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Coastal Tourism in a Context of Neoliberal Development: Social Change in Mancora, Peru

FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ VELARDE
University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

The case of Mancora, Northern Peru, illustrates a process of neoliberalisation through which conceptions of place, local identities and the recent history of the place have been reformulated due to the rapid expansion of global tourism. In this former fishing village, tourism development altered local conceptions of place, allowing the emergence of contrasting projects for converting it into a beach resort. This process brought about a context governed by land conflicts and tension between local authorities, where local inhabitants reshaped their identities and the recent history of the place in order to gain or maintain ownership over valuable natural resources.

Keywords: coastal tourism, ethnography, fishing villages, neoliberalism, Northern Peru, peasant communities.

During the 1990s, Peru went through a radical process of economic structural adjustment aimed at stabilising the national economy after continued years of increased hyperinflation. Apart from attracting capital investment and increasing exports of primary commodities, Alberto Fujimori's administration reduced state spending and rolled back the state in favour of the entrepreneurial elite (Crabtree and Durand, 2017). Staff working for the tourism sector were drastically cut (Desforges, 2000), while the regulating role of the state in developing tourist destinations was reduced to a minimum. This strategy included closing the Instituto Nacional de Planificación (INP – National Planning Institute) and limiting the state's role in policy formation (Crabtree and Durand, 2017). In addition, Fujimori promoted La Comisión de Promoción del Perú para la Exportación y el Turismo (PROMPERU, Peru's Commission for Promoting Exports and Tourism) into a key state institution responsible for marketing the country, both internally and externally, as a means of creating an attractive image of Peru for the neoliberal policies to be successful. In other words, in the process of becoming a 'neoliberal state' (Harvey, 2005: 7) and inserting the country into the global economy, Peru turned into a 'promoter state' (Fuller, 2009: 117), leaving the development of tourist destinations open to the entrepreneurial elite.

The end of the internal civil war between the state and the Shining Path terrorist group in 1992, and the implementation of the neoliberal reforms, resulted in exceptional growth in Peru's tourism industry. During the following two decades, post-war Peru recreated itself into a tourist destination (Babb, 2011), and adopted cultural tourism

as a key strategy for development (Ypeij and Zoomers, 2006; Baud and Ypeij, 2009). Since the the recovery of Peru's economy, internal tourism among Peru's middle class increased (Fuller, 2009), while global tourists visiting developing countries multiplied (Mowforth and Munt, 2009). In taking advantage of this context, the Peruvian state has successfully attracted national and international tourists and encouraged private investment in the tourism sector (Desforges, 2000; Fuller, 2009; González-Velarde, 2013). Peru's recent tourism boom has also benefitted from the dramatic growth that the tourism industry has experienced worlwide over the last half-century, through which global capitalism has rapidly expanded while sustaining itself over time (Fletcher, 2011).

Tourism has increased revenues to many Latin American economies, becoming an important source of income for local communities (Ypeij and Zoomers, 2006; Mowforth, Charlton and Munt, 2008; Baud and Ypeij, 2009; Berger and Wood, 2010; Babb, 2011). However, this industry also provokes substantial socio-cultural transformation at a local level. In Peru, academic research demonstrates how tourism development alters gender and race relations and fosters processes of social change amongst indigenous and local communities (Henrici, 2002; Stronza, 2008; Fuller, 2010; Babb, 2011; Ypeij, 2012). In addition to reinforcing processes of social exclusion (Ypeij, 2006; Maxwell and Ypeij, 2009; Steel, 2009), and increasing internal socio-economic differentiation and conflicts (Gascón, 2005; Stronza, 2008; Carnaffan, 2014), tourism development intensifies tensions between local communities and outsiders (Ypeij and Zorn, 2007). Moreover, tourism often converts local histories, traditions and cultural identity markers into commodities for the tourist market. These processes of commodification can transform perceptions of identity and culture amongst host communities engaged in cultural tourism. However, this is not only a passive process, where local and indigenous identities are changed by their encounter with tourism. Often members of such communities strategically reshape their identities to participate in the tourism industry or to claim rights over natural resources and their territories. Such practices illustrate the fluidity of local identities and the active agency of local communities in reshaping these identities (Valdivia, 2005; Stronza, 2008; Asensio, 2012; Ypeij, 2012; Smith, 2015).

In tourism contexts, processes of neoliberalisation contribute to forging perceptions of the environment as a resource with market value. Neoliberalisation is understood here as a 'global process that varies from location to location' (Igoe and Brockington, 2007: 436) and that considers the market as the best mode of governance of the non-human world (Castree, 2008). As a result of the 'reregulation of nature through forms of commodification' (Igoe and Brockington, 2007: 432), this process reinforces an 'orientalism paradigm' in terms of human-nature relations, which defines the natural environment as an object that must be exploited (Pálsson, 1996). This has permitted ecotourism to gain popularity recently as an attractive strategy that supposedly brings economic development while caring for the environment (West and Carrier, 2004; Stronza and Pêgas, 2008; Fleischer, 2009). However, as a fast-growing industry governed by capitalist logic, critics of neoliberal conservation in Latin America state that ecotourism could increase processes of social exclusion while negatively affecting the natural environment (Duffy, 2002; Igoe and Brockington, 2007; Brondo and Bown, 2011; Fletcher, Dressler and Büscher, 2015). Moreover, the impact of neoliberal policies and tourism development in coastal territories in Latin America has increased pressure on local land markets and has limited access to land for local communities due to the 'foreignisation' and privatisation of land (Van Noorloos, 2014).

In the coastal district of Mancora, Piura, Peru's process of neoliberalisation combined with the expansion of global tourism, triggering socio-cultural changes and conflicts at a local level as a result. In the last two decades, this former fishing village has been transformed into one of 'South America's Leading Beach Destinations' (WTA, 2016) in a context of neoliberal reforms and rapid growth in tourism. Due to its location and tropical weather, Mancora mainly receives visitors from Lima and other cities in Northern Peru, the Southern Provinces of Ecuador and international backpackers travelling around South America. In addition, Chilean, Argentinian and Brazilian tourists arrive every year seeking luxury houses and hotels by the beach, and a surfing spot with exceptional seafood, marine biodiversity and electric nightlife.

However, led by the market and without regulation and control by the state, Mancora's sudden growth in tourism has generated social and environmental problems that threaten its long-term sustainability as a beach resort. Mancora's uncontrolled urban expansion and land conflicts have raised tension between local inhabitants, increasing the population's environmental vulnerability and restricting fishing communities' access to land (see González-Velarde, 2013). Here I aim to explore one dimension of these problems, that which, in my view, is rooted in the way the main social actors conceptualised Mancora during its initial stages of tourism development, and related to each other while participating in Peru's process of neoliberalisation.

Based on qualitative data collected in two fieldwork periods undertaken in Mancora and Lima in 2007 and between 2010 and 2011, the ethnographic approach used here relies on archival research, informal talks, semi-structured interviews and participant observation as main research methods. Documents were gathered from the archives of the Municipality of Mancora, the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora and family archives, as well as local and regional libraries. Semi-structured interviews and informal talks were conducted with key informants representing the main social groups that make up Mancora as a community: members of the Comunidad Campesina, the municipality, tourism developers from Lima and old members of the fishing sector. Special attention was given to interviewing former presidents of the Comunidad Campesina and former mayors of Mancora, in particular those who occupied key positions when Mancora was going through its initial stages of tourism development, and when both agrarian and neoliberal reforms were implemented. Some of the interviewees' names have been changed by the author to preserve anonymity.

By delving into Mancora's recent history, I show how this coastal town changed over the last century, looking at the processes altering its development and social composition. I then move on to explore the projects produced by the main social actors involved in Mancora's development, and the way each of them conceptualised the fishing village as a beach resort during its initial stages of tourism development. Finally, I describe how, in a context of neoliberal development and rapid growth in tourism, local identities and the recent history of the place were reshaped in order to justify land rights, increasing social differences and tension at a local level. I argue that Mancora illustrates a process of neoliberalisation through which conceptions of place, local identities and the recent history of the place have been reformulated due to the expansion of global tourism amongst fishing communities. In doing so, I seek to contribute to current debates analysing tourism dynamics, but also to studies about social change brought about by tourism amongst fishing (Kottak, 1992) and coastal communities (Van Noorloos, 2014; Smith, 2015) in Latin America.

Mancora's Development

From 1880 to 1940, Mancora was politically constituted as a Hacienda. During this period, social life was circumscribed by the countryside and the coastal zone. In the countryside, only a handful of families worked on charcoal and wood production, combining it with self-sufficiency farming. According to old villagers, only a few fishing families lived in the coastal zone. The Hacienda also used the coast for storing its output in a lumberyard before its commercialisation in regional markets.

In the 1940s, Mancora developed into an important fishing village as a result of substantial flows of national and international capital. During this period, national elites sought to advance Peruvian fisheries into 'the most rapidly-expanding area for local enterprise' (Thorp and Bertram, 1978: 80–81) and fishing into one of the most important sectors of the Peruvian exports (Klarén, 2000). Consequently, six fishing companies established their operating premises on Mancora's coast. At the same time, fishing families from other villages in the north and south of the country relocated to Mancora, while country dwellers moved to the coast to work in the fishing industry. These socio-economic changes also followed a broader pattern occurring at a national level. Fast urbanisation processes fostered by migratory waves from the highlands populated the coast (Aldana and Diez, 1994; Klarén, 2000), reversing settlement patterns that dated back to colonial times (Drinot and Contreras, 2014).

The first tourism developers arrived between 1975 and 1983. They were a group of upper- and middle-class surfers and businessmen from Lima, who had previously acquired experience working in the hospitality sector in Lima and abroad. According to the Limeños, they found in Mancora a territory whose natural characteristics and marine biodiversity as well as tropical and dry weather were ideal for developing coastal tourism. Their arrival coincided with some fishing families leaving the village, following the exceptional growth of the fishing industry in Chimbote. The Limeños took advantage of this context and bought the fishermen's houses in order to build the first hotels and restaurants. As Javier Paroud, pioneering tourism developer and former Mayor of Mancora, remarked: 'locals sold their houses for cents because they did not know about tourism and how the value of their properties would increase' (interview with Javier Paroud, 2011). During this period, the Limeños managed to occupy key political positions, such as mayor, to transform Mancora into a town ready for tourism development. As such, the Limeños represented the first group residing permanently in Mancora who conceptualised the place as a resource that needed to be produced and transformed into a tourist and surfing paradise.

The changes in the composition of Mancora as a community, together with the new socio-economic dynamic brought about by the fishing industry and tourism development, altered both the identity of the place and the use of the space. If, during the Hacienda period, Mancora was a major charcoal producer, with the fishing boom Mancora developed into an important coastal village. Mancora's development took a different path with the arrival of the Limeños who brought tourism from outside. At this point, it is possible to identify at least two culturally different constructs of place at play. Whereas for the Mancoreños the fishing village was somewhere to live, for the Limeños Mancora was a potential tourist resource to be exploited. These contrasting ways of conceptualising the place enabled the latter to give more priority to the land during the initial stages of Mancora's tourism development. Mancoreños usually refer

to this group of Limeños as the 'visionaries' or the 'pioneers', while lamenting that the 'true' Mancoreño did not value the place and the land in the same way as the Limeño. They say this regretting that their parents did not know tourism was going to turn their coastal neighbourhoods into areas with great market value. As such, rooted in the 'mentality' and cultural background of the Limeños, this new and modern conceptualisation of place introduced by tourism development allowed different ways of engaging with the place.

Between the 1980s and late 1990s the number of tourism developers settling in Mancora increased, and other new tourist zones emerged within former inhabited arid coastal areas, initially used by fishermen for their daily activities. Soon after the landslides provoked by the 'El Niño' event of 1983, for example, upper- and middle-class Limeños fenced off an area known as Las Pocitas and transformed the affected stretch of the Pan American Highway into the main access road to this now exclusive touristic zone.

The Emergence of the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora

In 1975, the Peruvian state expropriated the Hacienda Mancora from its owners as a result of the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1969. This allowed 45 male members linked to the countryside, former workers of the Hacienda and fishermen, to create the Grupo Campesino (Peasant Group) Mancora. The Grupo Campesino then signed a contract with the state through which they obtained 26,226 hectares and 1225 m^2 distributed amongst the districts of the Los Organos, El Alto, Mancora and Zorritos. In 1989, the Grupo Campesino turned into the Comunidad Campesina (Peasant Community) of Mancora, as this status offered peasant communities in general a chance to maintain land ownership (Diez, 1999). In fact, members of the Grupo Campesino Mancora undertook this process to prevent the Provincial Municipality of Talara from selling their coastal land to foreigners. As a former president of the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora mentioned: 'in doing this we were trying to save our lands' (interview with Mateo Rosas, 2010). However, members of the Comunidad Campesina first needed to pay the agrarian debt owed to the Peruvian state in order to make their land rights official. They accepted Mancoreños and Limeños that had arrived in Mancora in the early 1980s as new members, expecting that their fees would contribute to raising funds. In 1996, after paying the agrarian debt, the Comunidad Campesina officially inscribed its entire territory in the Registros Públicos, the official body in charge of recording and publishing contracts. However, despite being the official owners of their land, the protectionist laws that supported the Agrarian Reform Law prevented their members from selling it to foreigners (see Castillo, 2007).

The application of Velasco's agrarian reform transformed the social dynamic of Mancora and permitted the emergence of new local identities and powerful social and political actors. As a result of this process, two different and overlapping local authorities coexisted within the same territory: the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora and the Municipality of Mancora. In Peru the relation between district residents, migrants and comuneros, as well as between municipal mayors and the authorities of the Comunidad Campesina, tend to be characterised by tension and conflicts (Diez, 1992, 2007; Gutierrez, 1992). In Mancora, this relationship was particularly tense because the Comunidad Campesina considered the land of the district of Mancora as part of their territory when registering its land title. As such, their land title comprised the coastal

areas where all the neighbourhoods and tourist zones emerged. This developed into a significant source of conflict between the Comunidad Campesina and the Municipality of Mancora, especially when land value increased as a result of tourism development, and the neoliberal reforms allowed Comunidades Campesinas to sell their land to foreigners.

From 1991 until 1997, Fujimori's neoliberal administration promulgated a package of laws aimed at liberalising the Comunidades Campesinas' land and facilitating land-titling, in order to foster corporate investment in the agrarian sector. Whereas in 1991 Legislative Decree (LD) 653 repealed Velasco's Agrarian Reform Law, the new liberal Constitution of 1993 eliminated the protectionist guarantees given to indigenous communities by the state since 1920s. The Ley de Tierras (1995) and Ley de Titulación de Comunidades Campesinas de la Costa (1997) concluded this process by allowing Comunidades Campesinas to freely dispose of their land; namely, donating, selling or renting it amongst comuneros or third parties. In Mancora, this process of neoliberalisation allowed the Comunidad Campesina to encourage land markets amongst local villagers and foreigners while adjusting the governance of natural resources, such as coastal land, to capitalist market ideology.

Actors' Projects for the Place

During the 1990s and 2000s, when Peru's tourist boom began, the number of tourists and surfers visiting the town gradually increased, incorporating tourism into the Mancoreños' way of life. Local inhabitants became aware of the economic benefits that this industry could generate and, consequently, turned their houses into hostels, restaurants or shops, and started selling art and crafts or food in the streets or walking along the beach. When other sectors of Mancoreño society adopted tourism, new conceptualisations of the place emerged as well as projects for turning Mancora into a beach resort. As such, apart from the Limeños, the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora and the Municipality of Mancora actively participated in the transformation of this coastal town into a global tourist destination. Although during this period the national government focused on increasing the number of national and international tourists at a national level, the state did not engage directly in Mancora's development or regulate the uses of natural resources. In fact, the liberalisation of the land of the Comunidades Campesinas, together with the institutional changes in the tourism sector implemented by Fujimori's regime (Desforges, 2000) left the development of Mancora to the private sector and the market.

The Comunidad Campesina of Mancora

In Peru, a 'Comunidad Campesina' has been defined as a type of social organisation usually formed by a group of peasants linked by kinship relations, who share the same territory and resources and are committed to collective work and duties. Apart from being economically, legally and politically bound by the state, these groups are governed by a particular type of organisation that has its own rules and norms for managing the uses of the space and resources (Diez, 1999). Although the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora shares most of these characteristics, not all its members are peasants, they are not all linked by kinship relations and have different

cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds and are not committed to collective working. In contrast to other type of Comunidades Campesinas ('Comunidades Históricas' (Historic Communities) and 'Comunidades de Hacienda' (Estate Communities)), the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora is a 'Comunidad de la post Reforma Agraria' (Post Agrarian Reform Community) (Diez, 1999: 98–104). Members of this type of Comunidad Campesina, also called 'comunidades parcelarias' (smallholding communities) (del Castillo, 1999), neither use areas of their land collectively nor attribute land ownership to the Comunidad. Conversely, the whole territory is divided into plots, and its members have single ownership of them (del Castillo, 1999: 14 quoted in Burneo, 2007: 164). Because of this, the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora could be defined as mainly a group of landowners, illustrating the heterogeneous nature of the Comunidades Campesina in Peru (Diez, 1992, 1999, 2007; Burneo, 2007; Castillo, 2007).

In 1996, the members of the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora were divided generationally into two groups. Whereas the first generation was composed of a group of former Hacienda workers, fishermen and countryside dwellers, the second group encompassed the sons and relatives of the first group of comuneros as well as some upper-class Limeños who arrived during the 1980s. Unlike the first generation – contemptuously called 'Montubios' as a way of identifying them as 'indigenous', 'rustic', 'forgotten', 'unfriendly' or 'half-asleep person' – the second group of comuneros campesinos identified themselves as a modern generation possessing a business mentality (Comunidad Campesina, 1999: 11). Under the leadership of Atilio Silva, a Mancoreño member of this second group, the comuneros used this business mentality to develop a particular conceptualisation of the place that allowed them to define the plans of the Comunidad Campesina for making Mancora a tourist destination. In a local magazine, written and published by the Comunidad Campesina in a period where the Municipality of Mancora undertook a heated legal process against them with the hope of gaining rights over the land, one short article entitled 'Comuneros de Nuevo Cuño' (a new generation of comuneros) stated:

> Mancora's potential as a valley has been decided. The Comunidad Campesina Mancora had already opened their arms but wants the shoulder. So now the foreigners know: there is a different place in Peru where it is possible to be under the sun and swimming in the sea, while making business throughout the year, without taking any risk of being cheated. THIS PLACE IS WITHIN THE COMUNIDAD CAMPESINA MANCORA'S TERRITORY (Comunidad Campesina, 1999: 13; original emphasis, author's translation).

The Comunidad Campesina of Mancora, instead of carrying out a significant beach development project, decided to construct Mancora as a tourist destination through a more local and communal project of tourism development due to a lack of economic resources (Caretas, 1997). Based on three initiatives involving the use of the land, the Comunidad Campesina aimed to increase Mancora's land market value while making a profit out of tourism as official land rights providers. Thus, 70 hectares of land were given to each of its members, including the Limeños, as a way of allowing comuneros access to credit and increasing land values. Then they declared reserved areas within their territory: reserved areas located within the district of Mancora that would be sold to foreigners in the long term, representing the principal source of income to the comuneros. Finally, they offered district dwellers and fishing families living within the urban centre,

and Limeños who had previously bought the land through the Provincial Municipality of Talara (around 650,000 m^2 or 65 hectares of coastal land) the opportunity to obtain property titles for a fee from the Comunidad Campesina (Municipality of Mancora, 1997).

The Limeños

The Limeños applied their business mentality, acquired from previous experience of working in the tourism industry, to take Mancora through the process of production that shaped its identity as a tourist destination. During the initial stages of Mancora's tourism development, the Limeños obtained control of key local institutions while using national laws and institutions in order to introduce hegemonic notions of place and development. In fact, although the agrarian reform successfully eliminated the Hacienda system and dissolved the landowning class (Klarén, 2000; Eguren, 2006; Mayer, 2009), Velasco's reformers did not predict that some middle- and upper-class Limeños were going to take advantage of the Agrarian Reform Law to become 'comuneros campesinos', as a strategy for implementing their political and economic projects. The pioneering Limeños even became municipal mayors and, in some cases, they effectively used their knowledge and understanding of the national political and economic context to obtain rightful ownership of previously invaded coastal land. In so doing, they sought to increase their land extensions, secure coastal land, change the uses of the space and attach the symbolic meanings that would allow Mancora to be identified as a popular tourist destination.

The Limeños aimed to reshape Mancora into an international tourist destination, hoping that this former fishing village could reach levels of physical infrastructure and popularity similar to Cancun in Mexico. Jerry Muller's case is the best example of how the group of Limeños culturally envisaged the place. Jerry's family became involved with Mancora when they bought charcoal from the Grupo Campesino for their restaurant in Lima, and his family links with Mancora's parish priest. Jerry and his brother later bought the priest's house in the early 1980s, where their hotel was founded. They became members of the Comunidad Campesina when the first group of comuneros were raising funds for paying the agrarian debt, contributing 80 percent of the total amount owed to the Peruvian state.

In 2007 Jerry was president of Comité de Gestión de Desarrollo Turístico de las Playas de Talara' (Management Committee for Tourism Development within Talara's beaches), also named COGEDETUPLATA (TAKEFROMYOURMONEY). This association represented the business elite of the region engaged in the tourist industry, who came together to become a political force that could liaise with projects for developing tourism. As part of a wider tourism project for the entire coast of the Province of Talara, Jerry presented a total of 52 projects to the Vice-Ministry of Tourism that, according to him, were going to transform this area into an internationally renowned tourist destination, attracting tourists and cruise ships from all over the world. He planned to build a marina in Mancora on the coastal land reclaimed from the sea after the 'El Niño' event of 1983. In our interview, with plans in hand, he showed me where the casino, the hotel, the cruise ship dock, the nautical club and the shopping mall were going to be built. Furthermore, he planned to urbanise part of his 59 hectares, obtained previously from the Comunidad Campesina, to build a golf course. Correctly or not, he claimed that 90 percent of his project had been accepted by both the Comunidad Campesina and COGEDETUPLATA, although he was still waiting for investors. Whilst some

people close to him thought him a dreamer and questioned the feasibility of his plans, with COGEDETUPLATA and the Comunidad Campesina he mainly worked towards channelling foreign, but also national, investment in order to undertake his ambitious projects.

The Municipality of Mancora

During this period, other Mancoreños occupying powerful political positions also reshaped their conceptions of place in a similar way to the Comunidad Campesina. Schoolteacher and Mayor of Mancora, Florencio Olibos (1996–1999, 2003–2007, 2015 to present), regarded Mancora as *'la gallina de los huevos de oro'* ('the goose that lays the golden egg'), alluding to its capacity as a mass tourism destination to generate economic wealth in the short term. Although he did not have a clear idea as to what type of tourism to develop in this coastal town, during his first administration (1996–1999) he imagined the fishing village as the best beach town of the entire Peruvian coast and gave this economic activity a key role in the development of the town. As such, he adopted tourism as an important tool for advancing the former fishing village into a 'purely touristic town', convinced that tourism was going to improve Mancora's economy while increasing employment.

Despite his initial enthusiasm, during his second administration (2003–2007) he was more concerned about the negative consequences resulting from a sudden and uncontrolled growth of tourism infrastructure. As such, he prioritised territorial management policies, with the hope of making Mancora a more organised city, as it was already suffering from land invasions and land conflicts. At this stage of Mancora's tourism development, the number of investors expanding the tourism physical infrastructure increased exponentially, swiftly increasing the pressure over the land as well as its market value. The land became a highly valuable and desired commodity not only for wealthy foreigners but also for locals and land invaders who fostered illegal land markets. Thus, Florencio believed that in defining and organising the uses of the territory of the district, the Municipality of Mancora would make the best use of the still unoccupied coastal areas of the town. In his view, this was going to allow all local villagers to obtain benefits from the tourism boom.

However, Florencio's attempts at controlling Mancora's territory and undertaking his plans in charge of the municipality were constantly hampered. Since the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora obtained its land title in 1996, the municipality's rights over the territory were set aside due to the fact that the state awarded the urban centre to the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora, turning this highly valuable area into private property rather than a public asset. As such, the Comunidad Campesina had the right to sell any plot of land within the district, without approval from the municipality and without following a territorial management plan. Moreover, the plans of the Comunidad Campesina for Mancora brought about several tensions, provoking conflicts with other Mancoreños, who suddenly found the land they have inhabited for decades in a condition of legal vulnerability. According to local residents, the Comunidad Campesina has even tried to sell the land where the local church was built. Consequently, the municipality, whose authority was side-lined by the Comunidad, undertook several legal actions against the Comunidad Campesina. In this process, the social actors involved in Mancora's tourism development reshaped their identities and the recent history of the place in order to claim or defend their rights over Mancora's most valuable natural resource: land.

Reshaping Local Identities and the History of the Place

As a result of tourism development and the implementation of neoliberal reforms, Mancora became an 'arena', that is, a spatial location dominated by social encounters 'in which contests over issues, resources, values and representations take place' (Long, 2000: 190). In this contest, each social actor deployed their strategies to secure coastal land, encouraging a land-grabbing race, with the ultimate aim of implementing their projects for the place. In doing so, they reshaped local identities and the recent history of the place, a process that ended up increasing tensions and social differences amongst the actors that compose this socially heterogeneous coastal town.

Since the 1990s, the relationship between the Municipality of Mancora and the Comunidad Campesina had been embroiled in a legal conflict in which the coastal land has been contested. During this conflict, the Mayor of Mancora, Florencio Olibos, relied on a particular construction of Mancora's recent history to show that this is a deep-rooted district with more than 90 years of history. In doing this, Florencio wanted to create a 'mancoñerismo' feeling amongst residents in order to undermine the comunero identity, with the hope of gaining rights over the land. Mancora's 'official' history was strategically constructed following the creation of the initial district of Mancora on 14 November 1908, a date that is seen as a foundation date of the district. The 'official' history of Mancora, written by schoolteacher Angel López (2006), tells the story of the Pazos family, who arrived from Sechura, Piura, at the end of the nineteenth century and settled in the coastal area of the town to work as lumberyard guardians of the Hacienda. This text considers the Pazos family to be the first family who settled within the El Puerto neighbourhood, and they are regarded as the 'founders of Mancora'. At present, this has become the locally accepted version of Mancora's history, and this date is symbolically used every year to celebrate the district's anniversary.

In contrast, the comunero identity emerged as a result of the Agrarian Reform Law, which, in general, created a homogenous subject in a socially and culturally diverse country. In Mancora, the construction of the comunero identity entailed a process of negotiation between upper-class Limeños, fishermen and countryside dwellers that came together in the fictitious form of Comunidad Campesina to obtain benefit from the state. In doing this, its members have relied on the fact that Mancora was initially a Hacienda to create its comunero and peasant identity in order to establish their rights as beneficiaries of the Agrarian Reform Law. In 1999, the Comunidad Campesina published a short article entitled 'Reseña Histórica de la Comunidad Campesina Máncora' (Historical Account of Mancora's Peasant Community) in a local magazine, providing details about the history of the Comunidad. In using a historical record of the Mancora Hacienda dating from 1626, this socially mixed group represented themselves as the most deep-rooted and oldest sector of Mancora's population (Municipality of Mancora, 1997: 3), justifying their rights over the land.

The construction of the 'official' history of Mancora sustained the actions aimed at undermining the Comunero identity and therefore the rights of the Comunidad Campesina over the territory of Mancora. In 1996, the municipality stressed the contradiction resulting from applying the Agrarian Reform Law in a place where the population depended on fishing rather than on agriculture. The municipality used this argument to ask the state to declare null the contract signed in 1975 between the Peruvian state and the Comunidad Campesina. Then, by passing several municipal bylaws, the Municipality of Mancora wanted to demonstrate that the Comunidad Campesina did not have the legal competence to sell or transfer the land located within

the urban centre. This allowed the municipality to allege that the comuneros were acting against the law (Municipality of Mancora, 1996: 7). In recent years, this argument has gained consensus amongst district residents, regional and national authorities and people engaged in the tourism industry. They consider the Comunidad Campesina to be an obstacle to appropriate tourism development because they have sold the land without following a territorial development plan that could have assured the social and environmental sustainability of tourism at a local level. In addition, they have been blamed for the current land invasions and uncontrolled urban growth, as well as for the rapid expansion of hotels, restaurants, shops and beach houses all along the coast.

As a result of this, the comunero identity has been constantly reshaped. When the comuneros of Mancora have been compared to other more traditional types of Comunidades Campesinas, they have defined themselves as an unusual type of Comunidad, arguing that the group has a sui generis nature. According to their members, their Comunidad Campesina is similar to those of San Juan de Catacaos, Castilla and Sechura because they are all ruled by the Comunidades Campesinas General Law, as well as by an internal statute. Also, they argue that they are different because the Comunidad Campesina of Mancora paid its agrarian debt, while the other Comunidades had their agrarian debt written off by the state. Furthermore, they also see themselves as a group of landowners, arguing that, once the agrarian debt was paid, the comuneros could do whatever they wanted with their land, using it for their own benefit: 'it [the land] was not given free of charge' (Comunidad Campesina, 1999: 10). According to the members of the Comunidad Campesina, they developed into a private entity after the agrarian debt was paid.

Similarly, Jerry Muller relied on the fact that his family had paid 80 percent of the agrarian debt to take over the chair of the Comunidad Campesina, arguing that he had to look after his assets (Jerry Muller). As part of his strategy, he accused the previous president of the Comunidad Campesina, Atilio Silva, of corruption when he discovered that the sale of 521,000 m^2 of coastal area took place without consultation (El Tiempo, 2000). Muller accused him of forging the comuneros' signatures to avoid the mechanism ruled by the Ley de Tierras N. 26505 (18 July 1995), which states that any sale must be approved by at least 50 percent of the comuneros. Muller was supported by other comuneros Mancoreños, who agreed that they had never received any detailed report regarding sales of the Comunidad Campesina's land as would normally be expected. Consequently, after calling a general meeting, 74 comuneros dismissed Mateo Rosas, who was president of the Comunidad after Atilio's administration, from office, establishing instead a provisional executive board chaired by Jerry Muller who reported criminal offences against the Comunidad Campesina. Following this, former presidents Atilio Silva and Mateo Rosas were removed from the Comunidad Campesina and Talara's criminal court sentenced Atilio and his executive board to four years in prison with a fine payment of S/. 7000 (Peruvian Soles).

Once in power, Muller sought to change Atilio's plan for Mancora, making the comuneros doubt the validity of their property titles regarding the 70 hectares previously given out by Atilio's administration. In our interview, he told me when he was president of the Comunidad, he himself wanted to redistribute the land amongst the comuneros, giving the agriculture workers farming areas, the cattle farmer areas for raising his cattle stock, and the woodcutters forest areas. However, he did not clarify who were supposed to use coastal areas and whether the Mancoreños would have access to this natural resource.

Nonetheless, in 2004, the Limeños that had become comuneros were removed from the Comunidad Campesina and Jerry was not able to undertake his ambitious project. According to former president of the Comunidad Campesina, Everardo Távara, the comuneros carried out what they called a 'purification' of their members by separating the Limeños from the Comunidad Campesina, arguing that 'instead of being real comuneros, they were businessmen who sought benefits from the Comunidad' (interview with Everardo Távara, 2010). This focus on the 'purification' of the 'comunero' identity highlights how the construction of local identities operates across difference and entails a process of binding and marking symbolic boundaries amongst interrelated groups (Hall, 1996). In fact, in carrying out this 'purification', members of the Comunidad Campesina were trying to mark socio-cultural differences with the group of Limeños, while at the same time strengthening their 'peasant' identity in order to establish their rights over the land as beneficiaries of the agrarian reform. In so doing, they eliminated the symbolic elements that could result in the Comunidad being perceived as a form of business organisation, and maintained land ownership over Mancora's territory.

Conclusions

The expansion of global tourism, combined with the liberalisation of the market of natural resources and the 'roll-back' of the state carried out during the 1990s, abruptly transformed Mancora as place and as a community. By introducing tourism from outside, the Limeños transformed local conceptions of place. This permitted the emergence of a diversity of projects aimed at developing this former fishing village into a popular tourist destination. In addition, tourism transformed coastal land into a highly valuable natural resource, and Peru's process of neoliberalisation opened this natural resource to the capitalist market without regulation and control. As a result, local actors initiated a contest through which local identities and the local history of the place has been constantly reformulated in order to justify or gain rights over the land. In Mancora, this process increased pressure over coastal land, fostering a climate governed by tensions and conflict that strengthened social differences and conflict at a local level.

As a result of these conflicts and the lack of local mechanisms of land control that derived from them and Peru's neoliberal reforms, most of the hotels, restaurants, beach houses and shops that today make Mancora a popular tourism destinations have been built – and still are – following an unsustainable pattern of resource utilisation: land invasions. This has increased conflicts and tensions to the extent that former president of the Comunidad Campesina, Everardo Tavara, was shot dead due to a land-related problem (RPP, 2015). In addition, land invasions have allowed Mancora to be built within previously disaster-stricken areas without regulation and control by the state. More importantly, this type of tourism development is negatively affecting the territories that artisanal fishing communities use to reproduce their models of development and local identities, as they have been reduced and restricted.

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