) discovered that residents who work within the tourism industry did not have different responses toward tourists from those who did. This is in contrast to Brunt and Courtney (1999) who found that many studies reflect positive resident attitudes toward the tourism industry by residents dependent upon direct tourism-based positions. Brunt and Courtney point out that acculturation is directly tied to guest-host interaction, reflecting residents’ role and subsequent contacts in the tourism industry’s direct impact on their attitude toward the industry.

### **Age and Length of Residency and the Tourism Industry**

A significant, but one of the least discussed variables when discussing resident perception of tourism is that of age. Pine Island’s Chamber of Commerce website lists 58 as the median age for their residents with 10,000 year round residents and 16,000 winter residents. The community is known for being a destination for older generations where they can vacation and retire. As illustrated, Pine Island has a noteworthy older

population which may significantly affect the community's perceptions of tourism. In a study of Swedish residents by Lindberg, et al. (2001), age was found to be a consistently significant variable and that the older resident participants were more apprehensive about increased skiing facilities and equipment in the area.

The final important variable affecting resident attitudes and perceptions is the length of residency in the community experiencing the results of tourism. Besculides, et al. (2002), noted that social factors such as length of residence "can influence resident perceptions of and attitudes toward tourism" (p. 308). Likewise Haley, et al. (2005) found length of residence to be the "greatest contributor to the overall explanation of variance" (p. 660). They also found that long-term residents living in a community observed more damaging effects of tourism whereas, residents with shorter residency noticed more positive effects.

Ireland's (1993) study of residents in Sennen exhibits a fishing community's connection among length of residency and attachment to the community. "Covers" were identified as fishermen exhibiting economic activity, residence in the community and birthplace in the Cove (p. 669). During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the male-dominated Covers were prominent in the economic and social facets of the community, whereas when women took over the economic sustainability of the community, after the fishing industry declined the local men still remained prominent and involved in the community, illustrating length of residency and the resulting attachment to the community. A "solidarity of the local fishing community" persisted after the change in economic foci in the community (p. 669).

To sum, the 1995 net ban greatly affected the residents of Pine Island, including their income and employment opportunities, gender roles and family structures (Adams et al., <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FE123>; Smith et al., 2003). As a result of the decline of the fishing industry after the ban, tourism developed a stronger presence (Pine Island Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.pineislandchamber.org/>). Residents' length of residency, age, gender, and relationship to the tourism industry are critical in evaluating resident response to economic, environmental and economic impacts on the community after the net ban. These variables are also important when examining tourism's relationship to these impacts and residents' perception of tourism's connection with these impacts.

## CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS

Semi-structured face to face interviews were the primary data collection method used to study Pine Island resident's perceptions. Interviews were conducted among residents who have resided on Pine Island for various lengths of time regarding their attitudes and perceptions about the impacts of tourism. The study focused on interviewing current residents who have lived on Pine Island since at least 1995 to ensure residency during and subsequent to Pine Island's net ban transition.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection was conducted during May 2009 to February 2011 in Pine Island, Florida. Qualified Pine Island residents were found via newspaper announcements, community flyers, and resident referrals. Data were collected and recorded via face to face interviews with adult residents. Interviews were conducted to develop an understanding of resident attitudes and perceptions about the economic, environmental, and sociocultural impacts associated with tourism on Pine Island since the 1995 Net Ban.

Face to face interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes to an hour and a half and were audio recorded for the purpose of transcription. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on seven main questions centered around their history with the island, the net ban, and the triple bottom line changes they have seen during their time as a resident (Appendix A). Probes were used to encourage detailed answers regarding their opinions of the impacts. Semi-structured interviews ensured an open dialogue for resident answers and the ability to provide follow-up questions that guaranteed the fullest insight into the resident's attitudes and perceptions. For interpretation purposes,

residents were asked to provide additional background information such as age, length of residency, and occupation. Using constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), themes and patterns emerged from the data.

### **Sample**

The 19 participants for this study were delimited to adults at least 31 years old to guarantee they were at least 18 years of age when the 1995 Net Ban occurred (Table 3-1). This strategy ensured participants would have sufficient memory regarding the community's transition and resulting impacts. Additionally, a proportional distribution of male and female residents was interviewed as previous studies have suggested gender may influence perceptions (Milman & Pizam, 1988; Smith et al., 2003; Swain, 1993).

Initial resident participants were recruited from *Pine Island Eagle* newspaper postings and community flyers at various island locations including the library, community pool, restaurants, and general stores. Purposeful contact was also made with owners and staff of tourism destinations to ensure their perspectives were represented in the study. Snowball sampling of resident referrals then occurred from the initial contacts. Residents referred those people they believe had lived on the island since 1995 or those that had a connection with the tourism and/or fishing industry. As more resident contacts accumulated, representation in terms of gender, length of residency and relationship to the tourism industry were sought. After analyzing the initial interviews, theoretical sampling was employed to find additional interviewees to substantiate the emerging themes and to guarantee balanced representation based on demographics. Interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached. For anonymity purposes, each interviewee was assigned a code name and number that was used during the evaluation of all interview information collected.

Data saturation was achieved with the conclusion of 19 resident interviews. Nine respondents were male and ten were female with ages ranging 43 to 90 years old with a mean age of 61, which is reflective of the large, retiree population on the island. Four respondents had ties with the fishing industry, five interviewees are associated with the island's tourism industry, and 11 are either retired, unemployed, or have another occupation. Length of residency for the respondents ranged from less than a year to 57 years with a mean of 22 years for all interview participants. The participant residing on the island less than a year was interviewed due to her long family history and previous residence on the island. Twelve respondents were also either currently employed or residing in Matlacha, versus other areas of the island which was shown to provide important implications.

### **Data Analysis**

After resident interviews were completed, groundwork for interview evaluation began with digital audio-recorder transcription into Microsoft Word format. Respondent interview conversations were initially transcribed from complete beginning to end by means of listening to them in their entirety. Once initial interview transcriptions were completed, data were coded using constant comparison for patterns in attitudes and perceptions. Some member checks were employed as well as comparing historical accounts using historical records to check the accuracy of their recall.

Grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) methods were implemented to evaluate data for saturation and for final data interpretation. Initially, open coding was employed to identify patterns and trends in the data. At this point more interviews were required to achieve sufficient data to support these emerging themes. This process was known as constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin). Axial coding was then employed in the second

phase of data analysis. At this point utilizing multi-colored highlighters guided by the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, the major themes were recognized. Two major themes emerged in addition to the sociocultural, environmental and economic categories. Once the themes were established, sub-themes were also recognized and grouped under these major themes. The last stage in the data analysis, selective coding, produced connections and categories that ultimately led to the development of a grounded theory model. Identification of the relationships among the themes provided an in depth understanding of the residents' attitudes and perceptions towards tourism on Pine Island.

Table 3-1. Participant Demographics

	Name	Sex	Age	Length of Residency	Occupation
1	James	M	55	40 years in Lee Co.	Ex-commercial fisherman Ex-fisherman and building industry
2	Stan	M	64	30 years	Unemployed
3	Tammy	F	57	Entire Life	Retired
4	Stewart	M	72	31 years	Skilled labor
5	Irene	F	89	29 years	Artisan
6	Matt	M	59	29 years	retail business owner
7	Brenda	F	50's	16 years	retail business owner
8	Adam	M	50's	16 years	Artisan
9	Sherry	F	50	29 years	Retired
10	Peggy	F	90	25 years	retail business owner
11	Roger	M	64	8 years	Artisan
12	Lois	F	53	13 years	Tourism operation owner and very active in the community
13	Carl	M	59	9 years Less than 1 yr., but family lived on island 20+	Restaurant owner
14	Elaine	F	50's	years	Artisan
15	Cathy	F	56	10 years	Fishing charter captain Retired and actively involved in promoting the community
16	Steve	M	60	8 years	Retail business owner Ex-commercial fisherman's wife and employed in the service industry
17	Bruce	M	70's	25 years	50
18	Allison	F	59	8 years	
19	Judy	F	43	35 years	

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Sixteen themes and subthemes were recognized in the qualitative data as a result of the coding process. There were themes that supported the original three dimensions of economic, sociocultural and environmental, but two others were also identified, net ban and tourism. Several subthemes emerged associated with each of these major themes (Table 4-1). The themes and subthemes were further framed by demographic factors and residential histories for each participant such as length of residency and occupation.

To begin, residents were asked to talk about living on Pine Island and what they remember of the 1995 net ban to establish an understanding of their initial opinion of the island without probes and to recognize their proximity to, and understanding of the net ban. The interview then focused on questions regarding change they may have seen on the island since 1995 in the economic, environmental and sociocultural spheres of the community. Probes were designed to determine resident's perceptions of these changes and if they ultimately believed any of these changes were due to the tourism industry. The interviews were then concluded with any final thoughts and demographic questions for contextualization purposes. There did not appear to be any relationships among responses due to gender or age. This was not the case with resident proximity to Matlacha, whether they were located there for home or work, which was assessed as a subtheme.

### **Net Ban**

To begin conceptualizing the evolution of tourism on Pine Island, the 1995 net ban had to be mentioned at the forefront of the interview. It was important to discuss the

large community of commercial fishermen that were once present on the island and the significant impacts of the net ban in framing resident's perceptions to the development of tourism.

Residents living on the island prior to the net ban all acknowledged the large presence of the fishermen and commercial fishing as the number one industry in the community. Matt, a 59 year old skilled laborer and resident of 29 years, recalled that the island was "much more rough and tumble. It was a fishing town." Sixty-four year old Stan, a 30 year resident of the island in the building industry who fished with commercial fishermen remembered, "in the first years of course it was a bustling industry you might say" and besides some retired people moving to Pine Island "just about everybody else was connected to commercial fishing." Tammy, a 57 year old, life-long resident of the island and the daughter of a commercial fisherman, commented that "of course everybody (sic) was involved in the fishing industry, which was big." Residents attributed the introduction of the net ban as the rationale for the decline of the industry as well as the downturn for any associated facets of the industry that were connected to the community.

It is interesting to note that even residents who moved on to the island years after the net ban were knowledgeable of the profound impact it had on the community. Steve, a 60 year-old local tourist attraction owner who had only been an island resident for eight years noted that, "I know all the fishermen, especially in Bokeelia, lost everything and were very angry. I've heard all about it." Cathy, a 56 year old, ten-year resident and artisan of Pine Island, echoed similar sentiments:

that happened before we got here, but not that long before and from everything I've heard from the people that I know, it definitely changed the

direction of the main industry. I'm sure that fishing was much stronger before the net ban.

Lois, a 53 year old artisan who moved on to the island in 1998, recalled, "we did notice and see and hear a lot about it when we first moved onto the island. And a lot of people said things have really changed since then."

While acknowledging the net ban during the interviews with respondents, two subthemes emerged: (1) there was animosity and tension that occurred during and after the net ban, and (2) the net ban caused the fading of fish houses and fishermen.

### **Animosity and Tension that Occurred During and After the Net Ban**

The net ban drastically altered the lives of the commercial fishermen on the island and went on to permanently restructure the community. This was highly apparent to even non-commercial fishermen residents of the island and many of them remember the years centered around the net ban as a highly contentious and tense time.

James, a 55 year old ex-commercial fisherman, recalled the primary opposition to commercial fishermen as "a sport fishing organization called the Florida Conservation Association" or the "sporties" signifying the most prevalent divide among the island during the time. Stan recalled, "fishermen talking about it a couple of years before it happened. They seemed to see it coming. I didn't believe it would ever happen, but they were very much afraid of it, for the couple of years before" and that "there was a lot of upheaval in their lives." Stan went on to further explain this upheaval by saying:

they had invested virtually their whole life and didn't know much of anything else, but they were really smart and experts at what they did. But to ask them to get another job was almost impossible. In fact, these guys never had jobs. They're all basically businessmen, a commercial fisherman don't really work for anybody, but himself.

James, an ex-commercial fisherman, confirmed their statements when he said, “I have never actually had an on-the-land job—a real job as a lot of people call it” and that:

several of my buddies that their great-granddaddies fished, their granddaddies fished, their daddies fished, and they fished and they’ve got sons and you hear this thing that they say that you work hard and you can be anything you want to be, well you can’t be a commercial fisherman, I can tell you that. It’s the heritage thing. A lot of people, myself, I consider myself this, I’m James, a fisherman. But a lot of the boys like I say, granddaddies, daddies, all of that stuff, was a fisherman so I feel sorry for them that their sons, whether they wanted to be or not, weren’t afforded the opportunity to become a fisherman if they wanted to and lost their identity.

It was a big time of transition for the community, especially with the fishermen and was often cited as a time of heavy burden for them and their families. Tammy noted that her father, an ex-commercial fisherman, “has photographs of the sadness in people’s eyes when they had to give up their nets. Piddly look on their faces.” Stewart stated, “I remember that commercial fishermen realized it would pretty much destroy most of their source of income [...] the net fishermen realized that it would pretty well doom their way of making a living.” This tense time of transition was further exacerbated because the fishermen did not witness the community rallying for their cause.

Many of the fishermen did not feel supported by the residents of the island, causing a recognizable animosity and tension among the community. Stan remembered “that the general public on Pine Island didn’t care one way or the other pretty much. They weren’t really against the commercial fishermen and weren’t really for them, they didn’t really care.” Matt stated that the amendment, “passed by 75% to 25% so the state was for it. That’s how it made the fishermen unhappy.” Brenda, a retail business owner and 16-year resident in her 50’s, remembered when they first moved on to the island being asked, “did you vote? And we were like, “vote for what?” and when asked if she felt like it was a tense time, she replied with, “oh yeah!” Her husband, Adam, a retail

business owner as well in his 50's, also noted the tension, "for a couple of years after that they were painting 'Yankee Go Home' on Little Pine Island right on the roadway and somebody killed a bunch of snook and they just laid them on the side of the road" and that "there were a lot of really angry people at that time." Judy, a 43 year old ex-commercial fisherman's wife now employed in the service industry, also remembered a lot of tension, "there was a lot of animosity [...] I fought hard." Some fishermen transitioned from commercial fishing to guiding for visitors to the island.

Carl, a 59 year old tourism entrepreneur who is active in the community, moved to the island seven years after the net ban and noted that, "now I don't go back real far, the fishermen changed now from what were, you know, fish for food, are now fish for sport. So the fishermen today on the island are primarily sport fishermen and guides." James remembers, "a few of the commercial fishermen, the younger ones, switched over from commercial fishing to guiding." When the possibility of transitioning over to guiding following the net ban was discussed with James, he replied, "I don't care if sport fishermen paid me a \$1,000 a day, I ain't going to take the same guy that loaded me out of business out rod and reel fishing" and went on to say that, "I would think all of the fishermen, kind of like myself, think that, I don't know, that an unconscionable wrong has been done." More than fifteen years later, these attitudes can still be seen among the ex-commercial fishing community. A few years after the net ban Cathy remembered: going down to the fishermen's co-op down there at the end of Maria Drive and just feeling totally intimidated when I went in to ask for some crab claws or whatever it is I wanted to buy. Just all the fishermen are there and they're all growly, am I ever out of place here. And it's that community that I think is feeling hurt and resentful.

The commercial fishermen also noted not only the absence of resident support, but the lack of government support as a reason for animosity as well. Commercial fishermen were asked to participate in the government's net exchange program to help alleviate their financial burden. James recalled, "we never got paid nothing [...] they took all the nets, we got the receipt and they wouldn't give us nothing." He was also upset with the government when he stated that

it was basically unconscionable, what they had done, the reasons they had done. If the net ban was put through for biological or scientific reasons, hey, got no problem with it. And if you would have put the net ban through and put something in it the way of language as 10 years down the road we need to revisit this, see that would have been done in legislation, this was done in constitution amendment, when it goes down in the constitution it's pretty much there.

This animosity and feeling of being mistreated among the fishermen seemed to have only added to the decrease of the commercial fishermen in terms of community presence and the resulting change in community stratification.

### **The Fading of Fish Houses and Fishermen**

Prior to the net ban, there was a very obvious presence of the fishing industry on Pine Island, whether it was the fish houses, the fishermen, the commercial fishing boats, their gear, and so on. Fishermen and their families accounted for a large proportion of the residential community on the island, which can no longer be said.

Sherry, a 50 year old active artisan on the island, relayed that:

the first year I was out here I saw a lot of guys walking around in mullet boots and "Pine Island Reeboks" and I don't see them very much anymore. There was a lot more fishermen and working people around, a lot less tourism, too.

Similarly, Matt reflected “the fishing families are gone—the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> generation mullet fishermen. They didn’t have a legacy to pass down to their kids.” An accurate record does not exist regarding the number of fishing families that moved off the island, but James estimated that “40% of the commercial fishermen that were around here moved off the island, moved away”. The former wife of a commercial fisherman, Judy, estimated that “half and half” of the fishermen left and stayed. For the ones that left she said:

A lot of them are trying to fish legally, a lot of them went to crabbing, and lot of them, I say you could do a third, third, third, and a lot of them moved to Alabama and North Carolina.

The island seemed to be experiencing Dogan’s (1989) adoption response to tourism at this time. Dogan illustrates that adoption is recognized as the community destroying their traditional social structure in favor of accepting a new culture for their society. Stan also recalled comparable happenings:

quite a few have actually moved away. Well, I know a sizeable group have moved out of state where they don’t have net bans. Most of the ones I know have gone to North Carolina. Some others I know have gone to Alabama—they know they have much coast line.

Peggy, a retired 90 year old resident of 25 years, was not associated with fishing, but also noticed, “they had to get jobs and there weren’t jobs here for them to do.” It was evident to many residents that fishermen were fleeing the island following the ban.

The fishermen were not only noticeable as individuals walking and fishing on the island, but to some residents as active groups within the community. Stewart remembered that fishermen had a large and active presence in the community, “the fishermen had co-ops. The co-op was a big fishermen organization.” Stan also noted their large presence in the entire area when he stated, “they had the best net fishing

organized system on the west coast.” Others disagreed that they were active for the community, such as Stewart, when he noted that, “they weren’t active in the community, they were active for themselves, trying to keep legislation in favoring themselves [...] I don’t think they did much civic stuff for the island.”

Fish houses were a poignant and fixed representation of the fishing industry on the island. Stan reflected that “there must have been six or eight fish houses that were busy all of the time” reinforcing the large and active presence the fish houses had among the community. James commented that he worked primarily with two fish houses on the island that no longer exist, “most of the fish houses occupied a pretty decent piece of waterfront property and it was worth a lot more to whoever owned it, than rather keep a fish house open” following the net ban.

With the enforcement of the net ban, apparent changes among the fishermen were witnessed by residents. Tammy commented that “when they ran the collection it put 40,000 people out of work, that’s fishermen, drivers, the fish houses, the actual fishermen”, illustrating the profound impact it had on not only her family, but the entire area. She went on to reflect, “how sad everybody was [...], people moved off the island, people really didn’t know how to do anything else, this is all they knew how to do, generation after generation and it hurt everybody.” The net ban not only affected the fishermen, but their families as well. Judy stated that a lot of the fishermen “got divorced and a lot of depression went on, it wasn’t pretty. Not at all. It was not a good thing.” Matt also noted that the net ban “hurt a lot of families, hurt a lot of fishing, certainly changed the nature of the island.”

Not all fishermen left the island or sought out other job opportunities. Fishermen who remained were remembered as retiring, fishing legally under the new requirements, or fishing illegally using their old means. Stan recognized this and relayed that, “some of them were going to just keep on fishing, the outlaw fishermen, no matter what. Others would try and fish legally under the new rules and others just decided it was time for change.” Matt also witnessed the desperate measures of the illegal fishermen, noting that “some of them went into trying to poach. You could hear motors in the middle of the night and you knew what they were up to.”

Of course, many of the fishermen chose not to stay. Stan reflected on a notable fisherman on the island, “I haven’t seen him since and his family was here for many generations.” Irene, an 89 year old, retired resident of 29 years, summed it up when she commented, “I miss the fishermen.” These sentiments validate that many of the fishermen were witnessed as having to leave the island in search for other opportunities, leaving a clear void for the island to contend with.

At present, many residents feel that the net ban is no longer a topic of conversation within their community even though it once was. Cathy reflected, “I feel like some of the fishermen that were here for a long, long time resent people like me moving in with a different kind of company. I mean I don’t know that, we’ve met a lot of the fishermen, so there’s no animosity, but I think that was present for a long time.” Sherry, a 50 year old artisan active on the island for 29 years, who stated, “everything from the net ban seems to have calmed down, everyone seems to have found their place.” One reason for this halt in referencing the net ban could be that the island seems to have transitioned into a community that now has a focus on tourism.

## **Tourism**

Residents appear divided when considering if tourism would be so prevalent on the island if the net ban had not occurred. When discussing tourism with residents, five subthemes emerged: (1) there was a noticeable transition to tourism after the net ban; (2) tourism is very seasonal and needed for survival; (3) the island conducts active campaigns to draw in tourism; (4) the draw is “quaint”, “untouched”, and the “old Florida” atmosphere; and (5) tourism is highly concentrated in Matlacha and not other parts of the island.

### **Noticeable Transition to Tourism after the Net Ban**

Tourism was recognized by residents as only evolving following the net ban. Prior to the net ban, commercial fishing was the main industry on the island, whereas tourism was barely evident. It was apparent during resident interviews that there was a noticeable and distinct transition from the fishing industry to the tourism industry that had implications for their community.

When James was asked if he believed the net ban was the end of commercial fishing on the island, he answered that “it was the end statewide” and that “Lee County was the number one producer of finfish in the state, so economically, the net ban hurt Lee County more than any other county in the state” signifying the immense void the net ban left in the island’s economy and way of life. It was speculated that tourism really began to thrive with the demise of commercial fishing and that Pine Island began its changeover from the exploration stage to the involvement stage of Butler’s (1980) Destination Life Cycle. When Judy was asked if she believed the transition to tourism was a result of the net ban she replied, “I do. I really do. It might have not been from that, but I feel that’s kind of where the island shifted. It started getting all of the art stores

in, which is not a bad thing.” Irene also recognized that “a lot of things were changing” following the net ban. Many areas of the island, especially Matlacha, were noted as even drastically changing their building facades following the ban. Bruce, a retired resident active in the community in his 70’s, said, “like all these art shops here, they were all houses, you know. It has gotten a lot more busier out here because of the art shops.” Elaine, a restaurant owner in her 50’s whose family has lived on the island for many years said, “there’s been *a lot* of changes here since I was here last. *A lot.* I don’t remember any of these buildings being this bright or anything or any businesses being in them.” Irene echoed similar sentiments and proclaimed, “when we came there were little mom and pop stores. Now there are little sophisticated stores of artists. It was a far cry from the fishermen that were here all along Main Street.” Elaine, as well as others, believed that Leoma starting her art gallery in Matlacha spawned the movement. Sherry did not believe tourism was a *direct* result of the net ban and said “I think the galleries would have still come here. I don’t think the net ban had anything to do with that, anything at all. I mean, this one still would have been here, I think.”

To many residents, the transition was clear. Stewart very much noticed a feasible changeover to tourism, “the net ban had shifted the emphasis away from commercial fishing as a major source of income and then just naturally, since this is an attractive area, low density area, then people were attracted to the quaintness.” Matt recognized the change in the community following the net ban, “when I first came, how all the houses had working class fishermen, construction workers, most of the people along this road have college education and had careers. It’s changed from the little houses, that’s a remarkable difference.” Although, Matt is not so sure it was a result of the net

ban, when asked if he thought the net ban was the cause, he said, “not really, you see the rest of the world found the beauty” and believed it was due to the development of Interstate 75. When Judy discussed the net ban she went on to also mention, “I know back in the day when it was all mostly commercial fishing, you didn’t have the tourists that you have out here. It wasn’t as touristy as the art was.” Even if residents were not clear regarding the cause of tourism’s development on the island, there was an obvious consensus that it began to really develop following the net ban.

### **Tourism is very Seasonal and Needed for Survival**

The island transitioned from relying on fishing seasons to relying on the tourist season and the “snowbirds,” as residents affectionately call visitors. Business owners all strongly emphasized the seasonality of tourism on the island. Steve recognized that, “It’s important, tourism to our area in Southwest Florida is hugely important” and “it affects all your little service businesses. They all thrive on tourism that’s here. The people that are part-time residents and own homes, they come down, having something fixed, cleaned, repaired.” The fall and winter is usually considered the tourist season with summer as the inactive season exemplifying the island’s presence within Butler’s (1980) development stage of the Life Cycle. Seasonality is characteristic of communities within the development stage. Cathy referenced the summer as the “dead, dead, dead season.” Allison knows this all too well with her business and noted that, “you have to rely on the tourists here. I would have to close the first of May because it took my husband’s whole paycheck every week to keep this place going all summer long.” Even non-business owners recognize the importance of tourism to their community, such as when Matt was asked if tourism contributes a lot to Pine Island’s economy, he noted, “Oh yes. Snowbirdism, as tourism does now.”

During the season tourism impacts not only the business' financial well-being, but many sectors of the community, including some of the resident's daily lives. Cathy noted:

I don't go to the local restaurants very much in season because I have to wait and I don't know anybody in the restaurant and there's nobody to talk to outside of the people that I'm going with. There I see a *huge* impact and I know the restaurant owners are happy [...] I don't resent it, it's just a fact, I don't go out as much.

These actions could be interpreted as a mild form of Dogan's (1989) retreatism response to tourism. According to Dogan, retreatism occurs when a community is economically dependent upon tourism and residents cope by avoiding tourists and establishing new routines. When respondents were asked if tourists affected their daily lives, such as when going out to the grocery store or walking down the street, the majority of them replied that tourists do not personally have an impact on their daily routine.

### **Island Conducts Active Campaigns to Draw in Tourism**

It was recognized among respondents that there is now an active campaign to attract tourists to Pine Island through their "Creative Coast Weekends" and other means which is consistent with Butler's (1980) development stage whereby communities actively advertise themselves as a tourist destination. This is something that all residents, whether in the business of tourism or not, seem to recognize. Steve has witnessed this and claimed that, "you know we've got the Creative Coast Weekend, and sure we're always promoting tourism, especially in this economy." Bruce also noted that "we try to bring them here, yeah, the business community would like to have a lot of people here because that helps them. That is what the Chamber is here for." Carl has also noticed that the Chamber focuses most of their conversations on tourism drawing

visitors in. He said, “I feel that’s what the Chamber is all about, is about promoting tourism on Pine Island. We realize that’s our number one industry, other Chambers would be going after manufacturing, but we don’t want manufacturing here.” Many business owners are very aware and active themselves in the campaign for tourists. Cathy said “we are trying to encourage people from off the island to come onto the island. So that means we really are trying to encourage more tourism here.” Cathy went on to explain the plan for attracting tourists:

initially, just outside of Pine Island. Initially, just Cape Coral residents. I mean, you would be amazed, you lived here, you probably know, you go into Cape Coral and Fort Myers and you say I live on Pine Island they have lived in Fort Myers for 40 years and they have no idea where Pine Island is.

Many business owners have discovered the benefits of the internet in bringing visitors to the island. Cathy recognized this as well and said, “I think the internet, I know that, like the B&Bs, they all advertise with the bed and breakfast dot com or trip advisor dot com and that is very, very powerful for them.” It has also been a very powerful tool for Lois and Sherry in bringing people in for their business growth.

### **The Draw is “Quaint,” “Untouched,” and the “Old Florida” Atmosphere**

It was apparent during the interview process that Pine Island possesses the unique quality of being “quaint” and like an “untouched, old Florida” that attracts residents and tourists alike. The community capitalizes on this asset and was mentioned during many of the interviews as the reason many of the respondents personally moved to the island.

Lois, like many, was enamored with her first impression of the island, “it was Florida untouched. It was like the way Florida was before people started tearing things down and rebuilding and making it different.” Matt and Irene were also drawn to the

remoteness and environment. Irene said it would “brighten anybody” and Matt believes “the environment, the old Florida, the folksy, quirky little town” is what draws in visitors and seasonal residents. Brenda echoed, “it’s like a time warp.” Likewise, Carl believed that tourists are drawn to the island because of the “rural atmosphere, it’s different from anything else in Florida. It can be rural and on the coast at the same time.” Cathy remembers being drawn to the island for:

the remoteness. The fact that it just did not feel like the rest of the coastal living. And that there were a lot of artists [...] it just seemed to be sort of like an artist mecca, which we didn’t fully understand until we actually moved here and then we met authors and visual artists, and musicians and it’s full of that just sort of creative mentality.

Steve was drawn to the island for the “ambiance of Matlacha” and Cathy explained, “I think that people that are attracted to it are going to like it for what it is.” All of these responses parallel each other and really highlight what sets the island apart from other similar destinations.

### **Tourism is Highly Concentrated in Matlacha**

In evaluating tourism even further on the island, tourism was noted as mainly occurring in the island area of Matlacha, the closest destination to the main land. Interview respondents denoted a few primary conjectures as to why this was the case. Stan believed Matlacha has the most tourists because “it kind of look quaint and also it’s the closest place to the outside world [...] they have to go another 10 miles if they want to see Bokeelia and a lot of them stop right here.”

Unfortunately, for many businesses not located in Matlacha, there was an overwhelming sentiment that they do not receive the same quantity of visitors and have to struggle to draw them in. Allison’s business is not located in Matlacha. She noted that, “I would say the only things that tourists pretty much do here are eat at the

restaurants. That's what I would say. Go to Matlacha to see the art galleries and then come over here to eat," clarifying that they only venture out on to Bokeelia to dine after visiting the galleries. Lois' business is not located in Matlacha and mentioned that "it's taken a lot of effort to raise awareness that we're here," she also said, "Matlacha gets a lot of attention [from the Chamber]. Matlacha gets a lot of business." Cathy is also fully aware of her disadvantage not being located in Matlacha:

I don't see 25% of the people they see. The people I do see, I'll bet I have more sales per customer because they've come all the way out here, [...] if I weren't burned out on [retail], I would probably try to rent a place in Matlacha. That is the place to be.

As a business owner in Matlacha, Sherry fully recognized that "Matlacha seems to be the destination."

Compared to the rest of the island, both businesses and residents in Matlacha experienced an increase in interaction with tourists. Irene, a long-time resident of Matlacha, was asked if she has a lot of daily contact with tourists and she replied, "oh my gosh, yes! Matlacha you can't go, I can go out here and garden and in a matter of minutes people will stop and talk and ask about the place." Irene went on to say that she has had visitors from many different states and countries this year alone.

Residents on different areas of the island such as St. James City and Bokeelia expressed different sentiments noting that they rarely ever interact with tourists in their daily lives.

Therefore, it is apparent that Matlacha attracts the primary source of tourists and that only a few venture past Little Pine Island to experience Bokeelia and St. James City. As expressed during the interviews, there is currently a conscientious effort to

attract residents to the other areas of the island, but the participants have not yet noticed the results.

### **Economic**

The economy, including sources of revenue generation for the community and the nation as a whole, has seen many changes since the net ban. One of the largest economic changes for the island resulted from the net ban and its shift from the money generated by the commercial fishermen to other sources. James demonstrated the significant economic contribution the fishermen made to the community as a whole when he said:

house payments, car payments, groceries, outboard motors, hiring people to work on his crab traps or his nets and all his money got stuck back into the economy and I guess economists take that and they use some kind of formula they use and they call that, you know a multiplier.

With the onset of the net ban, the fishermen's economic presence within the community declined and the island was forced to reconsider its' economic base.

Subthemes appeared when discussing the economic history and current situation on the island. These subthemes included the recession, the increase in the presence of tourism and growing industries following the net ban, the history of the seasonality of the island's economy, and the limited economic opportunities for younger generations. These subthemes are important as they create a better understanding of the study's economic dimension.

### **Recession**

Along with discussing the change in the focus of the island's economy, the majority of respondents mentioned the recession as the only economic impact they have witnessed since moving on to the island.

Stan was well aware of the current economic situation and stated, “right now it’s not thriving, in that there’s this recession. And in fact, every business of every kind is hurting.” The island seemed to experience a successful economic period before the onset of the recession. Carl noted, “things were really booming in ‘05 [...] and now everything has stopped and it’s basically tourism.” Allison said, “we were devastated when the stock market crashed, you know everybody, the real estate.” When Steve was asked about changes he has witnessed with the economy he noted that, “most has been the last two years [...] the recession and the economy” and has affected many of his colleagues in the tourism industry on the island. Sherry noted, “up until the last two years business was increasing steadily. The past two years with the economy being sucky hasn’t helped.” Brenda also mentioned, “it has gotten pretty bad for most people.” Interestingly, Lois stated, “people that have lived on the island who are of a lower socioeconomic level, that little by little, they’re going to be inched out of the island.” She is concerned and noted, “it’s not tourism, it’s just the economy.”

### **Presence of Tourism and Growing Industries after the Net Ban**

An additional subtheme that emerged was the noticeable presence of tourism and growing industries such as palm growers and fruit tree farmers following the net ban. When respondents were asked what the primary industry on the island currently is, these were the only two mentioned.

Tourism consistently emerged as one of the top, if not *the* top industry, among the participants interviewed. It was unclear to most of the respondents as to exactly what encouraged the development of tourism. When Sherry was asked what she believed spurred the tourism growth she replied:

probably the galleries. I think the galleries made a huge difference because when I look at the numbers on how much money I was making in 1994 and 1995 and then when these other galleries started coming in and started advertising that made a difference, too.

Tammy definitely believed tourism became more apparent following the net ban and that there was an intentional shift because the net ban “really affected the economy.” Stewart noted, “Matlacha in particular and Pine Island in general [...] had to rely more on tourism and less on commercial fishing” and that “Matlacha would not be the tourist attraction it is today because the commercial fishing would still be king, so it would be centered around that.”

The new direction toward tourism seems to have also had a highly visible impact on the appearance and safety of the community, contributing to further economic growth. Peggy has noticed that the change in industry may have spurred the community to “fix up” their places which can be recognized as a positive consequence of tourism on the island community. Allison also witnessed this and stated, “I have seen lots of changes as far as people taking care of their properties and paint them and maintaining them better. I see a bigger pride in being from Pine Island.” Sherry also noticed that the transition has “cleaned up Matlacha a lot. It’s a lot, I think people feel safer out here now than they used to in the past.”

Allison believed that tourism was the most noticeable industry on the island, but “dollar wise, probably the tree farms.” Steve and others have also witnessed the presence and growth of the tree farms as a significant industry on the island. When Stewart was asked what economic changes he has seen, he replied, “seen more other areas of the economic growth, plant nurseries on the island and tropical fruit orchards on the island.” Whereas, when Stan was asked what environmental changes he has

seen he mentioned, “what has changed a lot environmentally has been the palm trees. And that was about 20 years ago, people discovered that this was the ideal place to grow palm trees and sell the tree itself and that was going great.” Judy reflected on the tree farms and stated the island “didn’t have back then. I kind of wonder about the pesticides and all of that.” Lois echoed these sentiments mentioning the fertilizers and watering systems for the industry and their potential negative impacts.

Even though it is not clear whether the onset of the tourism and growing industries was a direct result of the net ban, it is clear that they are now the prevalent economic spotlights for the community.

### **Very Seasonal Economy**

Another economic subtheme that was very apparent was that Pine Island has always experienced a very seasonal economy, whether it was with commercial fishing or tourism. This seasonality has affected their way of life and something that is very relevant to all of the respondents.

Matt illustrated that, “before it was all fishing families and snowbirds during the winter, the population would increase. During the summer, the only industry was fishing really.” James reflected on the desirable earnings of a fisherman even with a dead season, “I was in high school and making more money commercial fishing on weekends and holidays than teachers were making in the school.” Stan recalled otherwise, noting that “fishing was never big money even at its best. But in the fall, it seemed like it. There’s guys that would make \$1,000 a night and think that they were rich, driving new trucks. But this time of year [summer], they were dirt poor and just couldn’t go out and do anything.”

Ultimately, the island started to experience tourism and its seasons. Lois believes that eventually the “island started attracting more and more people who just wanted to have a seasonal home.” Tammy now recognizes tourism as “the only thing that keeps us alive are the tourists coming down. And now it’s the art galleries which are good because it does bring money into the local vendors.”

### **Limited Economic Opportunities for Young People**

The island was often cited as having very limited economic opportunities for young people, which emerged as the final economic subtheme. Judy grew up on the island herself, and when asked if she thought there are opportunities on the island for younger people she replied, “well, I think it depends on the individual kid. There are opportunities out there if you seek it.” Two of the residents mentioned that Pine Island may be transitioning into a bedroom community with younger people moving to the island and commuting to the main land for work. Judy said, “I know a lot of younger people are moving out here and they don’t mind the drive to go back and forth to work.” This response reaffirms that there may not be desirable economic opportunities on the island for young people.

## **Environmental**

Residents did not notice many significant environmental changes as a result of the net ban or as a product of tourism in the community. When discussing the environment, three key subthemes surfaced: (1) increase in ecotourism and tourist respect for the environment, (2) Hurricane Charley, and (3) increase in traffic.

### **Increase in Ecotourism and Tourist Respect for the Environment**

When discussing tourism and possible environmental impacts, many residents mentioned the recent and intentional development of ecotourism on the island. For

example, when discussing ecotourism, Carl stated, “that’s probably one of our brightest futures. It is very low impact on your community.” Lois noted that, “the tourists are coming here because they appreciate what we have to offer and they seem very respectful of it. I don’t really see them destroying it.” She also sees “all of the ecotourism opportunities really blossoming here, with the kayaks, and the Blueway [...] I really see it all as very positive and very respectful on the island. I haven’t really had an experience in the negative.” Brenda and Adam recalled the kayaking trail, Calusa Blueway, specifically implemented on the island as a draw for tourists. Brenda said, “I think if anything is going to change out here, I think it would be more of that kind of ecotourism, that’s easy on the environment. Like the creative coast, the artists don’t really hurt the environment.” Sherry relayed similar sentiments to Lois when asked about possible environmental impacts from tourists and said, “I think they’ve been pretty positive since they’re going more ecotourism out here now. That part’s good.” Some residents also see the island heading in a sustainable direction, such as Judy when said, “I do know that a lot of people are trying to go green around here.” Overall, it is evident to residents that ecotourism is the new sector for tourism growth on Pine Island and that visitors are often there for the environment and choose to respect it for that reason.

### **Hurricane Charley**

Another noticeable environmental theme that appeared during the interview process, was the lasting impacts of Hurricane Charley on the community. Hurricane Charley made landfall near Pine Island on August 13, 2004 and was considered by many respondents to be *the* major environmental change in their residential history. Environmentally, many immediate changes were visible after Hurricane Charley to the

community and is still considered to have impacts on the island's waterways. Brenda and Adam now witness less fish, birds, and trees as a result of the hurricane. Peggy also reflected on the vast decrease in the amount of trees following the storm. Stan viewed the hurricane as the largest environmental change and the water beds becoming unsettled and killing off much of the sea life. Steve also viewed it as the largest environmental change and said "the damage to the mangroves was intense and they haven't come back."

In terms of business, Sherry reflected on Hurricane Charley, and stated, "I thought the hurricanes would slow things down, but they didn't at all. I was surprised." Brenda and Stan also felt there was something of a "boom" after the hurricane with the economy on the island. Cathy stated otherwise when she reflected on the downturn with the economy and said, "Charley sort of added to it."

### **Increase in Traffic**

The majority of respondents only see one negative impact of tourists to their community, which is an increase in traffic on the island roads. This sentiment is echoed in other studies such as the study of Silver Valley by Johnson et al. (1994) where 61% of residents agreed that tourism resulted in an increase in traffic congestion in their community. When Cathy was asked about the daily impact tourists had on her life she responded, "just the traffic [...] I'm one of those people, that I have to have the tourists, so I deal with it [...] I definitely see an increase in traffic." Similarly, Brunt and Courtney's (1999) study of Dawlish, a resort in the U.K., concluded that "those directly involved in the industry are always quick to recognize the economic benefits" (p. 510), which implies that they may also be quick to overlook small inconveniences as well. Tammy, a resident not directly reliant upon tourists, reflected that her commute time has been

dramatically extended due to tourist activities and she was “pretty upset.” Elaine, Judy, Peggy and Carl also noted traffic as the largest environmental impact as a result of tourists and Carl explained, “I think people love to come out to Pine Island” as the reason for the increase.

### **Sociocultural**

Questions probing resident’s perception of sociocultural changes concluded the series of questions regarding the triple bottom line analysis of Pine Island. This is important to discuss further as this appears to be the area where most of the island’s transitions occurred. Three noticeable sub-themes emerged when evaluating responses for sociocultural implications: (1) noticeable bonds and stratification in the community, (2) mainly retirees and no opportunities for young people, and (3) residents want the island to remain the same.

#### **Noticeable Bonds and Stratification of the Community**

It became very apparent during the interviews that a distinct stratification system exists among the residents of Pine Island in which commercial fishermen could be classified as one strata, tourism industry representatives another, retirees another, and so forth. A hierarchy did not emerge among the community as the groups co-existed and some were separate strata that did not interact much with any of the others. It was also noticed that no matter what segment someone in the community belonged to, there were primary bonds that held them together. The cohesive bonds included pride in the community and caring for one another.

Pine Island residents consider themselves very independent and seem not to acclimate to outsiders’ opinions well regarding the development and direction of their community, similar to the native “Covers” in Ireland’s (2004) study on Sennen.

Regarding independence, the adjacent city to Pine Island across the bridge, Cape Coral, is mentioned in many discussions regarding island autonomy. Matt and Brenda noted that islanders are “very independent” and “always very outspoken” and the notion of Cape Coral conducting business with Pine Island was something that was unreasonable. Steve remembers the proposal from Cape Coral to annex Matlacha and the island being up in arms about the situation and that “the county commissioners were getting their doorbell rang.” James further illustrated this independence and community pride when he spoke about attending Civic Association meetings and not approving of the attendance of recently transitioned residents moving there and feeling they had a valuable opinion at the meetings. Cathy recalled newcomers at a Civic Association meeting and thought “you’re not going to last and they didn’t [...] They rapidly found out that it’s pretty hard to change everybody’s mind around here.”

Islanders also consider themselves very tight-knit and able to take care of each other, even if the population has changed and doubled in many people’s opinions. Peggy said, “people are very clannish when they know you and like you, they’re very close.”

Commercial fishermen were a large and active segment of the community prior to the net ban, but subsequently experienced a weakening of their bonds and involvement in the community after the amendment passed. The fishermen were recognized as their own community within the island among the residents. Irene fondly remembered her first impression of the island and stated, “they were all fishermen and they weren’t about to try to impress anyone and we just loved it. Just loved it. Loved everything about it.” Stewart, a 72 year old retired resident of more than 30 years remembered when they

first moved on to the island, “they were just people of the community. They were really good about absorbing [my wife] and myself in the community.” He also noted that many of the commercial fishermen’s children were even recognized as “mullets” in Cape Coral. Peggy remembered the fishermen being “clannish.” Stan remembers the island just having a few bars to socialize in and if you were not a fisherman then “it would be good to not go to that bar.” Peggy also claimed that, “fishermen and I think people on the island help each other. Very close. Close-knit.” Irene recalled attending Civic Association meetings as well and said:

fishermen would come in, in their boots and in their own manner would tell them what they thought and believe they wouldn’t mince words when they didn’t like something and now it’s everything is according to Roberts Rules and everyone knows their place and people that get up to speak are well spoken, I’m not saying it’s better. I just miss what was here before.

James recalled an annual seafood festival that the commercial fishermen organized that ceased after the net ban and stated, “we still could have done it, but on the net ban we didn’t even carry the vote on Pine Island. So if that many people here on Pine Island didn’t even support you that much the heck with them.” He went on to also say that he felt “Pine Island ain’t Pine Island no more.” Stan said, “the festivals we have now generally don’t bring out the fishermen. They feel like they’re just not part of that. They’re their own society [...] for the most part, they don’t really have anything to draw them together.” Judy recalled that the fishermen prior to the net ban were segmented into distinct units:

the Bokeelia fishermen stayed in one end, the Matlacha guys stayed on one end, the St. James guys stayed on another end [...] they were very territorial. The Matlachians hung out with the Matlachians, the St. Jamesins hung out with the St. Jamesins, Bokeelia guys hung out with the Bokeelia guys.

Currently, there is not a divide among the residents from different areas of the island, according to Steve, when he said, “St. James, Bokeelia, and Matlacha, we all work together. It is very good.” Since the net ban, the island has seen new and active groups develop within the community such as the Hookers and Mariners dedicated to charity for the island with the Hookers witnessing around 100 members at each meeting signifying their large presence. Allison, having lived on the island less than a decade, has observed the island taking care of each other and said “they do. There’s no question about it, no question about it.” Lois stated:

the thing I love about Pine Island is that it's very eclectic. You could go from unbelievably rich, wealthy, well-known people, who like to be anonymous, all the way to the farm workers and to the people that are really living below the poverty level [...] there is something about a sense of community that you just don't find anywhere else. I like to think that there's an acceptance and a tolerance of one another.

### **Mainly Retirees and No Opportunities for Young People**

The island was cited throughout the interviews as having a dynamic that attracted retirees as well as not having sociocultural opportunities for young people. Many respondents moved to the island themselves in the hopes of retiring. Carl initially invested in property on the island hoping to retire and said, “people my age, late 50's, are starting to show up and starting to buy” and also noted, “most people in Matlacha are in their 60's and 70's and have been retired 15 years.” Stewart said, “several of the tourists now are “Baby Boomers” mostly” and many believe they utilize word of mouth bringing in the large numbers of retirees to the island. He also stated, “retired people are better quality people—affluent. They're affluent and live a certain lifestyle.” This may have inferences that the community is experiencing a change in social structure from working classing to an upper middle class. Stan acknowledges the retirees on the

island as “still having their checks” and are able to contribute to the economy even in the time of the recession. Steve estimated that approximately 45% of the island population were retirees and pointed out that he did not see too many younger families present on the island. When Allison was asked if she saw young people on the island, she replied, “No! No! I’m shocked. Maybe I should go over and sit in front of the elementary school. I don’t see any!” Cathy also noted, “I wouldn’t want to be under the age of 25 on this island” and “I just think when you’re younger you want more happening.” She went on to say, “If I was single I would not want to live here. There’s just so few young people on this island that you wouldn’t have the chance to venture out.” She recognized a close-knit community among the young, married couples on the island that have children, but has not noticed anyone single among their group. Carl stated, “you don’t see anybody at the bus stop so there’s no families in the area. Yeah, very few kids here, it’s all retirees.” The limited number of activities for the younger generation’s social life and the increasingly large draw of retirees seems to be apparent among both long-term and recent residents to the island.

### **Residents want the Island to Remain the Same**

Residents seem to band together to prevent development on the island, although they would like to see it grow in popularity as a tourist destination. This materialized as another sociocultural subtheme.

The long-time resident, Peggy, has seen the island go through a lot of change and said, “I think it’s going to get more popular all the time” while also saying, “they don’t want this to be commercialized, they don’t want the light. They like the four-way stop signs [...] and when they try to bring in those things, everybody pulls together then, they kind of hug it up.” There was also the regular mention of conscientious land and

development management. Stewart would like the county to be held accountable to their land management promise and to limit the density on the island. Stan also believes that “people will come out here and buy more businesses and start and there will be more tourists.” Judy expressed similar sentiments to many of the other interview respondents when she said, “I don’t want to see a lot of development out here. And I don’t think a lot of other people do either.” Steve, Carl, and Sherry also expressed they hope it does not change. The majority of respondents seem to be experiencing some of Dogan’s (1989) resistance characteristics such as expressing animosity toward changes in their community as a result of tourism. This may also be indicative of a transition towards Butler’s (1980) consolidation stage of the destination life cycle where the community relies on tourism as their largest source of income and residents begin to experience dissatisfaction. Even though Allison does not agree with this sentiment, she recognizes it and said, “they don’t let anybody in here, commercial wise, it’s totally ridiculous.” Steve said, “my hope is that we can keep the quaint fishing town with an art problem or vice-versa and the growth is managed in a proper manner.” Because many expressed similar sentiments, the island adopted the Land-Use Management Plan to limit growth on the island and was often referenced in the interviews by the residents to limit building construction and population growth. Carl also mentioned that there is an effort to try to change some of the zoning laws in Matlacha to “keep Matlacha more Matlacha, trying to avoid these people coming in and buying land and building a box” and as long as there is “slow growth” it “will hold its charm.” Cathy stated:

there’s a spirit to the island that you can’t put your finger on it. And I think those people will keep the height restrictions down, keep the density down [...] I think those of us that are here now want to keep it that way [...]

building up, I think that the people are being forced into being responsible about it.

Cathy also noted that she:

hopes it stays just the way it is, which is not very forward thinking. I think the islanders that are living here now, I think we're all going to have to die off first, I think it will pretty much stay the same. The reason people like me move to the island, the reason we love the island is because it is the way it is.

This sentiment of apprehension for future growth and community change emerged among almost every resident interview and appeared to be the most important issue residents wanted to illuminate prior to the conclusion of the interview.

### **Summary**

Overall, the interviews with the residents revealed that Pine Island did experience a shift towards tourism following the net ban. This transition produced many environmental, economic, and sociocultural implications for their island community. Notably, the largest impacts appeared to be the sociocultural loss of the fishermen, the change in community stratification, the transformation of island demographics resulting in an increase in retirees, and the island's active campaign to draw in tourism, subsequently witnessing the emergence of ecotourism.

Additionally, two factors were recognized as highly influential on the resident perceptions: proximity to Matlacha in the course of their daily life and length of residency on Pine Island, whereas residence characteristics such age and gender did not appear to significantly influence analyzing perception. Overall, residents expressed positive sentiments toward tourism on the island and appeared to have a difficult time identifying many negative impacts of any consequence.

Table 4-1. Respondent Themes

MACROTHEME	MICROTHEME
Net Ban	Animosity and tension occurred during and after the net ban
Net Ban	Net ban caused fading of fish houses and island fishermen
Tourism	Very seasonal and needed for survival
Tourism	Island conducts active campaigns for tourism Tourism is highly concentrated in Matlacha and not other parts of the island
Tourism	Noticeable transition to tourism after the net ban
Tourism	The draw is "quaint", "untouched", and "old Florida" atmosphere
Economic	Recession
Economic	Presence of tourism and palm industries after net ban
Economic	Very seasonal economy
Economic	No economic opportunities for young people
Environmental	Increase in ecotourism
Environmental	Hurricane Charley
Environmental	Increase in traffic
Sociocultural	Bonds and stratification of the community
Sociocultural	Mainly retirees and no opportunities for young people
Sociocultural	Residents want the island to remain the same

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The interview data provided an in depth understanding of Pine Island residents' attitudes and perceptions towards tourism and its impacts on their community and lifestyle. In reviewing the 16 macro and micro themes and their interrelated patterns, a suggested grounded theory of resident perception of tourism is introduced (see Figure 5-1). Five main tenants of the model were developed and paired with stages of Butler's (1980) Destination Life Cycle. The model is progressive beginning with (1) the halt to the community's primary industry, then leading to (2) the community conducting campaigns for tourism, significant resident characteristics such as (3) length of residency and daily life proximity to the tourist area are recognized as being influential, (4) resident adoption of tourism and finally concluding with (5) various residents functioning without interaction with the tourists. As mentioned, the main tenants were paired with Butler's stages advancing from exploration to consolidation. It is important to consider Butler's stages in relation to the island's evolution because it reinforces a noticeable progression of the island, it provides other implications that may be associated with each of Butler's stages, and it may also be useful in forecasting the future of the island and ultimately the island's destination management.

Grounded theory methods were utilized in the study when identifying resident perceptions of the economic, sociocultural, and environmental impacts of tourism on the island. Selective coding produced two central phenomena in influencing perceptions: proximity to Matlacha and length of residency. Study limitations and delimitations as well as future research implications for similar locales are also discussed.

## **Halt to Community's Primary Industry**

To begin, Pine Island has experienced many noteworthy transitions in the last 16 years, since the introduction of the 1995 Net Ban. These changes have included industry and economic transitions, sociocultural shifts, ecological alterations, and more. This study concludes that the net ban was a significant impetus for change. The net ban signified the end of the community's main industry, commercial fishing, and prompted the development of a new industry in the community, tourism.

A study by Smith et al. (2003) of Florida fishing families in 1998 concluded that three-fourths of the families continued fishing following the ban. Currently, according to Pine Island residents, this is not the case noting that the majority of fishing families have discontinued their profession. Smith et al. also recognized the closing of fish houses, the increase in finfish and shellfish catch, and the reduced income for fishing families. Importantly though, Smith et al. summarized that the short-term negative consequences of the ban were absorbed by the finfish initiatives. Today the initiatives highlighted by Smith et al. were found to not be relevant to the Pine Island community as most commercial fishers were not able to sustain their income enough to remain in the industry or even remain residing on the island.

This halt in the main industry for the community produced the opportunity for other industries to emerge on the island. During resident interviews, it was noted that one or two art galleries existed on the island at the time of the net ban, but that art was not a draw for visitors and that tourism was not a recognizable industry for the residents. At this time, Pine Island could have been classified as a community experiencing Butler's (1980) exploration stage. Visitors did not experience tourist-specific facilities, there were a small number of allocentric explorers, and the visitors were attracted there for its

natural attractions (Getz, 1992; Plog, 1974). In the years following the net ban, according to respondents, the art galleries in existence soon attracted the attention of future galleries and tourism eventually leading to movement along the Destination Life Cycle (Butler, 1980). Residents varied in their belief that tourism would have developed so prominently on the island if the net ban had not occurred. Additionally, another large industry was also recognized as emerging more in recent years on the island, the palm tree growing industry. This growing industry is evident on areas of the island other than Matlacha, such as St. James City and Bokeelia. The epicenter of the tourism industry on the island appeared to affect resident responses residing from the same epicenter in their recall regarding tourism's history and impacts on the island. Locals not residing in Matlacha more readily mentioned the palm growing industry's presence on the island and had difficulty deciding if the palm growing industry impacted the island's economy more than tourism.

In referring back to social exchange theory, both individualistic and collectivistic segments are evident in evaluating Pine Island resident's perception to the transition following the end of their main industry. Social exchange theory illustrates resident motives on both the individual and community levels in terms of reciprocity (Makoba, 1993). Pine Island residents appear to be willing to accept the inconveniences that tourism may bring, such as avoiding their local dining locations during peak season and the increase in traffic, in exchange for the benefits, either for their community or for them as individuals (Teye et al., (2002). These benefits for Pine Island have included community development, the "cleaning up" of the neighborhoods, revenue generation, and environmental preservation to name a few. The mutual benefits ensure continual

reciprocity for the island and the success of the tourism industry for their community (Makoba, 1993).

### **Community Conducting Active Campaigns for Tourism**

Tourism was soon recognized as one of the community's income generating solutions to the economic void left by the end of the fishing industry ([www.pineislandchamber.org](http://www.pineislandchamber.org)). The island has even created a branding campaign for tourism, "Florida's Creative Coast". Interview respondents overwhelmingly recognized the island's intentional focus on revenue generation from tourism. Residents mentioned the adoption and steady increase in ecotourism as just one of the island's important initiatives for revenue. Chamber of Commerce discussions, promotional activities, new business development, and community collaboration were all acknowledged as evidence of the community's new economic focus.

More specifically, the island is currently undertaking many tourism-related initiatives. Residents recognized the Chamber of Commerce's support of the artisan community, especially in Matlacha, both promoting the destination on the internet and through other means to outside of the community. According to respondents in the tourism industry, the artisans also individually and/or collectively market their enterprise through various means to attract tourists such as social media, website listings, pamphlets, newspaper, and magazine advertisements, etc.

These actions in recent years illustrate Pine Island's evolution within Butler's (1980) involvement and development stages. This involvement stage was witnessed among the island with the investment by residents in the tourism industry, the distinct tourist season during the winter and spring months, promotional activities highlighting the destination, and the development of tourist facilities (Butler; Getz, 1992). In sum,

Pine Island's campaign for tourism following the net ban has secured them a place as a tourist destination.

### **Influential Factors**

In the dialogue about recent perceptions of tourism introduction into their community, it is important to address connections that other factors may or may not have in the process. The two principal factors seeming to influence resident perception on Pine Island identified from the data were their level of interaction with Matlacha and their length of residency. These two factors invariably affected their answers regarding resulting impacts from tourism in the community. Additionally, the data did not produce any significant findings regarding the influence of age and gender on resident perceptions.

### **Proximity to Matlacha**

Matlacha is acknowledged by all residents as the tourism hub for Pine Island with its art galleries, tourist traffic, and promotional initiatives to attract visitors. Residents of Matlacha could even be classified in a different stage of Butler's (1980) Destination Life Cycle than the rest of the island due to their high volume of tourist activity and tourist businesses compared to other areas.

Resident vicinity to Matlacha during the course of their daily lives, whether they are direct residents of Matlacha or are employed in that area was discovered to have one of the strongest impacts on their perceptions of tourism on the island. Brunt and Courtney (1999) also found that direct contact with tourists influenced their study in resident perceptions of tourism in their community. Matlacha, the closest part of the island to the mainland, experiences the largest number of tourists and consequently produces more of an impression on residents who live or work there. Locals that

consistently interact or are exposed to tourist activities in their community demonstrate a heightened awareness of tourism's impacts and are shown to express different sentiments regarding the industry than other residents in the same community that may have limited contact with the industry (Besculides, et al., 2001). Residents in Matlacha were consistently quick to mention tourism when asked about impacts, whereas, residents outside of Matlacha required more probing to determine their attitudes toward tourism. Residents of Matlacha acknowledged the economic importance of tourism to the community, whereas non-Matlacha residents were hesitant to acknowledge its economic significance. As Brunt and Courtney (1999) explained, "those directly involved in the industry are always quick to recognize the economic benefits" (p. 510). In general, Matlacha residents expressed more quality and quantity sentiments regarding tourism due to their direct interaction with the industry in their daily lives allowing for more observances and anecdotes.

### **Length of Residency**

It was also acknowledged that resident responses toward impacts were influenced by their length of residency on Pine Island, thereby reaffirming findings that length of residence is influential on resident attitudes and perceptions toward the tourism industry in their community (Besculides, et al., 2001; Liu & Var, 1986). Haley et al. (2005) also concluded that length of residency has a significant impact on attitudes toward tourism. They noted that recent residents noticed more positive impacts, whereas long-term residents witnessed more negative impacts. While, long-term residents of Pine Island did observe negative consequences as a result of tourism, they noticed even more positive consequences. Long-standing residents noted the increase in traffic, the "cleaning up" of residential property, and especially noticed sociocultural shifts since

1995. Evidently, this appeared to hold some merit with the residents of Pine Island as those who were there longer had witnessed more change over time. Long-time island residents were able to recall the transitional impacts more readily having experienced the island prior to the tourism industry's presence in their community.

Short-term residents noticed an increase in traffic due to the seasonality of tourism on the island where changes can be witnessed during the season, but long-term residents noticed an overall change in traffic during the tourism season's months compared to a decade or more ago. Long-term residents were also able to remember the image of the neighborhoods prior to tourism's existence, noting the positive changes to the aesthetics of the residential areas since the introduction of tourism. This is something that short-term residents were not able to recall as a positive consequence of the industry. Moreover, inferring from resident anecdotes, it seems that the main sociocultural consequence that is not seen as positive to community members is the demise of the fishing community. This study is another illustration of tourism's ability to change the sociocultural arrangement of a community (Dogan, 1989). Long-term residents remembered the prominent presence of the fishing community in all areas of the island. It was apparent during the initial stages of the transition following the net ban that this even impacted community cohesion with the fishing community not feeling supported by the residents and therefore exhibiting periods of dissociating from the rest of the island population. Some expressed the sentiment that they miss the fishermen and that the island is vastly different now as a result of the net ban and the introduction of tourism. In Ireland's (2004) study of Sennen Cove, the "Covers", or long-term fishermen of the community, remained in the community after the demise of their fishing

livelihood only because of their length of residency and attachment to the community. This signifies fishermen's ability to have such strong ties to the community as they also once did in Pine Island. According to respondents, these strong ties were cut as many of the fishing families left, resulting in a noticeable impact on the community and to the long-term residents. It can also be seen on the island that some of the tourism marketing capitalizes on the notion that it was once a fishing community, manufacturing "original" community sentiments on postcards, paintings, etc. which can have the potential to replace the authenticity of the host (Jafari, 1987; Simpson, 2008). To conclude, the shift in community ties and the island's effort to reference the community's character prior to the net ban is something that is especially evident to the long-term residents of the community.

### **Residents' Adoption of Tourism**

With the majority of Pine Island residents expressing support for tourism on the island, the community can be recognized as having entered Butler's (1980) development stage. This stage is illustrated by a distinct market area such as Matlacha, a rapid increase in visitors which has been witnessed since the net ban, tourists outnumbering locals which can occur in Matlacha during the tourist season and substantial advertising which is currently taking place. Presence in this stage suggests residents' endorsement of the industry in the community. Observation of endorsement was consistently reinforced with positive feedback from all island residents throughout the interviews.

In mentioning residents' adoption of tourism on the island, it is also important to point out that some of the residents intentionally avoid interaction with tourists, such as the respondent that avoids her favorite local dining location during tourist season. Brunt

and Courtney (1999) concluded that all study participants were impacted in some form during the tourist season. This may also suggest that Matlacha may be evolving in to Butler's consolidation stage where residents appreciate the significance of tourism, but also initiate actions to disassociate themselves from it. Dogan (1989) concluded that formerly homogenous communities will become diversified with the introduction of tourism as residents adopt various coping strategies ranging from "active resistance" to "active adoption" (p. 232).

Island residents have quickly adopted tourism within the last 15 years in to their community that was once reliant upon a vastly different industry. The halt to their primary industry mixed with consistent tourism industry advertising messages in recent years has enabled the residents, especially of Matlacha, to recognize its large presence in their community. This acknowledgement coupled with perception of economic benefits, limited environmental consequences, and new sociocultural opportunities is what emerged as residents suggested reasons for the acceptance of the industry in their community.

### **Future of Pine Island**

In considering the future for Pine Island, the data points to a few conclusions. It appears that Pine Island is headed towards ecotourism, limited population growth and large development initiatives, as well as fostering tourism expansion to other areas of the island.

Resident trepidation about the island experiencing change in the form of population growth, development (large residential developments, industrial building, or main stream commercialism), or the notion of a shift in island culture emerged as the strongest sentiments during the interview process. Residents of Pine Island were drawn

to the locale for its “old Florida” feel and limited population and do not want to see this altered. It is significant to recognize that they are not threatened by the tourism industry as possibly prompting such change. Residents do not attribute the idea of change to tourism for various reasons, including the island’s adoption of the land-use management plan and the temporary, day trip, nature of the tourists that respect the natural milieu of the destination.

Specifically regarding tourism, it is evident that Pine Island is invested in expanding tourism beyond Matlacha and has a current and future spotlight on ecotourism in their community. Various respondents in the tourism industry established their businesses on areas of the island other than Matlacha and expressed island initiatives such as signage at the island center and promotional materials in Matlacha directing visitors to Bokeelia and St. James City as efforts to increase tourist traffic beyond the current day-tripper hub. It will be interesting to witness if tourism advances further, beyond Matlacha, with a positive shift in the economy. Additionally, ecotourism is a significant topic in the discussion of the island’s future. Island enterprises such as the Calusa Blueway, kayak rentals, wildlife day excursions, and camping opportunities illustrate ecotourism’s manifestation as a strong contender in the island’s tourism industry. Resident outlook and awareness of ecotourism confirmed that it is increasingly gaining a presence within the area and that it falls in line with resident values of maintaining their natural environment and their island culture.

Finally, it is important to talk about destination management as an additional opportunity for Pine Island. According to Plog (2001), “destinations appeal to specific types of people and typically follow a relatively predictable pattern of growth and decline

in popularity over time" (p. 13). This predictability of growth and decline patterns is what Pine Island's many stakeholders need to remain cognoscente of for effective destination management. With good planning and foresight, intentional forecasts and actions can be made for the proper growth of the tourism industry in the community. Various studies have echoed the importance of destination management, such as Getz's (1992) analysis of the Niagara Falls when he argued the significance of proper planning in molding tourism development for the future success of the popular destination. Getz also supported this by stating the value of reflecting on the current destination's practices, "uncertainty over the stage of tourism development probably reflects specific problems for certain businesses and possible short-term difficulties" (p. 767). It is also important to recognize that residents should participate in the discussions about tourism management on the island because the regulations need to be derived from the host's needs (Besculides, et al., 2002). Ultimately, destination management is important for Pine Island in preventing the community from progressing to Butler's (1980) stagnation stage of the Destination Life Cycle where the island may experience its peak in which environmental, sociocultural, and economic problems can emerge. Currently, with ecotourism, limited growth, and tourism expansion initiatives already in progress for Pine Island, it is apparent that the destination is focused on further fostering a conscious and self-sustaining tourism industry that can still benefit from good destination management practices.

### **Intervening Factors**

Two intervening factors surfaced during the study that appeared to consequently affect resident perception: Hurricane Charley and the economic recession. These intervening factors produced an impact on each of the economic, environmental, and

sociocultural dimensions. The destructive environmental impacts of the 2004 hurricane were recalled by residents as the primary environmental changes they have witnessed, making it difficult to distinguish possible impacts resulting from tourism on the island. They also attributed some recall of the post hurricane time period as a possible economic stimulant. Conversely, unease for the economic recession that developed in recent years influenced discussion regarding the economic performance of the island. It appeared that residents were unable to discern tourism's economic consequences for the community because of the stunted economy. This sentiment emerged at both the individual and community levels during discussion ultimately making it difficult to truly understand resident's perceptions of impacts due to tourism.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Various facets of the interview process and data exploration emerged as possibly affecting the purity of the study. Limitations for this study were primarily associated with the interviews. Participant recall of events may have been affected by time as the net ban occurred over 15 years ago. Researcher bias regarding transition and impacts may also be considered as the researcher lived on the island for 17 years, but not within the past eight years. The researcher took extensive notes and remained conscious of this potential bias during the entire study.

Sampling of respondents was also limited in respect to age. It was difficult to find younger interview participants that were residents on the island since the net ban and that were at least 18 years of age at the time. Delimitations included the difficulty in sampling mirrored resident sentiment during the interview process regarding the lack of younger generations on the island. Finally, the goal of this study was in depth understanding rather than generalizability. As such, the generalization of findings from

this study is limited to similar geographic locations with similar economic and sociological histories.

### **Implications and Future Research**

The findings of this study contribute to the body of knowledge regarding communities transitioning to tourism and residents' perception of the introduction of tourism to their community. The findings may be relevant to other small island locales evolving from a fishing industry to a tourism industry. This information would have useful implications for governments, policy makers, business owners both in the tourism industry and outside, as well as residents in the community (Murphy, 1983). As mentioned previously, understanding how such a shift occurs and the reaction to the impacts can help future areas prepare for a similar situation.

One implication for future research is to study long-term consequences for the community as well as resident perceptions following the transition to tourism. Pine Island can be considered to have moved through the destination life cycle stages rather quickly within the past decade with its transition to tourism. Further evaluation may provide different and valuable insight in the years to come. I believe Pine Island is currently between the development and consolidation stages of Butler's Destination Life Cycle. Residents of Pine Island have exhibited Butler's characteristics of each of these stages, including adjusting their social patterns during tourist season, the large tourist advertising that is presently taking place, and now the community's large economic dependence upon tourism. Further analysis of which stage of the life cycle Pine Island may currently be in would be useful in examining the evolution of the community and determining the change in resident perception throughout its progression among each of the life cycle stages. Future studies on Pine Island may recognize that resident

perceptions may differ with time as tourism has an even longer presence in the community. This will prove to be useful in determining long term consequences of a community's transition to tourism, not just the short term.

## **Conclusions**

Residents are guaranteed to vary in their perceptions, and this includes perceptions of their community and its environmental, sociocultural, and economic histories. Pine Island has experienced a noticeable transformation in its sociocultural configuration and community stratification due to the industry transition and as Dogan (1989) noted, "as tourism develops in a community, changes will occur in the responses of the people affected by it" (p. 232). Currently, it is recognized that the island is cohesive and independent, especially when discussion of an outside influence is mentioned, such as the prospect of Cape Coral's annexation of the island. Furthermore, many long-time, native residents are now living alongside recent residents drawn to the island for its quaint, tourist appeal that have either moved to Pine Island to work in the tourism industry or as many of them do, to retire. Pine Island mirrors this continuing trend of many tourism destinations which is more reason to further consider Butler's Destination Life Cycle and destination management strategies should be continued and that the grounded theory model developed in this study should be considered for future, similar destinations.

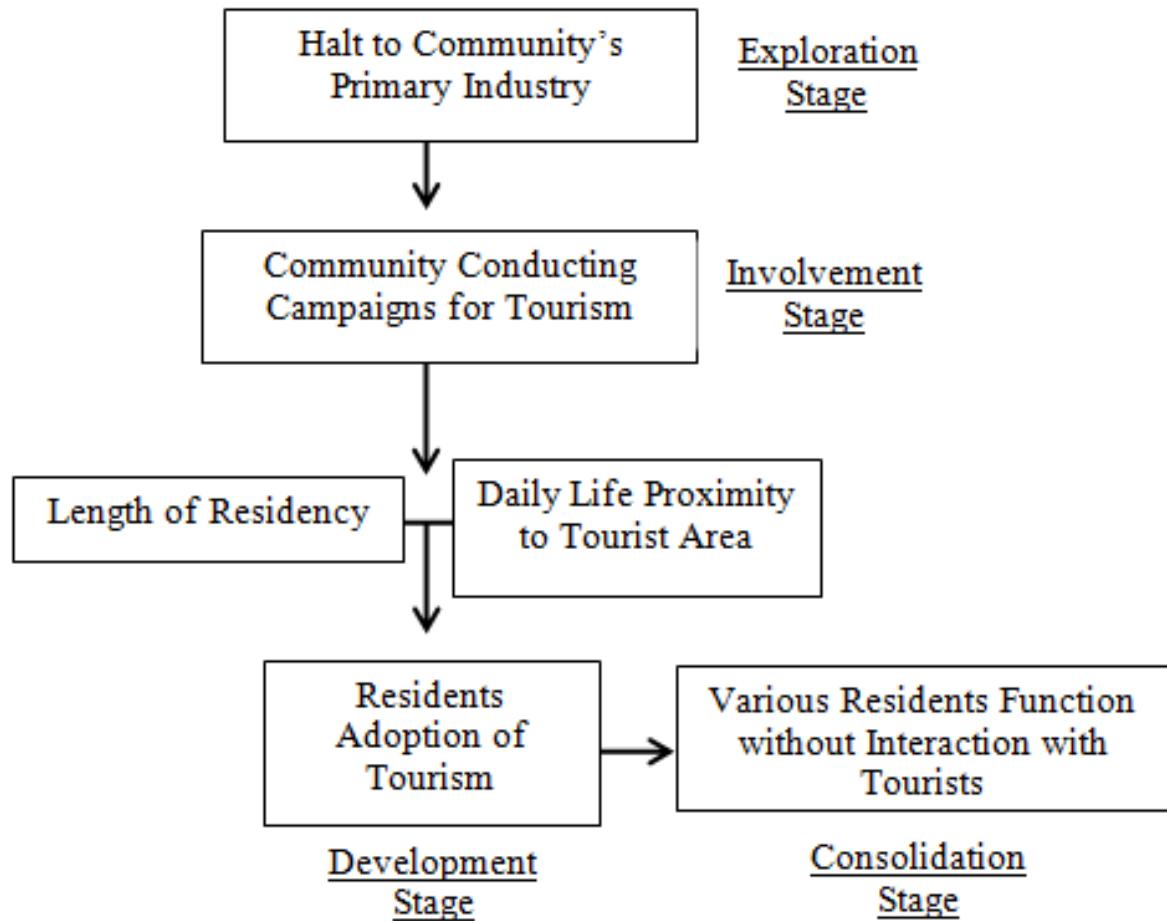


Figure 5-1. Proposed Progression of Resident Perceptions to the Introduction of Tourism on Pine Island, FL

## APPENDIX INTERVIEW GUIDE

- 1. Tell me a little about living on Pine Island?

Probes: Can you tell me some background information about yourself (for example, length of residency on Pine Island, age, occupation, education and other background information)?

- 2. What do you remember about when the 1995 Net Ban was introduced to Pine Island?

Probes: What happened during that time?  
Tell me about the changes on Pine Island.

- 3. What environmental changes have occurred on Pine Island since 1995?

Probes: What do you think caused these changes?  
Do you think tourism caused any of these changes?

- 4. What economic changes have occurred on Pine Island since 1995?

Probes: What do you think caused these changes?  
Do you think tourism caused any of these changes?

- 5. What social changes have occurred on Pine Island since 1995?

Probes: What do you think caused these changes?  
Do you think tourism caused any of these changes?

- 6. What does the future hold for Pine Island?

Probes: More tourism? More people coming to live on Pine Island?

- 7. Is there anything else about the Net Ban or your thoughts about Pine Island that you would like to add?

- 8. Now a few questions about you if you did not obtain this information earlier in the interview:

a. How long have you lived on Pine Island?  
How old are you?

b. What is your current occupation?

**Follow-up questions to be used when relevant:** Do you work in the fishing industry? Have you ever worked in the tourism industry? What contact do you have with tourists and the tourism industry?

- c. Interviewer records gender

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Angel Iva Mae Short-Iverson was born in 1985 in Lee County, Florida. She is the eldest child of Franklin and Deborah Short and sister of Frankie and Jimmy. She spent all of her childhood and teenage years in Matlacha, FL. Angel attended Pine Island Elementary and Mariner High School graduating in 2003 as the President to the National Honor Society, Lieutenant Governor of the Key Club, and member of the American Legion Auxiliary Post 136 and Captain's Table. Her love for Pine Island developed during her upbringing where she encountered inspiring educators, loving neighbors, and supporting community organizations such as the Pine Island F.I.S.H., Pine Island Kiwanis, Matlacha Hookers, and Pine Island American Legion Auxiliary. She gained her biggest insight into island tourism while working at the Pineland Marina and further developed her fascination with the appeal of the island.

Angel entered in to the University of Florida the summer of 2003 and earned a *cum laude* B.S. in Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management with a specialization in Event Management in 2007. She married her husband, Alan Iverson, in October of 2009 on Paradise Island in the Bahamas. Angel's undergraduate education and love for travel and tourism led her to receive a M.S. in Recreation, Parks, & Tourism the summer of 2011 while working full-time as a marketing manager and event planner.

Personally, Angel loves to spend time traveling, fishing, playing volleyball, hosting events, supporting charities, cheering on the Gators, and spending time with her husband. Upon completing her academic thesis, Angel is looking forward to sharing her work with the residents of Pine Island—a little piece of something to show her appreciation.