# Chapter 5
# Local Knowledge and Change in a Small Fishing Community in Cyprus: Implications for Social and Cultural Sustainability

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**Abstract** This chapter explores the question of social and cultural sustainability for a small fishing community in Cyprus undergoing transition in light of wider economic restructuring. Drawing on qualitative data collected from three generations of fishing families, we focus our exploration on the processes through which local knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation creating a sense of continuity with the past. A strong shared sense of identity and belonging to the local community was reflected in our participants' narratives across all three generations. In our chapter, we interrogate the significance of the local knowledge shared among participants which includes ways of thinking, feeling, and relating to others and the environment and which entail much more than the mere transmission of cognitive and practical skills related to fishing. Our research clearly pinpoints a radical break in processes of local knowledge transmission at this historical juncture as young people turn away from fishing which is no longer economically viable to seek opportunities for employment beyond the local community. Possibilities for a reconstituted sense of self emerge under these conditions which highlight the challenges posed by change for the social and cultural sustainability of small coastal communities.

**Keywords** Childhood · Cyprus · Local knowledge · Social and cultural sustainability · Fishing

## 5.1 Introduction

> Kostas (m.,[1] 3rd generation): It's [i.e., fishing] not attractive to all [of us young people] because it's a profession that requires that you not only have will, you also need to be smart. That is, if you make just one mistake, you will get stuck, you will tear your nets, you will have other damage, something which does not pay. Or let's say there are some bad areas let's

[1] M. and f. in parentheses accompanying quotes are used to denote male and female participants, respectively.

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say, that you need to cut off so that when the fish comes to eat, to be able to catch them with the net. That is, if we go, we will end up in there. We will go straight in there and this will cause other damage. You will end up spending the profit you make on the damage and you will be forced to . . . As a result of the damage you cause, you will be forced to quit on your own. It's a smart profession, it's not something easy. And you today. . . .

Researcher: They [young people] do not want these things.

Kostas: We do not put our mind on that aim, let's say, to be able to do that. So, it [i.e., fishing] does not attract them very much.

Researcher: Yes. How about you Stavro, do you agree, disagree?

Stavros (m., 3rd generation): I believe that only somebody who has personal experiences with the sea through their father's family, their grandfather, can do this job because it is a difficult job, it is not an easy job. You must have experiences, lessons must start early on because there's, as [name of participant 2] said [there are] a lot of traps. You might even hurt yourself and end up not making it.

The excerpt above comes from a focus group discussion we had with young people at Psari village, a small fishing village in Cyprus which is currently undergoing a significant transition in light of larger scale economic, social, and environmental changes which impact fishing in the area. The young people who participated in our focus group discussion explain why their generation is not actively pursuing fishing as a profession. Earlier in our discussion, they explained to us that while it was possible for previous generations to earn a living, they consider fishing to be no longer economically viable. They recognize how their lifestyles and preferences have changed and how most of them would not be willing to put up with the hardships and demands of fishing. Moreover, they seem to be fully aware that this is a profession which heavily depends on having the necessary skills and local knowledge which are not acquired overnight, nor can they be easily taught; but rather are ingrained in a way of life, of growing up in a fishing family and being immersed in fishing activities that make one a fisher. It is this rupture in the intergenerational transmission of local fishing knowledge and way of life that their comments allude to and which is our main concern here.

Drawing on qualitative data collected from three generations of fishing families, we focus our exploration on the processes through which local knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation creating a sense of continuity with the past. A strong shared sense of identity and belonging to the local community was reflected in our participants' narratives across all three generations. In our chapter, we interrogate the significance of this local knowledge which includes ways of thinking, feeling, and relating to others and the environment and which entail much more than the mere transmission of cognitive and practical skills related to fishing. Our research clearly pinpoints a radical break in processes of local knowledge transmission at this historical juncture as young people turn away from fishing which is no longer economically viable to seek opportunities for employment beyond the local community. A reconstituted sense of self emerges under these conditions, which highlights the challenges posed by change for the social and cultural sustainability of small coastal communities. Our participants' narratives document the sense of loss and the complexities and ambiguities of a way of life which is anchored in fishing but is also more broadly encompassing social relations in the community as well as people's relations with the environment, both the aquatic and the terrestrial.

## 5.2 Sense of Place, Belonging, and Ruptures in the Intergenerational Transmission of Local Knowledge

Understanding youth transitions in coastal fishing communities benefits a great deal from an intergenerational analytical lens which places young people's lives within both a temporal and a spatial context which is itself constitutive of change. This allows for a clearer exposition of both continuities and discontinuities which stem from larger environmental, economic, and social changes that escape any individual young person's control but manifest themselves, nevertheless, in young people's choices and decision-making.

Gustavsson and Riley (2018) use a life course approach to understand the temporal dimension of fishing lives, an approach which highlights the ways through which knowledge is transmitted and lives are intergenerationally connected and which is in line with our own approach in this study. The intergenerational connectedness which characterizes fishing families and the transmission of knowledge from a very young age from fathers to sons creates a strong sense of fisher identity which is more akin to "a way of life"—a constitutive element of one's being—rather than merely a profession. This intergenerational element in occupational fishing is undeniably gendered; and although the discussion of the gendered nature of the fishing falls beyond the scope of this chapter, it is, nevertheless, even if briefly, worth noting. As Blomquist et al. (2016) explain, among farming and fishing families in Sweden, sons are more likely than daughters to pursue parental occupation in these professions. This trend is linked to broader issues of occupational gender segregation and gender inequity in fishing with women historically playing a vital role in the fishing industry mostly at shore, while having all but a scarce presence at sea in engaging in the act of fishing or boat owning (Gerrard and Kleiber 2019; Kleiber et al. 2017). As Yodanis's (2000) ethnographic study of women and fishing in a small town sitting by the Atlantic Ocean has exemplified, multiple factors such as gender socialization, gender discrimination, as well as gender construction were simultaneously at play to construct fishing as non-feminine and women as non-fishers, attesting to the gendered nature of relations and knowledge transmission in fishing.

Returning to intergenerationality in fishing, this strong intergenerational component of the profession not only contributes to a strong sense of fisher identity but also to a strong sense of attachment to place which extends to the past:

> There is a connection to the past through the skills that have been passed down through generations, skills that cannot be learnt in a textbook, such as how to get the boats up and down the beach, how to mend nets and how to prepare the fish. Boats, gear, knowledge and skills have been passed on from father to son for generations and there is often a sense of pride in coming from a local fishing family. (Acott and Urquhart 2014, p. 268)

This points to a chronotopic intersection where time and place are entangled in individual and collective fisher identities giving rise to a strong sense of belonging

and attachment to place all of which have preoccupied scholars who seek to situate fishers' lives in the social and cultural contexts in which they unfold.

One key component of fisher identity is the acquired knowledge that goes with being a fisher. Fishers' knowledge can be both generic and place-specific (tied, for instance, to specific fishing grounds) and embodied or tacit (Gustavsson 2018, p. 263). It is this local knowledge which fishers come to acquire in the particular cultural and social contexts of fishing and which is passed on from one generation to the next that gives them a unique sense of fisher identity (Garavito-Bermúdez and Lundholm 2017, p. 634).

In their review of the value and significance of local ecological knowledge, Garavito-Bermúdez and Lundholm (2017, p. 629) point out that the literature refers "to the various forms of users' ecological knowledge as place-based knowledge, and a component of the intellectual and cultural property of many communities, resulting in a very intimate relation among people (i.e. individuals and communities), the environment and natural resources." This intimate relation that fishers have with their local environments which is part of their family heritage allows for the construction of a strong sense of place (including attachment to fishing places) and to the natural environment at large (Garavito-Bermúdez and Lundholm 2017, p. 650). As a result, there is increasing attention today to the literature which examines "the importance of symbolic capital in fishing – that is, social capital (coming from, and reaffirmed by, social contacts) and cultural capital (knowledge, skills, and dispositions which may be developed by socialization or education)" (Gustavsson 2018, p. 264).

The intimate relation with the environment and people which characterizes fishing also creates a strong sense of belonging. Cuervo and Wyn (2017, p. 222) draw on post-structural theory using Butler's concepts of performance and performativity to approach belonging as "constructed through self-conscious and deliberate performances and also through unreflexive processes and actions of performativity" and extrapolating on how this opens up an understanding of belonging as linked to the everyday practices of people and the crucial role place plays in the (repetitive) performance of such practices over time: "It is the reiteration of these performative acts embedded in norms, values and rituals that builds a sense of belonging" (Cuervo and Wyn 2017, p. 228). Understanding the temporal/historical element of how belonging is formed through the performance of everyday practices over time (Cuervo and Wyn 2017) sheds light onto the multiple layering of place which in our case is afforded by the intergenerational method applied to this study. Discussing youth transitions in a snapshot in time does not allow for the understanding of this temporal layering of place experiences and relationships. Rather, the intergenerational method allows us to see how everyday practices and routines which transcend the generational (or the individual) time form a deep layer of attachment to place that is historically and intergenerationally configured and grounded in the ordinary.

Fishers' sense of attachment and identity is linked to specific physical spaces and the social activity that revolves around them and is rooted in both their personal and family history and experience (Garavito-Bermúdez and Lundholm 2017,

pp. 648, 650). Their everyday practices build layers of affective experience of place (Cuervo and Wyn 2017) and construct identities which stem from their experiences and relationships with, on the one hand, the physical environment and the landscape, and the community, on the other (Acott and Urquhart 2014, p. 271; see also Urquhart and Acott 2013, p. 45). This entanglement of ecological knowledge, social identity, and attachment to place encountered in fishing lives is also found in other occupations that have a strong tradition of intergenerational recruitment such as farming (Blomquist et al. 2016). As Mueller, Worster and Abrams (2005) note, for New England farmers and fishers in their study, the line between the professional and the personal was blurred as farming and fishing to them were more akin to a way of life infused with deep ecological knowledge and linked to a strong attachment to place.

Public places play a crucial role in developing a communal sense of place and belonging and contribute to quality of life as they provide spaces for developing relations and processes of exchange and interaction which strengthen social cohesion, help form feelings of belongingness and sense of place among community members, encourage democratic processes, and facilitate the sharing and building of capital and networks (Piyapong et al. 2019, p. 486). Piyapong et al. (2019) described public spaces in coastal communities as spaces where people interact and engage, providing opportunities for communicating, exchanging knowledge, and creating and transmitting cultural and social values as well as a sense of community and place, but also providing youth with opportunities to interact, play, or simply hang out.

An approach that takes "sense of place" seriously allows us to explore the social and cultural values that spring from the relational processes at work as well as to connect what takes place in marine fishing with what happens in terrestrial communities (Acott and Urquhart 2014, p. 258). However, sense of place also has a material dimension which is not just about the marine environment and the coastal landscape but also involves the physical objects created by people in the context of their fishing activities whether these are buildings, nets, or boats which contribute in their way to constructing a sense of place (Acott and Urquhart 2014, p. 265).

The crucial point here is that the very process of fishing is not just a task-oriented process but also "creates a range of values that tie people, places and ecosystems into a network of relational encounters" (Acott and Urquhart 2014, p. 257). Studies have shown the significance of both tangible and intangible cultural values for fishers (Khakzad and Griffith 2016, p. 97) related to the landscape or the infrastructure of fishing as well as to traditions, skills, and memories (Acott and Urquhart 2014: 267) and certain emotions which constitute fisher identity (Garavito-Bermúdez and Lundholm 2017, p. 638). In their study, Garavito-Bermúdez and Lundholm (2017, p. 639), for example, found that fishers expressed:

> Happiness, challenge and pride for having coastal fishing as a lifestyle and carrying on an old family tradition; freedom to become what they wanted to, love and longing for the sea; sadness and concern for the future of fishing cultural heritage; and disappointment and anger against authorities, unlawful fishing, tighter regulations and increased costs to enter deterring new entrants.

Close examination of how the affective dimensions of place and belonging are formed may provide insights into how youth make decisions about their future and whether to move out of the community or not. This resonates with findings by Cox and colleagues (2014) in relation to youth's occupational aspirations in rural USA as declining economies in rural communities affected the educational and occupational aspirations of youth in a struggle to balance their attachment to their local communities and the need to seek viable professional options inside or outside these communities. Such dilemmas, tensions, or struggles faced by rural youth in Cyprus and elsewhere hinge upon broader questions of sustainability, especially where the continuation of particular means of livelihood and lifestyle—in our case fishing—largely, if not exclusively, depends on its intergenerational endurance.

When the spatial and temporal connections with fishing as "a way of life" are severed, as in our study, fisher identity, sense of place, and attachment to place are likely to change as well which more generally can lead to "the loss of maritime cultural heritage such as fishing material culture, traditional waterfronts, and maritime cultural landscape" (Khakzad and Griffith 2016, p. 96).

Though coastal fishing communities around the world try to adapt to the environmental and social challenges they face, in recent years new problems such as climate change and overfishing create additional challenges for many of them (Blythe et al. 2014: 6). Small fisheries in Cyprus suffer from the same environmental and social pressures. As Hadjimichael (2015) explains, fisheries in Cyprus suffer from overexploitation of resources not just by professional fishers but also by recreational and illegal ones, "conflicts over access to space and resource and power struggles (between different métiers but also between fishers and the authorities)," the weak enforcement of regulations, environmental change stemming from climate change, and the invasion of destructive species such as the *Lagocephalus* (rabbit fish) which has come from the Red Sea and can cause serious damage to both the fishing gear and the catch. The heavy exploitation of fishing grounds is also largely attributed to the Turkish invasion in 1974 which led to the forced movement of 300 fishers from the occupied north to the south. For all these reasons, fish stocks have been declining since the 1990s and today fishers partly depend on financial aid from the government for their survival (Hadjimichael 2015, pp. 462–463, 471).

To understand youth transitions in the face of environmental, economic, and social changes, we need to understand how young people situate themselves within the moral and cultural landscape of the fishing community (Donkersloot 2010, p. 33). Though they are no longer opting for fishing as a profession, our third generation participants, as in other studies (see Ainsworth et al. 2019, p. 6), expressed a sense of belonging to the coastal, fishing culture built through partaking in particular activities at particular places. Thus, despite the globalizing and modernizing forces at play including technological developments which might encourage a sense of placenessness, sense of place remains meaningful and important in young people's lives (Donkersloot 2010, p. 49). In fact, a sense of attachment to the local community and to place (including a sense of attachment to family) together with the economic realities with which young people are faced is likely to play a role when deciding about their educational and occupational future (Cox et al. 2014, p. 174).

In many small-scale fisheries around the world, parents engaged in fishing realize that fishing is no longer viable as a profession and encourage their children to pursue formal education as an avenue towards a more desired and economically successful future (Idrobo and Johnson 2019; see also Power et al. 2014, p. 6). In our case, as in Idrobo and Johnson's (2019) study, the identities of the younger generations become more fluid partly because of their increased mobility and participation in the region's tourism economy (which clearly offers more opportunities for employment) and partly from the increased significance attributed to formal education in light of fishing's diminishing importance as a viable profession (see also Coulthard and Britton 2015; White 2015).

The new orientations and fluidity in the younger generation's identities, however, do not resolve diverse attachments and orientations which linger on for many in the younger generation creating, at least at some level, a tension. In their study of rural communities, Cox et al. (2014) found young emerging adults were caught in between their positive attachments to the local community and the reality of limited economic opportunities there. Likewise, Gram-Hanssen (2018) discusses the complexities of the role of formal education in youth mobility among Native Alaskans, problematizing the dichotomies of leaving vs. staying and pointing to the importance of context as well as the role of local cultural values and ties in youth decisions for mobility. The author stresses both the importance of education but also the importance of a supportive community culture before the youth decide to move but also when/if the youth decide to return.

## 5.3 Methodology

Data analyzed for this chapter originate from a larger set of data collected through the use of ethnographic methods in the fishing village of Psari in the southeast of Cyprus in 2018 and 2019 to examine intergenerational knowledge transmission in coastal communities. At the time of the study, there were 35–40 families involved with fishing at the village. Based on the latest census of 2011, there is a population of 4951 inhabitants at Psari (CYSTAT 2014). The small port herein referred to as "Inlet"[2] (pseudonym) is a significant landmark in the village.

The larger project employed an intergenerational and biographical approach which during its first phase (2018) of data collection included interviews with three generations of (mostly) men (grandfathers, fathers, and sons) from each participating fishing family. For the interviews of the first phase, we adopted a life-history approach looking at important phases in participants' lives, such as

[2]The Inlet refers to a narrow bay formed by an inward curve of the sea in the coastal village where fieldwork was conducted. For village residents and the fishers in our study, the Inlet is more than a docking area; it is a place where social gatherings and many activities related to fishing take place.

childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. We also inquired about their experiences with education, work, and the physical space around them.

The data discussed in this article stem from the second phase of data collection conducted in 2019 with some of the original participants. For this phase we primarily employed walking and on-site interviews during which participants would guide us through places they frequented and which held particular meaning(s) to them. The aim of employing this method was to zoom in on important themes which emerged from the first phase of the study such as the significance of local knowledge and attachment to place and the sea. The walking interviews were complemented with photographs taken along the route and with a focus-group interview with three members of the younger generation.

Owing to the intergenerational approach of the study, the selection of participants for the first phase of the study was based on the participation of families involved with fishing professionally across the three generations of interest (grandparent, parent, and child). Participants in generation one were between 59 and 92 years of age; the age of participants in generation two ranged from 35 to 66 years, whereas the majority of participants of the third generation were children and young adults in their early 20s (the youngest participant was 10 and the oldest was 42 years of age).[3] Even though the study's original methodological design prescribed the recruitment of all three generations of professional fishers, during our fieldwork it became apparent that the third generation of participants were involved with fishing only recreationally resulting in the participation of twenty-four male and two female participants from a total of eight fishing families (in two families more than one member of a generation partook in the study). All participants (a total of 17) of generations one and two (grandfathers and fathers, respectively) self-identified as professional fishers, except for a female participant involved in fishing-related activities ashore.

Of the total of 26 participants, 8 also took part in the second phase of the study. They were selected based on their interest and deeper understanding of the issues under study, resulting in the participation of two members of the first generation and three from the second and third generation, respectively.

To analyze the interviews, we employed a content analysis approach through open, axial, and selective coding using a qualitative analysis software (Atlas.ti). Inter-coder reliability between members of the research team was sought. Coding themes for the data of the second phase centered on participants' experiences with/of place, their connection with the sea, their everyday life, and processes of local and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Project activities were approved by the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee. Participants gave their free, voluntary, and informed consent, and in the event of children's participation, both child assent and parental consent were obtained. All

[3] This wide age range was mainly a factor of the small number of three-generational families of fishers coupled with the overall small number of fishing families at Psari (estimated at around 35–40 families) that we could draw from for our research sample.

names of places and people have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants.

## 5.4 Local Knowledge, Skills, and Values

As participants walked us through and around places of importance to them, sharing stories of their lives by/at the sea, their narrations of self revealed an abundance of tacit knowledge on fishing and the environment, both aquatic and terrestrial, forming an intricate web of symbolic capital that included skills, values, and intergenerational and intragenerational relations of kin as well as social relations with/in the community. The local knowledge shared among fishers involved deep familiarity with the sea, the underwater and the terrestrial world, manifested in detailed knowledge of, for instance, the different fish species, where and when to catch them, their characteristics, the variegated types of the tides, the meanings of waves, the different types of breezes, and the interconnectedness of underwater life. As fishers introduced their worlds to us, through their stories fishing emerged not as (just) an occupation but as a way of life. To understand the latter means to understand the peculiarity of fishing as an undertaking that is both aquatic and terrestrial, happening both in/under and out of water, on and off land, as an act that occurs out in the sea but is followed by a whole variety of subsequent acts at shore (cleaning the fish, mending nets, etc.) (Acott and Urquhart 2014). Participants of especially the first and second generation shared stories of their childhood but also of their adult life as fishers, family men, and members of a coastal community, steeped in a wealth of local and localized knowledge connected with the natural, social, and cultural landscapes of the locality, as evidenced in Panos's (m, first generation) recalling of how fishers of his grandfather's generation had intimate knowledge of the sea, the tides, and the different types of water. He recounted with admiration how his own grandfather used to fish with horse hair because they did not have fishing line back then and how deeply knowledgeable he was of the fishing areas so that he could go to the holes where the octapi would hide and catch them: "He knew the hole" ... "That is, he knew this area ... here is a hole ... he wasn't roaming around. He knew where to find the octapi." Angelos (m, second generation) likewise shared with us the kind of intimate knowledge that fishers have of the temporalities of fishing. He explained for instance how the appearance of different migratory birds or of the blooming of different flowers signals the start of the fishing season for different varieties of fish.

Along with knowledge needed for fishing, an array of skills cultivated were also amassed which were both necessary for one's survival in the profession (and at sea) as well as lie at the core of fishinghood proper.

Utilizing and developing skills such as casting and mending the nets, removing the fish from the nets, managing tides, landing the boat safely in the water and at port, and making their own tools (e.g., needles) are part and parcel of a performance

of "true" fishinghood and serve as testimony to one's recognition as fisher "proper," exemplified in the account below where Giorgos (m, second generation) showed the researcher how he was able to mend the big hole in his nets:

> Giorgos: Did you see how it was [i.e., the hole]. How big this hole was?
> Researcher: Yes, all this time you were working on it.
> Giorgos: You see, now it [i.e., the net) is like it was before.
> Researcher: Looks fine now.
> Giorgos: Not everyone knows how to make them appear like they used to be.
> Researcher: Yes.
> Giorgos: They cut them off, throw them away, [. . .], bring new ones, bring new ones [. . .] they have others do it [mend them] for them and pay them [. . .] those who are fishers [inaudible] do the work I do now.

The cultivation of these skills is largely experiential and social in nature as it occurs on the job, in the company and under the guidance of others on board a boat or while working on a quayside. As Acott and Urquhart (2014, p. 257) purport, fishing is a relational activity where a "network of relational encounters" an array of practices, values, people, places, and ecosystems are bound up together. These skills (and tacit knowledge) are not something that can be learned in school through formal instruction but rather are seamlessly conveyed through a process of intergenerational transmission based mainly on kinship and are the outcome of one's enduring investment of time, effort, and commitment. Skills that pertain to the activity of fishing (e.g., catching fish, driving the boat, mending nets, etc.) as well as skills that relate to the management of the occupational hazards that come along with it are essential elements in securing one's survival at sea but also in terms of their ability to manage the (largely financial) insecurities of the profession (e.g., saving to cover unexpected damages on the boat and poor catch, keeping spare nets) given the lack of predictability and stability that comes with it:

> what's important is [good] management. To not think that everything is yours. If you go out today and get 500 pounds from the sea, tomorrow you might not. [. . .] you have to have a sea reserve [. . .] any time something happens: you want to make nets, an accident happened, your engine broke down, in record time to have it fixed. (Angelos, m, second generation)

Understanding fishing not merely as a means of livelihood but also as a way of life also entails understanding the complex ways in which local knowledge and skills are linked with values, transmitted, and shaped through the way the many different facets of fisher's lives are interwoven around fishing as well as in the way these values mediate their relationship with the environment and the people around them. Participants' stories of fishing, the sea, and what it means to be a fisher were replete with a strong work ethic honoring the laboriousness, dedication, and decency fishing requires; a pronounced respect and concern for the natural environment, both the sea- and the land-scape; reverence for the freedom they feel when at sea; and a sense of gratitude for the opportunities fishing has afforded them to connect: with the sea, their selves, fellow fishers, and members of their community at large. As Maria (f, second generation), a fisher's daughter, shared, she liked the fact that her 16-year-old son is learning to love nature by spending time at the Inlet with his friends and explained that this is something that is passed on from one's parents but also learned

experientially: "it is not something that they tell you to do—do this and that—it comes out of your encounter with, as a result of the time you spend [at the sea] you learn yourself. My parents were sensitive about nature as well, so this is something they passed on to us."

## 5.5 Place, Intergenerational Relationships, and Sustainability

Acott and Urquhart (2014, p. 258) highlight the importance of place as "a useful approach to begin to understand the range of social and cultural values emerging from the relational process that connects marine fishing and terrestrial communities and is important in planning for a sustainable future." Looking at places as configured through the meanings humans attribute to them but also as influenced by the material reality of the biophysical world means to pay attention to both the material and the subjective (Acott and Urquhart 2014). It also involves working off an understanding of space as contested and constructed in the midst of/by social relations (Cuervo and Wyn 2017) as everyday practices build layers of affective experience of place (Cuervo and Wyn 2017). Paying attention to feelings of belonging visibilizes relationships of intergenerational interconnectivity between youth and their families as well as between people, space, and the environment—shedding light upon how place is configured through not only affective layers of meaning and relations at a particular point in time, but also on how these come about *intergenerationally*.

Participants' sense of belonging was expressed through feelings of attachment to the sea, the Inlet, and the surrounding coastal area and was reflected in the very intimate knowledge of both the under/water and the terrestrial landscape, manifested in the detailed place-naming that filled participants' accounts.

Attributing names to quite small and geographically proximate strips of land/sea can be read as an act of intimacy, built in a web of close social relations and through the situated practice of regular routines and traditions (such as camping, learning to swim and fish, hanging out, cooking, and cleaning the fish by the coast), and sustained through participants' memories of childhood and adulthood:

> [When we hear the word Inlet] what comes to mind is fish, diving, boat trips, that's what comes to mind. Sometimes we would go and set up huts and light the coals [for grilling] and would stay there until the next day. Now there is no room to do that. [...] These are very good memories. (Kostas, third generation, focus group interview)

The materiality of fishing (nets, needles, pots, boats, gear, and equipment) both mediates and is mediated by social and intergenerational relations which are locally situated, as storied by the participants. Along with the symbolic (knowledge, skills, and values) handed down from generation to generation through layers upon layers of affective experience of place (on the boat, at the quayside, at the port, at the beach), attention should also be paid to the material and the way the boundaries of

each blur as they converge to forge both individual and collective senses of self and place. The material aspect of fishing does not only relate to the marine ecosystem and the coastal landscape but also to buildings and a range of objects such as nets, boats, tools, and fishing gear (e.g., clothes and boots) that are linked to the materiality of fishing (Acott and Urquhart 2014) and are constitutive of the performative element of belonging to the extent that the latter is materialized as a performance of repetitive, even routinized, practices inextricably intertwined with the physical (Cuervo and Wyn 2017). In his account, a young recreational fisher, for example, explained to us how he would follow around his uncle and his father and grandfather who were people with "old ways of thinking" and described how he learned the many of the technical skills of preparing and mending the nets through performing a set of elaborate and routinized procedures of finding the holes, untangling the fish, and sowing the nets starting from the age of 6 and "as we progressed they would give us gradually something more difficult [to do]" (Kostas, third generation, focus group).

Shedding light on the material as well as the sociocultural dimensions of fishing inescapably begs attention to the question of intergenerationality and how the latter impacts sustainability. The intergenerational method adopted in our study has made visible the intergenerational character of attachment to sea and place (Spyrou et al. 2021), as well as of the local knowledge, skills, and values as seen in participants' accounts throughout this chapter. It has also provided an insight into exploring questions of sustainability through apprehending the importance of intergenerational recruitment to the fishing profession (White 2015). As participants across generations in our study recount, induction to fishing was done from an early age, on the job, and through relationships of kinship (cf. Spyrou et al. 2021). This intergenerational recruitment to (professional) fishing for the first and second generation was marked by the passing down from one generation to another of both material inheritance, such as boats (Maria, f, second generation) and quays "our son's quay was my father's father's, my grandfather's" (Marios, m, first generation), as well as of symbolic, through the transmission of knowledge, skills, and values.

Participants' narrations of fishing paint it as a relational (both with the human and the more-than-human element), intergenerational, emotive, material, and symbolic activity whose performance becomes inseparably entangled with one's sense of self, akin to a love affair as Panos (m, first generation) told us: "It's no small thing to fall in love with her [i.e., the sea] [. . .] You can't easily forget it, can't easily do without it." Such is the extent of the enduring investment, commitment, and resources (material but mostly symbolic) needed that for people not being inducted into fishing from a very young age and not sharing a deep love for the "sorceress sea" (Angelos, m, second generation), entering and lingering in the racks of the profession would pose a difficult and risky path. Elaborating on this, Angelos (m, second generation) explained that he learned how to fish from his father and that "I know the sea underneath as I know the land outside," insisting that he is one of the best fishers around because of the experiences he has had. He went on to say that "It is very important to know the movements of the fish, when the fish moves, what times of the year the fish moves, which fish is moving, what materials and tools to use. It is an art

that you cannot learn in coffeeshops or in schools. You can learn it in the sea and that is why I said you must love this job." And he concluded: "This is the reason we were able to hold on to this [profession] despite all the difficulties. A young person who enters the profession today will starve."

Beyond the sheer hardship of and devotion to the profession, our research tells us that for the third generation of participants becoming a professional fisher constitutes not merely a challenging but in fact an impossible choice due to significant environmental change (and social, as will be shown below) that has transpired over the course of a few decades and which undermines the viability of fishing with stocks depletion, changes in the natural environment due to construction or land development, shifts in social relations as the use and character of public places (e.g., the closure of fisher's coffeehouse and plans for the imminent development of the docks) that nourished and supported them dwindle, and rising costs associated with fishing and reduction in profit, all described as shifts which disrupt the intergenerational recruitment into fishing and all that comes with it:

> It is not easy [for a young fisher] to survive [today] because he does not have the experience, you can't find the volume of fish we had in the good old days. You need to know where to go and find the fish, it's based on the different seasons, you need the proper equipment, you need a lot of things. (Angelos m, second generation)

Changes in the physical environment with the coast being described as a far greener and more "pristine" place back then, untouched by human interference (e.g., vis-à-vis the establishment of a fish farm and imminent plans to reconstruct the area) and with a richer sea life free from pollution, co-occur with changes in the symbolic. Social and cultural changes in the way participants experienced childhood, youth, and adulthood are evident in their narratives with members of the younger generations describing a less mobile and outdoor leisure time, still hanging out and swimming at the docs, yet devoting time to activities typical among youth in contemporary western societies such as playing electronic games, meeting up in cafeterias, and browsing on social media (interview with Orestis, m, third generation). Instead, older generations would recount to a far greater degree fond memories of fellow fishers, relatives, and friends meeting regularly at the coast and the docks to fish, cook, eat, and socialize, speaking of the Inlet as a place to work, hang out, relax, and find peace almost as a thing of the past. They would reminisce about traditions such as learning and teaching younger generations how to swim in rocky shallow water and camping with family by the beach and the docks during the summer time. All of these practices, traditions and routines created for participants primarily of the older generation's affective layers of experience of place, reflected in the toponyms they used. In fact the very act of naming places, the quite limited geographical distance between which would not warrant them with a toponym, operates in participants' narrations as a way of conveying and solidifying affective layers of experiencing place enveloped in nostalgia, intimacy, and interconnectedness with environment and people, history, and cultural heritage—all bound up in the single word of a place-name.

Generational shifts in the way public spaces such as the beach and the docks are/have been used imply changes in the way people in this coastal community connect and interact among them and with the spaces around them (cf. Piyapong et al. 2019). This is no inconsequential shift. In fact we would argue that one of the most significant implications deriving from our research is that with social and environmental change and emerging questions for this fishing community's sustainability at the backdrop of the realization of fading intergenerational recruitment to fishing, comes a gloom future for the continuance of the profession in this small community. This also signals a disruption in the ways in which people come to know, connect with, and understand the physical and social world around them. The older generations' deep knowledge of and long-term engagement with the aquatic and terrestrial environment and the way in which these were accumulated, shared, and transmitted intergenerationally through the activity of fishing and the cultural and social fabric that has been woven around it will be severely altered upon the second generation's retirement:

> And we have a number of households who weave baskets and mend nets. People are involved with different activities which they still slowly-slowly continue doing since the old days. Ok, slowly-slowly this is being lost because we, the young ones, cannot do this. Even if we want to do it, we can't. [. . .] Because now we have tablets . . . While back then they did not have much else, they dealt with those things. We cannot make baskets today, we will fail. [. . .] We can't. We need to go buy them. Let's say to mend the nets, no matter how many times somebody shows us, we are still not going to be able to do it. (Kostas, third generation, focus group)

Some of these skills (e.g., basket weaving, net mending) are unlikely to remain integral to the community's way of life; as fishing diminishes in importance with the current generation, one would expect that they will be lost over time. It is possible, of course, that some such skills may be reappropriated if the community finds a renewed vision for a sustainable future that allows for such skills and cultural and social artifacts of significance, as hinted at in a participant's recount of how a fish trap he made for someone ended up being used as a lamp.

The decision among the third generation not to follow fishing professionally is a choice that appears to be supported and even encouraged among members of the second generation (see also White 2015) who had too often during our interviews emphasized the hardships that come with the profession, the physical toll it takes on the body as well as the character needed to survive it, all elements of which were depicted implicitly or explicitly among participants as incompatible with a modern way of life and as too demanding for today's youth who were better off investing instead in formal education. As Angelos (m, second generation) explained: "I never pressured them [i.e., his children to get into fishing]. Ok, I would take them with me but this is a difficult job for them." It is important to note here that though in theory the young people who belong to the third generation *choose* not to follow fishing professionally, for all practical purposes, this choice is an impossible one as we have explained earlier on, not just because of the hardship that fishing entails but also, and more importantly, because it no longer is a viable, profitable career path. Thus, though they could opt to follow fishing professionally, none of the young people in

our sample chose to do so suggesting that, in essence, the structural constraints are so powerful as to make their putative choice a non-choice after all. This follows trends also noted elsewhere with Blomquist et al. (2016) arguing that paternal occupational income during childhood is a contributing factor in decisions among sons of farmers and fishers in Sweden to follow in their fathers' footsteps. Hence, for sons of families in farming and fishing in Sweden, experiences of low income during childhood play a factor in their decision to seek occupation outside of fishing and agriculture, thereby disrupting a tradition of intergenerational occupation in much similar ways to what we see happening in the case of Psari in Cyprus.

Investing in formal education within the broader socioeconomic framework of a knowledge economy as well as venturing into regional tourism given the area's prominence in the Cypriot tourism industry appear to be more promising venues for youth in Psari as Stavros (m, third generation, focus group) explained: "[studying law] was a way out [...] but it turned out good for me. Having [the degree] was a powerful ace that opened many doors," while Kostas (m, third generation, focus group) added that "I wanted to transmit what I learned to others somehow. If I were to do so without papers [i.e. a university degree], nobody would listen."

Yet despite turning away from fishing and choosing formal education, a lingering attachment with place and sea (Spyrou et al. 2021) remains with third generation participants contemplating alternative professional choices which would allow them to remain connected with land/topos and water (e.g., opening a pool, becoming nautical engineers or lifeguards). Their impossible choice (i.e., their decision not to pursue fishing professionally) is partly met in this way with more realistic choices which allow them to retain a sense of closeness to what they have grown to love, namely, the sea, rather than a complete rapture:

> I became a PE instructor with a specialization in swimming. It's something I have liked for years and it's what I pursued. We really love the sea. The bottom of the sea cannot be explained in any way [...] The sea bottom is magical, you lose yourself. [...] It's a hobby to catch fish [...] personally I am into it, wherever I have time I go [fishing]. (Kostas, m, third generation, focus group)

Several also mention still hanging out at the quayside, going to the sea to relax, taking up fishing as a hobby, and maintaining some of the older traditions (e.g., camping at the beach) with their families and young kids, speaking to the intergenerational and emotive nature of attachment to the sea and what one of the participants has referred to as the inevitable heritage of being born to "watermen," of being sons of fish:

> Because it's not all kids of every family who are like this with the sea and all. Because our parents are sea people, watermen, in other words our parents are fish [smile], the only thing left for them is to grow scales from the many hours they spend at sea. They transmitted this to us, and it makes sense. (Kostas, m, third generation, focus group)

## 5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we tried to document what happens to a small fishing community when fishing ceases to be economically viable and young people opt for different professional futures. Our case study is clearly not unique with many other communities around the world experiencing similar transitions. Nevertheless, our intergenerational approach to documenting this transition provides interesting insights into the workings of structural and temporal change in such communities.

By focusing on the narratives of three generations of fishers, we are able to situate the larger environmental, economic, and social changes in the everyday lives of the people who are being impacted by them. Thus, at one level, it becomes clear that something significant is being lost with such a transition. A way of life which characterized successive generations of fishers is, for most of our research participants, coming to an end with the third generation pursuing formal education and employment opportunities beyond fishing. This has direct consequences for the intergenerational transmission of local fishing knowledge which is interrupted with the decisions of the younger generation (Neis et al. 2013) to abandon fishing. As a result, today there is increased awareness about the loss of local knowledge and its implications on human societies and the environment (Aswani et al. 2018). As Gómez-Baggethun and Reyes-García (2013, p. 646) point out, however, when considering the loss of local knowledge, it is not so much about what is lost but rather about "the capacity to generate and apply knowledge that enables actions and adjustments in response to current and future changes." Moreover, as Idrobo and Johnson (2019) show through their own research, despite the fact that formal education for the younger generation may be seen by the older generation as a strategic way of responding to globalized change with young people moving from their fishing communities to urban centers, it is also seen as a means towards maintaining a connection to community and place through the mobilization of local knowledge into the tourism economy. Indeed, this might offer an opening for Psari as a community which is finding itself in a transitional point in its history where one way of life will have to give way to another by reinventing its place in the world, perhaps in the context of the local tourist industry. Indeed, the faith of all three generations on the value of formal education attests to wider global changes and developments which are aligned with neoliberal logics of subjectification. Though this is pure conjecture on our part at this point (given that Psari is in the midst of this transition), faith in education provides a means through which to reinvent the locality. The hoped for entrepreneurial abilities of the educated younger generation and their capacity to utilize the technical and technological skills they acquire through education to create new possibilities for themselves and their communities provides formal education with an added importance and challenge which is unclear at this point to what extent it can deliver.

At another level, it is more than local knowledge which is being lost; it is also a way of life which creates strong attachment to place and community and characterized by particular cultural values that go hand-in-hand with the practice of fishing.

As relations between people and between people and the environment change, a way of life comes to be reconstituted within a new set of parameters. In our case, it is still too early to tell what these parameters are but the turn to formal education and subsequently to local employment opportunities within the tourism industry which has flourished in the region during the last few decades is suggestive of what this transition entails.

So, in a sense, this leaves open the larger question of what happens to Psari and other small fishing communities like Psari, as a result of this rupture. As White (2015, p. 291) has pointed out, the lack of interest among younger people in fishing as a commercial activity is a wider European phenomenon which "not only does it pose questions for the survival of individual enterprises and put at risk local ecological knowledge, skills and fishing heritage, but it also deprives the industry of future sources of innovation, adaptability and enterprise." This then is a larger issue that centers squarely on the question of sustainability. Along with calls for promoting the sustainability of fisheries, there have been skeptical voices over time raising the issue of the unsustainability of fishing as a means of livelihood, citing the increasing depletion of stocks, the rising costs, and the increasing difficulties to access the profession pointing to the "complexity of understanding and regulating ecosystems and human impact" (Martindale 2014, p. 280). Are such communities resilient enough to engage productively and creatively with these challenges and to transform themselves economically and socially? Magis (2010, p. 402) defines community resilience as "the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise." For Psari this is a challenge which lies ahead in the years to come. The process of coastal community adaptation to ongoing social and ecological change is heterogeneous and multifactor involving diverse actors involved in diverse activities, choices, and actions (Blythe et al. 2014, p. 6) and therefore one which is hard to predict. Longitudinal studies of such transitions are therefore called for to shed light on such processes and to questions of sustainability in the longer term.

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