

*An integrated view: Multiple stressors and small tourism enterprises in the Bahamas*

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Abstract: Vulnerability to multiple stressors has been a research area of increased focus as geographers and other social scientists investigate how various processes of change affect regions, industries and social groups. However, much research within the human dimensions of environmental change literature continues to focus on vulnerability to single stressors such as climate change or natural hazards. Using the double exposure framework (Leichenko and O'Brien, 2008) to explore the vulnerability of small tourism enterprises to various processes of globalization and global environmental change, this dissertation contributes to a deeper understanding of how vulnerability is affected by interactions between multiple stressors. Research was based in New Providence and Paradise Island, Bahamas, a major tourism destination in the Caribbean. A qualitative approach conducted in two phases utilized over 70 semi-structured interviews with owners and managers of small tourism enterprises and other tourism industry stakeholders. Results of the dissertation show that climate change, extreme natural events, land use change, mass tourism, sustainable tourism and financial crises interact with each other in complex ways to affect the vulnerability of small businesses to change while shaping their response options. These interactions have significant implications for the ability of small tourism enterprises to compete with large businesses and negatively affect their current and future market share of the international tourism industry. This dissertation reveals that interactions between multiple stressors increase the vulnerability of small tourism enterprises to change, constrain their ability to respond to change and expose the need for greater public-private partnerships to improve the viability of these businesses. This exploration of interactions between stressors makes a strong case for the need to consider how multiple processes of change affect entities of any kind.