UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Beyond the Waves:
Economic and Cultural Effects of the Global Surf Industry in El Tunco, El Salvador

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in

Latin American Studies (Cultural Studies)

by

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2011

DEDICATION

For: Alejandro, quien abrió las puertas de la mente; Zane, who inspired el sueño; and Mom, who helped turn ideas into reality.
Con todo mi alma.

EPIGRAPH

Surfing Macroeconomic Theory:
Waves attract surfers. Surfing attracts energy. Energy attracts people.
People attract capital. Investment attracts development. And so it goes.
A quick survey from outer space would likely show
an inordinate number of major coastal cities expanding outwards
in concentric waves from a quality surf break.

Steve Barilotti

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LIST OF TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AHP	Asociación de Hoteles Pequeños (Small Hotels Association)
ALAS	Asociación Latinoamericana de Surfistas Profesionales (Latin American Association of Surfing Professionals
ASP	Association of Surfing Professionals
banda	Organized criminal network
CORSATUR	Corporación Salvadoreña de Turismo (Salvadoran Corporation of Tourism)
CNR	Central Nacional de Registros (National Registry Center)
surfers de la ciudad	city surfers
extranjeros	foreigners
FESASURF	Federación Salvadoreña de Surf (Salvadoran Surfing Federation)
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation)
FUSADES	Fundación Salvadoreña para El Desarrollo Económico y Social
GOES	Government of El Salvador
la(s) playa(s)	the beach(es)
MUSASURF	Mujeres Salvadoreñas Surfers
pandillas/maras	gangs
SIMA	Surf Industry Manufacturers Association
tablas	surfboards
UCA	Universidad Centroamericana “José Simeón Cañas”
zonas franca	Free Trade Zone (FTZ)

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PREFACE

This project grew from a series of events that I witnessed while living in Panamá, where a special crew of Panameños exposed me to the dysfunctional surfing industry while we competed in contests sponsored by the Asociación Latinoamericana de Surfistas profesionales. The tag "Hecho en El Salvador" on one of my surf shirts prompted me to research more about the country's surfing scene. Eventually it became my site of academic exploration.

The goal was to determine whether or not the same themes pertaining to the surfing industry in Panamá applied in El Salvador. After three weeks of intense ethnographic research in August 2010, I concluded some did and others did not.

Traveling for waves has enabled me to perceive a minute part of Latin America from multiple angles, all of which are flawed, privileged yet restlessly hopeful. The bulk of surf narratives, both scholarly and creative, lack female insight as well as characters. This project is but a tiny grain of sand resting among a growing space of research, and I hope other female scholars who love the ocean and/or surf help fill the void. In the same vein as Noam Chomsky, what is happening in Central America's beach pueblos is *not* inevitable. "The future can be changed. But we can't change things unless we at least begin to understand them."

The ultimate goal of this thesis is to promote awareness and understanding. Without either, the soul of surfing will disappear alongside all the waves that we have cherished and lost to reckless development and entrepreneurs.

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Y más importante, gracias a la gente de El Salvador. Desde el momento que llegué hasta me fui, ustedes me ayudaron. Las olas de Punta Roca, La Bocana, La Bocanita y Sunzal siempre se quedan en el corazón y la mente. Siempre grateful and aware.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Beyond the Waves:
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Professor Michael Monteón

For at least fifty years, surfers have gravitated toward El Salvador's Pacific Coast in search of waves. Once the 1992 Peace Accords were signed, the republic re-emerged as a popular Central American surfing destination. Miles of pristine beaches and near-vacant waves were no longer accessible only to the fearless. By the turn of the century, a beach town dubbed El Tunco, approximately 37 kilometers southwest of San Salvador in the department of La Libertad, became a refuge where waves beckoned the war-weary. El Tunco's evolution into a wavetopia raises several issues that warrant attention. Issues raised in this investigation concern tourism, property rights, searches for investment, the aftermath of neoliberal reforms,

(g)localism, opportunities based on gender, and the ambiguous surfing identity at large. This study confronts how pervasive wave-oriented entrepreneurs engage neoliberal reforms, global economic transformations and exploitation.

Two central arguments emerge. First, surf tourism serves as a key sector in a depressed Salvadoran economy wherever waves are in demand. The mere act of riding a wave maintains a service sector cemented in a neoliberal ideology. Matters pertaining to land ownership and beach access exacerbate social tensions. Second, the country's social actors engage in a three-tiered process in which many appropriate, reject, and continue to create a surfing identity on their own terms. Published scholarly analyses dissecting the influence of the global surf industry on specific Central American countries are either underdeveloped or nonexistent. The qualitative data presented should fuel discussions among individuals who recognize surfing as a globalized lifestyle, sport and business.

Introduction

When Salvadoran government officials signed the United Nations-sponsored Peace Accords on January 16, 1992, members of the global surf community took note. For twelve years, civil war had ravaged the Central American country, leaving at least 75,000 civilians dead or disappeared. Along El Salvador's 307-kilometer Pacific coastline, stretches of pristine beaches and vacant waves, which lured small groups of foreign surfers in the 1960s, remained off-limits, accessible only to daring locals who risked their lives to score a fleeting ride.[1] Approximately 37 kilometers southwest of the capital San Salvador, a small beach pueblo nicknamed "El Tunco" in the province of La Libertad became a refuge where waves beckoned and soothed the war-weary.



Figure 1.1: It takes less than an hour by microbus to travel from San Salvador's Terminal de Occidente to La Libertad. Playa El Tunco is located less than 7 kilometers north of the port. Map image courtesy of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Salvadoreños have been surfing the balmy waters of the Pacific Ocean for at least fifty years, if not longer. Their symbiotic relationship with Mother Nature and her wave pool began long before tourists noticed it. Five-thousand year-old pieces of pottery in Peru depict pre-Inca Moche surfing *caballito de totoras*, or local reed boats; thus, it is possible to imagine the

[1]Tsui, 2009.

nomadic Pipil venturing to El Salvador's coast and cruising waves thousands of years ago, despite the absence of similar cultural artifacts.[2] This academic project's period of interest, however, pertains to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Once the Salvadoran government granted Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional political party-ship in 1992, gradual economic and cultural changes occurred in the country. By the turn of the century and in the language of surfing guides, writers transformed El Salvador's image as a nation where "extremism once again rule[d] the day" into a tropical paradise "worth exploring." Between 1993 and 2009, El Salvador attracted an estimated 12.5 million tourists, many of them in search of "zippy point breaks or long clean waves that peel off forever." Of these tourists, 2.7 million, or 21.6 percent, hailed from the United States. In 2009 alone, tourism overall generated $516.63 million in revenue.[3] The number of registered and licensed hotel operations nearly doubled between 2004 and 2009, jumping from 215 to 394.

Despite a steady rise in tourism-related activity, El Salvador has not achieved any sustained prosperity, and its social peace remains precarious. In 2009, approximately 37.8 percent of an estimated 6.1 million Salvadoreños lived in poverty, and the International Monetary Fund estimated a per capita income of $3,429.[4] The World Bank reported the country's gross national income was $21.0 billion in 2009; however, of 693 firms that it surveyed in 2006, 62.5 percent identified corruption as a major constraint to economic growth.[5] Access to finance troubled 24.8 percent of entrepreneurs, and 47.8 percent of firms

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[2] For an interesting read on the Pipil's migratory patterns along the Pacific Coast, see Ruud Van Akkeren's "Getting Acquainted with the Pipils from the Pacific Coast of Guatemala: An Ethno-Historic Study of Indigenous Documents and of the General Archive of Central America."

[3] Data set provided by Dirección General de Migración y Corporación Salvadoreña de Turismo. Source: Banco Central de Reserva.
Surfline Travel. "El Salvador regional overview." www.surfline.com/travel/#3252. Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2010: The Top 10 Countries for 2010**.** www.lonelyplanet.com/el-salvador/travel-tips-and-articles/42/15809 and www.lonelyplanet.com/el-salvador/travel-tips-and-articles/42/1580.

[4] República de El Salvador: Estimaciones y Proyecciones de la Población 1950-2050. July 2009. 45.

[5] This is the most current data available.

considered crime, theft, and disorder key concerns.[6]

Furthermore, El Salvador shares a border with Guatemala and Honduras, two nations struggling to maintain political and social order. Thus, violence often reaches across national boundaries. In February 2007:

> Three Salvadoran legislators, including a scion of…the [National Republican Alliance], were kidnapped and slain, and their bodies set ablaze during…an official visit to Guatemala City. Their charred bodies and gutted vehicle were found on a farm outside the city.[7]

Two years later, the alleged murder of lawyer Rodrigo Rosenberg "pitched Guatemala into a crisis." Rosenberg claimed in a videotape, which he recorded before his death, that Guatemalan President Álvaro Colom and three of his "presidential associates" assassinated him. "Otto Perez, secretary-general of the opposition Patriot Party, called on…Colom to step aside during the investigation," and several hundred people, including relatives of Rosenberg, demanded his resignation.[8]

Honduras experienced a constitutional emergency on June 28, 2009, when soldiers "roused [President Manuel Zelaya] from his bed..., forced him out of the country" by gunpoint, and flew him to Costa Rica.[9] Although the international community lauded Latin American leaders for their efforts to restore democracy, resolution is relative. Only forty years ago, Honduran officials' solution to illegal immigration -- deporting thousands of undocumented Salvadoran immigrants -- triggered a short-lived war between both countries.[10] In 1992, they also faced off in the International Court of Justice to debate the "status of their maritime borders in the Gulf of Fonseca." Despite signing a border demarcation treaty in January 1998, more than a decade's worth of delays from technical difficulties continue to

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[6] World Bank Group. 2006 Survey. www.enterprisesurveys.org/ExploreEconomies/?economyid=62&year=2006.
[7] Renderos and Tobar, 2007
[8] Cordoba, 2009.
[9] Malkin and Thompson, 2009. Associated Press, June 28, 2009.
[10] Timeline: El Salvador -- A chronology of key events: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1220818.stm

undermine the court's ruling, which granted Honduras ownership to most of the territory in dispute.[11]

Given Central America's volatility, as well as El Salvador's tumultuous history and relationship with Guatemala and Honduras, the republic's emergence as a *wavetopia*[12], or haven for surfers, often surprises people. "Surfing?" is the initial response, usually followed by "Why El Salvador?" Intellectualizing the ancient pastime in a post-war nation is an effective way to explain the nuances of development and complexities of culture. "Why bother?" a middle-aged male American surfer asked in the lineup one gray morning. "Just write about tourism; leave surfing out of it." Therein lies the rub. Perceived governmental stability generates opportunities to tout resources as tourist attractions. One of these resources is waves. In coastal towns such as El Tunco, located in the El Salvador's province of La Libertad, surfable waves give rise to tourism. Once the surfing experience is commodified, new patterns of development and growth appear. Whereas the act of surfing can thrive without tourists, tourism feeds off the experience and can become dependent on it. To write only about one subject while ignoring the alluring intricacies of the other would feel worse than pearling on a perfect wave. Neoliberal forces affect both surfing and tourism, but their personalities, if they were to possess one, remain at odds with each other in their purest, non-commercialized forms. For these fundamental reasons, El Salvador's emergence as a wavetopia raises several issues.

Using El Tunco as a case study, this thesis examines how the global surf industry, with U.S. retail sales currently valued at $6.24 billion, affects El Salvador's economic and cultural landscape.[13] Grounds for this project concern tourism, property rights, capital

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[11]El Salvador. September 2009 online report from Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. U.S. Department of State. www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2033.htm.

[12] ©

[13] Surf Industry Manufacturers Association. "Surf Industry's Footwear, Wetsuits and Board Categories Lead Growth in 2010." Retail distribution study press release. July 8, 2011.

investment, the aftermath of neoliberal reforms, localism, surfing as a sport, professional opportunities based on gender, and the ambiguous surfing identity at large. Here, the word "identity" is preferred rather than "culture" or "subculture." As a concept, surf scholars Nick Ford and David Brown define subculture as an "explicit lifestyle…[that] connotes a shared category and a commitment which may be potentially tentative and variable."[14] A lifestyle requires human life to validate its meaning. It cannot remain explicit if the commitment permits uncertainty. Ford and Brown's definition creates space for individuals who may not surf yet appreciate and adopt the sense of freedom that the physical act -- no matter where or how it is performed -- represents. Surfers often debate the relevance of the terms "subculture" and "culture" once "industry" manipulates their essence for financial gain. They argue each term does not encapsulate the intricate dynamics of surfing itself. Surfing can exist without a subculture; however, its identity, marketable and ever changing, is a principal reason why people who have never stepped foot in the ocean realize it exists. Some individuals, therefore, would agree their shared category and commitment -- in essence, their particular motivations and interests -- drastically differ from those who see surfing only through a neoliberal, capitalistic lens. Thus, identity minimizes the individual's impact, allowing for a realm that is more tentative, fluid and variable. Subculture and culture, on the other hand, may not.

From this philosophical outlook, two central arguments emerge. First, surf tourism serves as a key sector in a depressed Salvadoran economy wherever waves are in demand. In thirty-four recorded interviews, nearly everyone, including individuals who did not surf, favored the idea that the activity plays an instrumental role in generating income for the local and national economy. Ethnographic and field research conducted for three weeks in August 2010 indicates that property values have nearly tripled in five years, particularly along coastal towns closest to San Salvador, the point of entry for most surf travelers. Matters pertaining to

[14] 2006, 60.

land ownership and beach access have intensified social tensions because the majority of Salvadoreños in this area are without property rights. As a result of commercial development, a class-based hierarchy has emerged within El Salvador's tourism industry, as well as within sports, including surfing.

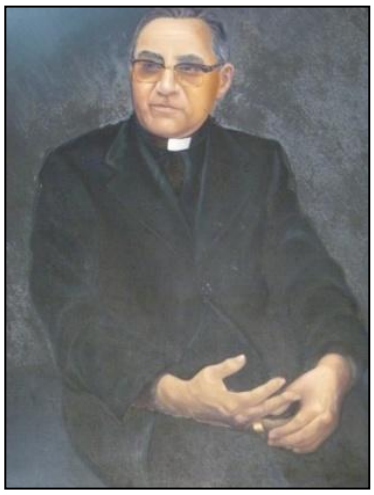
Second, the country's social actors engage in a three-tiered process in which many appropriate, reject, and continue to create a surfing identity on their own terms. Material acquired from archival-influenced and ethnographic-based research complement these arguments. Theorists who have influenced my interpretation include Walter Benjamin, Daniel Defert, Henri Lefebvre, Aihwa Ong, Eric Ishiwata, Joseph Arbena and Pierre Bourdieu. Via four arenas of examination, this study confronts how wave-oriented entrepreneurs have invaded and altered life in El Tunco. It also forecasts the commercial and cultural fate of this particular Central American coastal town, and what the future may hold for others experiencing similar changes. Beyond the scope of creative non-fiction, published scholarly analyses dissecting the influence of the global surf industry on specific Central American countries are nonexistent. The qualitative data presented should fuel discussions and promote more awareness among individuals who recognize surfing as a globalized lifestyle, sport and business.

Chapter 1: The Central American 'Wavetopia'

1.1: A Brief Background of El Salvador's Civil War

At various points throughout El Salvador's history, words and phrases such as "oppressed", "communist threat", "landowning elite", "dangerous", and "violent" have characterized the country's political rhetoric. These descriptions were particularly prevalent when Oscar Arnulfo Romero was named Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Salvador. Beyond his ecclesiastical duties, Romero, who assumed the role as archbishop on February 23, 1977, advocated human rights and supported the poor and the marginalized.[15]

Photographs 1.1: A portrait and headstone of Archbishop Romero are located outside Sala Memorial de Mártires at Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas, also known as "la UCA."





In a homily dated August 12, 1979, he proclaimed:

> Yo denuncio sobre todo la absolutización de la riqueza. Este es el gran mal de El Salvador: la riqueza, la propiedad privada como un absoluto intocable y ¡ay del que toque ese alambre de alta tensión, se quema! No es justo que unos pocos tengan todo y lo absoluticen de tal manera que nadie lo pueda tocar, y la mayoría marginada se está muriendo de hambre. / I denounce above everything the absolutism of wealth. This is the great evil of El Salvador: the wealth, the private property as an untouchable absolute -- and, hey, anyone touching that high-voltage wire is burned! It is not fair that a few have

[15] Cavada 1999, 11.

> everything and declare absolutely and in such a way that no one may question the way things are; and the marginalized majority is dying of hunger.[16]

Romero's outspoken nature eventually led to his assassination. As relations between the Salvadoran army and General Humberto Romero's regime soured in 1979, the U.S. government drafted a policy toward El Salvador. A declassified secret memo from the Office of Central American Affairs in the Department of State to Ambassador Vaky dated October 4, 1979, stated:

> When the SCC [Safety Checklist Contractor] recommended August 2 that we undertake a quid pro quo policy of economic and security assistance in return for human rights improvements and progress toward elections, it was assumed: … that successful democratization offered the best hope of avoiding insurrectional violence and the coming of power of a radical regime unacceptable to the US and hostile to its interests.

Committed to the belief that a free and fair election would curtail the growing power of leftist revolutionaries, the U.S. government established grounds for intervention. Democracy was not the only issue at stake, however. The possibility of losing market control of El Salvador's import and export trade -- including textiles and apparel, ethyl alcohol, coffee, sugar, medicines, iron and steel products, tuna, light manufacturing, and paper products -- also influenced the United States' foreign policy. A loss of El Salvador's trade might affect the attitudes of other Central American governments and left-wing movements. The U.S. risked losing some trade but even worse, widening the opportunities for left-wing resistance to its policies in Latin America. Central America became especially important to U.S. policy after a coalition led by the Sandinistas overthrew Nicaragua's long-reigning dictator, Anastasio Somoza Debayle. As candidate, former U.S. President Ronald Reagan had promised to roll back any left-wing victories in the region. In essence, Reagan's approach toward El Salvador congealed Karl Marx's theory that the entire system of capitalist relations equaled a base for market relations. No "radical regime" of Salvadoran communists would

[16] Ibid 1999, 29.

support a system that pigeonholed their country on the global market's periphery as a primary exporter of inexpensive goods. Political meddling from the United States seemed inevitable based on evolving "trouble signs." According to the memo:

> Within the past week, we have seen repeated indications that many of our assumptions are no longer valid. The signs include:
>
> -- reporting from several reliable sources that [President Carlos Umberto] Romero may believe that (a.) progress to date on the electoral process is sufficient to earn US approval and support and (b.) that the US has no choice but to support the GOES [Government of El Salvador] as the only alternative to a leftist government; …
> -- indications that the leftist terrorists have made a quantum jump in tactics and capacities, and could possibly prevent an election from taking place.

If, as philosophical linguist Noam Chomsky once argued, the "whole history of the United States in Latin America is one of destroying popular movements or crushing any move to independence and installing brutal and vicious dictatorships by which they keep the region under control," El Salvador's political future seemed bleak.[17] Social conditions deteriorated following the assassination of Archbishop Romero on March 24, 1980, in Capilla del Hospital La Divina Providencia. Incensed by his murder, Salvadoran leftist parties joined forces with five distinct guerilla groups to create Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) in October 1980. FMLN supporters endorsed the Marxist notion that capitalism was at the core in creating alienations and inequalities. This, Anne Simpson writes:

> …drew together peasant unions, teachers' unions, students, small traders, slum dwellers, the radical Church, high school students, market workers, professional groups, the textiles and food federations, [and] transport unions into one centrally coordinated body.[18]

[17] Dieterich 1999, 40.
[18] 1983, 894. These groups included: Fuerzas Populares de Liberación; Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo; Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación; Resistencia Nacional; and Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamericanos.

A month later, oppositional forces abducted and murdered six leaders of the newly formed FMLN and dumped their bodies on the side of a road.[19] A culmination of political tensions, exacerbated by these deaths, triggered twelve years of relentless violence and led to a massacre of nearly 1000 individuals near the village of El Mozote.[20] In the words of journalist Mark Danner:

> [T]he ultimate sanction that the Americans could brandish -- turning off the aid spigot -- threatened to hurt the Americans themselves as much as it would hurt the Salvadorans, since the American fear of a Communist El Salvador taking its place alongside Sandinista Nicaragua had become overriding. Even during the final months of the Carter Administration, this underlying reality became embarrassingly evident, when President [Jimmy] Carter, after cutting off aid in response to the murder of [four] American churchwomen, rushed to restore it only a few weeks later, in the face of the rebels' 'final offensive.'[21]

Just as the FMLN formed, outgoing President Carter authorized $5 million in emergency aid to El Salvador, his administration dubbing the country's political plight "a textbook case of armed aggression by communist powers."[22] Fretting over the prospect of further communist expansion in Central America, U.S. President Ronald Reagan endorsed El Salvador's right-wing military leaders, who funneled money to death squads. In 1993, the Truth Commission for El Salvador reported that death squads -- "state agents or those acting under the direction of state agents" -- committed more than 85 percent of the "serious acts of violence."[23] The commission also revealed Major Roberto d'Aubuisson, director of the death squads, had called for Romero's assassination. Prior to the report's release, Reagan and his administration believed supporting "GOES" (the state agent) would derail communism and "prevent the kind of leftist takeover seen in Cuba and Nicaragua."[24] Scholars like Chomsky,

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[19] Justice & The Generals. www.pbs.org/wnet/justice/elsalvador_timeline.html.
[20] Several declassified documents in the Digital National Security Archives describe the United States' role in this particular massacre as well.
[21] 1993, 40.
[22] Justice & The Generals. www.pbs.org/wnet/justice/elsalvador_timeline.html.
[23] Wood 2003, 14.
[24] Enemies of War. El Salvador: Civil War. www.pbs.org/itvs/enemiesofwar/elsalvador2.html www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2033.htm

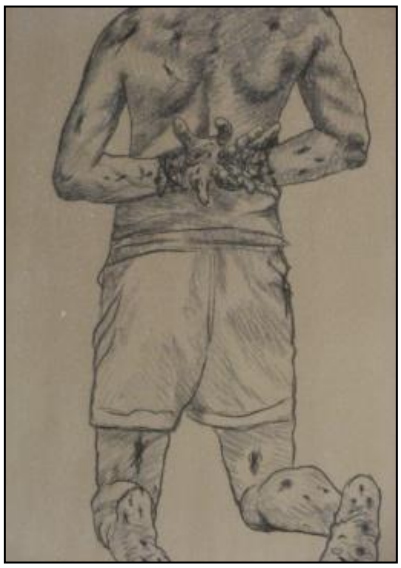
on the other hand, maintained the United States was merely behaving as the superpower "afraid of small countries." Conversing with Heinz Dieterich seven years after the Peace Accords, Chomsky says:

> The weaker the country, the greater the threat -- because the greater the adversity under which the success is reached, the more significant the result. Therefore, we had this consistent exhibition of quite extreme savagery and violence directed against tiny and insignificant countries that could be a source of infection, that could be 'rotten apples' that would infect the barrel.[25]

Between 1980 and 1992, the U.S. government pumped more than $6 billion in aid into El Salvador. After the brutal assassinations of six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter, U.S. congressional support for the Salvadoran regime -- "a coalition of military hard-liners and economic elites" -- abruptly ended.[26]

Photograph 1.2: An unidentified artist captures a boiling point of religious and political tensions in El Salvador. Most noticeable is the blood of six assassinated Jesuits that gushes from their torsos over the land toward a member of the death squads.





[25] 1999, 36.
[26] Wood 2003, 26-29.

Photograph 1.3: Inside Sala Memorial de Mártires at la UCA, the heavy realities of civil war emanate from two of artist RHRE2a85's sketches of the tortured nameless.



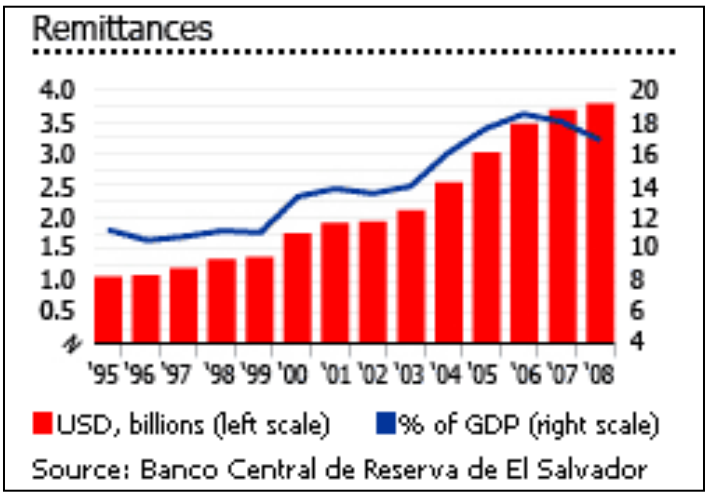
At least 220,000 Salvadoreños fled to the United States between 1979 and 1987. Regardless of their motivations to emigrate, by 1988, more than one million Salvadoreños resided there, accounting for nearly 20 percent of El Salvador's estimated population of five million inhabitants at the time.[27] Apart from providing financial aid to the country, the U.S. government did little to atone for its funding of death squads. Halfway through El Salvador's war, the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.[28] Salvadoreños who had been residing without proper documentation in the United States prior to January 2, 1982, were granted amnesty. Those who entered after faced the threat of deportation to El Salvador, which experienced an alarming rise in U.S.-bred street-gang activity once the war ended. "The deportation of tens of thousands of Salvadorans from the United States since the late 1990s…helped spur the growth and development of these gangs," particularly Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Mara 18 (M-18).[29] With roots based in East Los

[27] Montes 1988, 110.
[28] The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 is also known as the Simpson-Mazzoli Act.
[29] International Human Rights Clinic: Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School 2007, 7.

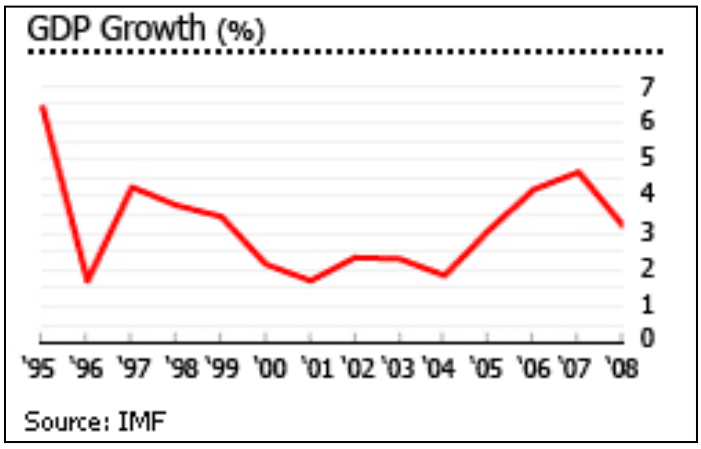
Angeles, MS-13 evolved into a vicious, transnational crime syndicate, operating primarily out of several U.S. cities with a large Hispanic population from Mexico and El Salvador.[30]

Many Salvadoreños who managed to remain in the United States worked and sent money home. Remittances more than tripled from approximately $1 billion in 1995 to $3.75 billion in 2008. Three years post-war, they accounted for only 8 percent of El Salvador's gross domestic product (GDP). By 2006, however, that changed, as they comprised approximately

Graph 1.1: At the onset of the U.S. financial crisis in 2008, remittances dipped slight, comprising less of El Salvador's GDP than in 2006.



Graph 1.2: In 2009, remittances accounted for nearly 16 percent of El Salvador's gross domestic product.



[30] Del Barco, 2009.

19 percent of the GDP. The figure dipped slightly in 2009, totaling 16 percent of the GDP. Remittances undoubtedly increased Salvadoreños' purchasing power at home and abroad. Yet they also demonstrated El Salvador's GDP growth depended on external forces. Greater income enabled them to shuttle back and forth between the United States and El Salvador without holding an allegiance to or identifying with either place. Anthropologist Aihwa Ong describes this phenomenon as "flexible citizenship," a valuable component tied to the cultural production of surfing in El Salvador. Working abroad in U.S. hubs of economic activity such as Los Angeles exposed Salvadoreños to a consumer-based culture (including images of surfing, even though it is unlikely many of them rode waves) engrained in the identity of the West Coast. Beyond the demonstration effect that foreign surfers had on immigrants to the U.S., it is possible a tiny handful of Salvadoreños learned how to surf on their own, sharing their skills and resources whenever they made a trip "home." In the first trimester of 2011, of the 267,945 tourists who visited El Salvador, 48,635 identified themselves as Salvadoreño, but did not reside in the country, according to CORSATUR.

Apart from a rise in Salvadoreños visitors, several other notable post-war trends occurred in El Salvador. One involved a reduction in infant mortality between 1990 and 2009. In 1990, there were 66 deaths per 1,000 births; by 2009, the figure decreased by 50 percent to 33 deaths per 1,000 births.[31] Furthermore, between 1991 and 2007, the percentage of El Salvador's rural population living in poverty dropped from 52.4 percent to 36.2 percent. The national percentage decreased from 37.1 percent to 18.9 percent over the same sixteen years.[32] The amount of children who completed a full cycle of primary education also soared from 41 percent in 1991 to 90.9 percent between 2006 and 2007.[33] These figures demonstrate the

[31] United Nations Development Programme 2010, 170. The age accounts for children five years old and younger.
[32] Ibid 2010, 199.
[33] Ibid 2010, 170.

quality of life was improving in El Salvador in ways that development agencies recognize and celebrate.

Along with remittances, revenue from tourism began to play an instrumental role in keeping the nation's economy afloat. Of the $516.63 million total income from tourism in 2009, North America ranked second behind Central America as El Salvador's principal source of tourist revenue, as 371,280 North Americans identified tourism as their reason for entering the country. Of those travelers, 327,314 -- or 88 percent -- came from the United States, contributing on average $75.50 per day to the economy.[34] Despite a high rate of homicide throughout the 2000s -- 41.2 per 100,000 in 2004; 55.5 per 100,000 residents in 2005; 42.3 per 100,000 in 2007 -- editors of the ubiquitous guidebook *Lonely Planet* named El Salvador one of the ten "hottest" countries to visit in 2010, calling specific attention to its surf. The unidentified author asserts:

> El Salvador sneaks up on you: in lefty lounge bars in San Salvador, at sobering museums and war memorials, and along lush cloud-forest trails; it's a place of remarkable warmth and intelligence, made all the more appealing for being so unexpected. … [T]he war ended almost 20 years ago, and crime, while serious, is almost exclusively played out between rival gangs; tourists are virtually never involved. And though El Salvador has fewer protected areas than its neighbors, you get them practically to yourself -- including pristine forests, active volcanoes, and sparkling lakes. The only place you might find a crowd is on Punta Roca, El Salvador's most famous surfing spot -- it happens to be one of the best right point breaks in the world, yet is a ghost town compared to lesser swells in Costa Rica and elsewhere.[35]

1.2: Transforming into a Wavetopia

Lonely Planet's complimentary description bears little resemblance to one that appeared in *Surfing*'s 1977 October/November world travel issue. In an article titled "Sea

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[34] All figures in data set provided by Dirección General de Migración y Corporación Salvadoreña de Turismo. Source: Banco Central de Reserva.

[35] *Lonely Planet Best in Travel* 2010. After perusing *Prensa Gráfica*, one of El Salvador's daily newspapers, it seems athletes and residents perceive Costa Rica as the quintessential surf-oriented country in Central America -- something they hope to challenge. See: "Surf: Bajo la Sombra de Costa Rica." www.laprensagrafica.com/deportes/otros-deportes/68497-surf-bajo-la-sombra-de-costa-rica.html.

Snakes, Belly Aches, Right Breaks and the Last Roundup in Central America," Australian Peter Townend -- who nabbed the International Professional Surfers first world title in 1976 -- ventured to El Salvador courtesy of "an all-expense-paid-trip." His article served as published evidence that regardless of a country's political instability, a traveling man could conquer its surf.[36] From Townend's standpoint, El Salvador existed mainly to quench a desire for perfect waves; thus, wave quality took precedence in his eyes. "However, accustomed as I am to the perfect points of my home," by the fifth paragraph, he sighs, "I'd virtually seen it all before, and I'd really been expecting a whole lot more."[37]

The cavalier traveler never considered how a "dummy warm-up surfing session for the shooting of the new Warner Brothers production *Big Wednesday*" or the "constant flow of traveling surfers," which included "East Coasters and Texans, the wave-hungry Brazilians, and numerous California transplants," could aggravate Salvadoreños living in a stratified nation on the brink of civil war.[38] Instead, Townend concludes the journey by writing: "An uneasy feeling of political stability was evident on every street corner. The military oppression of the people makes you glad you don't have to call this place home (yes home!)."[39] Yet the more dangerous and non-inviting the country, the better suited it was for his travel narrative. The more simplistic the style of prose, the broader the audience it reached, regardless of whether or not a reader surfed.

Townend's tone and lack of political insight provides a historical reference point in surf-oriented literature for understanding the roots of localism in El Salvador's beach towns. In this particular period, El Salvador's past, according to the logic of German philosopher

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[36] 85.
[37] 1976, 86.
[38] Ibid.
[39] *Surfing*, 90. This unnamed country where Townend and crew are surfing in Central America is El Salvador for three reasons. 1. Pictures of the surfing terrain and waves mirror the break of Punta Roca in La Libertad. 2. He interacts with Bob Rotherham -- father of El Salvador's surfing icon Jimmy Rotherham and founder of Punta Roca Restaurant and Hotel. 3.) Townend's concluding observation about political instability is timely for El Salvador given the year he wrote this article.

Walter Benjamin, is "the object of a construction whose place is formed not in homogenous and empty time, but in that which is fulfilled by the here-and-now [Jetzeit]."[40] Here-and-now, only El Salvador's surf -- not its people or political situation -- ultimately matters to the writer.[41] The here-and-now also produces very distinctive perspectives at various points in time. *Surfing*'s writer portrays El Salvador as an undeveloped hellhole, where the waves are mediocre and weak travelers surely will perish; writes Townend:

> Did I say paradise? Wait a minute, PT, let's not forget a few other necessities that are absolutely imperative to survival, such as a cast-iron stomach for the local gourmet delights and the ability to do without the simplest conveniences we are all accustomed to.[42]

In *Lonely Planet*, however, three decades later El Salvador is transformed into a commodifiable wavetopia. Both male and female foreigners with disposable income are encouraged to come explore war memorials, eat pupusas and surf uncrowded waves. Instrumental elements -- attractions, food and activities -- that comprise a touristic package show bona fide potential.

Constructing a timeline based solely on travel literature and surfing articles about El Salvador would suggest changes in perception were more gradual than abrupt. Seven years post-Peace Accords, for instance, *Surfer* writer Skip Snead ranks El Salvador fourth out of five on a list of "The World's Most Dangerous Surf Trips -- where the environment on land is

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[40] Benjamin 1940, "On the Concept of History: XIV."

[41] In an interview with Bob Rotherham on August 23, 2010, the restaurateur confirmed Townend stayed and surfed the breaks of La Libertad for almost a month. "This is something that's kinda cool," he notes. "Hollywood came to El Salvador. They filmed a movie here. I've never seen the movie, a surf movie. Ever heard of *Big Wednesday*? …Oh yeah. We had Jan-Michael Vincent here. I met Oliver Stone. John Milius. They all had their Hollywood sluts with 'em. They had a helicopter. They had -- let's see, the surfers at the time -- they had almost all the famous surfers in the world. … And they never really used any of the footage because the union wouldn't let 'em use it because they used non-union photographers. … Yeah, and they spent a lot of money down here. … [T]here were like parties every night; they'd make this big bash [with] ten-gallon margaritas. It never stopped. Day and night."

[42] 1976, 86.

more perilous than sharks, bad food or over-protective locals."[43] Drawing from information in Robert Pelton and Coskun Aral's work *World's Most Dangerous Places*, Snead writes:

> Surfers have been checking into this tiny patch of Central America for years. Some have returned with great tales of surf, some with only bad cases of food poisoning. But there's more to this small country than meets the eye. Flying into San Salvador is a major headache. Once off the plane, look out. 75 homicides were reported in the first fifteen days of January '94 (sure it was a few years ago, but it's still scary). Most of the killings were linked to car-jackings, although sex crimes were right up there, too. The consular section of the embassy sees approximately two to three Americans per week who claim to be the victims of assaults and robberies. Hard to imagine so much killing going on in such beautiful surroundings. …
> **Stay Away From: crime, political situations, land mines, the "Maras", death squads, carrying valuables in public places, some of the food.**

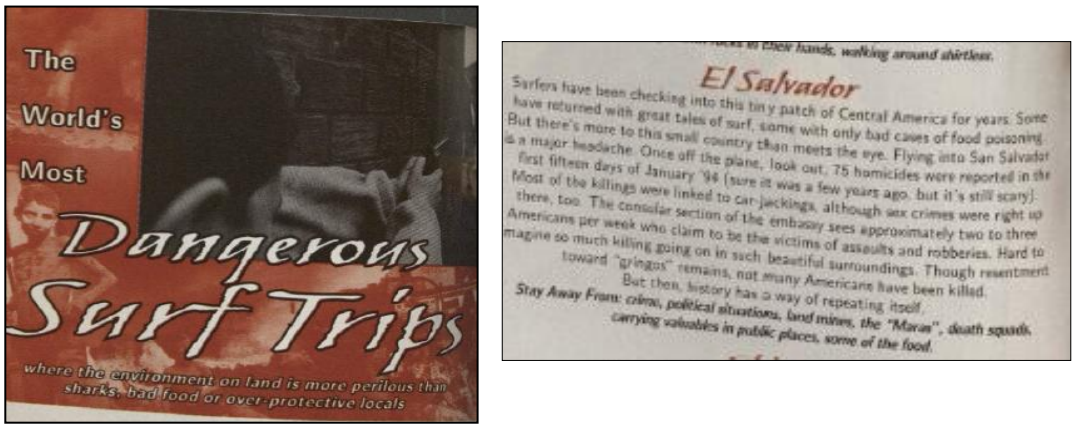


Figure 1.2: Writer Skip Snead outlines the most hazardous surf trips in a 1999 issue of *Surfer*. Photocopied image taken at the San Diego State University Surfing Special Collections.

Although his blurb mimics Townend's pre-war travel piece, dependent on generalities more than substance, it parallels a notable post-war trend occurring in El Salvador. Of the 177, 343 North American tourists who arrived in 1999, 143,614 -- or 80.9 percent -- were from the United States. This figure represented a 44.7 percent increase from 1995, when only 99,229 Americans visited.[44] In part, an overall rise in tourism-related activity explained how a country

[43] *Surfer*, not to be confused with *Surfing*, is a U.S.-based magazine also committed to all things ocean-oriented.
[44] Data set provided by Dirección General de Migración y Corporación Salvadoreña de Turismo. Currently, there is no accurate way of determining how many of these reported tourists surfed.

such as El Salvador could suddenly necessitate the "surf trip" label in a magazine. More people were traveling there -- including Salvadoreños who had fled their home country during the civil war and wanted to return to their homeland.

Snead's depiction fits within the framework for Benjamin's concept of history. It resurrects the complex nature of El Salvador's image, that being an "irretrievable picture of the past, which threatens to disappear with every present, which does not recognize itself as meant in it."[45] A resurgence in tourism suggested wounds suffered during the civil war were healing. Even so, Snead's blurb demonstrates that neither foreign surfers nor Salvadoreños would reject the country's past. Rather, the piece merely enlarges "the true picture of the past [that] *whizzes* by."[46] In a twenty-two-year blink, Townend's "fully qualified survival run" transformed into Snead's potential but risky surf trip.[47] This perceived change implies that "[o]nly as a picture, which flashes its final farewell in the moment of its recognizability, is the past to be held fast."[48] Hence, the writer elects to underscore data from 1994, which only reinforces El Salvador's dangerous aura. By doing so, foreign surfers do not yet saturate the breaks with better waves.

It makes sense why Snead warns anti-gringo sentiments persist, and history "has a way of repeating itself." His uninviting invite doubles as a reluctant surrendering and acknowledgement that change is at bay. With war and political instability no longer viable threats, El Salvador re-establishes an attractive position on the global wave radar. Surfers could return to the Central American wavetopia. If *Surfer*'s writers did not report the country was back in surf-tourism business, other people surely would, perhaps in a manner that fared poorly for fans of un-congested waves. There were ways to delay the aftermath of neoliberal reforms -- that is, cheap labor, expensive eats, increased inequality, a decreased role of the

[45] Benjamin, 1940. "On the Concept of History, V."
[46] Ibid. V.
[47] 86.
[48] Benjamin 1940, "On the Concept of History, V."

state, and self-serving enterprises such as the omnipresent, foreign-owned surf camp. Editors and journalists could ignore El Salvador as a prime surfing destination, or they could recollect its history of violence whenever surf was discussed. For nearly twenty-five years, these two particular approaches kept El Salvador as an "open secret" within the global surf community and mass media.[49]

1.2.1: The Power of Punta Roca's Neocolonial Surf Narrative

In Jack London's famous 1907 article, "Riding the South Seas of Surf," scores of American and British readers learned about Hawaii's surfscape via an arrogant tourist's perspective. His narrative is a projection of his masculinity: "This is what it is: a royal sport for the natural kings of the earth."[50] Throughout his piece, London incites a competitive energy, conveying a sense of "otherness" that conflicts with Benedict Anderson's idea of an imagined community. If, via Anderson's perspective, surfers come "to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves through print language," there is one major flaw in past narratives.[51] The female surfer seldom plays a groundbreaking or reoccurring role.

Popularized narratives similar to London's that allude to the birth or boom of surfing in exotic spaces often follow a neocolonial trajectory. Contemporary surf scholars should consider such a plot hackneyed and subject it to rigorous analysis whenever it begins with an adventurous, male wanderer who rents a board or arrives with quiver in tow in search of an endless summer. Even more predictable is a narrative in which said male "discovers" pristine areas with surf-worthy waves and rejoices when no one else appears to be riding them. Simply by surfing these empty locations, he assumes he is introducing the pastime to locals,

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[49] Wilkinson 2011.
[50] 2009, 137. For a first-hand account from 1788 that describes how "at this diversion [surfing] both sexes are Excellent, and some are so expert [as] to stand on their boards to the Surf breaks…" read "The Journal of James Morrison, Boatswain's Mate of the Bounty" published in 1935 and featured in Patrick Moser's *Pacific Passages: An Anthology of Surf Writing*.
[51] 1983, 77.

resurrecting an abandoned interest or modernizing the way in which they have connected with the ocean's waves. He regards locals as impressionable receivers of the activity; thus, their skills are inferior and require improvement. Excluding certain spaces such as Hawaii or the Pacific Islands, some scholars call this process a touristic demonstration effect. Historian Joseph Arbena dubs it "diffusion," and suggests a variety of carriers transport the sport from its source area to a new home.[52]

Diffusion can mean that as the dream of the adventurer's endless summer fades, the intrepid traveler abandons his used equipment for the sake of convenience, budget, or good will toward the host society. Rather than leave, he might consider the area's multifaceted potential, aware that everything, particularly land, is affordable by his standards. If man chooses to stay and settle, he searches for ways that make the transition to assimilation easier. Marriage, investment and entrepreneurship are attractive options. Pursuing such avenues consequently disrupt the dynamics of any beach town with accessible, quality waves. Over time, Arbena writes, diffusion merges into the larger process of globalization, of which sport (in this case, surfing) is only one element.[53]

In the 1977 *Surfing* world travel issue, Townend's experience, which incorporates his version of surfing's history in La Libertad, is a classic example of the neocolonial narrative. He views himself as an explorer who already has ridden waves of "the Mecca." His literary skills and privilege to travel affect how he perceives Salvadoreños:

> The local native surfers are also into surfing quite heavily and are improving rapidly -- their styles markedly reminiscent of the surfing transplants. Carlos is a hot switchfoot who, when surfing, is a master of the point and rides more than his share of waves (he'll give an all-tooth grin and take off on you down the line). He has plans to tackle Hawaii and hopes to start in a few contests, but I'm sure he'll learn in time that, once there, you only ride your share. Alfonso surfs the reef located just out in front of his parents spacious

[52] 2000, 88.
[53] Ibid.

> beachside house, and Michu is the winner of the contest that was held here last year.
>
> Carlos and Michu's chances of being able to finance a surf trip to the Mecca are unlikely, though, as they are common people, unlike Alfonso, who has the ways and means and -- as most of the weekend surfers do -- comes from a well-off family. This is definitely a bonus to a surfing career in these generally undeveloped and overpopulated countries.[54]

Townend's interactions reveal four notable points about the history of surfing and localism in El Salvador: Before civil war pulverized society, the "play impulse" had morphed into a competitive urge. Contests existed, and Salvadoreños participated in them. Within each community, social status determined the range of opportunities "common people" like Carlos and Michu could pursue related to a potential career in surfing. Local Salvadoreños assumed the top spot in the country's own wave hierarchy, which did not correspond with those of other places, such as the Mecca. Finally, hostility on land had yet to contaminate interactions between local and non-local surfers in the water, which is why Carlos sported an "all-tooth grin" as he dropped in on visitors.[55] Establishing a cast of expatriates responsible for popularizing surfing in the port of La Libertad, home to El Salvador's notable Punta Roca, Townend writes:

> Many of the early wanderers found permanent abodes and methods of maintaining a laid-back lifestyle in this locale. Among those we met were Henning the Peanut Butter King; Bob Rotherham (an early Latin adventurer whose beachside café overlooks the long, winding point and fishing pier); Bob Levy, who conducts the surfing trade and, with no surfboards built locally, buys boards from surfers on the move; and a master of the local lifestyle, Stokesberry, with his prime-point property.

Thirty-three years later, the names of Rotherham and Levy remain synonymous with La Libertad's surfing history. Researcher Blair Tom notes the two men began traveling throughout Central America in the late 1960s in an article titled "In Search of Libertad" for the

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[54] 86, 90.

[55] To "drop in" on someone means to ignore the basic etiquette of surfing, and take off on a wave in front of someone who has the right-of-way to ride it.

online publication theInertia.com (a surefire example of how Web-based platforms for surf news have evolved since the 1970s).

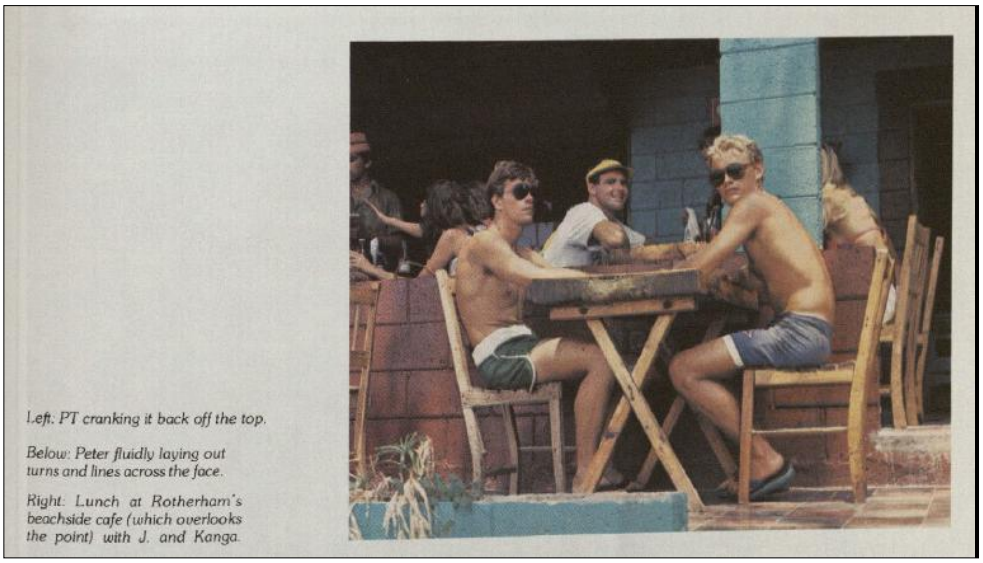


Figure 1.3: Two tourists take in the scenery. The caption alongside this photo that appeared in the 1979 world travel issue of *Surfing* reads: "Lunch at Rotherham's beachside café (which overlooks the point) with J and Kanga."[56] Photocopied image taken at the San Diego State University Surfing Special Collections.

Tom also writes:

> Their stories of migration to El Salvador reveal a unique perspective on the wider history of Central America. … Don Roberto Rotherham exudes the aura of a man who found what he was looking for, as he settled into La Libertad by opening a restaurant, starting a family, and becoming an integral part of the local community. He and his son, Jimmy, run two hotels and restaurants and have a network of local surfers to guide surf tourists. They have not only witnessed the bloody civil war and subsequent street gang explosion, but also the beautiful evolution and growth of surf culture in their home.

In a slow departure from the corporatized mainstays *Surfing* and *Surfer*, Tom's musings read like a thesis prospectus. Yet his description about the port during the civil war contradicts what Rotherham expressed in an interview with me, for he claims:[57]

> Kidnappings, missiles flying overhead, and guerrilla ammunition in the front yard are all colorful pieces of the surfer experience in La Libertad, and it's hard to imagine paddling out in the middle of armed combat, but there were

[56] 91.
[57] This interview, referenced earlier regarding the movie *Big Wednesday*, occurred on August 23, 2010.

> guys getting shacked while AKs were firing and mortars were booming in the jungle.

According to Rotherham, however:

> R: You see, during the war, La Libertad was very, very prosperous.
> B: Yeah, that's what everyone I've interviewed has said.
> R: And, it's because, geographically, we're the closest beach to the capital. So people could come down here, eat and drink, and get home before dark. And after twelve years of war, it's sorta the same. It's just kinda starting to get to the point where people are coming here and starting to stay late at night.

In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Rotherham also recalls: "'Even during the war, the danger level was not too high. … This was probably the most *tranquilo* zone in the country.'"[58]

One of Tom's artistic intentions is to establish a setting in which not even the severest of civil conflicts can deter man's desire to surf. Before, during and after the war, he argues surfing becomes part of national culture, described by Frantz Fanon as "the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence."[59] With legitimacy at stake, responsibility rests on Tom as the storyteller. According to Fanon:

> The storyteller once more gives free rein to his imagination; he makes innovations and he creates a work of art. … The storyteller replies to the expectant people by successive approximations, and makes his way, apparently alone but in fact helped on by his public, toward the seeking out of new patterns, that is to say national patterns. … As for dramatizations, it is no longer placed on the plane of the troubled intellectual and his tormented conscience. By losing its characteristics of despair and revolt, the drama becomes part of the common lot of the people and forms part of an action in preparation or already in progress.[60]

Acquiescent rather than "tormented" may be a more accurate description of the researcher's conscience. Throughout the remainder of Tom's brief narrative, the absence of details from his interviews prevents him from revealing "how the interactions of visiting surfers have evolved

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[58] Wilkinson 2011.
[59] 1994, 154.
[60] 1994, 155-156.

over time and influenced the cultural dialog[ue]." His journalistic synopsis, which aims "to create a narrative history of surf exploration and assimilation in Central America," merely echoes what Townend had written three decades earlier, save the attempt at a scholarly intervention. Thus, a masculine model of cultural hegemony prevails. Similar to what Raka Shome and Radha S. Hegde theorize about approaches to communication, Tom's "…postcolonial connection is a powerful way of restoring the macro structures and the historical trajectories that frame contemporary social relations within the global/local nexus."[61] The voices of locals do not guide his introduction; Rotherham's does. Readers who crave analyses and introspections are left to nibble on the standardized opening that features the same players and the familiar story. Such is the fate of La Libertad's written inception of surf tourism, corroborated by Rotherham himself.

Aware that an economic opportunity existed, in 1974 the man who "just kinda go[es] wherever the wind blows" opened El Restaurante Punta Roca. He calls his venture "the first option of something different" than what existed in La Libertad. In theory, Rotherham explains, where there were waves and gringos, there should exist a restaurant:

> By 1974, we were starting to get a little bit of a gringo population here that would come in to surf. It was also a time there was no Internet or anything, so the guys who came down, they knew the surf season was in between, say March and the end of October into November. …
>
> … There was a need for somebody to put some gringo food. I started off with hamburgers, French toast, and pancakes and omelets. And then I had a combo of Salvadoranean food and gringo food. And as the war started progressing, and the gringos started disappearing more and more, I just shifted almost all to Salvadoranean- type meals that appealed to Salvadoraneans in a gringo-like way. Not greasy -- a lot of things on the grill. And it was successful. I gave people an option as far as food goes.
> B: And it was affordable, too?
> R: Oh yeah.

[61] 2002, 249.

A strategically located enterprise and English-speaking dueño are not the only factors attributed to La Libertad's growth as a globally recognized surfing destination. The Internet has played just as instrumental a role, which Rotherham quickly points out:

> Now we've got what I classify as Internet surfers [who] come because the guy up in the sky tells them that there are gonna be good waves, you know what I mean? So you'll have an invasion of surfers when there's gonna be a swell, and then all of a sudden they disappear. And they don't even really -- a lot of them don't even mix with the local people. They just come and surf for three of four days and leave. They go from their hotel, to the waves and back, and some of them don't even walk over to the pier, you know what I mean? In the old days, they would stay, God, minimum probably two weeks to see if they could get some waves. It was a different kind of surf culture than we have today 'cause of all this technology. You know, somebody gets on the Internet and says, "Well, next week there's gonna be waves." They buy a ticket, you know; it doesn't matter what it costs. The focus point in this town for the tourist is a wave. And that's what they come here for.

It is uncomfortable to trace Rotherham's place in El Salvador's surf history for several reasons. He is knowledgeable, nice, expressive, and funny; he surfs better at sixty years of age than most of the young men do. He also offers a savory homemade meal on the house, considers himself Salvadoreño, and is respected throughout the country. Most locals whom I interviewed would not comment about him, especially with a tape recorder involved. Yet in the academic realm, it is impossible to ignore the character Rotherham becomes in the cartography of neocolonial surf knowledge. Regardless of any self-imposed affiliation, he belongs in the comprador class.[62] The comprador class generally exists at the site of exploitation and facilitates the interaction of a foreign elite and domestic reality to the former's benefit. They may prosper even as locals suffer a decline in circumstance. In this case, Punta Roca is the site and its prolific waves are the source of profiteering. Owning a car enhanced Rotherham's own social mobility and presence in the community. In describing his journey that eventually brought him to La Libertad, he shares:

[62] In Spanish *comprador* means buyer.

> And so…basically from Petacalco, we went to Puerto Escondido, through Oaxaca, and then we made our way down through Guatemala, where we ran into a horse and rider. We killed the horse but not the rider. And my nickname here in town is Caballo. And that's because after we ran over the horse and got here to La Libertad, where the big dent in the car was, we painted "caballo" on there. So every time I'd drive by, people would go, "Caballo."

Rotherham's income included enough starting capital to purchase property in El Salvador, and he arrived with skills: a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Miami and experience from a six-month stint as a shop teacher. All of these elements enabled the wanderer to establish a foundation of economic opportunity geared solely around him. These elements also facilitated an informal center, later dubbed an official sector, initially deficient of local Salvadoreños, which means a sense of continuity is not formally established. Instead, to acquire the necessary capital and learn the skills of "service" -- pivotal to the lasting success of a fledgling enterprise -- most Salvadoreños, with the exception of the land-owning elite, are expected to venture elsewhere. Many of them did during the civil war, says Rotherham:

> And because of the war, it's like a lot of people migrated to the U.S., and after the war, they came back, and they brought a lot of knowledge with them. … They came with money in their pocket. … They learned what service is.

The concept of service adds noticeable muscle to a neoliberal state, whose "freedoms it embodies reflect the interests of private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations, and financial capital."[63] Rotherham owns private property. Income put him at a distinct advantage when it came to acquiring a prime piece of real estate, though his whimsical story dilutes this point:

> I just ended up here, he says. .. This was, without a doubt, my favorite spot. When my buddy went down to South America, I came back here, and I was by myself, and that's why I met my wife. And this piece of property was for sale. And there was this little old lady who was getting ready to die, and everyone was just fighting over the piece of property. And she said, "Oh, I'll just sell it and divide it up." She sold it for a pittance, you know. What I paid for it, they considered it was a lot of money, but it wasn't, you know.

[63] Harvey 2005, 23.

Skills and knowledge that Rotherham acquired in his host country, as well as his class status, propel the restaurateur to the periphery of the global surfing industry. He becomes the go-to man for El Salvador's "central zone" surf tourism industry. Above all, he acquires an entrepreneurial reputation throughout El Salvador and the global surf community because of profitable projects: El Restaurante Punta Roca and Punta Roca Surf Resort (Un Escondite En El Trópico / A Tropical Hideaway). Hideaway is open to debate, as anyone with an Internet connection can Google "Punta Roca," and of the 1.13 million results, Rotherham's website is the first listing. Assimilation reaches a specific level of authenticity when he settles and marries his Salvadoreña wife, whom he said he met one afternoon after sparking up a conversation with her siblings sitting atop an old seawall near their house. Having children -- one who is the first Salvadoreño surfer sponsored by Quiksilver -- further legitimizes his presence and solidifies his place in national and international dialogue.

So what, then, is the problem? In simplified terms, a pokerfaced capitalist sees none. Calling Rotherham an imperialist feels disingenuous and fails to capture the essence of class relations in El Salvador that are historically and temporally much more complex than such a word. An eco-minded surfer might agree that his wave-based accommodations, as well as the country's burgeoning infrastructure that favors tourism, make traveling enjoyable, albeit at a hefty environmental cost. From a concerned academic's perspective, similar to Seyla Benhabib's concept of democratic iterations, neoliberal iterations take form. Word-of-mouth advertising perpetuates repetition. Repetition breeds an enclave economy focused on the act of surfing. A business model like Rotherham's is duplicated in or near zones where there are surf-able waves. Consequently, class tensions persist rather than improve; private surf camps mushroom; free access to waves is compromised; and the price of food, such as a pupusa, at the beach triples in value. Development hastens to a speed faster than a community can adapt. All entrepreneurs -- regardless of their nationality -- become both friend and foe. Before long,

"…[e]very act of iteration involves making sense of an authoritative original in a new and different context."[64]

Analyzing the tiniest slivers of the present is one way to make sense of the sweeping, authoritative original. Neoliberal iterations have accelerated to a point of outright declaration. El Salvador is no longer El Salvador, but *El Salvador Impresionante: Más tuyo, más cerca y más accesible* (*Impressive: More yours, closer and accessible*). The slogan decorates tourist maps, highway billboards, even the Ministerio de Turismo y CORSATUR's profile on facebook, currently the most popular social networking site with more than 500 million active users.[65] One feature that makes El Salvador's central zone impresionante is the surf. "More yours" means coastal property is for sale, and beach access can be privatized. "Closer" translates as a thirty-minute taxi ride from Cuscatlán International Airport to reach a handful of wavetopias in the central zone.[66] "Accessible" highlights the government's efforts to simplify a complex load of touristic information: detailed, color-coded maps; directions in English to the playas; lodging contact information; and safety recommendations. El Tunco is one coastal town shaped by such iterations. Here, several Salvadoreños consider surf tourism a salvation for an otherwise-depressed national economy.

1.2.2: Mapping the 'Inevitable' El Tunco

In the province of La Libertad along la Costa del Bálsamo, Playa El Tunco's waves have become a coveted resource for surfers. Development is in a pivotal stage, which is one reason why El Tunco is an appealing site for academic exploration and analysis. Accessibility is crucial as well, given the project's time restraints. Once people locate Terminal de Occidente, traveling by microbus from San Salvador -- a $1.50 one-way fare -- is efficient, lasting approximately forty-five minutes. Route No. 102 ends in Puerto de La Libertad. From

[64] Benhabib 2004, 180.
[65] Impresionante is Spanish for impressive. Facebook statistics: www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics.
[66] It is also called Comalapa International Airport.

4a Avenida Norte at 2a Calle Oriente, Bus. No. 80 departs frequently and passes Playas La Paz, Conchalio, El Cocal, San Blas, and El Majahual until it finally reaches El Tunco about twenty minutes later. (Jumping into a taxi whose driver disregards the speed limit will get people there in about half the time.)



Figure 1.4: Inclusion of surfable breaks along Costa del Bálsamo varies among each map. A multitude of factors affects how locations and their particular breaks are featured and broadcasted to the world. On this map, the unmarked Playa El Tunco is home to El Salvador's only left-breaking wave, La Bocana.

According to CORSATUR's map, the town is "un destino inevitable en lo referente a sol, playa y surfing" / (an inevitable destination in reference to sun, beach and surfing). It is located several kilometers north of La Libertad's port, and the oppressive heat makes every bus ride, walk or jog stifling and sweaty. Along the way, historical specifics remain evident. More than forty years after Archbishop Romero's assassination, someone has scrawled the religious leader's popular maxim "Con este pueblo, no cuesta ser buen pastor" / (With this pueblo, it is not hard to be a good shepherd) in black marker on the interior of an old school bus. Amid other surf-industry stickers, a gigantic Quiksilver decal is plastered across the ceiling. Vehicles on the verge of collapse outnumber the occasional ride with fancy rims and tinted windows. Humble homes with tin roofs and chicken coops outline the two-way

highway. Each house is a reminder that a brutal civil war failed to redistribute income. The landless poor still rent their homes; the lower-middle-class still reside on someone else's property; and the upper-middle class and elite still own the land. Fading graffiti on a small bridge linking El Majahual and El Tunco demarcates the territory between MS-13 and M-18; gang wars have replaced the civil war.

Yet at the entrance of El Tunco, these historical specifics evaporate under the tropical sun. A wavetopia entices under a veil of engineered serenity. Analogous to anthropologist Elana Zilberg's description of La Luna café in her compelling essay about the politics and production of the transnational identity of deported Salvadoreño immigrant youth: "If anything, [the ocean], which is dedicated to opening up cultural spaces in a socially conservative society, has utopian dimension."[67] Although natural hazards exist (sea urchins, for example), El Tunco is not portrayed as a dangerous place. A surfer's ability to disengage from the ruthless reality that exists beyond the waves is the driving force that transforms this beach pueblo into a wavetopia. How El Tunco evolved into a recognized

Photograph 1.4: The entrance to Playa El Tunco is easy to spot from Carretera del Litoral.



[67] 2004, 769.

surfing destination is a dynamic process, influenced by factors such as word-of-mouth recommendations, reasonable airfare prices, proximity to Comalapa International Airport, advances in online advertising and technology, guidebooks and, perhaps most important, the widespread availability of maps.[68]

In her enlightening study *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*, Elisabeth Jean Wood held three workshops where "a dozen teams of *campesinos* from across [the province of] Usulután" came together to draw "maps of their localities showing property boundaries and land use before and after the civil war."[69] Wood conducted ethnographic fieldwork in 1992, the same year the Peace Accords were signed. Her research explored the way in which a mapmaking process authenticated "how *campesino* collective action literally redrew the boundaries of class relationships through their depiction of changes in de facto property rights and patterns of land use in the case-study areas during the war."[70] Although the crux of Wood's work centered on conditions and incentives that provoked rural Salvadoreños to mobilize, her insight about maps is relevant to El Tunco and other Salvadoran beaches. According to the scholar:

> In short, maps are not just strategic but also cultural constructions. Maps not only reflect cultural practices of their producers, revealed by analyzing what is included and excluded (for example, whether or not places important to subordinate but dominant social groups are named, how images are presented in relation to one another, and so forth); they may also have enduring cultural consequences.[71]

One way to contextualize this claim is to analyze a heavily distributed touristic map of El Salvador, created by Centro Nacional de Registros (CNR) in June 2010, and compare it to information extracted from Surfline.com, a "comprehensive surf-related website" based in the

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[68] Adjusting for seasonality, on average, a roundtrip flight from Los Angeles, California, to San Salvador, El Salvador, costs less than $700 if purchased within a month from the expected date of departure. Travelers generally must make one stop before reaching the country.
[69] 2003, 45.
[70] Ibid.
[71] 2003, 46.

United States and headquartered in Huntington Beach, California. CNR is El Salvador's decentralized government-supported institution that provides "registration services for trade, real estate, intellectual property as well as…the supply of…geographic information…under principles of transparency, equity and quality."[72] Tourists can find CNR's informative map in the CORSATUR center of operations in San Salvador; managers of registered hotels usually carry a stack of copies as well. Surfline, founded by an American entrepreneurial community-college dropout in 1985, is hawked as "the largest surfing and water sports media company in the world." Anyone with access to technology and the Internet can enter the site free of charge, although "premium" members who pay a subscription fee have enhanced features at their disposal. The media kit boasts Surfline "attracts over 1.7 million unique surfers each month through its online and mobile properties: Surfline.com and mobile.surfline.com."[73] Some of the user features include: a network of more than 100 live streaming surfcams; thousands of individual report pages; forecasts; surf news; photos; a surf-themed TV and video channel; mobile phone applications; a web section focused solely on female surfers; an online store; and travel information.

Finding out where to surf in El Salvador via Surfline.com takes less than ten minutes. An individual simply clicks on the "travel" homepage to pick a surf trip; selects Central America on the digitized world map or in a pull-down menu; and chooses El Salvador as a region and subregion, followed by one of any seven breaks listed on the webpage. The "El Salvador Introduction" warns that "…while [the country] is no longer in civil war, its population lives in large part below the poverty level; therefore, petty theft occurs occasionally. Monitor your valuables."[74] Data for each Salvadoran break includes what type of tide (low, mid or high) is best for surfing; which swell and wind direction generate ideal

[72] Centro Nacional de Registros. Visión: www.cnr.gob.sv/index.php?option=com_ content&view=article&id=151&Itemid=192.
[73] Surfline Media Kit: www.surfline.com/advertising/mediakit/.
[74] "El Salvador Introduction." www.surfline.com/travel/index.cfm?id=3252#3253.

conditions; where the waves rank on a "Perfect-O-Meter" of 1 to 10; when during the year is best to go; how to access the surfing area; and what kind of hazards exist.[75] The very existence of Surfline.com and its globalized information about El Salvador's two surfing regions -- East/El Oriente and West/Occidental or La Libertad -- corroborates Daniel Defert's thoughts on the "ensemble of…travel accounts." Defert explored how particular texts resulting from a series of voyages that spanned two centuries influenced "the cultural formation of knowledge." The sociologist was concerned with each text's "organizational themes," as well as the role that publishing played in determining a European political perspective. He suggested travel accounts between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries "must be reread as organized knowledge, coherent and efficient and produced by tactics of domination which can be identified."[76]

Assumedly, many publicized pieces of information about El Salvador's surfscape were based on "voyages of discovery." In Defert's words:

> With the voyages of discovery, the voyage itself constituted a scientific institution and praxis. The voyage is not a means of gaining access to the terrain of possible knowledge; but it supports, generates, and assembles knowledge as the locus for systematic deductions, for celestial and marine observations…[77]

Over time, the voyages revealed the direction of El Salvador's coast favored two particular types of swell: south and southwest. Las Flores Surf Club, a resort located in El Oriente, expounds what this means for wave-seekers. According to its website, which includes webpages with tide times, multiple links to surf forecasting tools (such as Surfline), and live surf cams:

> The East coast of El Salvador gets the same swells as the West coast and La Libertad. These swells are generated by storms in the Southern Hemisphere and occur with regularity from March-November. Average wave heights are

[75] In Central American countries Panamá and Costa Rica, the descriptions also include information on where to stay.
[76] 1982, 12.
[77] Ibid.

> 4-8ft on the face, with bigger days to 10-15ft faces possible, and rarely if ever under 3 feet. The consistency is 90 percent or greater. December-February still breaks but is less consistent, 1-3ft mostly, with days to 5ft possible. This season offers sunny skies and pleasant conditions[;] however[,] strong side-onshore winds are common (ideal for kitesurfing).[78]

The ongoing accumulation of marine observations has resulted in a multitude of detailed websites devoted to the country's surf. The concern is not so much whether the information should be available. Unless some catastrophic server meltdown occurs, its existence seems unavoidable in this era of information overload. Worth contemplating is how knowledge producers' utilization of technology pre-constructs experience. For Rotherham's "Internet surfer," a website manipulates a cross-cultural exchange by reducing the opportunity for human interaction beyond a superficial realm of customer service. The Internet surfer can find every bit of information needed to make informed decisions with the click of a mouse. Once human interaction is eliminated, dialogue between the host and visiting society erodes. As foreigners hunt for the same waves as locals, the once-serendipitous adventure converts into a systematic invasion of tech-minded surfers. Consequently, social tensions flare to an irreconcilable level at mapped locations where a scientific tool, such as a swell tracker, has predicted good waves are aplenty.

For a specialized website such as Surfline, the Internet facilitates an instantaneous dissemination of information, transcending the limitations of traditional publishing. Distribution knows no boundaries, and time is everlasting. The organizational theme of each webpage very much affects El Salvador's economic culture, more so than its political one. Particular breaks such as La Bocana are transmitted to the world as go-to destinations, simply because their names "magically" appear on a map. A host of issues affects the way in which Google Earth identifies each town on the imagery; the most predominant one involves money.

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[78] Las Flores Surfing: "El Salvador's East Coast." www.wavehunters.com/el-salvador-surfing/las-flores-surf-club/surfing.php.

DigitalGlobe, for instance, is powered by Google. To utilize Google Earth Pro or any other suitable software that features the latest mapping technologies, a business must purchase a license. DigitalGlobe is one of three names listed next to a copyright symbol on Surfline.com's imagery of El Salvador East. The firm describes itself as a "unique imagery provider because our founders were scientists and GIS mapping users who wanted commercial access to a consistent and rapidly expanding supply of high-quality earth imagery and geospatial information projects."[79] Regarding El Salvador, skilled entrepreneurs saw an opportunity to profit by creating online "recreational mapping" imagery of the country's surf spots.

Mapping, as well as daily surf reports, surfcams, individual report pages, forecasts, and user-uploaded photographs of the country's breaks become technological tactics of domination. Domination is a suitable term: The scientific tools necessary to accumulate data reveal information about Salvadoran wavetopias that some Salvadoreños would rather *not* advertise. The potential for a communication clash is precisely what makes CNR's map fitting for comparison. On it, surf-friendly beaches along the coast are tagged with a distinct symbol: a small evergreen-colored square featuring a nondescript stick figure standing next to a white surfboard. Interestingly, between Puerto de la Libertad and El Tunco, the surf symbol appears only twice: in front of Playa La Paz (a swift paddle halfway up from the famous Punta Roca) and El Tunco. Playa Conchalio, sandwiched between the two, misses the national cut. CNR does not symbolize this particular break as a suggested surfing destination, although it is tagged with two symbols. One is for eating: a blue square with a white knife and fork flanking a white house. The other is noted as "Playa/Beach," a white palm tree enclosed in a small green square. Coincidentally, Surfline describes Conchalio as:

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[79] DigitalGlobe. About Us: www.digitalglobe.com/about-us.

> a mile-long stretch of beachbreaks just west of Punta Roca that hosts a speedy, thumping barrel wave that shines during the dry season, when offshore winds really open the barrels up and give you hope of emerging unscathed. Conchalio is often surfed when it's flat everywhere else, because even at two or less, it's still completely surfable.[80]

Even Jimmy Rotherham, currently El Salvador's most recognized national surf champion, lives and operates a hotel here.

Based on Surfline's portrayal, Playa Conchalio seems a logical choice as an "unavoidable" surf destination in La Libertad. One reason is security. In theory, a wavetopia cannot exude an aura of man-derived danger. According to Surfline.com, at this particular break "[l]ocal bandits have been known to operate on the route from town, so travel in a pack and be smart. Your life is worth more than your wallet."[81] A quick Internet search yields the following incident that occurred in July 2008: "Robbery at Conchalio -- a friend of mine was just robbed by two guys with a gun and a machete, June 2008. This is a common occurrence in El Salvador. The government of El Salvador needs to do something about tourist safety at the beaches…"[82] Negative news hinders a surf spot's touristic appeal. Omitting the troubled location from a map is one way to reduce the potential of any public-relations nightmare. Of the 120,000 average "unique" daily users who visit Surfline.com to accumulate more information about El Salvador's surfscape, most travelers likely will avoid this break. Shaking a stigma requires time. Thus, it is understandable why El Tunco is mapped, advertised and currently deemed La Libertad's inevitable surfing destination.

1.2.3: Readjusting the Surf-Narrative Methodology

At the entrance of El Tunco, thirteen painted business boards, each about the size of a giant torso, are nailed to a wooden structure that towers over a razed tree. They advertise local

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[80] Playa Conchalio Travel Guide: www.surfline.com/surf-report/playa-conchalio-el-salvador_5803/travel/.
[81] Ibid. Surfline Travel: "El Salvador Regional Overview." www.surfline.com/surf-report/playa-conchalio-el-salvador_5803/travel/.
[82] www.wannasurf.com/spot/Central_America/El_Salvador/playa_concholio/index.html.

businesses such as hotels, hostels, restaurants, and an Internet café. Pieces of small trash litter the ground, dampened from a recent August storm. Fences, gates, man-made barriers, and protective dogs mark the boundaries of each individual's private property. The trek along the unpaved road toward the town's main commercial strip takes approximately fifteen to twenty minutes by foot. When a multilingual French woman slows her beach cruiser to hand out a flier for "Movie Night" at a nearby restaurant, El Tunco suddenly becomes reminiscent of Southern California without the asphalt, concrete sidewalks and bumper-to-bumper traffic.

The goal is to find Papaya's Lodge, "una pequeña empresa que nació a principios del año 2000, dedicada al negocio de surf" / a small business that was born early in the year 2000, dedicated to the business of surf.[83] In the June 2004 edition of *Lonely Planet*: *central america on a shoestring -- big trips on small budgets*, journalist and travel writer Gary Chandler Prado mentioned this accommodation as one of four "sleeping" options in Playa El Tunco. Prado kept the description of "Papaya Surf Lodge" brief:

> Run by local surfer Jaime [Ernesto] Delgado [Aguilar], aka Papaya. Three decent doubles and one crummy single surround a small shaded courtyard. 50 m north of Hotel del Surfeador, Papaya also offers surfboard rental and repair, surf lessons and 'everything to do with the sport.'

The degree of what constitutes "local" varies in El Salvador as demonstrated by the proliferation of Bob Rotherham's narrative and entrepreneurial success in Punta Roca. At thirty-six years of age, Papaya -- born, raised and set on dying in El Tunco -- is the ideal form of local. If narrative methodology "seeks to order and simplify the complex and crowded events of reality in order to create a pattern and distill meaning," then this Salvadoreño surfer's personal relationship with the town makes him an appealing subject to interview.[84]

Papaya confirms that plenty has changed since his name appeared in Prado's *Lonely Planet* piece. A ten-year bank loan enabled him to purchase the lodge and hostel, both of

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[83] www.papayalodge.com/index.html**.** Accessed on June 5, 2011.
[84] Ford and Brown 2006, 21.

which cater to the needs of surfers.[85] Although access to finance troubled 24.8 percent of entrepreneurs surveyed by the World Bank in 2006, Papaya's loan suggests at least one Salvadoreño bank was willing to endorse the concept of surf tourism. The hostel, a.k.a. Papaya's Lodge, is located along Rio del Tunco. The river flooded in August 2010 after several days' worth of a torrential downpour, destroying several homes, damaging nearly every business, and washing away a few cars. Next to the main street, Papaya's Surf Shop also serves as a tourism agency that offers guided tours for visitors in search of hidden lakes, waterfalls, flora, fauna, and secret surf spots.

Papaya's other accommodation "El Tubo" -- a more tranquilo place adjacent to the river -- is located less than a kilometer northeast of the busy, unpaved strip. It parallels Pardo's description to a degree, housing four simple rooms with fans. The shaded courtyard includes a big table, television, communal kitchen, and several inviting hammocks. There are two beds in each of three rooms, and a cramped dormitory with two bunks and a single bed. Compared to the wooden shack that fronts the town's bus and shuttle stop to San Salvador, it is a mansion. Whereas on average a sencillo cuarto (single room) at Rotherham's Punta Roca Surf Resort Hotel costs $57.50 per night (breakfast included), Papaya charges $12. Both prices are barely affordable for the average higher low-income Salvadoreño worker who earns approximately $190 per month. These figures reflect surf tourism's fiscal potential when travelers' funds are expected to boost local revenue.

Papaya's willingness to discuss his experience as an entrepreneur and surfer helps launch a "post-modern assault" on the standardized surf narrative. His musings destabilize surf theorists Ford and Brown's claim that narrative, as per historian William Cronon, "'cannot avoid a covert exercise in power.'"[86] On the contrary, it can. They attempt to prove a point by

[85] Papaya's entire name is Jaime Ernesto Delgado Aguilar.
[86] Ford and Brown 2006, 22.

excluding the remainder of Cronon's sentence, which reads: "It inevitably sanctions some voices while silencing others."[87] The sneak attack works only when no one expects it -- such as in surf magazines owned and operated by media conglomerates obsessed about the bottom line. In these publications, the audience consumes a foreign writer's experience: stunning photographs of waves, action shots of talented athletes, and a writing style that often mutes the voices of locals. In this academic exploration, time and space restrictions silence the voices, at times intentionally, other moments without reason. They are the culprits -- not just the narrative. Scholars should not "readjust common sense to make the contingent seem determined and the artificial seem natural."[88] In other words, they should refrain from manipulating someone's surf narrative to support their own biases, hypotheses and conclusions.

Optimistic common sense nudges the natural, not the artificial, to persevere. A methodology that fuses the basics of the inverted pyramid (a journalistic narrative technique) with literature's pyramidal dramatic structure is a practical way to write an abridged version of El Tunco's contemporary history as it relates to surfing. Participants answer a standardized list of twenty open-ended questions concerning surfing and tourism. Their voices, regardless of gender or background, are neither subordinate nor subaltern; they simply exist in the here-and-now. Above all, the inverted pyramid aims to answer *why*, although who, what, when, where and how -- information an audience must have communication to be successful -- play just as vital roles.

[87] Cronon 1992, 1350.
[88] Ibid.

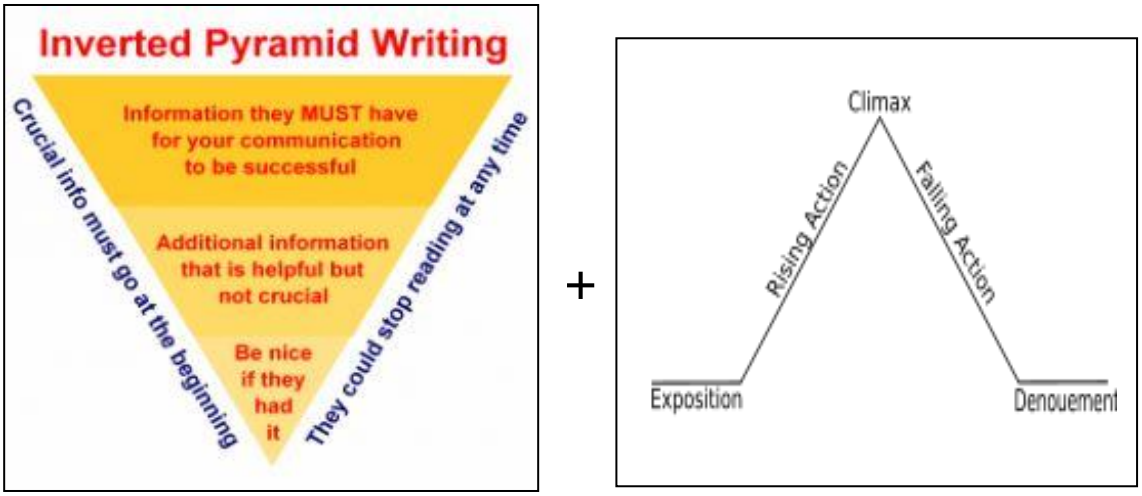


Figure 1.5: Narratives expose the effects of the global surfing industry in El Tunco. The inverted pyramid is an efficient way to explain the here-and-now. Combining this approach with pyramidal dramatic structure produces compelling stories about the history of surfing and tourism in post-war El Tunco.

The pyramidal dramatic structure is important because it organizes and integrates personal narratives, which are then situated within El Tunco's history of surfing gleaned from the inverted-pyramid writing style. Counter to Ford and Brown's assumptions regarding the narrative history of surfing, their stories are not shrouded in myth; rather, they stem from direct experience. Most never aim to be "the first" in anything surf-related; others seldom follow a chronological trajectory. Perhaps most important: The current narrative of surfing in El Tunco has a "final resolution." It necessarily concludes in the future, "in the perspectival assessments of the state of the art and culture of surfing."[89]

Take, for instance, Papaya's perspective on foreigners who buy land and open a business in El Tunco. The impulse to pose the question is logical, considering Rotherham (regardless of his status as a local) is a "non-native" name synonymous with El Salvador's surf history. Within five years, Papaya says he has watched his hometown grow at a pace that disconcerts him. He resists being absolute, aware that his views do not represent every

[89] Ford and Brown 2006, 23.

Salvadoreño: His answer is subject to terms and conditions, but he considers it final, able to withstand the trials of time:

> P: Eh, mira, eh. El problema que ha pasado aquí es de -- una parte de los extranjeros que han venido invertir aquí han utilizado mucho a los nativos. / Eh, look, eh. The problem that has happened here is of -- a part of the foreigners who have come to invest here have utilized many of the natives.
> B: Sí. / Yes.
> P: Y principalmente yo fui una víctima de un extranjero. Entonces, no tenemos una buena imagen de los inversionistas que han venido aquí. Han como presionado se han aprovechado a el nativo. Y el final, han aprovechado los recursos y hemos tenido un poquito de mala experiencia. No todos. Hay excepciones -- pues, entiende. / And mainly I was a victim of a foreigner. Then, we do not have a good image of the investors who have come here. They have pressured and taken advantage of the native. And in the end, they have taken advantage of the resources, and we have had a little bad experience. Not all. There are exceptions -- well, you understand.

In El Tunco, the range of those exceptions fluctuates based on three factors: 1.) the foreigners' business intentions; 2.) their ethics; and 3.) the length of time they intend to stay. This is not a systematic way of determining how El Tunco as a host society receives visitors. In general, when all three factors coalesce, the entrepreneurs still must engage in "fair market" practices for El Tunco's longstanding residents to accept them.[90] According to Papaya:

> P: De allí, cómo se llama, igual, como te digo si son generadores de empleos, y generadores también de las obras de la comunidad, pues, son bienvenidos. / Hence, it is called, well, as I say if they are generators of jobs and generator of the works of the community, then they are welcome.
> B: Pero a veces la gente viene sin papeles, y no hace las cosas con legalidad. ¿Y esto? / But sometimes people come without papers, and they do not do things legally. And what about this?
> P: Más que todo como no aquí no puedes hacer nada ilegal -- pues, el problema es que a veces que se ha valido de la unidad de la gente, y sacan información a los locales, y al final, como se llama, eh, cuando ya están posesionados, ya te venden como de menos. Tal vez se ponía una empresa chiquita. Ellos tratan de matarte, me entiende -- de matar la empresa porque ellos quieren solo para ellos. / More than anything, as here you cannot do anything illegal -- well, the problem is that sometimes the camaraderie of the people has been used, and they take information from the locals, and ultimately, as it is called, eh, when once they have the upper hand, they treat you as inferior. Perhaps you are creating a small business. They try to kill

[90] This statement does not always hold true, as there is always an exception to generalities.

> you, you understand me -- to kill the company because they are out only for themselves.

Business etiquette is a source of contention among entrepreneurs throughout the province of La Libertad. Recall that Rotherham advertises room prices at a level that low-income Salvadoreños cannot afford, thereby demonstrating a class gap. Yet Papaya makes it clear that in El Tunco, a high price tag for goods and services is more desirable than a low one, and low-ball competitors "kill" local businesses. Under Ford and Brown's structural approaches to their old-school narratives, Papaya and Rotherham still should be at odds with each other. Their class affiliations differ: Papaya mentions he comes from a background of limited income and resources; Rotherham arrived with starting capital and the necessary equipment to surf. They are both vying for the same touristic dollars. These are key tensions that complicate action.[91] Tension seems inevitable after Papaya notes that Rotherham arrived in El Salvador as one of the first "hippies" when "el surf en ese momento era un deporte de vagos, de drogadictos. / surfing in that moment was a sport for bums, drug addicts." Papaya's parents, devoted fans of fútbol, disapproved of the image and sport. He says:

> Entonces, por eso, nunca les gusto. Y quizás unos de los retos que tuve fue eso: aprender hacer tablas porque no tenía los recursos, y mis papas no eran a comprarme una tabla. / So that is why they never liked it. And perhaps one of the challenges I had was that: learning to make boards because I had no resources, and my parents were not going to buy me a board.

The lack of support from his parents never deterred Papaya from creating his own boards. He describes how he spent countless hours piecing together broken ones left behind by tourists. By 1986 -- twelve years after Rotherham settled in La Libertad -- the twelve-year-old Papaya had chosen surfing over fútbol. He does not explain why, though perhaps it was as much an act of rebellion as it was a calling. Instead, he professes respect for his hometown:

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[91] In Ford and Brown's outline application of structural analytical frameworks to the narrative history of surfing, the authors consider action an integral component in the Labov structural approach (2006, 25).

> ¿La verdad? he asks: Siempre he me gustado el lugar por el mar, la playa, el surfing. Yo no soy una persona de ciudad. No me gusta la ciudad. / The truth: I always have liked this place for the sea, the beach, the surfing. I am not a person of the city. I don't like the city.

An affinity for riding waves and rejection of a metropolitan lifestyle ultimately unites Papaya and Rotherham. In their narratives, a man-versus-man theme does not work because neither character ever assumes the role of antagonist. The man-versus-nature theme also buckles under analysis. Surfing, when devoid of plays on language, allows the individuals to coexist with nature, not dominate it. Ultimately, Papaya and Rotherham appeal to travelers with different levels of disposable income and surfing abilities. Even if a wealthy tourist opts to stay in Papaya's cheaper lodging, the traveler with limited funds cannot afford to sleep in Rotherham's. People who barely know how to surf will not paddle out to Punta Roca, but they probably will in nearby El Tunco. These dynamics produce an unpredictable climate in which to conduct business, as well as unexpected alliances among competitors. Papaya reveals the variable nature of surf tourism when discussing Rotherham's enterprise:

> B: ¿Le molesta que él haya desarrollado la Punta Roca con los anuncios en Inglés, y es como más comercio? / Does it annoy you that he has developed Punta Roca with advertisements in English, and he is more commercial?
> P: Mira, sinceramente no me molesta porque el -- cómo se llama -- uno que tener ideas. La idea de él fue llamarle a su restaurante Punta Roca como el point de surf. / Look, sincerely it does not bother me because he -- what is it called -- one has to have ideas. The idea of him was to call his restaurant Punta Roca like the point of surf.
> B: Sí. / Yes.
> P: Eso es ser inteligente y la inteligencia nadie se va a chingar, entiendes. Igual, por ejemplo, si aquí es El Tunco y tú le pones el hotel 'El Tunco' o 'La Bocana,' que es una de las puntas…. Entonces, él fue muy inteligente porque Punta Roca es un nombre reconocido al nivel internacional. Y no es difícil de recordarse Punta Roca. Punta Roca es un restaurante también. / That is being intelligent, and no one is going to fuck with that, you understand me. Equally, for example, if here in El Tunco you put the hotel 'El Tunco' or 'La Bocana,' that proves. Thus, he was very intelligent because Punta Roca is a name recognized at the international level. It is not difficult to remember Punta Roca. Punta Roca is also a restaurant.

Writing off Papaya's decision to speak candidly about a competitor's business acumen as a covert exercise in power reflects the limitations of theorizing within a hyper-masculine framework.[92] Outside the hyper-masculine framework, power loses significance, particularly because narratives still exist without someone injecting a contrived meaning into the meaningless. The exercise functions when the model is hierarchical. This is where the bulk of surf scholarship falls short. Through narratives, writers perpetuate a hegemonic political economy where patriarchal glorifications and male surfers – the CEOs of a "global surf culture" -- reign supreme. They also cling to the notion that "pre-modern cultures of the Pacific Islands," Polynesia, the United States, Hawai'i, California, and Australia are forever the authentic cradles of surfing's civilization, innovation and superior athletes. In effect, these histories always rank highest on the global surf-narrative ladder.

Contemporary surf scholars who wax nostalgic about these locales trap themselves in a clichéd paradigm. They must let go of this antiquated perspective and use a different lens. A country such as El Salvador cannot remain subordinate in "Western" surf history, precariously perched on a rung beneath all the other places. Challenging social and economic conditions never stopped Salvadoreños from riding waves in the past, and they will not anytime in the near future. The biggest threat is environmental destruction. The country possesses exactly the same natural resource, materials and labor necessary to produce supreme surfers. At some point, Australian, Hawaiian and American athletes will no longer "hog the headlines." Numerous Latin American nations, including El Salvador, have adopted the sport of surfing "as a unifying, stabilizing force to overcome tribal insularity, language differences and social barriers."[93] In El Tunco, surf contests cement ties of friendship with political allies and

[92] Of the 34 subjects interviewed in El Tunco, approximately half of them recognized and seemed to respect Rotherham's approach to surf tourism.
[93] Baker 1988, 274.

exclude or bludgeon diplomatic foes. These "nationalistic functions of sport" are embedded in El Salvador's pre- and postwar eras.[94]

The majority of Salvadoreños and foreigners interviewed are aware of incongruities at the micro and macro levels. They discuss them while sharing insight about the mechanisms of capitalistic competition and class warfare in El Salvador. In El Tunco, generations of ocean-lovers have resorted to surfing as a means of reconciling and even escaping a mutilated past. Interviewees, a.k.a. characters, offer disparate views of tourism but agree surfing creates a multitude of opportunities. Their narratives are like pieces of stained glass in El Tunco's endless mosaic of surfing history. Although historical and cultural contexts mold the people, the power of waveriding itself generates the most profound effects. These cultural and economic implications exceed El Tunco's mapped boundaries.

Surf scholars are bound to accumulate and interpret ethnographic data differently. They will reach dissimilar conclusions depending on how they prioritize each element that shapes a Latin American surfing narrative. Ford and Brown acknowledge such methodological concerns when referencing the work of Cronon. The historian rationalizes how disparate conclusions affect the power that narrative possesses in the environmental history of the Great Plains' Dust Bowl in the United States during the 1930s. He argues that "[b]y writing stories about environmental change, we divide causal relationships of an ecosystem with a rhetorical razor that defines included and excluded, relevant and irrelevant, empowered and disempowered."[95] These dichotomies shortchange the vital intricacies of El Tunco, a place where residents are captivated by, dependent on, and critical of the global surfing industry. Such intricacies are observable, and their importance stretches beyond the narrative. Positive outcomes that supplement the pastime include employment opportunities, an improvement in

[94] Ibid.
[95] 1992, 1349.

the standard of living, and availability of affordable, locally manufactured surf-themed goods. Yet there exist equally toxic drawbacks, such as the privatization of public beach access, a nagging culture of grotesque consumption, querulous class relations, and labor exploitation. Chapter 2 delves into the murky world of the economic effects.

Chapter 2: Social Spatiality and Surfing

2.1: Surf Tourism as Exception

Playa El Tunco and its surrounding area encompass approximately 100 square kilometers of land in the province of La Libertad.[96] Here, the Pacific Ocean's temperature ranges between 79 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit depending on the time of year. How the beach pueblo becomes a wavetopia depends on the production of space. French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre's description eloquently describes this intricate process:

> …[C]ertain spaces were carved out of nature and made complete by being filled to a saturation point with beings and symbols, while other spaces were withdrawn from nature only to be kept empty as a way of symbolizing a transcendent reality at once absent and present.[97]

Considering El Salvador's land area (20,720 square kilometers) and population density (298.9 people per square kilometer in 2010), the fate of El Tunco as a space approaches a saturation point with beings and symbols.[98] There are at least 24 registered hostels and hotels that operate in the area. In purely economic terms, the touristic locale has two distinct competitive advantages, the first being proximity to Carretera del Litoral (the main highway) and Comalapa International Airport. Under ideal traveling circumstances, time spent reaching an ocean's portal cannot exceed the number of hours the visiting surfer expects to be in the water riding waves. Similar logic applies for the country's "weekend warriors," who often are surfers "de la ciudad / from the city" of San Salvador.

The easier the wave-playground is to locate and access, the more frequented it becomes. More surfers generally translate to more tourism revenue. During El Tunco's peak season, the estimated tourist population can reach up to 300 visitors per day, most of whom hail from the United States, Canada, Australia, Israel and Brazil. Brazilians, in fact,

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[96] Provinces are also referred to as departments.
[97] 1991, 163.
[98] World Bank. Population density in El Salvador**:** http://search.worldbank.org/all?qterm =el%20salvador%20population%20density#.

"mantienen la ocupación con un porcentaje mayor al 60 gran parte del tiempo / maintain the presence at a rate greater than 60 percent most of the time."[99] Despite the business they generate, they have a poor reputation in many surfing communities, including El Salvador. Alex Guimaraes, a 41-year-old who teaches English in Compton, California, has visited El Tunco three times since 2007 "para surfear y hablar Español / to surf and speak Spanish." While describing his experiences with localism in El Salvador, he talks about the first time he walked with his board toward the beach:

> Un chico quiere pelear conmigo porque yo soy de Brasil. El estaba borracho y quiere pelear conmigo a las diez de la mañana -- porque los Brasileños tienen mala fama. Entonces yo no hice nada. En todos los lugares, a nadie le gustan los Brasileños porque roban las olas, no respetan. Viajan en grupos largos. / A guy wants to fight me because I am from Brazil. He was drunk and wants to fight me at ten in the morning -- because Brazilians have a bad reputation. So I did nothing. Everywhere, no one likes the Brazilians because they steal the waves, they don't respect [others]. They travel in large groups.

Yet, those large groups of wave-hungry travelers stimulate business in surf towns like La Libertad and El Tunco. Between 2003 and 2010, the number of Brazilian tourists visiting El Salvador skyrocketed from 1,448 to 23,259 -- an insane 1500 percent increase. According to La Libertad's Bob Rotherham:

> There's a lot of resistance to the Brazilians, but the Brazilians are basically the ones supporting us right now. They must be having a good economy because there are more people coming from the south of the equator than the north of the equator. As far as the local economy goes, it couldn't be better for us.[100]

El Tunco's second economic advantage involves wave quality and user-friendliness. The beach pueblo houses two "world-class" breaks that continue to attract widespread attention, as well as two lesser-known beach breaks that achieve "perfect conditions mostly in

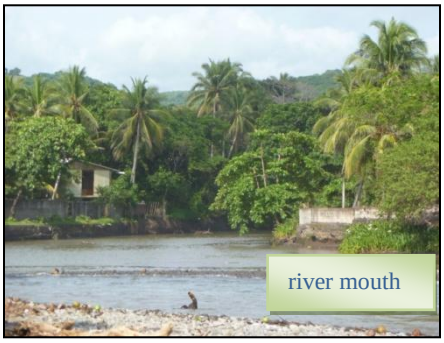
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[99] Funes, 2011.

[100] From 2004 to 2010, Brazil experienced an average economic growth of 4.4 percent. The central bank's high interest rates and inflationary pressures have affected the economy in 2011, however. From "Analysis: Brazil's economy goes from 'great' to 'good': www.reuters.com/article/ 2011/08/18/us-brazil-economy-idUSTRE77H6CQ20110818.

high tide."[101] The first, known as La Bocana, is heavily advertised as El Salvador's best, "most furious" left. Not intended for novices, its wave height can reach up to approximately eight to twelve feet on the face during the swell season.

Photographs 2.1: La Bocana is one of El Salvador's few left-breaking waves formed by a river mouth and cobblestones. Those who surf goofy may appreciate the anomalous direction that it breaks in the "land of rights."





The second, a 300-yard wave dubbed Sunzal, is actually located in El Sunzal, a "roadside town with not much to offer to visitors," according to Sunzal Surf Co.[102]

Photograph 2.2: During El Salvador's wet (rainy) season, which lasts from approximately May until October, tennis ball-sized cobblestones make for an uncomfortable barefoot walk along the beach to Sunzal.



[101] Playa El Sunzal: www.elsalvadorsurfcamps.com/ubicacion.html.
[102] "Sunzal: Where are We?" www.sunzal.com/travel-info/travel-tips.php.

The majority of surfers who stay in El Tunco must trek north along the cobblestone beach for about 700 meters before paddling out about twenty minutes to the point. On route to Sunzal, a long seawall separates the public beach from private property. The restricted area boasts a sprawling oceanfront resort called Club Sunzal, which charges $90 per night, per person. With a swift shake of his head, the club's 24/7 on-site security guard reminds people they cannot walk atop the wall to avoid piles of stones below. When there is little swell, Sunzal is an ideal break for beginner- to intermediate-level surfers, particularly individuals who longboard.[103] The remaining two waves -- El Sunzalito and La Bocanita -- are situated between El Sunzal and La Bocana; El Sunzalito, in particular, is where many first-timers try their hand at surfing, pumping money into the local economy when they rent a board for $10 to $15 per day and dole out cash for a $10- to $20-per-hour lesson.

Revenues generated from such transactions benefit the community economically -- at least, this is what twenty-two interviewees maintain when they discuss the direct impact waves have on their sources of revenue. "Aquí, definitivamente / Here, definitely," Papaya says. "Aquí, El Tunco lo ha hecho crecer del surf. Si no hubiera surf, no existiría El Tunco. Simplemente. Ha sido sencilla. / Here, El Tunco has grown from surfing. If there were no surf, El Tunco would not exist. Simply put. It's been that simple." The waves themselves are what ultimately distinguish the beach pueblo from other tourism hotspots throughout El Salvador. Without them, the space becomes yet another party pit stop infested with drunken gringos on holiday and Salvadoreños de la ciudad. This assertion contradicts Salvadoreña journalist Margarita Funes' outlook, however. Funes claims El Tunco's nightlife, not its waves, has become the driving force of local tourism. [104] She writes:

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[103] In basic terms, when wave breaks onto a rocky point, it produces either a right or left point break.
[104] See Funes' "Vida Nocturna El Tunco, Más que Olas" for further information. www.laprensagrafica.com/mujer/plan-bella/181745-vida-nocturna-el-tunco-mas-que-olas.html.

> Los empresarios locales advirtieron, hace aproximadamente un año, que estaban teniendo un flujo mayor de visitantes. Es así como decidieron invertir en infraestructura y propiciar vida nocturna y un intercambio cultural frente a la playa. / Local entrepreneurs warned, about a year ago, they were having a greater flow of visitors. Thus, they decided to invest in infrastructure and promote beachfront nightlife and interaction.

What came first? Surf tourism or the nightlife? In El Tunco's case, all data (maps, tourism literature, subject interviews, online searches and the like) suggest surf tourism. Nightlife is an economic byproduct and cultural response to demand. It produces additional local revenue by providing visitors with something to do after the sun sets. Alcohol and illicit drugs (crystal meth, cocaine and marihuana in particular) are available for consumption. When individuals appropriate surfing as a counter-cultural front for their own vice-ridden lifestyles, a beach town's overall allure can increase if such substances are easy to locate and purchase. El Salvador "finds itself enmeshed in an expanding drug trade, a shift brought on in part by the presence of a new, U.S.-funded highway that provides an overland route for shipping cocaine north.[105] Along the way, the tentacles of trade tap into smaller markets full of tourists. In El Tunco, several interviewees consider only marihuana, though illegal, acceptable, but nothing else. They indicate they do not mind when visitors smoke weed, as long as no one openly solicits it or uses it in public or in front of children. "Lo que me molesta más es un borracho. / What annoys me more is a drunk," says Papaya.

Whether or not these specific cultural concerns stem directly from surf tourism is open to debate. What is evident is that the request for infrastructure existed before local entrepreneurs sounded the nightlife alarm. A year prior to the publication of Funes' article, Papaya -- when describing his "preocupación más grande con la llegada de turistas / biggest worry with the arrival of tourists" -- replies:

> Eh, la única preocupación es el desarrollo desmedido. Que no hay regulaciones, y no tenemos infraestructura de cuadra, y tampoco el gobierno

[105] Wilkinson, 2011.

> no la tiene, entiende. … El Tunco está creciendo, y esto se me pone alegre. Pero, sí, está creciendo de manera desmedida. El gobierno no tiene los recursos todavía pues para meter buena infraestructura. Entonces esa es mi preocupación. Por ejemplo, todas las aguas vayan a los ríos y bajan en algunos, y eso se contamina después. Un lugar bonito se ha lograr contaminado con el imagen. Entonces, sí, no me gustaría que esta. Por decirla así: esta perla aquí, esta perla que está brillando tanto al final no brilla. Se noten el sucio. / Hey, the only concern is the excessive development. There are no regulations, and we do not have a stable infrastructure, and neither does the government, you understand. ... El Tunco is growing and this makes me happy. But, yes, it is growing excessively. The government still does not have the resources to put in good infrastructure. So that's my concern. For example, all the waters go to the rivers and empty into some, and that becomes contaminated afterward. A beautiful place -- it has been contaminated with the image. So, yes, I would not want this. To put it this way: This pearl here, this pearl that is shining at the end does not shine. Dirt is noticed.

For interviewees, there is no question the ocean and her waves remain the town's most valuable resource. From a global perspective, without either, the most widely held perception of surfing is delegitimized, rendering the industry incomplete, irrelevant or obsolete; furthermore, surf tourism cannot exist.[106] Without the reputation of a pristine location, tourist revenue will drop with no one renting boards, taking lessons, staying in surf hostels, or making impulsive purchases for surf-related products (such as leashes, rash guards, wax, wax combs, waterproof sunscreen, fins, fin screws, fin keys, et cetera). In a country where every cent counts in the informal sector, posting a loss, no matter how slight, will hurt. Overall, individuals who surf create a distinctive demand for the resource and materials. Surf tourism conveniently arises as a subsector of the global surfing industry, and beach pueblos like El Tunco become celebrated wave suppliers. The more surfers there are, the greater the demand for waves (which leads to an assortment of anti-crowd paraphernalia, including the popular "Surfing Sucks, Don't Try it" T-shirt, for instance).[107] The greater the demand, the more likely

[106] Although there are various activities that produce similar psychological effects (e.g. skateboarding, tarp surfing, wakeboarding, snowboarding), an ocean maximizes surfing's economic potential. Without the aqueous playground, all that remains is a market-driven consumer culture bound to the retail and manufacturing sectors.

[107] More than 1500 people are a fan of the T-shirt on facebook: www.facebook.com/DontTrySurfing.

an accessible place such as El Tunco becomes a site of exploration, incorporation, adaptation and exploitation. The value of a break is intrinsically tied to a surfer's skill level: The more skilled the surfer, the more valuable the break. How surfable the breaks are (that is, their surfability) makes them commodifiable.

One mode of commodification occurs when the name, photograph or artistic representation of a wave or its surrounding landscape appears in print or online advertising. El Tunco's waves, as well as its mascot-like landmark -- a volcanic-rock formation that protrudes like a pair of gigantic tusks from the ocean floor -- have become commodifiable. They regularly appear in national advertising campaigns, tourism websites, and the mass media, including magazines and newspapers.[108]

Photograph 2.3: Apart from El Tunco's waves, the picturesque rock formation off the coast is frequently commodified. The lesser-known break of La Bocanita breaks slightly south of this geological gem.



On a humid afternoon when business is slow, Marvin Caceres echoes Papaya's sentiments. Caceres has worked at Super Tunco, the town's main grocery store, located across the street

[108] For a nicely written but boring depiction of La Libertad's surfing scene, see Tracy Wilkinson's piece that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in 2011. Wilkinson rehashes Rotherham's story but fails to speak with Salvadoreños for additional insight, perpetuating the neocolonial narrative that characterizes the country's contemporary surfing history. The accompanying photograph's cutline misidentifies El Tunco's classic landmark; instead, it reads: "Foreign tourists enjoy the surf and sand at Puerto La Libertad on El Salvador's coast." See: www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/latinamerica/.

from Papaya's second lodge, for more than a year.[109] Inside the small market, the price of a jar of imported peanut butter is steep: $5 for about 4 ounces; a 2-liter of bottle of water (40 fluid ounces) goes for $2.50, an imported Snickers, $1.50. Clearly, prices and products are geared toward people with purchasing power, not impoverished residents who work in the informal sector, hawking pieces of 25-cent candy, $2 handmade shell pulseras, and 10-cent small, plastic baggies of tap water to make ends meet.[110] The disparity between food prices and the minimum daily wage for apparel assembly workers, $5.79, is yet another reminder how unequal the distribution of income is throughout the region.[111]

At 23 years of age, Caceres' take on surf tourism is optimistic (although some scholars see his optimism as a form of enthusiastic fatalism). He was born in El Tunco and notes he has seen "*muchos* cambios / *many* changes." Until approximately five years ago, he says:

> …[N]o habían muchos hoteles, y hoy sí hay muchos. Y -- es bueno para el pueblito acá El Tunco porque es más -- más -- generen empleos y más turistas, y es más dinero para nuestro país, para sigue evolucionando en la economía. / [T]here were not many hotels, and today there are many. And -- it is good for El Tunco because -- more -- they generate jobs and more tourists, and more money for our country, so the economy continues to evolve.

As a pro-development theme perseveres in subsequent interviews, there are moments when it feels as though Salvadoreños' optimism breeds blissful indifference. I ask Caceres if he is afraid everything is progressing too fast. Shooting down my assumption, he replies:

> C: No, pienso es normal ahorita, porque antes, a pesar de hace cinco años que no había nada, y ahora es mucho mejor. / No, I think it is normal now, because before, despite five years ago, there was nothing, and now it is much better.
> B: ¿Piensa que el turismo de surf es bueno para la comunidad? / Do you think surf tourism is good for the community?

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[109] Per an e-mail exchange, as of July 2011, Caceres no longer works here. He moved to La Libertad to take a job as a security guard at a new hotel.
[110] Pulseras are bracelets.
[111] According to the U.S. Department of State's 2010 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in El Salvador, retail and service employees earn $6.92 per day.

> C: Sí, es muy bueno. A parte que ellos traen nuevas formas de surfear. Los locales aprenden más las cosas, y aprendemos culturas de ellos y ellos aprenden cultura de nosotros. Es bueno compartir cultura. / Yes, very good. In addition, they bring new forms of surfing. The locals learn more things, and we learn their culture, and they learn our culture. It's good to share culture.

Ernesto Hernein Amaya is another local who says he has watched the playa undergo a rapid transformation. If there was no surf in El Tunco, he confesses: "Pues, no sé qué pasaría porque siempre está movido por turismo. / Well, I don't know what would happen because it's always driven by tourism." He runs a snack shop from a sheltered partition fronting the main strip outside of his modest home, selling bottles of soda (mainly Coca Cola products), produce and sought-after bread and donuts, which come from a bakery in the port of La Libertad. In addition to this livelihood, Hernein Amaya takes extranjeros on guided tours to volcanoes and lakes, and taxis surfers to and from breaks like Punta Roca for $5 to $7 per person. The 45-year-old describes the changes he has seen since the civil war. Back then, he says, there was "no más de un hotel pequeñito / no more than one tiny hotel." Instead, visitors camped on the beach:

> Turismo extranjero no había antes de la guerra. Era muy raro cuando venía un extranjero a la playa. Solo había turismo nacional salvadoreño. Hoy, después de la guerra, sí está viniendo mucho turismo de todas las partes del mundo. / Foreign tourism was not around before the war. It was very rare when a foreigner came to the beach. There was only national Salvadoran tourism. Today, after the war, yes, tourism is coming from all parts of the world.

Hernein Amaya also offers remarks about the environmental changes El Tunco has undergone because of tourism. "La construcción," he says. "Antes habían muchos árboles, mucha vegetación, muchos animalitos -- ahora hay muchas casas, muchos hoteles. / The construction," he says. "Before there were more trees, a lot of vegetation, many animals -- now there are a lot of houses, a lot of hotels."

Despite noticeable mutations to the town's environmental surroundings, currently the majority of interviewees appear to welcome development -- if only for economic reasons. "El

turismo atrae la divisa a nuestro país. Así es. / Tourism attracts currency to our country. That's right," says Hernein Amaya. When foreigners purchase property and open a business, Super Tunco's Caceres admits he feels "alegre / happy" because "vienen a generar el empleo a nuestro población / they come to generate employment for our population." Even Elva Amaya de Ramos, a middle-aged server who grew up in El Tunco and works at a popular restaurant alongside the Río El Tunco, does not harbor ill will toward the idea of foreign-based real estate ownership. When extranjeros buy land and open a business, in her eyes:

> Yo pienso que está bien porque hay más trabajo, más fuente del trabajo para personas. Porque ahora han crecido más negocios, más hoteles, restaurantes porque vienen más extranjeros. / I think it's good because there is more work, more sources of work for people. Because now they have grown more businesses, more hotels [and] restaurants because more foreigners are coming.

De Ramos also seems accustomed to the uptick in touristic activity every weekend when, come Friday, on average a total of 1,500 foreigners, middle-income and wealthy Salvadoreños "de la ciudad" make a beeline for las playas:[112]

> B: …Ayer y viernes, había un montón de gente. No pude creerlo. / Yesterday and Friday there were a bunch of people. I couldn't believe it.
> D: Sí. Hay mucha gente particularmente durante las vacaciones de la Navidad, Semana Santa, y Semana de Agosto. / Yes, there are a lot of people particularly during Christmas break, Semana Santa, and August week.

One particular voice resonates louder than some others, however. It belongs to Juana Adelia Amaya de Molina. Amaya de Molina, 55, has spent the majority of her life in El Tunco, with a 16-year stint in San Salvador at one juncture, and a five-year adventure in the United States at another. Although her vision for the future of the beach pueblo includes welcoming more tourists, she is not open to the idea of foreign landownership:

> Pues, que te diré. Te voy a ser sincera y franca. Porque cuando yo comencé aquí en este lugar, puse mi negocio, y aquí no había nadie, ningún negocio. No había nadie que solo yo. Y hice muchos clientes de turistas que venían, muchos nacionales y extranjeros. Es bonito que vengan invertir del otro lado, pero tampoco no nos favorece a nosotros. Si todos lo vieron de un punto de

[112] Funes, 2011.

> vista que dice: "¿Por qué no? Trae más negocio, más bonito…" -- sí, puede hacer más bonito, te ves más bonito, pero haga aquí, haga la comunidad no nos favorece. Porque los negocios nosotros somos pequeños. Y viene alguien en grande, en grande al ponerse la par de nosotros -- es como digamos que llega un tiburón a la par de pescadito pequeño. Nos viene a comer. Eso -- eso es lo que nadie entiende. / Well, I will tell you. I'll be honest and frank. Because when I started here in the place, I put my business, and here there was nobody here, no business. There wasn't anyone but me. And I made a lot of tourist clients who came, many nationals and foreigners. It is nice that they come to invest on the other side, but neither does it favor us. If everyone saw the point of view that says, "why not, it brings more business, more beauty" -- yes, it can make it prettier, you look prettier, but doing that here, doing it to the community does not favor us. Because we are small businesses. And then someone bigger comes, bigger to dominate the pair of us -- we have a saying that a shark comes to the pair of small fish. It is going to eat us. That -- that is what nobody understands.

Yet some individuals such as Cecy Vega, president of Asociación de Hoteles Pequeños (AHP), which is based in San Salvador kitty-corner to CORSATUR, recognize the challenge small businesses face in the country's blossoming surf-tourism industry.[113] Vega references Wavehunters Surf Inc., a Southern California-based "worldwide full-service surf travel agency, specializing in exotic surfing trips, surf vacations, surfing adventures, surf camps" -- essentially anything related to "SURF, SURF, SURF!"[114] The company operates Las Flores Surf Club, an exclusive resort in "El Oriente" that opened in 2005. One online entity lists the agency's annual revenues at $290,000 (although there is no guarantee that the numbers are accurate).[115] Wavehunters is also "a wholesaler with Taca and other major airlines and can book and coordinate all necessary flights."[116] The website domain is

[113] Costa del Sol Touristic Development Association.
[114] Wavehunters Surf Travel Homepage: www.wavehunters.com/index.asp.
[115] Company Profile: Wavehunters Surf Travel Inc. www.manta.com/c/mm0k7dj/wavehunters-surf-travel-inc. Accessed on June 29, 2011.
[116] Wavehunters El Salvador Las Flores: www.wavehunters.com/el-salvador-surfing/las-flores-surf club/destDet.asp?id=5GXXDLGV6EKZM1Y5K9GH5YB6F8FFEEUO.

registered under executive director Henry Morales, who also serves as director of sales and marketing at Las Flores Resort.[117] Vega says:

> C: What I know about Las Flores is that it is owned by an 'inversionist' [investor] from the United States…. So Wavehunters, this guy from El Salvador had the lot, and then he got the investment from them. That's why they keep always full. Because it's by -- you see their website and all.
> B: Is that hard to compete against?
> C: Yes. For us, yes. Because if you see the installations and all that, they're very nice. And plastic: They can charge anything they want. It's not like -- we're not competitive at all with them. … The policy to get into the Small Hotels Association is that you have to charge $5 to $50 a room.

During peak season, Las Flores Resort charges a nightly rate of $223 for single occupancy. Three private one-hour surf lessons for beginners average $58 apiece. This pricing includes a weekly surfboard rental but not the $25 to $100 security deposit required to use the equipment. Smaller establishments accept cash, not credit, which means two things. 1.) In the dollarized economy, they can manipulate their visitor log and accept payments under the table to avoid paying a profit tax.[118] 2.) They are at an economic disadvantage alongside "non-local" surf-tour operators who typically have access to some line of credit in their home countries and can use credit cards. When a profitable foreign-based business is at the helm, apart from paying for labor and other operating costs, there is no guarantee management will pump remaining monies back into the economy that provides any other business opportunity. Instead, entrepreneurs may pocket the funds or utilize them to displace other tourist endeavors.

Thus, Amaya de Molina has reason to be hesitant (if not suspicious) of visitors who are looking to purchase land and open their own business. At the onset of the civil war, the restaurateur operated a taco cart, which eventually became El Tunco's first official

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[117] Whois Lookup for wavehunters.com. www.enom.com/whois/Default.aspx?DomainName=wavehunters#. Accessed June 29, 2011.
[118] Of the 183 economies that Doing Business examined in 2011, El Salvador ranks 137 in the key indicator for "Paying Taxes." www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/el-salvador#paying-taxes

restaurant.[119] She says, "Comencé el negocio en el ochenta con todos los surfeadores -- pero con los nacionales. / I started the business in the eighties with all the surfers -- but with national ones." Journalist Roberto Amaya, who works El Salvador's state-owned television station Canal 10, was one of these nationals. On occasion, he would make his way to la playa to escape the oppressive concrete jungle of San Salvador:

> Compré una tabla de un extranjero. El hombre no la quería porque tenía unos pocos golpes. Yo venía con algunos amigos. Surfeábamos todo el día. Fumamos un puro en la noche. "La Juanita" -- esto es los que nos se lo llamaba. Ella era la única persona que tenía la comida: tacos de pulpo, camarón. / I bought a board from a foreigner. The guy didn't want it because it had a few dings. I would come with some friends. We surfed all day. We smoked a joint in the night. La Juanita -- that is what we called it. She was the only one who had the food. Octopus and shrimp tacos.

The location of Amaya de Molina's successful, small enterprise caught the eye of a Chilean expatriate. Before the war ended, Juana recollects:

> Ese terreno fue mío. Trabajamos veinte años para comprar eso. Y luego vino un chileno y nos robó la propiedad. / That land was ours. We worked twenty years to buy that. And then a Chilean came and robbed us of our property."
> B: ¿Cómo? How?
> J: Lo hizo firmar. Sé nos hizo que nos asociaron porque nosotros no teníamos construir la propiedad. Entonces, el dijo: "Bueno, aquí que se queda un hotel. Pero nosotros no teníamos el dinero, y nosotros nos conocíamos a él, que sea, seis anos -- a él, su familia. Y luego dijo, "Bueno, asocié," y me vino robando como un año. / He did it in writing. I know that he did it, that they associated with us because -- we did not have to construct the property. So he said, "Well, here you can put a hotel." But we did not have any money, and we knew him, what like, six years -- him and his family. And then he said, "Well, I took the partnership," and he went in robbing me like a year.

Details arrive in spurts, occasionally interrupting the sequence of events, and lingering disbelief still affects how Amaya de Molina relays her narrative. The overall idea was to create an investment partnership, build a hotel and split profits fifty-fifty. The soon-to-be partners, who had known each other six years, went to the bank, where Amaya de Molina and her husband were handed a packet of blank pages to sign. In the blank spots, the Chilean was

[119] Several interviewees as well as residents who declined my interview requests support Amaya de Molina's account of El Tunco's restaurant history.

supposed to include agreed terms of the partnership. "Y nosotros con mi esposo, te digo, por ignorancia, no estudiaba uno ignorante, pues, firmamos los papeles en blanco. / And we, with my husband, I say, ignorance, not studying, well, we signed the blank papers."

The signed documents essentially turned over the deed of Amaya de Molina's land to the Chilean. Rather than return to the bank, he took the manipulated paperwork and "sold" the land to a loan center in exchange for a lump sum of cash. El Salvador's ambiguous land laws permitted the loan center to retain ownership, "y se fue del país / he left the country," Amaya de Molina contends:

> No se fue a Chile. Se fue a Costa Rica porque por los años nosotros nos di una fuente. Y nos dejó sin nada. Porque vivíamos a trabajar, te digo, veinte años de lucha para el restaurante, trabajo, el bello salón. Y para perderlo tanto rápido. / He left the country. He did not go to Chile. He went to Costa Rica because through the years, a source told us. And we were left with nothing. Because we lived to work, I tell you, twenty years of struggle for the restaurant, work, beauty salon. And to lose it all fast.

Before year's end, the restaurateur's land was gone.

In a way, Amaya de Molina's loss kept a national wound from healing correctly. Throughout the civil war, "…access to land was a central part of *campesinos*' vision of a more just world."[120] As political scientists Manus Midlarsky and Kenneth Roberts argue:

> Models of revolutionary behavior in Central America are developed that rely initially on the distribution of landholdings. The scarcity of arable land -- as in El Salvador, with its high population density -- is suggested to result in high inequality, acute class polarization, and class-based redistributive revolutionary movements.[121]

Until the war ended, the legal relationship concerning land occupation played a secondary role to insurgents' political and moral claims. Wood writes:

> Access to abandoned land also gave insurgent *campesinos* the autonomy to continue their insurgent activities as they no longer had to depend on landlords or local authorities for their (meager) livelihoods.[122]

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[120] Wood 2003, 236.
[121] 1985, 163.
[122] 2003, 236.

Then the Peace Accords were signed, a move that brought legal claims to the forefront of El Salvador's national identity in 1992. GOES agreed to distribute 166,000 hectares of land to some 15,000 former combatants of the armed forces, 7,500 former combatants of the FMLN, and 25,000 *tenedores*, or farmers directly displaced by the war.[123] Granted, the agreement pertained to the best farmland, not coastal property in the less volatile zone of La Libertad; however, it signified something far greater in socio-economic terms. In theory, dismantling oligarchic control by taking land away from the elite and redistributing it to the "lower" classes meant Salvadoreños were free (and expected) to pursue their own financial and material destinies. Thus, tourism emerged as a means of economic survival. If losing such coveted land to a random foreigner from Chile could happen in less than a year, however, no doubt the cracks in El Salvador's realm of property rights can become catastrophic holes. The people most likely to fall through them are Salvadoreños without legal recourse.

After witnessing Amaya de Molina's prolonged fight to reclaim her land and eventual loss, a few of El Tunco's locals are leery of tourism as a catalyst for change. They deduce that the majority of tourists are either aiming to buy property or launch a business. As Caceres puts it: "Muchas personas acá, los locales, piensan que los turistas vienen por hacer sus…'business', sus dineros. / Many people here, the locals, think that tourists come to do business or make money." Sometimes they are right. Plenty of coastal property is for sale along Costa del Bálsamo. According to Francisco, a local who grew up in the city but moved to El Tunco because he loves the ocean:

> The normal rate is about $3 for a square vara -- a vara is smaller than a meter. That's the average price. But here in El Tunco, for example, the people say it's getting crazy and putting $300,000 pieces of land [for sale]. In El Zonte,

[123] World Bank, 197. Further research is necessary to determine how much of this distributed land was located along or near the Pacific Coast. Attempts to locate pre-war land tenure and post-war land distribution of the entire country were unsuccessful.

> too. But you go to the beach next to you, like Conchalio, and it's half or less. If, say, you want 1500 square meters, it could cost $300,000.[124]

This figure suggests that along with tourism, real estate transactions have become a means of generating income. Consequently, El Salvador's definition of the land-owning elite transforms as it incorporates a slowly expanding class of los hermanos lejanos of the Salvadoran Diaspora, critical figures in the narrative of national development.[125] In El Tunco, one success story resides within a local who had sufficient capital to pay a coyote and enter the United States as un mojado.[126] Once he accumulated his wealth working abroad, he returned to El Tunco and purchased coastal property. These days, capitalistic triumph gleams from the shiny exterior and rims of his Hummer. Also broadening the definition is the comprador class of expatriates like La Libertad's Rotherham. These changes indicate an interesting and complex class structure that carries a history of important land-tenure relations. Although El Salvador's real estate is "stunted by [a] bad reputation," an investment-centered news service claims "there is a small but slowly rising interest in investing in this country…by visitors who have stumbled upon its beautiful forests, mountains and beaches, and have fallen in love with its people."[127] In El Tunco, Canadian expatriate and surfer Russell Underschultz is one of those visitors. When Underschultz first visited El Salvador in 2001, he says he bought "a small house in a little community" and "almost six manzanas of land" -- equivalent to nearly 10 acres -- for $25,000. Then he went back to Canada to work for a couple of years, and saved enough money so that when he returned to El Salvador, he could "float around" for

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[124] The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's *A Dictionary of Units of Measurement* indicates: "The length of the varas varie[s], but in Spanish Latin America it [is] generally about 33 inches or a little longer."

[125] For a necessary perspective on "cultural artisans of Departamento 15 in Washington, D.C., [who] challenge the mythologized status of los hermanos lejanos while representing the tensions and contradictions of transnational life in the United States," read chapter 6 of Ana Patricia Rodríguez's *Dividing the Isthmus: Central American Transnational Histories, Literatures, & Cultures* (2009, 174).

[126] Mojado/a is slang for wet back, or one who crosses the border sin papeles (without papers). This individual was unavailable for an interview.

[127] Kifle, 2008.

a while before he decided what he wanted to do next. After moving from Los Cabos, México, to El Tunco in 2007, the former construction worker eventually opted to collaborate with a Salvadoreño who owns a beachfront bar that caters mostly to foreigners. Underschultz says: "…[H]e's got a part in the business, but it's fine. I can do whatever I want."

> B: Are all of your employees Salvadoreños?
> U: No, no, I would like them to be Salvadoranian, but I can't find -- most of my clients in the nighttime are English-speaking, and the daytime sometimes as well. You know, the girl I have in the daytime is Salvadoreneo, but I'm not going to get rid of her. I need to have Salvadoreneo employees here legally, and you know, I hire people, you know, doing reception work at nights, but that's only because I can't find local girls who work at night. Hardly any of them will be able to speak English. None of them lives around here anyways.

In her intriguing analysis "Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty," anthropologist Aihwa Ong's description of the expatriate captures the essence of Underschultz when she writes:

> In global circuits, educated and self-propulsive individuals claim citizenship-like entitlements and benefits, even at the expense of territorialized citizens. Expatriate talents constitute a form of moveable entitlement without formal citizenship.[128]

Underschultz notes investing as a foreigner has been relatively easy for him; his experience immigrating, however, has not.

> U: They do make it difficult to live here, because immigration here is ridiculous. They have no idea what they're doing.
> B: Yeah, can you tell me more about that? What is it like to immigrate to El Salvador?
> U: It wouldn't be hard if the people in immigration actually knew what they were doing, and they did their jobs. It's supposed to be a three-month process, and I've been dealing with it for two years.
> B: Geez.
> R: And, still when I say to them, "Hey, like is this going to be over anytime soon? I mean, I've given you everything you need numerous times, and you've told me that I have done everything you wanted, so what's the problem?" And they just say, "There's lots of people who've been here a lot more time than you who still haven't gotten their residency." And, you know, my question is: "Then what the fuck is wrong with you?" Honestly. You talk to anybody in this country who knows anything about immigration, and

[128] 2006, 16.

> they'll all tell you the same thing now: None of those people know their job. They don't know anything. They're all -- one little cubicle is all they know. They know the one thing they're supposed to do. And if you go outside of that little box, they are totally clueless on how to handle you.

Despite the immigration aggravations, Underschultz is in a fortunate business position compared to the majority of Salvadoreños. He and other like-minded foreign entrepreneurs bring a sense of prestige -- all of which pertains to an internal, structural attitude toward the market in El Salvador. Cultural familiarity abounds when they employ English speakers. Ultimately, Underschultz's thoughts on surf tourism are similar to those of other interviewees. The main difference is that he believes surfing, real estate investment and business create an economic trilogy -- that the surfable break enhances a local's economic fate and produces entrepreneurial opportunities that would never exist otherwise. Underschultz maintains:

> Sure, I mean this community wouldn't be thriving if it wasn't for surf tourism. This would just be another place on the side of the road with a bunch of derelict houses and a few people living in, you know, their shacks, scraping by, never making any money, never getting anywhere. You know, so what we've got now is we've got a place, you know, because of these waves, where these people are able to maybe sell their land to make money, move somewhere else, and build themselves a nice house and have a farm or something -- if that's what they want. Or maybe they open a business and they become part of the surf tourism community. I was here in 2001, and this place was almost nothing.

The changes over the past decade seem to suggest any economic change in El Salvador -- El Tunco, in particular -- is entirely dependent on international and national tourism. This is a reasonable assumption, though not an entirely accurate perception of the nation's bigger, more complex picture. Indeed, according to a 2009 estimate, the service sector comprised 60.5 percent of the GDP.[129] That same year, the national economy suffered when the tourism subsector lost 1,300 jobs and $184 million in income due to the global financial crisis and spread of the H1N1 flu virus. Adding insult to injury, within the first five months of

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[129] *Global Finance*. El Salvador Country Report: Data on GDP and Economic Information: www.gfmag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/279-el-salvador-gdp-country-report.html#axzz1ToDKd7gv.

2009, the number of tourists visiting the country sank 26 percent from 813,810 to 597,100.[130] Overall, GDP growth retracted 3.5 percent in 2009. A year later, construction jobs hit a historic 12-year low, with only 21,078 people employed in the building industry.[131] International tourism showed signs of a slow rebound in 2011, as the number of international travelers increased 8 percent in the first two months of the year. CORSATUR also reports the 65.5 percent of those visitors were men.[132]

Despite low rates of economic growth and high levels of fiscal uncertainty, the Salvadoreño government still invested $8 million to realize the fourth stage of "Complejo Turístico" in nearby Puerto de La Libertad.[133] In 2011, additional funds helped pave the main street in El Tunco. Backing infrastructural improvements indicate the government understands tourism's economic potential; otherwise, projects would have stalled rather than forged ahead during the downturn. Based on the economic ties that bind tourism with development, a dependency theorist might hypothesize:

> [C]loser relationships between industrialized countries and a developing Latin American country [e.g. El Salvador] will produce more rapid economic growth in the developing state, or, on the contrary, that closer or at least more 'dependent' relationships will have a detrimental effect on the economic growth of the developing state.[134]

In a post-war country where agriculture and industry combined accounted for only 39.5 percent of the GDP in 2009, however, this theory falls short -- even when considering the monetary data. Yes, industry comprises 28.9 percent of El Salvador's gross domestic product, and includes textiles and apparel. The sector also employs approximately 70,000 Salvadoreños.[135] In 2008, El Salvador exported $4.6 billion of materials, including textiles and

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[130] Romero, 2009.
[131] Vides, 2010.
[132] Informe de Coyuntura: Turismo Primer Trimestre. Abril 2011.
[133] Azucena, 2009.
[134] Ray and Webster 1978, 410.
[135] El Salvador. September 2009 online report from Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

apparel; 50.8 percent of those exports went to the United States.[136] That same year, the nation imported $9 billion worth of goods -- 35.6 percent of which the United States supplied. According to provisions set in the United States-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement, El Salvador has "preferential access to U.S. markets. Textiles and apparel, [and] shoes…are among the sectors that benefit."[137] It is assumed, therefore, this trade relationship is one in which El Salvador is economically dependent on decisions in the metropole. An external debt of $11.45 billion also discourages the country's self-sustainability.

For more than three decades, however, remittances from the Salvadoran Diaspora -- not just activity in the agricultural, industrial and service sectors -- have played a pivotal role in the country's real GDP growth. So much, in fact, that when U.S. President Barack Obama concluded his Latin America tour in March 2011, he reiterated: "President [Mauricio] Funes is committed to creating more economic opportunities here in El Salvador so that people don't feel like they have to head north to provide for their families" or "join a criminal drug network" (Calmes, 2011). The country's evolving, post-war property market also showed signs of dependency on remittances from the United States until mid-2008. In May 2009, Global Property Guide reported the country "experienced a property boom from early-2000s to mid-2008, benefitting from billions of dollars of remittances from U.S.-based "[Salvadorans]. But because of the US recession and credit crunch, El Salvador's real estate market is now frozen."[138]

To a degree, remittances ameliorate some Salvadoreños' state of welfare, prolong educational attainment, facilitate land purchases, and enhance quality of life. The mood of

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136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 For additional information and figures on the impact of the U.S. crisis on El Salvador's real estate market, see "US crisis paralyzes El Salvador's real estate market." www.globalpropertyguide.com/Latin-America/El-Salvador.

various markets affects their income stream, but they still emerge as active agents dialed into the metropole abroad, not passive recipients trapped on the periphery or "semi-periphery." In this role, Salvadoreños are fully engaged and navigate their way through mazes of a dysfunctional global economy plagued by inept immigration policies. In the words of anthropologist Karen Juckett: "…[L]abor migration and remittances might be considered the principal means by which El Salvador participates in globalization, with an estimated…15.2 percent of the population still resid[ing] in the United States.[139]

Even so, 2.5 million Salvadoreños have stayed put to participate in El Salvador's workforce. Approximately 29 percent are employed in the industrial sector and produce $1.86 billion worth of high-technology exports.[140] At least 746,000 Salvadoreños also know how to use the Internet, suggesting technological advancements does not bypass places like El Tunco; rather, they contribute to economic growth, albeit at a snail's pace. In a survey sponsored by The World Bank Group, 29.77 percent of firms noted they use a website to promote their business. AHP's Vega, who also heads Asociación de Desarrollo Turístico Costa del Sol, affirms in the tourism industry having a website is "necessary" for any lodging operation, regardless of size. On average, the firms surveyed also experience a delay of 22.13 days in obtaining an electrical connection -- crucial infrastructure required for Internet service.[141] Severe climate conditions such as tropical storms, hurricanes, torrential downpours, mudslides and earthquakes present issues; thus, the delay may be longer in rural or disaster-prone areas, especially during the wet season, a.k.a. winter.

Regardless of the environmental challenges, Salvadoreños' response to technological advancements enables them to continue modernizing the country and surrounding towns. As

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[139] 2006, 2.
[140] Data: El Salvador -- high-technology exports: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/tx.val.tech.cd/countries/1W?display=graph
[141] World Bank Group. 2007 Survey. www.enterprisesurveys.org/ExploreEconomies/?economyid=62&year=2006.

both the manufacturing and service sectors stay idle, an array of individuals in El Tunco challenge the notion of dependency by adopting a neoliberal outlook that coexists with modernization. Here, "all forms of social solidarity [are] to be dissolved in favour of individualism, private property, personal responsibility, and family values."[142] In a transnational context, personal responsibility plays into the establishment of Hometown Associations (HTAs). Juckett notes that migrants who hail from the same community in El Salvador oftentimes reside close to each other in the United States and form HTAs. Via donations and fundraising activities, HTAs (each one composed of about twenty salvadoreños) "raise approximately $15,000 a year for projects" and send the money back to El Salvador in the form of collective remittances. These particular remittances are utilized to help develop the communities in which they formerly resided.[143]

According to Juckett: "Studies suggest about one percent of all remittances sent to Latin America are collective remittances. While this may seem small, in the case of El Salvador it totals approximately $15 million invested in poor communities."[144]
Juckett also asserts 3 percent of individual remittances "are used for 'family investment,' which includes building or improving a home, buying land, starting or expanding a business, buying a vehicle or buying farm animals."[145] El Tunco could stand to benefit from these forms of transnational aid.[146] By international standards, it remains impoverished, particularly on the outskirts of town. Despite the burgeoning slew of touristic accommodations, by August 2010 there was still no agua potable (drinking water) -- a situation that greatly frustrated almost all interviewees.[147] Up until July 2011, El Tunco's main road remained unpaved, a necessary

[142] Harvey 2005, 23.
[143] 2006, 10.
[144] Ibid.
[145] 2006, 9.
[146] It has not been determined if El Tunco has been a recipient of collective remittances.
[147] During an August 2010 interview with Manuel Cruz, a sectoralist official from the Ministerio de Economía, plans to bring drinking water to El Tunco were slated for October 2010.

infrastructural improvement to accommodate heavy weekend traffic. Trash and recycling services are extremely infrequent, if not nonexistent, although Hernein Amaya, a member of the Comité de Mantenimiento, says the group conducts beach cleanups every two to three months. English is still not formally taught at El Tunco's public schools, but the town's only Language Center offers Spanish and English lessons for an undisclosed fee. The nearest legitimate health clinic, Undidad de Salud, is in the port of La Libertad, where wait times vary depending on the medical emergency. Patient files are haphazardly stacked to the ceiling behind the counter of the registration desk; malarial mosquitoes frequent the waiting lounge. (Surfers can only hope they will not sustain a major injury while riding waves.)

Such societal conditions characterize the backdrop of neoliberal El Salvador, still polarized by the effects of war, modernization and globalization. *Wall Street Journal* journalist Bob Davis, who analyzes the economic outcome remittances have on the impoverished community of Ciudad Barrios, writes: The country "abolished price controls, privatized industries, slashed tariffs that were as high as 290 percent and adopted the dollar as its currency in 2001 to limit inflation."[148] When it comes to the main stage, Historian Michael Monteón argues:

> Under neoliberal rules, leaders cannot raise but can always lower taxes. They cannot effectively regulate corporations to prevent pollution, ecological destruction, or even financial chicanery on a massive scale. They leave public goods to rot and collapse. Prior to the debt crisis of 1982, Latin American governments tried to rescue their industries from an untenable situation, but it did not follow that this mistake required dismantling all but the coercive powers of government. Allowing efforts to improve social welfare and education to go by the board has high social costs, and these have been accumulating for a generation.[149]

[148] 2006.
[149] 2010, 310.

Yet some residents of El Tunco harbor hope that surf tourism -- a "technology of subjectivity and subjection," as well as a principal product of neoliberal ideology -- will help solve economic dilemmas, specifically at the municipal level. Ong writes:

> Neoliberalism as used here applies to two kinds of optimizing technologies. *Technologies of subjectivity* rely on an array of knowledge and expert systems to induce self-animation and self-government so that citizens can optimize choices, efficiency, and competitiveness in turbulent market conditions. Such techniques of optimization include the…development of entrepreneurial ventures and other self-engineering and capital accumulation. *Technologies of subjection* inform political strategies that differently regulate populations for optimal productivity, increasingly through spatial practices that engage market forces.[150]

Surf tourism as a technology in El Tunco straddles both subjectivities. On one hand, it serves as an entrepreneurial venture beholden to surfers' demand for waves. On the other, it facilitates a spatial practice in which surfers as a real-estate market force privatize oceanfront property, thereby limiting public access to quality breaks. A combination of the dynamics creates a "neoliberal subject." According to Ong, "The neoliberal subject is therefore not a citizen with claims on the state but a self-enterprising citizen-subject who is obligated to become an 'entrepreneur of himself or herself.'"[151] Self-animation materializes as a potentially profitable livelihood as long as residents play their cards right. Even when they do, major obstacles exist, and they affect El Salvador's climate of investment in surf tourism. Chance, such as the recent downturn, plays a major role, and there is no social safety net. However, the most glorified challenge is Salvadoreños' past predilection toward violence, even when locals insist El Tunco is safe today. For the entire department of La Libertad, the most recent statistical data accumulated by Centro de Monitoreo y Evaluación de la Violencia desde la Perspectiva Ciudadana indicates that between 2002 and 2007, the homicide rate per 10,000 inhabitants was 6.18 compared with 0.99 in Morazán and 2.48 in Chalatenango. The national

[150] 2006, 6.
[151] 2006, 14.

average during this time period was 4.89. San Salvador topped the list as most violent with 6.50 homicides per 10,000 inhabitants.[152]

Las pandillas also remain a chronic socio-economic ill. The more impoverished the community, the more likely the gang activity. Like chameleons, they emerge from the fringes of society, only to blend back into their surroundings to escape punishment. Their subversive nature parallels a popularized image of anti-establishment surfers who hunt for waves like a global tribe of misfits. Although less common than in other parts of the country, a culture of gang violence still lurks beyond El Tunco's beaten path. Fears heightened in August 2010 when news reports recounted the decapitation of six-year-old Marleny Alejandra Galdámez Chávez. The student -- a victim of retaliation for her family's refusal to pay gang members $50 in renta (rent) -- was walking home from school in Las Costas, a rural borough in Ciudad Arce, a city less than 30 miles north of El Tunco. After torturing her, attackers dumped Chávez's mutilated body 500 meters away from her family's farm.[153] Extortion demands (a.k.a. renta) from pandillas are a major reason why many Salvadoreños who live abroad refrain from sending money back to their Salvadoran communities. According to journalist Davis, "they're afraid their families will become targets of gang violence. … The fear damps local investment, too. …[C]redit managers are afraid to travel to areas where gang influence is strong."[154]

El Tunco is certainly not immune to las maras -- two forms of the Mara Salvatrucha, the criminal youth organization that began in East Los Angeles. The bridge over Río Chilama that divides MS-13 and M-18 territory in El Majahual is within running distance of El Tunco. Thanks to a black-market demand for copper -- which nets $15 to $20 or more per cable (more than double the daily minimum wage) -- the town's only Internet café often lacks a connection

[152] Carcach 2008, 12.
[153] The slaying prompted San Salvador Archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas to condemn the violence. Five suspects were arrested in connection with the murder, but their judicial fate remains unknown.
[154] 2006.

for nearly two months at a time. Locals blame the situation on las pandillas. Says José Daniel Hernández Posada, a university student who works at the café: "We try to fix it, and then they just do it again." Some residents believe criminal behavior seems more prevalent now than it was during the war, when death squads and guerrilla groups preceded any notion of las pandillas.

Hernein Amaya muses:

> Pues, quizás haya más delincuencia ahorita que cuando estaba la guerra porque en el tiempo de la guerra, se sabía que iba a pelear un bando contra el otro, que peleaba la fuerza armada contra los guerrilleros. Y ahora no sabe quién te va a llegar a tu casa a molestarte o robarte el dinero que tiene. El gobierno necesita mejorar el sistema de seguridad. Es un problema. / Well, perhaps there is more delinquency now than during the war because in the time of war, everyone knew one band was going to fight against another, that the armed forces were fighting against the guerrilleros. And now you don't know who is going to come to your house and harass you or rob you for the money you have. The government needs to improve the security system. It is a problem.

A final factor that stains investment climate in El Salvador is the ease of conducting business. Doing Business Project, initiated in 2002 by the International Finance Corporation and the World Bank, "provides objective measures of business regulations for local firms" in 183 economies and selected cities at the subnational level."[155] In 2011 data, El Salvador ranks 86th overall, dropping six notches from 2010. Of "183 economies and selected cities at the subnational level," the country is 129th in terms of starting a business. As far as legal rights go, the law does not authorize businesses to agree on out-of-court enforcement.[156] The 2011 Index of Economic Freedom also notes:

> Private property is only moderately well protected. Lawsuits move very slowly and can be costly and unproductive. Private interests can manipulate the legal system, and final rulings may not be enforced. Judicial inefficiency and crime are among the main constraints on business. El Salvador is ranked 71st out of 125 countries in the 2010 International Property Rights Index.[157]

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[155] Ease of Doing Business in El Salvador: Doing Business 2011 data: www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/el-salvador.
[156] Ibid. www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/el-salvador#getting-credit.
[157] 174.

2.2: Perks and Perils of Privatization

"If land records were to receive as much attention from quantitative scholars as census records," writes political scientist Robert P. Swierenga, "our knowledge of rural landholding and tenancy would be considerably advanced."[158] The same goes for the coastal zones in the department of La Libertad. In this specific case, it is useful to continue classifying El Tunco a rural space within a densely populated nation rather than a mere extension of an urban sphere. Property rights indices and global rankings are not enough to discourage some national and foreign investors from purchasing land here. Landholding and tenancy change because of surf tourism.[159]

While observing the commercial landscape in 2010, an informal estimate of the foreign- to local-owned company ratio neared 2:2. For every two Salvadoreño-owned businesses, two foreign-owned were competing in the same market. An underlying concern involves Salvadoreños' English proficiency, which is generally low throughout the area (as Canadian bar proprietor Underschultz notes during his interview). According to data collected by the San Salvador-based non-governmental organization Campos Art Group, on behalf of the project Speak Surf: "Several foreign-owned surf tour companies have sprouted up and have absorbed much of the income from international tourism related to surf. Local guides have been left out of the equation, often due to linguistic barriers."[160]

Beach access is another barrier. The closer the terrestrial acquisitions are to the Pacific Ocean, the more likely entrepreneurs compromise the right of entry to waves. When property fronts the water, they often privatize access points altogether. Privatization requires substantial capital, which means those who benefit most are the local and foreign elite, dominant powers

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[158] Edelman and Seglison 1994, 453.
[159] If one redefines the land-owning elite to include wealthy foreigners, an interesting study might explore what this means in terms of democracy and outcomes of the electoral process in El Salvador.
[160] Tema: El Tunco ESP. ELF El Salvador. http://es-es.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=116721085053265&topic=64. Accessed July 30, 2011.

who govern space. In the words of Lefebvre: "Dominated space is usually closed, sterilized, emptied out. The concept attains its full meaning only when it is contrasted with the opposite and inseparable concept of *appropriation*."[161] Make no mistake many property owners who participate in surf tourism promote private-access-only breaks as "crowd-free" or "empty." Regardless of whether such descriptions portray actual conditions, a central goal of surf tourism in El Salvador is to create the illusion that they do.

Most surfers -- powered by an idealistic belief that riding waves is a freedom, not a privilege -- represent the unalienable notion of access. They utilize aquatic space without permission. Such behavior only reinforces surfing's rebellious persona, forever at odds with its natural-law-abiding counterpart. "A situation of this kind," writes Lefebvre, "exemplifies a spatial practice which, though still immediate, is close, in concrete terms, to the work of art."[162] When surfing persists as a spatial practice, the ocean becomes a canvas of bipolar energy. The surfboard is a technological tool used to create, and each surfed wave produces an "appropriated space [that] *resembles* a work of art."

Until death do they part, dominated and appropriated space are a volatile, married concept trapped in the same theoretical household. Lefebvre contends:

> …ideally, at least, they ought to be combined. But history -- which is to say the history of accumulation -- is also the history of their separation and mutual antagonism.[163]

The roots of this conceptual marriage's dysfunction reach down into dominated space's ongoing affair with the privatization of property. Lefebvre writes: "Private space is distinct from, but always connected with, public space." Self-inspired motives aside, surfing is a way in which people participate in a public space. To deny access suggests public space has been abolished in favor of private property. "Not that appropriation disappears, for it cannot:"

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[161] 1991, 165.
[162] 1991, 166.
[163] Ibid.

Lefebvre continues, "both practice and theory continue to proclaim its importance and demand its restitution."[164]

One way to understand the philosophical sociologist's claims is to assess two paradigms of spatiality in El Salvador: Las Flores and El Sunzal. The ramifications of privatizing beach access vary between each space. At Las Flores Surf Club -- advertised as a surfers' resort managed by surfers for surfers -- the societal aftermath remains hypothetical.[165] The club is located approximately two hours by car from Comalapa International Airport or two-and-a-half hours southeast of La Libertad. Developers have not yet fully realized their luxurious master plan "Utopia."[166] Based on a virtual tour of the real estate investment, a utopian essence arrives in the form of a prepackaged community for the elite, boasting everything from a "state-of-the-art cliffside spa and clubhouse" to "private massage stalls [with] ocean view." Eight "designer villas" sprawl across a manipulated landscape that excludes the lower and middle classes from accessing Punta Las Flores.[167]

Known to many surfers simply as Las Flores, this "world-class" wave can break for nearly 300 meters under optimal conditions, its energy "forming way off the point and peeling across the cove, right up onto the sand just meters from the front of [Las Flores Surf Club]."[168] Security and privacy concerns camouflage class-based issues:

> Due to its unique topography (2 sides are sheer cliffs, and the other 2 sides a steep grade only negotiable by internal trails and access roads) the property is naturally isolated and secure. Utopia en Las Flores will exist within a larger perimeter of Las Flores Surf Club, which is patrolled by 24/7 armed security. Beach access is by way of 2 separate trails or 1 access road through Las Flores Surf Club. Owners can walk freely from their villas to the resort or beach all within a fully secured perimeter.[169]

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[164] Ibid.
[165] Las Flores Surfing: El Salvador's East Coast: www.lasfloresresort.com/surfing.php.
[166] Due to time constraints, I did not visit this locale.
[167] The development concept integrates "ecological preservation" into the site's urban plan.
[168] Las Flores Surfing. El Salvador's East Coast: www.lasfloresresort.com/surfing.php
[169] Las Flores Real Estate. Utopia en Las Flores Master Plan: www.lasfloresresort.com/real_estate_masterPlan.php.

When wealthy foreigners and Salvadoreños, a.k.a. the land-owning elite, purchase exclusive access to the beach, they set a pay-to-play precedent. The overall perk is that they get the waves all to themselves. By implementing armed security, they militarize their dominated space and effectively thwart appropriation, emerging, once again, as the victor in the battle of co-dependent yet antagonistic concepts.

Assumedly, the next step -- perilous on all fronts -- is to establish imaginary boundaries within the ocean to "protect" touristic assets. Doing so may sustain or foster further growth in surf tourism. This type of measure may sound far-fetched. It is, however, conceivable considering how Latin American leaders have engaged in the World Bank's hydro-sector reform -- "a euphemism for the privatization and 'structural adjustment' of laws governing water management and usage."[170] Jason Wallach describes privatization polemics, writing:

> Resistance to water privatization has been common throughout Latin America since the World Bank and the IDB began quietly administering hydro-sector privatizations in the 1980s. But many nations are faced with the unenviable position of agreeing to water privatization by signing off on structural adjustment loans or being without the resources necessary to provide service in the first place. [171]

In the past, the Salvadoreño government has toyed with the idea of privatizing rivers to provide potable water to inhabitants, going so far as to "co-invest" with ambitious foreign enterprises and launch "pilot projects." It is naïve to assume the ocean is forever immune from corporate influence, especially when beach-access denial is permissible without legal authorization. This objective is clear to Washington, D.C.-based Competitive Enterprise Institute, founded on principles of "free markets and limited government," which supports the privatization of "ocean resources" to "help ensure long-term conservation and at the same time

[170] Wallach 2006.
[171] Private Rivers: http://upsidedownworld.org/main/el-salvador-archives-74/205-private-rivers-will-transnational-water-companies-swallow-el-salvadors-water-supply. Accessed July 31, 2011.

increase [owners'] profitability."[172] In fiscally challenging circumstances, leaders of any debt-ridden nation (like El Salvador) could very well co-invest with loaded investors set on preserving the natural environment (reefs or geographical formations, for instance) that create quality breaks for surfers. Noble intentions will backfire, however. There is no way to control greed and corruption, particularly when the state itself is weak.

At this stage, ocean privatization in El Salvador seems unlikely to economist Manuel Cruz, who has worked five years as an official sectorialista (sectoralist official) for the Ministerio de Economía. "Creo que la playa es de todos. Eso no puede 'tax.' / I think the beach is everyone's. That you cannot tax," he says. With support from the Ministerio de Economía, in June 2010 the 50-year-old began working alongside a small group of residents in El Tunco to communicate infrastructural needs to the government. Cruz says officials are aware of the development-related obstacles the town faces. "Lo que pasa es la velocidad que lleva el desarrollo de proyecto no es igual a la velocidad con que el gobierno pueda responder con sus recursos. / What happens is the speed leading the development of the project is not equal to the speed with which the government can respond with its resources." In the case of Punta Las Flores, Cruz refrains from making any judgments, but he does offer some general insight:

> Claro que no es lo mejor que la gente se apropia de la playa. … Creo que allí es más de la evolución de las leyes. … A esta persona las olas no le pertenecen. Quizás este empresario tiene poca visión -- que está fallando su visión económica porque eso [es] un atractivo que le va a atraer más gente. Entonces esto tengo que ver. / Clearly it is not best that people appropriate the beach. I think there it is more about the evolution of the laws. The waves do not belong to this person. Perhaps this entrepreneur has little vision -- that he is failing in his economic vision for an attraction that will bring more people. So, this, I have to see.

[172] 2011. Iain Murray offers an idealistic view of how privatizing the ocean's resources could help sustain the world's fisheries. See "Develop New Approaches to Preserve Ocean Resources" in *Liberate to Stimulate: A Bipartisan Agenda to Restore Limited Government and Revive America's Economy*.

Although there are other avenues where surfers can access Las Flores, the Surf Club's Utopia symbolizes a titanic warning for what the future of wave-centric tourism and coastal development holds in El Salvador. These types of entrepreneurial endeavors do not create a "better" reality for all Salvadoreños, nor is it progress. To individuals who insist otherwise, "…what [they take] for progress [is] merely a growth in the productive forces, which, so far from solving so-called 'social' and 'political' problems, [is] bound to exacerbate them."[173] This is apparent in El Sunzal.

Social tensions percolate beneath the cordial surface of the sleepy surf town near El Tunco. At the turn of the 21st century when development was still relatively sparse here, visitors could drive their vehicles over unpaved terrain, park at the beach, and "surf sin problemas / surf without problems," several interviewees claim. That freedom eroded when Salvadoreño developer and entrepreneur Alfonso Álvarez, current president of Federación Salvadoreña de Surf (FESASURF), purchased a significant stretch of jungle along the coast. He and fellow developer Ernesto Moreno joined forces to build Casa de Mar, which "sits perched on a slope with direct access to the Sunzal beaches just north of La Libertad."[174] The duo also collaborated with two extranjeros who had settled in El Sunzal and owned property adjacent to Casa de Mar. All parties agreed it would be in their best interest to limit access to the ocean and protect their investments from any potential crime activity. They constructed a salmon-colored wall along the perimeter of their hotel, as well as an enormous gate at the end of the once-public road that led both foreign and national surfers to the popular break Sunzal.[175] From 8 a.m. until 6 p.m., Casa de Mar's gate remained open. At sunset, armed security patrolled the area surrounding the locked barrier. Beachgoers would have to "hablar

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[173] Lefebvre 1991, 82.
[174] Gateway El Salvador. Casa de Mar Hotel & Villas at Sunzal El Salvador: http://gatewayelsalvador.com/gateway_el_salvador_hotels_casa_de_mar.html.
[175] Although the exact time remains uncertain, it is likely these events transpired sometime around 2003 when Casa de Mar opened.

con el dueño de hotel para no tener problemas / talk to the owner of the hotel to avoid problems," says Sunzal local Lilian Esmeralda López Corvera. López Corvera worked for Alvarez for four years and is one of El Salvador's most recognized female competitive surfers.



Figure 2.1: An aerial shot of Casa de Mar, courtesy of the hotel's website, reveals a stretch of the long wall that separates the lodging from a now-private road.

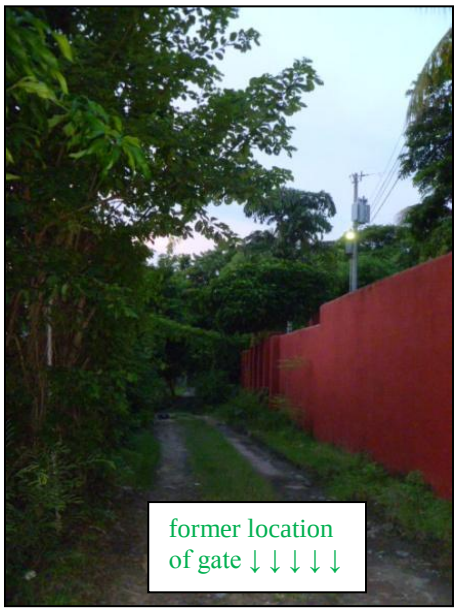
There were kinks in Alvarez's plan, however. The gate's hours of operation prevented hotel guests from entering grounds in the evening and accessing the break before sunrise, when surfing conditions generally are optimal. Adds López Corvera:

> Los gringos que se quedan aquí, bueno, todos se fueron al Tunco porque tenían [algo que hacer], y a las seis de la tarde, nadie podía regresar de las playas. Y a las ocho de la mañana estaba abierto portón, y nadie podía surfear a las cinco de la mañana. / The gringos who were staying here, well, they all went to El Tunco because they had something to do, and at six in the evening, no one could return from the beaches. And at eight in the morning the gate was open, and no one could surf at five in the morning.
> B: ¿Cuando quieren las olas porque están buenas en esta hora? / When they want the waves because they are good at this time?
> LC: Sí, y cuando no hay gente. / Yes, and when there are no people.

Measures to privatize beach access did not sit well with local Salvadoreños either. As López Corvera walks along the mosquito-infested path toward Sunzal, she points to where the gate once existed before a group of people banded together "a while ago" and (with the mayor's approval) allegedly used a tractor to destroy it. This is just one way in which Salvadoreños

contest the privatization phenomenon. Such an overt display of resistance seems connected to the widespread characterization of the surfer who, guided by an anti-bourgeoisie attitude, rejects authority. Even so, no one knows who brought down the barrier, and López Corvera insists she did not help organize anything, contrary to enduring rumors. What concerns the professional surfer is that wealthy entrepreneurs seem more eager than ever to cater to affluent foreigners. Yet unlike El Tunco, López Corvera says the majority of El Sunzal's visitors are Salvadoreños, and most cannot afford a night's stay in an oceanfront resort like Alvarez and Moreno's.

Photograph 2.4: Prior to privatization, this route to El Sunzal was open to the public. People could drive their vehicles along the unpaved road, park, and trek down a hill of rocks to surf the popular break. Property owners still permit pedestrians to pass through; the road is closed to local traffic, however.



Impervious to the longstanding class struggle, several members of the business elite still aspire to create aquatic playgrounds open only to wave-hungry tourists with disposable income. They gear infrastructure toward tourism, which invites towns like Sunzal and El Tunco to become more crowded. Yet El Salvador lacks the capital to create additional

attractions typical of a metropolitan area (a museum or library, for instance); thus, the towns are left with enclaves of privatized surfing. The hypothetical consequences are as follows: Over time, the number of public, "free" avenues to access the ocean will decrease, and the amount of pay-to-park lots (already existent in El Tunco) and privatized beaches will increase. Eventually, visiting the ocean may cost too much for the low- to no-income masses, presuming it does not already. Imposed parking fees create an additional financial burden. Either that or access will disappear completely. In the end, the surrounding area of El Tunco's beach-access landscape could end up looking similar to the United States' coastal terrain:



Figure 2.2: This model representing various degrees of beach access in the United States could characterize El Salvador's coastal landscape in years to come. Image courtesy of an article from The Surfrider Foundation featured on The Inertia.com.

Although the Ministerio's Cruz is against privatizing the actual ocean, in certain cases he sees no "injusticia / injustice" limiting access to the beaches.

> B: Por ejemplo, en Sunzal mucha gente quiere privatizar partes de la playa, y ¿piensa que esto es justo para la gente que ha vivido allá toda la vida? Bueno, luego el turismo llega, las turistas llegan, y ponen más dinero en la economía local, y luego un dueño de un hotel tiene suficiente dinero para construir un portón. ¿Piensa que esto es un efecto como -- / For example, in Sunzal many people want to privatize parts of the playa, and do you think this is fair for the people who have lived there their entire lives? Well, then tourism arrives, the tourists arrive, and they put more money into the local economy, and then the owner of a hotel has sufficient money to build a gate. Do you think this is an effect like --
> C: Es un efecto del desarrollo de la globalización, y no lo podemos evitar. Por hay algo -- un portón, tu casa, un portón en tu casa. Tú fueras la propietaria de un lugar, pero al final ves que el lugar está lleno de negocios, los restaurantes ruidosos con mucha gente. ¿Estarías contenta de vivir allí? Quizás ya no -- porque nunca pasaba un carro antes, pero hoy pasan autobuses, carros, y todo

> el tipo de gente. Entonces, ya no es el lugar como el que tú conociste a vivir. / It is an effect of the development of globalization, and we can't avoid it. For there is something -- the gate, your house, a gate in your house. Say you were the proprietor of a place, but in the end, you see that the place is full of businesses, the restaurants noisy with lots of people. Would you be content living there? Maybe not anymore -- because a car never passed before, but today buses pass, cars, and all types of people. So it is no longer the place like you used to know and live.

Cruz makes valid points, but his response focuses on the hypothetical individual rather than the actual collective. When concentrating on the collective, he holds responsible the globalization of development rather than people themselves, who are the productive energies behind the phenomena. In his eyes, the societal cost does not outweigh the prospective economic benefits, in that privatization produces:

> La posibilidad de trabajar que antes no tenía, que antes pasaba nada allí en toda la comunidad. Ahora los [pobladores] van a trabajar en los lugares y dan clases de surf o algo hacen. Hay ya tienen otra visión, otra oportunidad más. Entonces no lo veo como una injusticia para los pobladores. / The possibility of work that before [the community] did not have, that before nothing was happening there in the entire community. Now the [people] are going to work in the places and give surf classes or do something. They already have another vision, another opportunity. So I don't see it as an injustice for the people.

In one regard, Cruz's argument lacks clarity, which makes the perils of privatization even more transparent in El Salvador: If, at the governmental level, intangible economic forces ultimately dictate accessibility, then public beaches in places like El Tunco are at risk.[176] Compounding this concern are advertisements for accommodations such as Tortuga Surf Lodge, "one of the first registered Salvadoran surf tour companies established in 1998. … The lodge is located on a privately owned beachfront property."[177] Perhaps López Corvera best captures a dubious future for all Salvadoran beach towns when she acknowledges, "Entonces, sí, la privatización de la playa nos ha afectado mucho. / So, yes, the privatization of the beach has affected us greatly."

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[176] For a fascinating read about how "wave ownership" and the leasing of Tavarua Island for resort guests only "underscores the sport's crucial debate," see Mark Borden's "Who Owns This Wave?" featured in *Sports Illustrated* on April 18, 2005.

[177] Who Are We? Tortuga Surf Lodge and Tours: www.elsalvadorsurfer.com/whoare.html.

2.3: Bootleg Consumerism and Manufacturing Challenges

In 2004, the global apparel trade generated $226 billion.[178] By all accounts, surfing is a global industry, currently valued at $6.24 billion in U.S. retail sales. Business interests have appropriated and commodified "…the physical act of surfing…to create a lucrative market based on the sale of 'lifestyle clothing.'"[179] Market potential stretches way beyond the sphere of tourism in Salvadoran beach towns and into the country's malls, streets and homes. Sociologist John Horne contends in his study *Sport in Consumer Culture* that retail figures are one way to measure the "contemporary global economic significance of sport."[180] From a commercial perspective, the presence of surfing in El Salvador continues to evolve in step with the rest of Central America. According to Sean Smith, executive director of the Surf Industry Manufacturers Association (SIMA), it "is a culture and sport defined by passion -- it's not a hobby or pastime for core participants. Even in a down economy, core surfers will keep surfing[,] and youth will desire to be a part of the surf lifestyle and culture."[181]

A place to catch a glimpse of the industry's market-driven globalization is in San Salvador's "el centro." An exploration throughout the bustling corridors and crowded streets leads to clandestine booths full of bootlegged surf clothing. Vendors display racks of Quiksilver knockoffs. The marca pirata (pirated brand) is not made in Salvadoran factories; rather, bootleggers use homemade and industrial-style pulpos (printing presses) to put the fake labels on T-shirts. Imitation Hollister apparel exported from Guatemala sits atop a massive table. Hollister's stigma in the United States as a corporate leech on "legit" surfers' culture means nothing to consumers as they comb through the piles of cotton shirts.[182] One vendor

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[178] Gatchell et al. 2005, 4.
[179] Lanagan 2002, 284.
[180] 2006, 22.
[181] 2011.
[182] For a compelling read about how "Hollister Co. -- the 'surf-inspired' mall-based retail chain and brainchild of Abercrombie & Fitch CEO Michael Jeffries [has been] a threat to the surf market," see Josh Hunter's analysis: http://business.transworld.net/8642/features/how-hollister-co-stole-surf-eight-

charges $5 for a faux Quiksilver T-shirt. The price is nearly four times less than the full retail value of an "authentic" shirt imported from China and sold in Multiplaza El Salvador's official Quiksilver store.

Within the "mode of consumption," the price differentiation suggests that: "A democratisation of taste [is] occurring that permit[s] wider access for most of the population to previously exclusive consumption activities."[183] In other words, poorer Salvadoreños can still pledge allegiance to a commercialized surf culture by buying a bootlegged version. Consuming in this manner also enables them to reject the hierarchical nature of a global political economy, for they are sustaining a local surfing apparel market on their own terms. El Salvador's lax copyright laws do not adequately protect creators of the industry's "intellectual" property, even if they file the relevant paperwork and submit it to the appropriate agency. Ultimately, copyright and patent laws are not overhead expenses; thus, it is nearly impossible to prevent the knock-off industry from forming, especially in a country that struggles with high levels of poverty and structural unemployment.[184] Every bootleg purchase that a Salvadoreño makes sidesteps Quiksilver's profit margins, weakening the fiscal fortitude of an entity that currently "is worth more than $850 million."[185] Instead, revenue goes directly into the pockets of retailers in the informal sector, and consumers walk away with a price-friendly version of the brand's name or symbol (perhaps the most sought-after elements) plastered across locally produced garments. The out-of-control informal sector is simply another outcome of neoliberalism. Without any state enforcement of contracts to

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years-after-abercrombie-fitch-invaded-the-surf-market-what-can-be-done-to-defend-against-them/. Accessed July 30, 2011.

[183] Horne 2006, 9.

[184] According to data from the World Bank, in 2009 the percentage of El Salvador's population at the national poverty line was 37.8 percent. The Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean indicates in 2005 only 56.2 percent of Salvadoreños were classified as employees; 27.4 percent worked for "large companies" in the formal sector. In the informal sector, only 18.9 percent were employees for "small companies"; 29.2 percent were self-employed and unqualified; and 11.0 percent were workers without income (2010, 180).

[185] Melekian, 2011. Quiksilver is headquartered in Huntington Beach, California.

uphold the ideals of capitalism, bootleg consumerism thrives. The very destruction of El Salvador's government that preceded neoliberalism leaves the state vulnerable to rampant abuses of intellectual property.

At one historical moment, manufacturers integrated El Salvador into the global surfing industry as an apparel-producing country. Quiksilver competitor Hurley International LLC, founded by prolific surfboard shaper Bob Hurley in 1979, may be the most obvious example. A study conducted by a public affairs team from the University of California, Los Angeles indicates, "El Salvador's industry has mainly grown around trade agreements that allowed preferential access to U.S. markets."[186] Both the U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement and its expanded U.S.-Dominican Republic act made it feasible for the Costa Mesa, California-based surf-apparel company to operate in a Salvadoran free trade zone (FTZ), also known as a zona franca. FTZs are secured sites of economic activity dominated by the presence of maquilas (garment-assembly factories), which often serve as export platforms for manufactured clothing. "The free-zone regime provides assistance for eligible enterprises through tax concessions." In 2007, there were more than 82,000 Salvadoreños working in these zones.[187]

According to the Fundación Salvadoreña para El Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUSADES), El Salvador has thirteen zonas francas -- all but one that contain various business' maquila textile operations.

> At the end of 2008…there were 270 enterprises benefiting from the Law on Free Zones and Inward Processing Warehouses. … Of these, 62 are foreign enterprises. Whether directly or indirectly, the free zones employ 9.1 percent of the national labor force.[188]

[186] Gatchell et. al. 2005, 4.
[187] World Trade Organization: Trade Policy Review: El Salvador 2010, 69.
[188] Ibid.

Photograph 2.5: The printing on this T-shirt shows Hurley, a subsidiary of Nike, has relied on Salvadoreño labor to produce surf apparel. The T-shirt's year of production is most likely 2009; however, the duration of the company's stay in El Salvador, remains unknown.



Korean and Taiwanese investors own several of the maquilas. Their presence is observable thanks to script painted on the buildings' barb-wired concrete walls. [189] It is reasonable to believe not every employee working in an FTZ is necessarily Salvadoreño. The East Asian financiers may be conducting business in El Salvador because it is more cost-effective to utilize the country's natural resources. At the same time, they also may be importing their own labor because, as Gatchell et. al. claim, "Labor costs in El Salvador are considerably higher than in all of its Asian competitors."[190]

Several informal conversations with the store managers of El Salvador's mall-based surf shops substantiate that Hurley's interest in the country as a site of labor-intensive production and exportation seems to have fizzled. On-the-ground searches for a maquila

[189] El Salvador's thirteen FTZs (Zonas Francas) include: American Industrial Park, S.A. de C.V.; Export Salva Free Zone; Concordia Industrial Park; Parque Industrial El Progreso, S.A. de C.V.; San Marcos; Lido Free Zone; Zona Franca Miramar, S.A. de C.V.; Zona Franca San Bartolo; Zona Franca Santa Lucía, S.A. de C.V.; Zona Franca Santa Tecla; Zona Franca de Exportación El Pedregal, S.A.; ZF Internacional; and Zona Franca 10.
FUSADES. Zonas Francas: www.fusades.org/?cat=1419&lang=es&title=Zona%20Franca%2010 and Mercatrade. Tax Free Zone El Salvador: www.mercatrade.com/page/tax-free-zone-el-salvador.
[190] 2005, 4.

yielded a series of dead ends. Panjiva, "an intelligence platform for global trade professionals," does not list El Salvador as one of the company's contemporary supplier countries. (The platform does note two of Hurley's Central American contractors are located in Guatemala, however.)[191] The omission could suggest Hurley no longer relies on Salvadoran labor to produce surf apparel. According to Cruz, of the Ministerio de Economía:

> Aquí, hace algunos años, tuvimos muchas maquilas. Pero las maquilas se muevan donde la mano de obra es más barata. Y en el caso de Centroamérica, El Salvador es uno de los países que tiene como el mejor de los más altos ingresos per cápita, abajo está, por ejemplo, Nicaragua, Honduras. Entonces, las maquilas se muevan para allá. En Guatemala hay muchos también. / Here, some years ago, we had many maquilas. But the maquiladoras move to where labor is cheaper. And in the case of Central America, El Salvador is one of the countries with the best of the highest per-capita incomes -- below is, for example, Nicaragua, Honduras. Then the maquilas move there. In Guatemala there are many, too.

Even if Hurley does not appear to conduct business in El Salvador, it is possible that Nike has contracted one of its Salvadoran factories to continue manufacturing surf gear without explicitly noting the buyer's name in corporate communication material. In February 2002, the footwear leviathan purchased the surf firm for an estimated $90 million to $100 million. In a 2008 report, Nike disclosed two Salvadoran contract factories: Olocuilta La Paz's Boum Activewear SA de CV in Zona Franca Internacional, as well as Textiles La Paz LLC in Zona Franca de Exportación El Pedregal (located in the department of La Paz).[192] Nike's 2011 disclosure list names three contracted factories in El Salvador: The same Textiles La Paz LLC; Decotex International LTDA de CV, located in the free trade zone of American Industrial Park

[191] The platform contains supplier and buyer information on more than "1.5 million companies across 190 countries. Hurley Panjiva search: http://panjiva.com/search/results?q=hurley&m=buyer_combined. Accessed August 10, 2011. To acquire more information about Hurley's history of shipments to its Costa Mesa location from July 2007 to August 2011, subscribers can fork over $99 (or more) to view the company profile.

[192] 2008 Nike Contract Factory Disclosure: www.docstoc.com/docs/19686302/Nike-Contract-Factory-Disclosure.

SA de CV in the department of La Libertad's Ciudad Arce; and Supertex in Zona Franca 10 of Chalchuapa, Santa Ana.[193]

The current state of affairs is vague at best, and inquiries for additional information from Hurley supply-chain-and-management representatives went answered. Details extracted from an examination of Nike's *Corporate Responsibility Report FY 07, 08, 09* confirm that because Hurley is only an affiliate of the brand, it has "…a different product mix and is at a different level of compliance to NIKE, Inc. standards. In [fiscal year 09], the affiliates began integration into NIKE, Inc. standards with monitoring and Code compliance."[194] One potential conclusion can be drawn from this report: Hurley's last year of producing clothing in El Salvador was likely 2009, when Nike's affiliate integration initiative commenced. Disclosure reports categorizing the countries of Hurley's contracted factories either do not exist or are not publicly available. Until the company fully complies with Nike's corporate principles and operates with total transparency, pertinent information stays scattered across the Internet. Taking into account Hurley's posted gains, it is worth contemplating what financial success means for countries like El Salvador.

> To be sure, in a profit system it is unsporting to begrudge investors with high profits. But the system has yet to evolve to the point at which everybody profits. One man's profit is another man's loss. The profits of the global corporations derived from poor countries, it must be said, are made at the expense of the people of those countries. The proposition that developed and undeveloped countries will get rich together through the expansion of global corporations is, at best, exactly half true.[195]

Whether or not Nike's maquilas -- which specialize in screen-printing services and produce ropa deportivo (athletic gear) and vestidos de baño (bathing suits) -- are Hurley

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[193] 2011 Nike Contract Factory Disclosure: www.nikebiz.com/responsibility/documents/factory_ disclosure_list.pdf.
[194] 39.
[195] Barnet and Müeller 1974, 162.

suppliers is open to debate and investigation.[196] One thing is certain: Nike's move to acquire the company solidified the surf industry's corporate trajectory, drawing an end to an anti-establishment era born in the backyards and garages of entrepreneurial surfers.[197] Financial analysts believed Nike had been waiting for an opportunity "to take on the surf industry leaders…Quiksilver and Billabong." These two publicly traded companies are currently worth a combined total of $2.35 billion. Quiksilver's subsidiaries include Roxy, DC Shoes, Lib Tech, Hawk, Raisins, Radio Fiji and Leiani. Over the years, Billabong has purchased "a dozen other action-sports brands, including Element, Von Zipper, Nixon, DaKine, and RVCA." It also owns multiple retail outlets.[198] Between 1982 and 1998, the company licensed its brand to Hurley, which established Billabong USA. "By the end of 1998, it was clear that [Hurley] had its own vision for the future that did not necessarily serve the interests of Billabong globally."[199]

After Nike acquired Hurley, the surf company's sales jumped from approximately $70 million in 2002 to $221 million in 2010 (Manning, 2010). The boost is tied to a global transformation in the action-sport retail landscape. Says Doug Palladini, SIMA president and vice president of marketing for Vans, in a SIMA press release: "We have seen considerable contraction in the independent wholesale channel and rapid expansion into mall chains and forms of owned retail, and this shift is reflected in the sales data."[200] Nike's acquisition and Hurley's steady increase in revenue underscores T. Miller et al.'s notion that an effective way to conceptualize growth of the surfing industry is to integrate a global political economy.

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[196] Decotex: decotexintl.com/web_en/screen_printing.php and
Supertex nuestros clientes: www.supertexinc.com.sv/Clientes.html.
[197] *Sports Business Daily*:
www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Daily/Issues/2002/02/Issue-110/Sponsorships-Advertising-Marketing/Nike-Hopes-To-Cash-In-On-Acquisition-Of-Hurley-Intl.aspx.
[198] *Sports Business Daily*. Ibid. Melekian, 2011.
[199] Hurley History: http://hurley.com/base/history/.
[200] 2011.

> In 2001, for example, Nike products were made in 68 factories worldwide, but 57 of them were in Asian countries and only 8 were in the Americas where the Nike headquarters is. More than half a million people were employed in these factories -- although strictly speaking they are not 'Nike employees' because they are not directly employed by Nike -- and over half of these people were in China or Indonesia."[201]

In terms of surf-apparel production, the conglomerate's purchase highlights an ongoing trend. Asia -- particularly China -- has become the primary regional exporter of clothing and accessories.

Photographs 2.6: Quique's racks are full of Quiksilver and its "outdoor fashion brand" Roxy. The clothing is currently produced in China.





Scholars issued warnings for El Salvador about the implications of transnational capitalism's changing environment in 2005:

> Without drastic action, El Salvador will have a very difficult time competing with several Asian apparel-producing countries. … Efforts on the part of the Government of El Salvador have focused on exploiting its location advantage and upgrading its production facilities; however, these steps towards modernization will not allow El Salvador to displace or even compete with countries like China as a primary source of production for U.S. brands.[202]

Effects are already observable in retail outlets like Quique, a "boutique and surf shop" founded in Costa Rica. While browsing the racks in its San Salvador Metrocentro mall location, countless tags on surf apparel show China as the manufacturer. Yantai Glory Textiles Co. Ltd., for instance, is a current manufacturer for Roxy. The "export-oriented garment

[201] Smith 2003, 100.
[202] Gatchell et.al. 2005, 4.

processing enterprise with import and export rights integrates the design, production, and sale of a garment into a whole."[203] Delta / B & Y Global Sourcing LLC, a Chinese conglomerate that controls a "substantial worldwide factory base for a variety of textile and garment products at various cost structures and lead times" produces Hurley apparel.[204] Both firms emphasize one competitive strategy: speed-to-market. El Salvador's advantage in speed-to-market has shrunken as Asian producers master shipping times.[205] Nevertheless, the higher the export volume and the faster the products are available for consumption, the more exploitative the labor conditions. There is no way to ensure "garments are ethically produced" when facilities and alliances are peppered across the globe. The "watchful eye" of a "QC network" (quality control) can always turn blind whenever bottom-line growth is at stake.[206]

Under these economic dynamics, the supply of tangible, commercialized surf apparel amplifies. Spaces surrounding sites of production bridge the chasm between surfing's unadulterated identity and consumer-esque alter ego. Product demand breeds market-driven mutants who capitalize off manipulated boundaries of space. Thematically, Lefebvre understands this process:

> The forces of production and technology now permit of intervention at every level of space: local, regional, national, worldwide. Space as a whole, geographical or historical space, is thus modified, but without a concomitant abolition of its underpinnings -- those initial 'points', those first foci or nexuses, those 'places' (localities, regions, countries) lying at different levels of social space in which nature's space has been replaced by a space-*qua*-product. In this way, reflexive thought passes from produced space, from the space of production (the production of things in space) to the production of space as such, which occurs on account of the (relatively) continuous growth

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[203] Yantai Glory Textiles Co. Ltd. Company Profile: http://en.ytglory.cn/about/&FrontColumns_navigation01-1263273157959FirstColumnId=6c3b4574-2f19-47cb-956f-4bb64a8f3140&comContentId=a8e1b0c3-3b72-4f76-ab5d-37db53eae4a9.html. Ibid. Panjiva Supplier Synopsis: http://panjiva.com/Yantai-Glory-Textiles-Co-Ltd/supplier_provided/191726?ref=sp&sppckey=a752439824f86a3ffc00733734efd5bb.
[204] Delta / B&Y Global Sourcing Ltd. About Us: www.deltaglobalsourcing.com/about_us/lang_en Ibid. Panjiva Supplier Synopsis: http://panjiva.com/Delta-Global-Sourcing-Ltd/supplier_provided/180149?ref=sp&sppckey=c8a92699a5bffca73bcbd3ee390cdd6c.
[205] Gatchell et. al. 2005, 4.
[206] Delta / B&Y Global Sourcing Ltd. Ibid.

> of the productive forces, but which is confined within the (relatively) discontinuous frameworks of the dominant relations and mode of production.[207]

In other words, people engage in the "consumption of dreams, images and pleasures" of surfing. Even if the material basis of individuals' reality indicates they do not surf (e.g. they do not own a surfboard), their minds can experience the idea of the act itself. One way to validate the so-called "lifestyle" is to endorse materialistic forces that typify its existence. People, for instance, buy Hurley, Quiksilver, Reef, Billabong or other brands' products; they invest in artwork, books, music; they watch surf-themed movies; they subscribe to "surf" magazines. Within a moment, anyone can identify with a fetishized façade of surfing regardless of whether s/he has ever set foot in the ocean. "Hence, in consumer culture there may be a dialectical relationship -- between false consciousness and the sources of collective energy and inspiration to overcome that same false consciousness."[208] This is precisely when sources of collective energy and inspiration wade through dangerous currents of mass consumption.

2.3.1: qi-x and 'El Chino'

Along Carretera del Litoral, shortly before the entrance to El Tunco, three lowercase letters punctuate a towering sheet of ivory-painted tin. Patches of moss grow along a brick wall topped with jagged glass and circles of barbed wire. The cobblestone driveway leads past a moribund shed to a two-story ranch constructed with indigenous wood and strips of bamboo. Inside the foyer, five racks full of brand-new surfboards stand atop a red-tiled floor. Each board is for sale or rent; the selling price varies, but the most expensive longboard rings in at $470, once again unaffordable even for the decently paid Salvadoreño who earns $400 a month working in the surf ranch. Locals call the man who owns the property "El Chino." He is

[207] 1991, 90.
[208] Horne 2006, 9.

in Las Vegas running his restaurant “para recuperar la capital / to recover capital” when the ethnographic research commences.

Photographs 2.7: The qi-x factory is located less than 100 meters from qi-x Rancho, once a lodging facility for “team surfers.” These days, it is an “exclusive accommodation appealing equally to surfers and non surfers.”[209]








Lingering controversy besieges El Chino’s name and his business qi-x, despite a proclaimed mission to “sell surfboards of the absolute best quality at affordable prices, and through that model, to support surfers in places that most need a boost around the world.”[210] A handful of interviewees are willing to talk; the remainder politely decline. Several Salvadoreños confirm that around 2006 the entrepreneur with average surfing skills who spoke “poquito Español / very little Spanish” and relied on a translator to conduct business arrived in El Tunco with an agenda. After he queried locals for information about the town’s most promising shapers, El Chino solicited Papaya for surfboard-production insight. On a verbal agreement that he would receive payment for his services, Papaya spent nearly two months in China at the Shek-Oz

[209] Surf Travel El Salvador. qi-x Surf House: www.surfestravel.com/qix.html.
[210] qi-x. At Work: www.qi-x.com/ChinatoElsalvador/web1/atwork.html.
The website shek-oz.com features the same qi-x information under a different domain name. See: http://shek-oz.com.

factory showing a crew of about forty Chinese how to shape boards.[211] When he became ill, the duo returned to El Salvador. Shortly after, the business deal unraveled, and El Chino's promises of payment never materialized. Papaya says of the ordeal: "Cosas que empiezan mal terminan mal. / Things that begin badly end badly."

By 2007, a small factory, aptly dubbed "La Fábrica (The Factory)," was open for business in El Tunco. El Chino initially distributed surfboards under the label Beto. Salvadoreño surfers who purchased Beto boards immediately called their quality into question when they broke in half after just a few uses, and the fins fell out while doing standard maneuvers in the water. They also floated poorly. "Todas las tablas vinieron de China. / All the boards came from China," says Alfredo de la Rosa.[212] The Salvadoreño worked various jobs as El Chino's employees for several years. He hopes to run his own business someday, enough to live "la vida sencilla / the simple life." Despite limited experience riding waves, de la Rosa knows enough about board mechanics to understand Beto never lived up to its hype.

> B: Alguna gente dice la calidad sufre porque son de China. / Some people say the quality suffers because they [the boards] are from China.
> AC: Sí. Ese fue el otro problema que empezaron: las primeras tablas que fabricaron en China fueron tablas pocas malas. El 'glass' no fue suave, el sistema cajas para las 'fins' muy malos. Entonces, la gente cuando los compraba y usaba se quebraron rápido. Entonces después ellos mejoraron la calidad de las tablas, pero ya fue difícil recuperar la credibilidad. Ya la gente lo decía no sirve porque las tablas no estuvieron mejor. / Yes. That was another problem: the first boards that were manufactured in China were kinda bad. The 'glass' was not smooth, the box system for fins very bad. So, when people bought and used the boards, they broke quickly.

At some point, El Chino changed Beto's name to qi-x. According to de la Rosa, however:

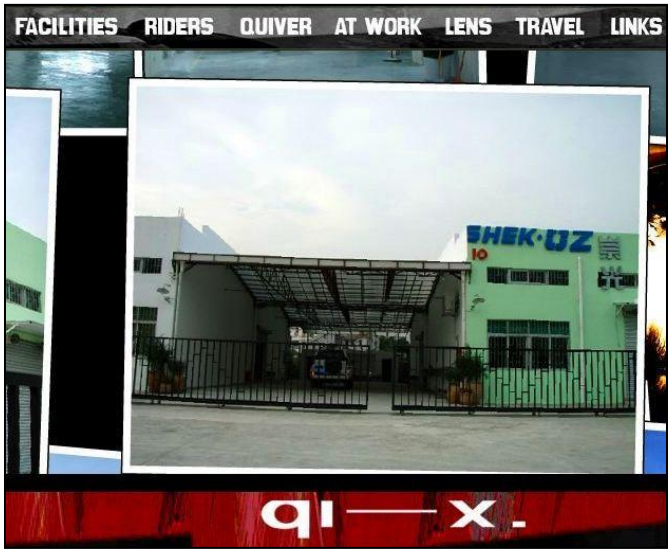
> Entonces después ellos mejoraron la calidad de las tablas, pero ya fue difícil recuperar la credibilidad. Ya la gente lo decía no sirve porque las tablas no estuvieron mejor. /

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[211] The qi-x website confirms there is a 30,000-square-foot academy, home to 6 hand shapers, 3 graphic artists, 10 laminators, 5 sanders/polishers, 37 bays and a 3DM double-cutting machine. qi-x.com. Facilities: www.qi-x.com/ChinatoElsalvador/web1/faciuties.html.
[212] This individual's name has been changed.

> So after, they improved the quality of the boards, but it was already difficult to recuperate the credibility. The people already said the boards didn't function, and they weren't any better.

Photograph 2.8: qi-x lists three supplier contacts in China. One is located in the 10 Qi'ao Industrial Zone on Qi'ao Island Tang Jia Wan in Zhuahai. The remaining two are in Hong Kong. The Shek-Oz factory is located in one of these cities.[213] Photo courtesy of qi-x.com.



Photograph 2.9: An image, courtesy of qi-x's non-copyrighted website, shows Papaya teaching a group of Chinese men how to sand a surfboard.



Even so, qi-x's aspirations, emphasized in crafty marketing speak, resonate, particularly among people who believe class status determines surfing's competitive landscape. According to the website:

[213] See qi-x Contacts: http://shek-oz.com/contact/contact.html.

> QI-X is standing by its goal of supporting unrecognized communities by getting the necessary tools into the hands of young dedicated talent: those most in need of top quality boards. We have institute the QI-X Pro-buy program, where we're making available to the top 10 surfers of countries world-wide to ride QI-X surfboards through our QI-X Pro Deal program. Basically, our program distributes our boards into the hands of the best surfers wherever they are, free. There's a lot of talent out there, in places without access, and we know that surfing can be expensive, where the sport is limited to the elite class, so this is our way of stepping up to support surfers who display the discipline and talent to go farther.[214]

Yet sandwiched between these noble intentions is a slippery slope where paternalistic deeds collide with exploitation. In the words of geographer and anthropologist David Harvey: "While neoliberalization may have been about the restoration of class power, it has not necessarily meant the restoration of economic power to the same people."[215] In El Tunco, "free" came with conditions. Athletes lost copyright privileges of their photos in which they rode Beto and qi-x tablas. They received surfing equipment but paltry sums of cash, resigned to the hope that one day their participation in local contests, as well as photogenic shots of massive airs and cutbacks, would lead to a bona-fide contract that remunerated them for their athletic skills. Meanwhile, the sponsor relied on the athletes as conduits of free global advertisement, selling "hand-crafted" boards made in China under the premise that he was equalizing competitive surfing's elitist playing field. Idealistic? Yes. Grounds for a successful venture? Not so much in El Salvador. Two years later, qi-x shut down. De la Rosa admits: El Chino's "obsesión de vender tablas a nivel mundial prácticamente fue un fracaso / obsession to sell boards at a world level practically was a failure."[216] Nonetheless, he does not believe the entrepreneur was an opportunist trying to exploit Latin American surfers. "No tanto / Not at all," he says:

> [El Chino] [t]enía su lado bueno, y tenía su lado malo también como muchos ¿verdad? Pero le dio una oportunidad a mucha gente. Le dio trabajo a mucha

[214] qi-x. Home: www.qi-x.com/ChinatoElsalvador/web1/index.html.
[215] 2005, 31.
[216] The company still seems to operate in several locations throughout East Asia.

> gente cuando él pudo. Pero cuando su se fue a quiebra, ya no pudo seguir dando más trabajo. No pudo regalar tablas, entonces -- como cualquier empresario creo que le puede pasar. / Not so much. He had his good side, and he had his bad side as well like many, right? But he gave an opportunity to many people. He gave work to many people when he could. But when he went bankrupt, he couldn't continue giving more work. He couldn't give away boards, so -- I think this can happen to any businessman.

Any similar fate is what the same surfer who taught Chinese how to shape boards intends to avoid. As events unfolded over the years, Papaya assessed social repercussions from the sidelines, concluding El Chino's failed venture augmented a culture of mistrust toward entrepreneurial extranjeros. With his limited capital, he invested in his own venture and took the smallest of steps to build a protective wall around domestic surfboard production.

Photographs 2.10: Many Salvadoreños regard Papaya as one of the country's most respected local shapers. He taught himself the art of shaping more than twenty years ago.



Blanks are imported from the United States, although it is unclear whether tariffs reduce the amount allowed into El Salvador. Papaya only confirms the imports "cuestan mucho / cost a lot." Apart from that, his goal is to decrease foreign dependency on globally manufactured, expensive surfboards via small-scale, local manufacturing -- a different approach than El Chino's. Mano de obra (labor) for one of Papaya's surfboards costs $125; the price does not include materials. Nonetheless, the cost of his finished product is still competitive compared with the $400-plus surfboard imports, and he guarantees quality. In terms of surfboard trade, it would appear Papaya has a comparative advantage. Yet, as Barnet and Müller suggest:

> It is often said that poor countries are poor because they are deficient in…capital stock: that is, they lack the tangible (and expensive) infrastructures that enable modern developed societies to function and to create more wealth -- roads, communications systems, schools, machines, and factories. But capital stock, unlike mushrooms, does not grow wild. Its appearance at a particular time and place is the result of specific human decisions about investment taken in the past.[217]

In El Salvador, those choices are deeply rooted in liberalization policies and neoliberal ideology. "Neoliberalismo es el culpable," Papaya agrees. "Tenemos que superar retos considerables. / Neoliberalism is the culprit. We have to rise above considerable challenges." Institutional classism is one obstacle that remains. Growing up with limited resources himself, Papaya understands the difficult journey El Salvador's aspiring surfers with limited income and education face at both the national and global level. In the end, based on his experiences, this is, perhaps, why he is willing to teach the future generation of Salvadoreños vital tricks of the trade. At this point, the market is small for local surfboard manufacturers, as is the demand for homegrown surf-related products. Still, in contrast to El Chino, whose neoliberal venture has stalled to the point of failure, Papaya's small business sustains itself. Recalling Ong's technologies of subjectivity and subjection, the local Salvadoreño operates effectively within both paradigms. He has created steady employment for himself, as well as a few fellow

[217] 1974, 134.

residents, while re-defining spatial practices that engage the local and global surf-market forces.

Photographs 2.11: Papaya's young apprentice takes note and memorizes.



In the case of El Tunco, the issue of space trumps that of jobs. Although maquila and service-industry jobs may appear, employment is not as permanent as the loss of environmental control and the transfer of property to the elite and foreigners. One can argue El Salvador is merely repeating the age-old experience of an export-enclave (complete with militarized police powers). The enclave does not consist of oil or copper but of beaches and surf -- exploitable but exhaustible resources exported to the world as commodified images. The systematic loss of public space, including land, and public access to the ocean approaches a tipping point. Foreigners (as usual) and financially successful members of the Salvadoran Diaspora are buying up this resource at a price that is beyond the reach of local Salvadoreños who have little to no disposable income and are trapped in a stagnant economy. What may result is another crisis in land tenure, land development and property rights -- that is, who owns what at what time. Surfing, no doubt, is a piece of tourism that has *and* has not worked regarding issues related to land development and land-tenure relations. It is dangerous to

ignore how the shift from pre-war to post-war El Salvador has altered class relations between the so-called “landed/landless, rural/urban, and domestic/foreign.” Although tourism buttresses El Tunco’s local economy, and bootleg consumerism appears slyly as a slim middle finger flicking off corporate surf moguls, harmonious social relations are at stake. When some Salvadoreño surfers experience the pitfalls of wave demand, like a dense fog, a sense of negativity settles over El Tunco’s surfscape. Chapter 3 surveys the issues of territoriality and (g)localism that arise.

Chapter 3: Territoriality

3.1: 'Mucha Gente, Poca Ola': Understanding '(G)localism'

Clouds shield the sun as a slight breeze tap-dances across the ocean. Head-high sets roll through, and foamy water, the shade of field-drab brown from a recent rain, pounds the cobblestones along the shore. On one August afternoon, it is not so much the water quality as the brassy message on the wall near La Bocana's point of entry that makes a visiting surfer pause and ponder: To go or not to go?

Photograph 3.1: The message on the wall at El Tunco's La Bocana is impossible to overlook.



Four factors influence the decision-making process: skill level, surfing conditions, desire and cultural capacity, though not necessarily in that order. On days with south-southwest groundswell, El Salvador's fickle but popular left is not a wave for the inexperienced or those who longboard, which is why Sunzal's overall aura seems more hospitable and tranquil. When the wind is favorable, La Bocana can barrel, and it gives surfers a fast ride. Inner desire

governs whether people heed the "ONLY LOCALS" warning. Finally, cultural capacity determines how they navigate the lineup, and what type of "peak experience" they have. Surf scholars Ford and Brown describe peak experience as an extension "to a whole range of aesthetically oriented aspects of surfing being 'triggered' for instance, by the variety of visual (coatscape, sea, sky and water senses) and tactile sensations surrounding...varied cultures and places associated with travel in search of waves.[218]

Apart from obvious water-quality issues, lurking rocks below and driftwood floating near the mouth of Rio Grande, the surf itself is too much fun to pass up. Several hidden chunks of driftwood make the paddle out to the lineup uneasy. Three men -- a local and two extranjeros -- wait at the peak, occasionally paddling north against a strong current to keep themselves from ending up at a different beach. The extranjeros chatter in English between themselves. Aarón Varquero, the only local, glimpses at the newcomer and then focuses on the pending set. The ambiance does not reflect the hostile energy that emanates from the wall on land. In fact, the vibe feels friendly and welcoming. Based on the minuscule demographic in the ocean, the message carries little weight during this particular session, regardless of the initials dripping in white paint on the wall.

Varquero paddles by and shoots a half-smile; it is enough to spark small talk:

> B: ¿Puedo preguntarle algo? / Can I ask you something?
> V: Sí. / Yes.
> B: ¿Cómo se siente cuando llegamos? / How do you feel when we arrive?
> V: O, pues yo soy tranquilo. Si tú me respetas, te respeto. … Es un evento diferente durante los fines de semana. Cuando la gente de San Salvador llega, te dirá '¡Vete! ¡Fuera! Y tú te vas. / Oh, well, I am chill. If you respect me, I respect you. It is a different event during the weekends. When the people of San Salvador arrive, they will tell you, 'Go! Out!' And you go.[219]

[218] 2006, 158.
[219] Dialogue was written in personal journal after surfing La Bocana in August 2010.

Photograph 3.2: Some Salvadoreños maintain members of Mara Salvatrucha, a.k.a. MS-13, are responsible for the wall art at La Bocana, and that (g)localism is a reflection of "delincuentes," not of surfers who live and work in El Tunco.



Political scientist Eric Ishiwata's description of localism in Hawaii is pertinent to El Salvador. "Surfing protocol, simply put," he writes, "dictates that the first surfer to stand up closest to the peak of a breaking wave has the right of way."[220] Assuming all cultures immersed in a wavetopia follow the code of behavior, ideally this right cultivates a global ethic. Ishiwata explains:

> However, the orderliness of this guideline is complicated by the phenomenon of localism. Irrespective of positioning, localism dictates that 'locals,' through an implicit claim of place and belonging, possess a priority to waves over other surfers. This assertion of priority…establishes an in-the-water hierarchy that positions local surfers at the top, with traveling surfers…at the bottom.[221]

Thus, another conflicting right emerges, which circumvents protocol as well as the global ethic. Comparable to many surfing towns across the world, more than a handful of El Tunco residents, primarily those who have lived in town the longest, assume wave priority at La Bocana. Other Salvadoreño surfers (typically from San Salvador) vie for the same right; however, experience level affects their spot in the hierarchy. Once presumed (whether

[220] 2002, 259.
[221] Ibid.

accurately or inaccurately) a "surfer de la ciudad / city surfer," the individual from San Salvador who lacks experience will rank below a similarly skilled El Tunco-based surfer because of where s/he resides when s/he is not surfing. On any given day, most foreign surfers, regardless of talent, have no wave rights at La Bocana. The cultural dynamics at play manifest in the form of "(g)localism," an offshoot of localism situated within a global context.

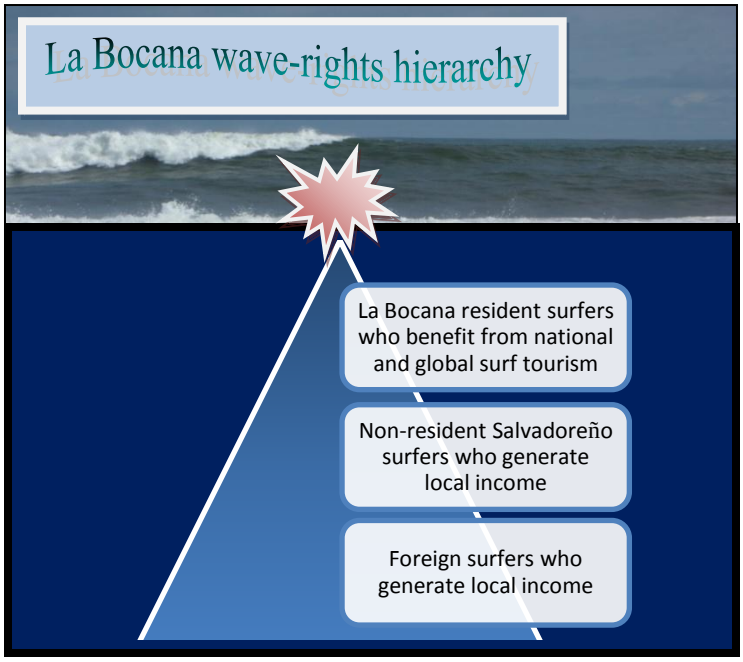


Figure 3.1: Nearly every place with quality surf contains a wave-rights hierarchy. Many individuals, regardless of country, disregard surfing etiquette when they paddle out to a lineup. The red image signifies the querulous energy that results.

In El Salvador, (g)localism becomes a way in which Salvadoreño surfers maintain control of the country's wave territories when a foreigner's nationalism "takes on an aggressive imperialist character."[222] The base of La Bocana's hierarchy creates an unstable foundation for the relationship between extranjeros and Salvadoreños. Whereas foreign surfers may assume their presence necessarily stimulates El Tunco's economy, some Salvadoreños remain unconvinced the globalization of surf tourism paves any path to cultural camaraderie.

[222] Anderson 1983, 87.

By laying claim to their breaks, they are rejecting the idea that any global political and economic order should push aside their control in the surf. As a result, they do not believe foreign surfers are entitled to waves (or wave rights) simply because they support local industry with tourist dollars. Benjamin's prose unintentionally pinpoints a major factor that shapes (g)localism:

> The past carries a secret index with it, by which it is referred to its resurrection. Are we not touched by the same breath of air which was among that which came before? Is there not an echo of those who have been silenced in the voices to which we lend our ears today?[223]

The echoes throughout El Salvador come together in a disconnected song. Lest tourists forget the country's civil war and the class struggles at stake. On land, tagging a wall that separates private property from a public ocean is just one of many ways Salvadoreños attempt to regulate El Salvador's beaches. Some also steal everything from foreigners' surfboards and flip-flops to their boardshorts and bikinis. In the ocean, anything goes; verbal harassment and intentional splashing at the face are common. A crew of Salvadoreños may even band together like a pod of angry dolphins, entrap the "threat" and verbally badger him until he leaves. As Ishiwata writes: "These tactics, however trivial, nonetheless work to alter the conditions and power relations of everyday life."[224] Some locals like Tono Bran deem (g)localism a justifiable combatant against hordes of wave-greedy travelers who respect neither the country's past nor its people. Says the 25-year-old Salvadoreño:

> Lo que sucede es acá al extranjero que es malcriado, que es, que anda diciendo disparates, se le dice que respete, me entiendes. … Hay personas que no son gratas, y hay extranjeros que son abusivos con las olas. Localismo es un ritual, un ritual de un lugar. Es como una paternidad -- o sea, es 'mi ola.' Entonces tenés que respetar esa, que tenemos un derecho por hacer locales por vivir en nuestra casa. … O sea no somos envidiosos, pero nos gusta que nos respeten, y que no respeten que no se ponen al frente de una ola surfear porque no saben con quienes están metiendo el agua.[225] / What is happening is

[223] "On the Concept of History" II. www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm
[224] 2002, 265.
[225] Metirse is another verb to describe paddling out to a lineup. For example, me metí roughly translates to I entered the ocean and paddled out.

> here the foreigner who is spoiled, who is, who walks talking nonsense, is told to respect, you understand. There are people who are not pleasant, and there are foreigners who are abusive with the waves. Localism is a ritual, a ritual of a place. It is like a paternity -- that is, it is 'my wave.' So, you have to respect that, that we have a right to make locals by living in our house. So we are not envious, but we like that they respect, and those who do not respect are not put at the front of a wave surfing because they don't know with whom they're getting into the water.

A paradox problematizes Bran's self-derived concept of localism. In the words of Ishiwata: "The irony of these…surfers, however, is that it is entirely possible that the local who punches or chases a visiting surfer out of the water will, later in the day, have to park that very tourist's car or serve him dinner."[226] Bran, on occasion, works as a bartender and waiter at a local club in El Tunco frequented by foreigners.

Expatriates' presence and gender relations add a dimension that further complicates Bran's outlook. Technically an individual such as Underschultz, the Canadian bar manager, considers himself a local. Although he was not born in El Salvador, he has worked in El Tunco longer than some Salvadoreños from both the town and de la ciudad have even been surfing. The dynamics play out in unpredictable ways at La Bocana, and they parallel, as Ishiwata writes, a "sedimentation of Hawaii's modern political orders."[227] Here, the indigenous inhabitants remain at odds with the Mainland's suffocating colonial influence:

> Consequently, surfing can be conceptualized as a tenuous suture, one that forces the recognition and remembrance of the painful injustices of the past while simultaneously founding a site for the possibility of a different future. For this reason, any value to be had with a 'politics of surfing' is lost precisely when an individual or collective looks past the numerous scars, and pretends as if there had never been so much as a wound.[228]

Underschultz is aware of El Salvador's history, and says he has developed "a better feel for it from hearing first-hand accounts and the way people talk." Yet attempts to refine his cultural

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[226] 2002, 265.
[227] 2002, 258.
[228] Ibid.

awareness possess little power when Salvadoreños do not recognize him in the lineup. Thus, his hierarchical positioning is always under scrutiny or attack:

> Like I say, these guys giving me a hard time in the waves, they're like yelling, 'Gringo, go home! And go back to where you came from, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.' And then they'll turn around and start hitting on the white girl beside them: 'Oh, how are you? Ah, you're so pretty,' you know. It's like, 'Could you be more of a hypocrite?' So much of an obvious hypocrite, like, and I call guys out on that all the time: 'What the hell! You just called me gringo, and told me to go back where I come from. Why don't you say the same thing to her?'

The reasoning likely is as primitive as competitive impulse: "Mating and territorial urge [go] hand in hand."[229]

A disconnection between locals and foreigners also affects Sunzal, though the outcome is different, according to Salvadoreña surfer López Corvera. Foreign men drop in on locals, particularly those who are female, all the time without consequence. She says, "Los locales de aquí no pelean por nada. / The locals here do not fight for anything."

> B: ¿No?
> LC: No, porque en La Bocana, los locales del Tunco y los gringos estaban peleando de las playas, y…[los locales] pusieron en la pared 'SOLO LOS LOCALES.' Los gringos respetan a los locales que están surfeando en La Bocana, y en Sunzal no respetan a los locales. / No, because in La Bocana, the locals of El Tunco and the gringos were fighting over the beaches,…and [the locals] put on the wall 'ONLY LOCALS.' The gringos respect the locals who are surfing in La Bocana, and in Sunzal they do not respect the locals.

One break where all conflicting energies come to head and produce a volatile mix is at La Libertad's Punta Roca. In 2011, the prolific break received another dose of worldwide exposure when the Association of Surfing Professionals (dubbed "the governing body of professional surfing") added Copa Quiksilver El Salvador to its North America schedule. Using Google to search the contest's key terms generates 109,000 results. Says Shane Beschen, a former American ASP competitor who finished third in the Copa: "This wave is insane[.] [I]t's such a world-class wave[.] [I] think they should have a World Tour event

[229] Baker 1982, 5.

here."[230] Although not a World Tour event, in October 2011, the International Surfing Association, "recognized by the International Olympic Committee as the world governing authority for surfing," selected Punta Roca for its World Masters Surfing Championship. According to El Salvador Minister of Tourism José Napoleon Duarte Durán, the "best surfers in the world from over 30 countries" competed in the tournament that reached "more than 240 million television viewers worldwide. With the coverage of respected sports channels such as ESPN, Sports News and CBS Sports, among others, the ISA World Masters [delivered] a global promotion" for El Salvador.[231]

Via these types of events and similar international contests, neocolonial forces confiscate power to dominate wavescapes. Oftentimes they reinforce a global political order that does not correspond to everyday surf life at breaks, particularly when contest winners come from more "developed" nations. At Punta Roca, Salvadoreños express resistance by spray-painting the walls. On one structure that fronts the waves "Gringos, Respect the Locals" throbs in red. On another: "THIS MEANS -U- BRA."

Photograph 3.3: This wall along the path to Punta Roca in La Libertad forewarns foreigners what type of energy orbits around the crowded peak's waves during days without contests.



[230] Surfline. Press Release: "Ezekiel Lau Claims ASP 4-Star Copa Quiksilver El Salvador." www.surfline.com/surf-news/asp-news/ezekiel-lau-claims-asp-4-star-copa-quiksilver-el-salvador_57441/.
[231] ISA, 2011. "Punta Roca, El Salvador to Host ISA Masters." http://surferspath.mpora.com/featured-content/punta-roca-el-salvador-host-isa-masters.html.

Whereas La Bocana as a territory, in theory, banishes foreign surfers, and Sunzal perhaps invites them inside too willingly, Punta Roca currently appears to be an exception. Local surfers who frequent the break attempt to establish a middle ground that ultimately benefits Salvadoreños and women. Middle ground is a logical option, for almost every contemporary narrative identifies American restaurateur Rotherham, a gringo, as the pivotal historical figure who put the break on the global surf map. Being a female surfer, regardless of national roots, has its advantages. Men clearly outnumber women in the lineup; however, locals allocate wave priority to females over nearly all foreign males who are white-skinned and communicate in a language other than Spanish. It seems the majority of Salvadoreños respect a female who possesses the skills to surf Punta Roca, speaks Spanish, and observes global surfing etiquette. The more skilled the foreign, non-Spanish-speaking male surfer, however, the more unwanted attention he attracts. The faster he infiltrates the lineup and ignores locals' wave rights, the more likely he will experience ridicule or rejection until his session ends.

Wave-right issues between Salvadoreños and foreigners are apparent in a 2009 Surfline travel feature, two years before the ASP declared Punta Roca an official contest site. Twenty-three shots document the movie project of six Americans who visit El Salvador in November.[232] Their trip, presented by Reef (a multimillion-dollar surf footwear and apparel corporation based in San Diego, California), is part of Surfline's reoccurring feature, "When Groms Attack." In this case:

> Filmmaker Aaron Lieber recently corral[s] a handful of up-and-comers -- Andrew Doheny, Michael Dunphy, Evan Thompson and Stack -- to tag along with grom graduates Chris Waring, Dillon Perillo and Cody Thompson for the making of his upcoming movie The Pursuit 2.[233]

[232]The terms Bra and Brah are slang for bro or brother.
[233] www.surfline.com/surf-news/when-groms-attack-el-salvador_38667/1/.

In the sixth slide, Doheny assesses the surfing style of Balaram Stack, a.k.a. "ball sack," commenting: "…As you can see in El Salvador he's surfing a left. …But he was ripping and doing some crazy aerials." Human geographer Gordon Waitt argues that when surfers, particularly young men, use words like "rip" or "shred," or exclaim "You killed it!" to describe their contact with waves, they "are constantly working hard to remain snug in the gendered orthodoxy of sports spaces by giving the union of desire, act, skill and aesthetic expression a violent terminology."[234] When these "sports spaces" amalgamate, they form a territory susceptible to foreign invasion. Describing the origins of competitive impulse, historian Baker writes: "…[T]erritorial invasion understandably produce[s] fear, which in turn provoke[s] aggressive behavior."[235] Defense of territorial boundaries, therefore, appears "all the more urgent" as Salvadoreños surf. Apart from waves, they have property, "not mere indefinite parts of the [ocean] to defend."[236] Thus, once under "attack," (g)localism becomes an innate defense mechanism against tourism for Salvadoreño surfers. Michael J. Shapiro notes:

> What is encouraged is not a hospitality towards *being*, that is, towards particular kinds of subjects, but towards *becoming*, towards the open possibilities for persons to resist being wholly quarantined within institutional and authoritative models of identification.[237]

In a separate September 2008 Surfline feature, "When Groms Attack: El Salvador," Keala Naihe's recorded dialogue reveals what can happen to foreigners who surf Punta Roca on a crowded day, which is essentially every day during swell season. While describing how he launches an air from a closeout, Naihe says:

> It was super-packed at the peak. …A bunch of guys, like, it's the same take-off zone, so there's always, like, a bunch of guys psyched up, battling for the waves. And, I just pretty much got dropped in on every wave I caught out

[234] 2008, 75.
[235] 1982, 5.
[236] Ibid.
[237] 1992, 53.

> there. So, uh, I kinda got over it, and just sat on the inside and waited for the straight close-outs, and got lucky on a couple -- and got the shot.[238]

Whether it is a movie or photograph, the "shot" is an element that Naihe and friends rely on to validate their narratives. Narcissistic endeavors in general do not sit well with locals like Jimmy Rothertham, hailed as one of the best surfers in Central America in a 2004 *Surfing* profile. He is the only Salvadoreño who inked a sponsorship deal in writing with Quiksilver, according to his father Bob. During an interview with journalist Nathan Meyers, he lambasts the ego-driven pursuit:

> Too many surfers take it all way too seriously, says Jimmy from his beachfront home in La Libertad. They're getting paid to do something they love, and they're still bitching about it, like, oh there's no 600 lens here; I'm over it. That's what I hate. When I was in California, I knew there's a bunch of photographers and all that, but I just wanted to surf good waves with not too many people out. That's what I love….[239]

It is what La Bocana's 29-year-old Varquero loves as well. Even so, he devalues (g)localism as a means of coping with mucha gente, poca ola (many people, few waves). Nor does he believe it is a powerful solution to combat the influx of surf tourists.

> V: No, yo creo que la solución -- la mejor solución en este caso es ser amigos, ser amigos de todos. Porque al final, las olas no son nuestras. Las olas son de ríos, verdad. ¿Y solo porque yo soy Salvadoreño y nací aquí las olas del Tunco son míos? No, soy equivocado. Creo que la mejor solución es ser amigos, respetarnos, el respeto la paz, verdad, y si nos respetamos a todos, todo va a estar bien. / No, I think the solution – the best solution in this case is to be friends, be friends with everyone. Because in the end, the waves are not ours. The waves belong to the rivers, right. And just because I am Salvadoreño and I was born here, El Tunco's waves are mine? No, I'm wrong. I think the best solution is to be friends, respect, respect the peace, truth, and if we respect them all, everything will be fine.

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[238] A closeout is a wave that loses its ideal form and shuts down the possibility of prolonging a continuous ride parallel to the shore. To "drop in" on someone means to ignore the basic etiquette of surfing and take off on a wave in front of someone who has the right-of-way to ride it.

[239] *Surfing* July 2004: www.surfingmagazine.com/surfing-magazine-features/surfing-currentissue/jul04_jimmy/index.html.

In the end, Varquero's approach to (g)localism "seeks a better balance between global forces and local needs and identities."[240] His sentiments may not resonate among all Salvadoreño surfers, yet they harmonize the discordant song, as well as the definition of a wavetopia. Anyone who transcends (g)localism fosters "an 'other form of politics'":

> … [It] does not simply react to a set of constraints but instead develops an 'other' sensitivity to them, one which is 'subtle enough to convert them into opportunities -- and to translate the body into an autonomous zone effectively enveloping infinite degrees of freedom.'[241]

Each degree of freedom suffers from its nuances, however. Many visiting surfers fail to recognize the subtleties when they seek a momentary respite from their daily grind in towns such as El Tunco. In some respect, the commercialization of surfing combined with the freedom of movement, a.k.a. tourism, has produced an air of entitlement. On occasion, a tourist believes his or her money is the principal force that produces "prosperity." Thus, s/he may adopt an attitude in which s/he believes s/he has as much of a right to the experience of riding waves as residents. As previously demonstrated, however, the importance of remittances in El Salvador overpowers the financial strength of tourism. Residents do not benefit from tourists' presence in any long-term sense, specifically when public space disappears, ocean-access rights corrode, property prices skyrocket out of reach, and waves become congested with inconsiderate, sexist surfers. Apart from the token success stories, locals' lives are still mired in poverty. Riding waves is one of the few life-enriching experiences they can afford. They already must compete with others for scarce resources: time and waves. Should local Salvadoreños like Bran or Varquero always treat the tourist as an equal? If they do not, someone is bound to impose a hierarchy of concerns on them. When this happens, the infinite degrees of the freedom to surf are limited to an intangible zone dependent on distant memories of the romanticized past.

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[240] Koch and Savir, 2002.
[241] Ishiwata via Brian Massumi 2002, 265.

4.2: From Self to Nation-Agent

At the most basic, unencumbered level, surfing sustains a philosophy geared toward the self. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus -- bodied culture broadly defined -- fosters the relationship that exists between an individual and surfing. According to Ford and Brown: "Habitus refers to a system of enduring, primarily embodied, structuring structures created in response to objective conditions and acquired through socialization."[242] In other words, the body can express things that the mind cannot. People who enjoy riding waves and use the tangible materials (e.g. a surfboard) to liberate their innermost selves may call themselves surfers because that is what they believe they are. In the same breath, they may reject proliferated actualizations of the industry, such as contests, which grant access to the masses. By itself, habitus accounts for the "patterns of objectives and practices" that permit people to slide across a wave. Whether on land, online or in the ocean, when the self interacts with other selves, a "sporting social world" forms, as Bourdieu calls it. The more often individuals merge their versions of surfing's identity, the more explicit the results are. As sports historian Allen Guttmann notes:

> Play can be divided into two categories -- spontaneous play and organized play, which we call games. The assertion seems paradoxical. How can one remain in the realm of freedom if one submits to organization? The answer is that spontaneous play may be as close as we can ever come to the realm of pure freedom, but most play is regulated and rule-bound.[243]

The intentional effect of rejecting rules and organization is that surfing can never be a sport, especially if one perceives it as self-art. Guttmann cleverly acknowledges this dynamic by writing: "The closer the contests [come] to the status of art, the further they [depart] from

[242] 2006, 77.
[243] 1978, 4.

that of sport."[244] Opponents of structured surfing, in essence, believe those who submit to organization destroy its candid, intimate demeanor and "sell out." If surfing lacks the instrumental components that make it a game, and surfers reduce the contest to a consumer-driven, self-promoting pursuit, the sport's identity fails to coalesce into a dominating presence such as fútbol. One cannot win a fútbol game without a team, but surfing's wo/man-on-wo/man competition negates the need for one. Even surf "team riders" are ultimately out for themselves. This is why Guttmann asserts "[t]he distinction between contests that are and are not games is a crucial one."[245] Without unified support, the energy fluctuates between two realms that are categorically opposed to each other.

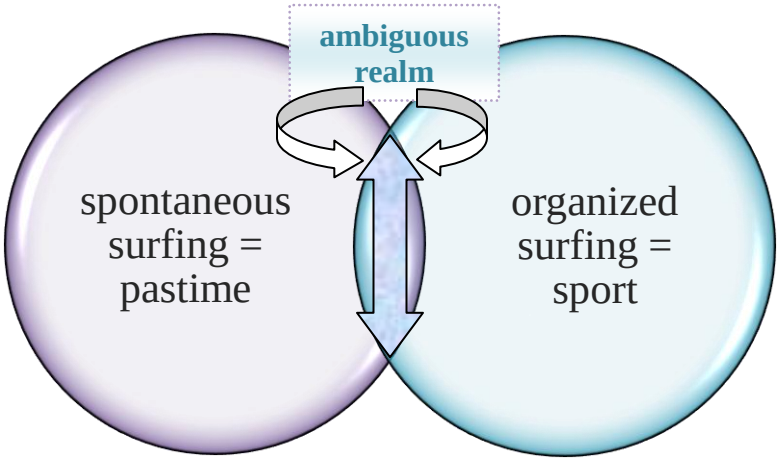


Figure 4.1: This adaptation of Allen Guttmann's theory regarding the division of play suggests surfing has two distinct identities. The ambiguous realm between spontaneous and organized surfing accounts for individuals who accept both categorizations. Professional, sponsored surfers who find satisfaction straddling both worlds most likely fit here.

El Salvador is a site where the two categories blend and produce a malleable panorama. Here, ocean-oriented themes manifest into a lifestyle enhanced by international and national contests. Internationally, El Salvador as a country vies for top honors against other Latin American nations.[246] At a national level, as early as 1977, Peter Townend's article

[244] 1978, 23.
[245] 1978, 7.
[246] Case in point, see Benjamin López's article, "Surf: Bajo la Sombra de Costa Rica," featured in *La Prensa Gráfica* on October 25, 2009. www.laprensagrafica.com/deportes/otros-deportes/68497-surf-

indicates Salvadoreños already were competing against each other at Punta Roca in La Libertad.[247] Taking this into consideration, as well as the seeming absence of organized surfing in El Salvador during the civil war, social anthropologist Otávio Velho's compelling insight about globalization is useful. He writes:

> ...without ruling out other possibilities, an alternative would be to see globalization in terms of *perspective* For those who usually study this question, this alternative would put a brake on the excessive emphasis on periodization and discontinuity, an effect of which is that the old problem of *interdependence* is largely neglected, as is the historical character of this problem, which in turn is subject to interruptions, cycles, and obvious resumptions that reveal the falsity of any evolutionist view.[248]

Interdependence favors spontaneity in the sense that some people are addicted to surfing and depend on it to cope with internal or external strife. They also will risk their lives to catch waves, regardless of turbulent social conditions (or even natural disasters, such as a hurricane). There is no doubt Salvadoreños sought refuge in the balmy ocean throughout the civil war, although how many and exactly where (beyond places throughout the department of La Libertad) remain unknown. Regardless, El Salvador's surf history during the war-stricken years is as potent as the recorded moments of the twenty-first century. It just receives less attention because information is difficult to accumulate and navigate. In 2009 (a continuation of 1977 with more money at stake), the department of La Libertad hosted a series of professional surfing events for men and women: the Reef Classic Latin Pro El Salvador Impresionante; IV Campeonato Centroamericano de Surf; the Christian Surfers La Bocanita; and four national contests sponsored by the Federación Salvadoreña de Surf, a.k.a. FESASURF.[249] Each competitive episode demonstrates that surfing vacillates between

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bajo-la-sombra-de-costa-rica.html. The journalist focuses the article on surf rather than surfers. He locates individual surfers in text that frames them as agents performing on behalf of each nation.

[247] This is a mere thirteen years after the International Surfing Federation, predecessor of the ASP, formed. Today the International Surfing Federation is known as the International Surfing Association.

[248] 2000, 322.

[249] Christian Surfers Contest: www.sesion.com.sv/component/content/article/3-news/39-christian and Sesion: www.sesion.com.sv/component/content/article/3-news/39-christian; and

multiple identities beyond El Tunco: one, as commercialized sport; and two, as an endeavor that favors the elite. In both aspects, economic and cultural capital determines how each individual reinvents, constructs and participates in the surfing social world. Some Salvadoreños ride waves only for personal pleasure while others do it to earn money. Class status influences the extent of their involvement. Bourdieu presents an "explanatory model capable of accounting for the distribution of sporting practices among the classes and class fractions."[250] He writes in "Sport and Social Class:"

> [It] must clearly take account of the positive or negative determining factors, the most important of which are *spare time* (a transformed form of economic capital), *economic capital* (more or less indispensable depending on the sport), and *cultural capital* (again, more or less necessary depending on the sport). But such a model would fail to grasp what is most essential if it did not take account of the variations of meaning and function given to the various practices by the various classes and class fractions.[251]

Based on this paradigm, in El Tunco, save the occasional anomaly, middle-class and affluent Salvadoreños are more likely to surf than impoverished individuals who have limited or no access to capital or the leisure time to pursue the activity.[252] Without the economic means to purchase a board and supplemental supplies, Salvadoreños with spare time still may not be able to surf until they acquire the equipment. In its objectified or embodied forms, Bourdieu writes, "[c]apital...takes time to accumulate… [and] is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible."[253] This assertion

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www.sesion.com.sv/component/content/article/3-news/30-fesasurf. *Olas Permanentes*: www.olaspermanentes.com/0000009cdf08ef604.htm.

[250] Bourdieu believes agency exists in the social world; society is a set of relations; and social theory arises out of concrete capital.

[251] 1978, 834.

[252] Recall in Chapter 1, Australian surfer Peter Townend writes in *Surfing*'s 1977 world travel issue: "Carlos and Michu's chances of being able to finance a surf trip to the Mecca are unlikely, though, as they are common people, unlike Alfonso, who has the ways and means and -- as most of the weekend surfers do -- comes from a well-off family. This is definitely a bonus to a surfing career in these generally undeveloped and overpopulated countries" (1977, 90).

[253] 1986, 96.

suggests that even if Salvadoreños surf, they face an array of barriers that prevent them from maximizing their truest potential.

It is more probable that Salvadoreños who possess economic and cultural capital will persevere if they enter the surfing social world's competitive territory. Dialing oneself into the network of the global surf industry generally requires at least one of these types of capital. In most cases (grant the exception), access to either also distinguishes the legendary surfer from the celebrated local. Jimmy Rotherham, son of La Libertad's Bob Rotherham, is an ideal, rare example. It is fair to suggest the phenomenal surfer had an advantage in the industry's professional circuit based on the types of capital his family provided before his career began. Spending some formative years of his youth in California also helped. Says Juan Carlos Ramos Amaya, a friend of Rotherham's and fellow professional surfer:

> La vida de Jimmy Rotherham es diferente porque tiene parte Americano y parte Salvadoreño. Entonces, una parte de vida vivió en California. Y bueno surfeó bastante tiempo allá. … Cuando regresó a El Salvador, era como "Woo -- muy impresionante." Entonces, él habla siempre con un americano como que el mismo acento, me entiende. Pero no es. Eso tiene ventajas, y yo creo que él es uno de los mejores surfistas de Latinoamérica. / Jimmy Rotherham's life is different because it is part American, part Salvadoran. So, a part of his life he lived in California. And, well, he surfed quite a while there. When he returned to El Salvador, it was like, 'Wooo, very impressive.' So, he always speaks with an American, like the same accent, you understand me. But it is not. That has advantages, and I think he is one of the best surfers of Latin America.

As Bourdieu explains: "…[E]conomic capital is at the root of all other types of capital," which in effect, creates class distinction.[254] Having an American father who is a successful restaurateur and owns property near one of the El Salvador's best breaks enhanced, not diminished, opportunity for Jimmy. This circumstance alone separates him from other Salvadoreños who surf well but are poor and live in different beach towns.

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[254] 1986, 106.

Bourdieu also claims cultural capital affects social status because of one's upbringing and education.[255] Jimmy speaks fluent English and is formally educated, having attended Instituto Nacional del Puerto de La Libertad. In effect, he can participate in English-speaking interviews with surfing magazines based in other countries, promoting his name, image and ideas, whereas the uneducated counterpart does not. In the end, although "everyone should, theoretically, have an opportunity to compete," the individual with all types of capital is more likely to profit from the sport itself.[256] Rotherham is El Salvador's only surfer to ink a contract with Quiksilver, a publicly traded surf company. Objectified capital, such as a written contract, reveals one's cultural capital. The contract solidifies an athlete's industrial and self worth. The mechanisms through which Salvadoreños attain objectified capital are indirect and unpredictable, however. No stranger to surfing's competitive realm, Papaya explains how the younger generation does not understand objectified capital is the result of a surfer's own due diligence, an ability camouflaged by education and literacy.

> B:… Lo que pasa parece es que como el atleta no recibe nada para surfear acá. / What happens is that it seems the athlete does not receive anything for surfing here.
> J: No es que, mira -- hay un problema aquí: Antes no había patrocinadores. Hoy, sí, hay patrocinadores. / Not that, look -- there is a problem here: Before there were no sponsors. Today, yes, there are sponsors.
> B: Sí. / Yes.
> J: Lo que no hay es -- lo que no hay -- como decirte -- si hay pero no hay manera de pedir patrocinen. / What there is not -- what there is not -- how to tell you -- yes there are but there is not a way to ask them to sponsor.
> B: Sí. / Yes.
> J: Hay atletas, pero los atletas no saben cómo pedir uno patrocine. Pero es que no puedan sino que no quieren si han estado malacostumbrados. Yo paso peleando con ellos porque nunca quieren seguir estudiando. La mayoría se quedó con quinto, cuarto grado. / There are athletes, but the athletes do not know how to ask for a sponsor. But it's not that they can't but that they do not want to if they have been spoiled. I keep fighting with them because they never want to keep studying. The majority ended with the fifth [or] fourth grade.
> B: Sí. / Yes.

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[255] 1986, 62.
[256] Guttmann 1978, 26.

> J: Y se quedaron hacer nada. Entonces no pueden llegar a una empresa porque no pueden ni siquiera poner su nombre. …. / And they were doing nothing. Then they can't reach a company because they can't even write their name.
> B: ¿Porque no hay contractos, y ellos no pueden firmarlos y no quieren firmarlos? Because there are no contracts, and they can't sign them and don't want to sign them?
> J: Eh, el problema es que las empresas no van a venir buscarlos. Ellos tienen que ir a las empresas. / The problem is that companies are not going to come looking for them. They have to go to the companies.

With limited capital at his disposal, Juan Carlos Ramos Amaya, El Tunco's celebrated local surfer, did find two sponsors. One of them was qi-x. In 2009, El Chino contracted then-20-year-old Ramos Amaya to ride his company's boards. With a decade worth of surfing experience and the equivalent of a high school education under his belt, the athlete hoped to solidify his career as a professional surfer in El Salvador. He says:

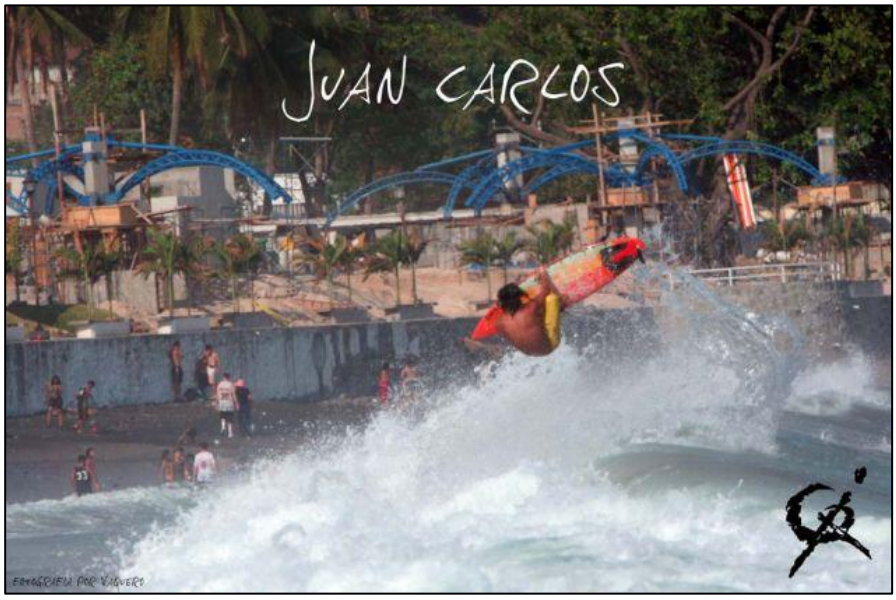
> Ellos me pagaban por surfear por ir a las competencias. Pero la empresa quebró. Mi carrera también se fue abajo. Entonces, lo bueno de competir es que conoces a muchas personas, haces amistad, conoces a otras culturas. Pero a veces también lo mejor que pueda haber es tener una buena disciplina, ser amable con todas las personas. / They paid me to surf in competitions. But the business went bankrupt. My career also went down. So the good thing about competing is that you meet many people, make friendships, get to know other cultures. But sometimes the best can be to have good discipline, be nice to everyone.
> B: ¿Le pagaron los patrocinadores para los cárteles y todo? / Did the sponsors pay you for the posters and everything?
> RA: No, no no. Solo tenía sueldo mensual y, como, me ayudaban para viajar un poco. Pero, por la publicidad -- tenía mucha publicidad pero nunca pagaron nada. / No, no, no. I had only a monthly salary and, like, they helped me travel a little bit. But through advertising – I had a lot of publicity but they never paid anything.
> B: ¿Nunca firmó un contracto, nada como así? / You never signed a contract, nothing like that?
> RA: Si, tengo un contracto firmado, pero en el contracto no dice que no era pagar para usar mi imagen. Bueno ellos tenían derecho de usar mi imagen pero no pagar porque ellos son como – ellos tienen – [makes a grab-you-by-the-balls gesture]. / Yes, I have a contract signed, but in the contract it does not say they weren't going to pay to use my image. Well, they had the right to use my image but not to pay because they are like – they have – [makes a grab-you-by-the-balls gesture].
> B: ¿Esto te pone frustrado porque no tiene, como, un derecho sobre tu propia imagen? / Does this frustrate you because you don't have, like, a right on your own image?

> RA: No. Al final, no me siento mal porque creo que era muy – teníamos mucho amistad con el dueño de la empresa. Tenía mucho cariño. Lo malo fue que él confió mucho en unas personas que, al final, lo traicionaron. Entonces, es como fue una traición muy triste. Entonces, para mí, no me siento mal ni frustrado de no tener dinero y no me pagaron. Fue muy triste. Me siento frustrado porque todo quebró. / No. In the end, I feel bad because I think it was very -- we had a friendship with the owner of the company. I was very fond of him. The downside was that he put a lot of trust en people who, in the end, betrayed him. So, it's like a very sad betrayal. So, for me, I don't feel bad or frustrated for not having money and they didn't pay me. It was sad. I feel frustrated because everything went under.

Without selling the very same surfing materials that enabled him to compete in the first place, Carlos Amaya could not transcend class barriers in the global surfing industry. When qi-x went bankrupt, that he had nothing left to sell also signified there were no longer any more free boards to ride. Even so, Carlos Amaya has found peace and purpose after the venture:

> Bueno, sí para todos tiene que tener esperanza y luchar por un objetivo. Pero me gustaría más ayudar a la niñez como desarrollo del surf. Me gustaría mejor ayudar en vez de ser surfista profesional. / Well, yes, for everyone has to have hope and fight for an objective. But I would like to help kids as the development of surf. I would like to help more instead of being a professional surfer.

Photograph 4.1: Juan Carlos will go down as one of El Tunco's most talented surfers of the 21st century. By endorsing qi-x, Ramos Amaya received free boards. The deal's monetary limitations kept him from accumulating capital required to participate in global competitive circuits. When qi-x tanked, Carlos' promising career stalled. Photo taken by Vaquero.



Beyond individual pursuits and tales of lore, surfing permeates the core of Latin American society, and is integral to national sport dialogue in almost all Central American countries. Costa Rica, for example, is home to the widely distributed *Surfos* magazine, founded in 1994 by Christopher Commarieu, a French expatriate. As editor, he recognizes a continental hierarchy within the global surfing industry when he writes:

> Latinoamérica como continente puede estar en la élite del surf mundial. En *Surfos* lo pensamos. Hay que tener fe y pasión en lo que se hace. Son los motores que les permitirán alcanzar sus objetivos. Las oportunidades aparecerán de camino. Nada es imposible, es nada más proponérselo. Este argumento es válido no solamente para el surf, pero también para la vida en general. / Latin America as a continent can be the elite of the surf World. In *Surfos* we believe it. Faith and passion are what is needed. They are the motors that allow us to realize our objectives. The opportunities will appear along the way. Nothing is impossible -- it is nothing more than proposing it. This argument is valid not only for surfing, but also for life in general.[257]

To amplify Latin America's surfing presence, *Surfos* writers highlight events that occur in various countries' competitive arenas. They also profile the region's most accomplished or promising surfers regardless of gender or skin color. An alternative publication focused solely on El Salvador's surf scene is *Olas Permanentes*, conceived in 2005 -- the same year El Salvador hosted its first event sponsored by the Asociación Latinoamericana de Surfistas Profesionales (ALAS). The most recent edition, published in October 2009, includes "Palabras del Señor Ministro de Turismo / Words from the Tourism Minister"; a photographic spread of "los mejores exponentes del surf Salvadoreño / the best exponents of Salvadoran surf"; and two informative interviews with representatives from ALAS and FESASURF. The purpose of the magazine is to increase El Salvador's "cultura de surf bien arraigado en las olas del Paraíso de las Derechas con una distribución nacional and internacional / well-established culture of wave in the Paradise of Rights with national and international distribution."[258] As

[257] *Surfos Latinoamérica:* Quienes Somos? Sobre Nosotros: www.surfosmagazine.com/quienessomos.aspx.
[258] *Olas Permanentes*. Quienes Somos: www.olaspermanentes.com/magazine/quienessomos/index.html.

Olas Permanentes currently stands, featured articles and information are outdated, and the website serves more as an advertising platform for a tour operator based in San Salvador who goes by the same name. Even so, an updated issue would keep it alive as El Salvador's longest-standing surf magazine. The existence of these cultural artifacts supports William Baker's notion that sports, surfing included, become "a means of fostering national unity, identity, and visibility."[259]

Indeed, unity was what Salvadoreño Francis "El Chute" Hasbun had in mind when he suggested Latin American countries join forces to form ALAS. According to the association's website, the idea took root in El Salvador in 1998 "cuando nuestro querido amigo y presidente de la asociación Salvadoreña de surf, 'El Chute,' organiz[ó] el primer evento latinoamericano de naciones. / when our dear friend and president of the Salvadoran surfing association, 'El Chute,' organized the first Latin American event of nations."[260] By 2005, El Salvador was one of 12 countries formally affiliated with ALAS, which had established itself as "la mayor organización de Surf en todo el continente / the largest surfing organization in the entire continent."[261] As surfing increased in the popularity in El Salvador, in February 2009 FESASURF announced it was restructuring.[262] The federation's general objective is "engrandecer la práctica, la imagen, y el desempeño competitivo del surfing salvadoreño tanto a nivel local, como internacional. / to magnify the practice, image and competitive design of salvadoreño surfing, both locally and internationally." Of five specific goals noted, one is "elevar la calidad de nuestros atletas, por medio de una formación integral en la parte física, técnica, mental, emocional y espiritual. / to raise the quality of our athletes through

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[259] 1988, 262.
[260] ALAS. Historia: www.alaslatintour.com/alas2010_historia.asp.
[261] Ibid. For a more in-depth history of ALAS, please visit the website.
[262] FESASURF. Quiénes Somos: http://fesasurf.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=4.

comprehensive training on the physical, technical, mental, emotional and spiritual.[263] FESASURF's reorganization formally acknowledges surfing as a sport in El Salvador, which thereby unites the body of the athlete with its history of "standing as the body of the nation."[264] Consequently, Salvadoreños become agents of the nation. Though not as popular as fútbol, some Salvadoreños believe that with the right support, surfing has the potential to be a profitable alternative in El Salvador.[265] They play down the numerous obstacles to the sport's development. Yet this step requires a commitment to its competitive structures, which require substantial capital. Without it, goals and visions remain unrealized. Says Ronald Walter, a 20-year-old surfer who repairs boards and offers lessons for a living:

> Para mí, yo creo que todos que no quieren jugar al fútbol – la mayoría de todo El Salvador son futbolistas. La tradición de aquí en El Salvador es fútbol. / For me, I think everyone who does not want to play soccer – the majority of all of El Salvador are futbolistas. The tradition here in El Salvador is fútbol.
> B: Sí. / Yeah.
> R: Sí, el surf no tiene mucho apoyo, pero si le dieran más apoyo, yo sé que llegaría y ser iguale. Pero, sí, el futbol tiene la mayor parte del apoyo. / Yeah, surfing does not have much support, but if they give it more support, I know it would arrive and be the same. But, yeah, football has the most support.

To an extent, the adoption and adaptation of surfing in El Salvador and El Tunco is "more of an expression of multi-dimensional transcultural fusion than of imposed cultural imperialism."[266] No one ever forced Salvadoreños to surf. The implications of their own passion for the ocean are far-reaching and hopeful. With an abundant wave supply and continual, steady governmental support, the nation is entirely capable of producing some of the global industry's greatest surfers. Writes Arbena, who draws from S.L. Price's *Pitching around Fidel*: *A Journey into the Heart of Cuban Sports*: "… [D]espite the appearance of a contradiction, surpassing the masters at their own game can allow people to express their own

[263]One major concern arises: Out of eight members on the advisory committee, none are female. Thus, Salvadoreña surfers are not represented, nor do they have any say in the direction surfing should take in El Salvador. www.surfosmagazine.com/DetalleNoticia.aspx?N=621&Z=6.
[264] Farred 2006, 62.
[265] Fútbol means soccer.
[266] Arbena via Mangan and DaCosta 2002, 15.

unique character and define their own national identity."[267] Any visitor who steps foot in El Salvador should realize the country already has a sense of self. Even if Salvadoreño surfers do not overshadow the "best" in the world, they still express whom they are via other extensions related to surfing. It is not El Tunco or El Salvador's surfers who must define their national identity. Rather, the unenlightened personalities who control the global industry must be willing to work within a different paradigm.

4.2: Why so Few Females?

It takes little time to realize Salvadoran males dominate El Salvador's surfscape. They are employed in every surfboard rental shop in El Tunco. They offer lessons and repair dinged boards. They work as photographers, earning cash by snapping and selling shots of visitors' hideous wipeouts and powerful snaps. Most of the kids who head to the beach with hand-me-down tablas, eager to try their hand at surfing, are young boys, not girls. Out of eight members on the Federación Salvadoreña de Surf's (FESASURF) advisory committee, none is female. Even the ratio of foreign females to local women catching waves at Sunzal is approximately four to two (or one) during the week. There is no doubt Salvadoreñas surf, however. Each break, in fact, has at least one local standout. El Tunco resident Mirna Lisette dismantles the gendered orthodoxy at Punta Roca as local and foreign men sit on the outside of the peak, watching and waiting. Twenty-one-year-old Noemi Luna Centeno Álvarez represents El Zonte on national and international professional circuits. Sunzal's López Corvera represented El Salvador in the 2008 ISA World Surfing Games in Portugal and has at least two national titles to her name.[268]

[267] 2000, 87.
[268] She finished first in the national circuit in 2008 and 2009.



Figure 4.2: Esmeralda López Corvera and her style of surf captured the attention of photographers for *Olas Permanentes* (pictured), as well as national newspaper *La Prensa Gráfica* (not pictured).

Photograph 4.2: Lighting issues aside, the difference in skin color is apparent as López Corvera stands next to El Zonte's Noemi Luna Centeno Álvarez. The team pictured here represented El Salvador in the Campeonato Mundial in June 2011 at Playa Venao in Panamá. Photograph courtesy of Diario Co. Latino.



López Corvera is a contemporary national icon. Aside from her evident athletic skills, her petite frame, long hair and light skin set her apart from her female counterparts.[269] In El Salvador it seems photogenic characteristics are equated with North American neocolonial aesthetics of surfer beauty: a white tan, long hair, perfect teeth, flawless skin¸ toned physique and a perfectly perky chest.[270]

In beach towns that breed marketable talent, one must ask why more Salvadoreñas are not surfing. There are various reasons, the most pertinent related to their role in the domestic sphere. Aside from taking care of children, when home, Salvadoreñas are generally in charge of food preparation. Writes Julia Hendon:

> Food preparation, broadly defined, is a set of tasks often assumed to be an essential function of a domestic group, if not the primary reason for existing. …Acquiring, processing, and cooking food requires the acquisition of certain kinds of knowledge, skills, utensils, and materials.[271]

In El Tunco, food preparation is an essential mode of production for it serves as a means of circulation and consumption of goods in the touristic public sphere as well (Nelson 1988, 261). According to Sarai Molina, a 31-year-old mother of two girls who works alongside Papaya as the dueña of their cabinas, other Salvadoreñas do not surf:

> Porque muchas les da miedo. … Otras no tienen el tiempo, y otras quizás quisieran, pero tal vez sus papas no les dejan porque muchos tienen un mal consentimiento de surf -- como que surf te lleva drogas, que surf te lleva a malos pasos. Pues, dicen ellos, 'No.' Aquí estás bien, y yo pienso que el surf es tu lo desarrollo bien, porque muchas chicas aquí trabajen, estudien, y después en la tarde no hay nada que hacer. Tal vez sea mejor que surfeen porque es algo que se les distraen de meterse en problemas. / Because many are scared. …Others have no time, and others may want to, but maybe their parents will not let them because many have a bad impression of surfing -- meaning surfing brings you to drugs, which leads to evil ways. So they say, 'No.' Here you're OK, and I think surfing is your development as well, because many girls here work, study, and later in the afternoon there is nothing to do. Maybe it is better that they surf because it is something that distracts them from getting into trouble.

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[269]Esmeralda López Surf Nacional: http://ncorvera.blogspot.com/
[270] Casanova 2004, 288.
[271] 1996, 50.

Rogelio Antonio Artiga Hernandez, a 22-year-old who rents and fixes boards for one of El Tunco's surf shops, explains why he believes the majority of surfers in El Salvador are men:

> Creo que nosotros tenemos más libertad. Sí, más libertad desde el pequeño -- que las niñas siempre tienen, como, más presionada./ I think we have more freedom. Yes, more freedom from the time we are little -- that little girls always have, like, more pressure.

López Corvera's perspective ventures in a direction where there is selective interest in surfing, but lack of support and organization are detrimental to the sport's growth:

> …[L]as chicas de aquí no nos interesa para un deporte. Como no hay una motivación para los deportes. A veces yo veo a unas chicas que están haciendo una tabla. Y luego salieron embarazadas, o tienen que trabajar y se olvidan de los deportes. Entonces las chicas que quieren hacer algo como no tienen el apoyo de nada. Tienen que dejarlo. Como yo siento a veces -- que tengo que dejar el surf porque no puede sugerir a nivel más alto. Pero tengo que surfear. No quiero mudarme a la ciudad. No puedo ser tranquila sin las olas. / The girls are not interested in sports. Because there is no motivation for sports. Sometimes I see some girls who are making a board. And then they became pregnant, or they have to work and they forget about sports. Then the girls that want to do something have no support at all. They have to stop it. That's how I feel sometimes -- that I have to stop surfing because it can't rise to a higher level. But I have to surf. I don't want to move to the city. I can't be at peace without the waves.

For La Bocana's Varquero, it all boils down to one reason: few Salvadoreñas surf "porque nosotros tenemos una cultura machista / because we have a macho culture," he says without hesitation.

Taking into account Salvadoreñas' historical struggles, Varquero's blunt assertion is most accessible from a scholarly standpoint. It provides more to analyze in terms of the civil war and surfing industry. Machismo is best defined as a "cult of male supremacy [that] affects women's wages, status, security from sexual abuse, opportunities for education, and the level of work that falls within their responsibility."[272] Throughout the civil war, the repercussions of

[272]Simpson 1983, 896. Machismo is also described in Random House dictionary as an "exaggerated sense of manliness." It assumes the attributes of masculinity are courage, strength, right to dominate and virility.

machismo meant women were beaten, raped, tortured and oftentimes executed for utilizing political philosophies to press for change. Many Salvadoreñas engaged in the revolutionary movement to free themselves not only from a "system of capitalist domination," but also from "their own ingrained submissiveness."[273] Between 1981 and 1992, an estimated sixty percent of women offered logistical support for the FMLN. Post-Peace Accords, "women represented [thirty] percent of the armed combatants who were demobilized. Their numbers were among the highest registered in the history of armed confrontation in the entire Latin American region."[274]

By engaging in war and executing duties that fell outside a gender division of labor, many Salvadoreñas found reason to question societal definitions of masculinity and femininity. Throughout El Salvador's history, these gender constructs determined their subordinate position to males. Within this male-female binary, designs of masculinity and femininity based on anatomical differences not only instituted but also fortified an oppressive gender hierarchy in El Salvador. Fighting on behalf of the FMLN allowed Salvadoreña militants to resist cultural elaborations attached to sex distinctions. At the same time, their "move from the hidden area of work (the domestic sphere) to the more visible" (the public realm) produced an interesting contradiction.[275] Norma Vázquez, a spokeswoman for the feminist group Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (Women for Dignity and Life), writes:

> On one hand, strong feelings of self-affirmation were generated from working in extremely adverse conditions and accomplishing difficult tasks which the women never thought they were capable of. On the other hand, the intensive utilisation of female qualities that proved to be necessary for waging a war (care of others, sacrifice without expecting recompense, self-negation and thoroughness, for example) reinforced in the collective imagination how suitable women were for carrying out the tasks they had always performed.[276]

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[273] Paley 1989, 89.
[274] Vázquez 1997, 139. This data comes from the United Nations Observer Group in El Salvador (ONUSAL), which "processed and registered the FMLN membership." According to the 1994 data, 4,492 women joined the FMLN. (Luciak 1999, 46).
[275] Simpson 1983, 895.
[276] 1997, 141.

Consequently, although the FMLN acknowledged that Salvadoreñas' new and traditional roles were necessary to sustain the revolution, recognition meant nothing for them in terms of securing political power and achieving equality.

Salvadoreñas, in effect, turned to each other. They believed solidarity was an instrumental way to enact change. As early as 1987, for instance, women from an array of organizations that represented peasants, workers, students and cooperative members joined forces and founded the Coordinadora Nacional de la Mujer Salvadoreña (CONAMUS).[277] CONAMUS had two primary objectives: 1.) "To raise the consciousness of women so that [they] can understand [their] situation and participate in changing it; and 2.) "To coordinate the various efforts to advance women, in order to unify and empower [themselves] on a national level."[278] With the support of CONAMUS and similar committees, Salvadoreñas could openly challenge the meaning of masculinity and femininity as they figured out how to infiltrate the political domain.

Yet right when it mattered most, women's issues took a backseat to cultural politics. Although high-ranking female commanders participated in the 1992 peace negotiations, no one discussed women's emancipation.[279] Without legitimate backing from members in the political domain, life as Salvadoreñas knew it seemed to revert to a pre-war "normal." Vázquez reaches this conclusion among others after conducting extensive interviews with seventy women who had been combatants or collaborators from five key parties that made up the FMLN.[280] Based on testimonies from Salvadoreñas, she also deduces "a double standard of morality" persisted throughout the war:

> The possibility that the war offered the fulfillment and validation of a freer expression of sexuality on the part of both men and women was not realized.

[277] In English, CONAMUS stands for National Coordinating Committee of Salvadoran Women.
[278] Paley 1989, 113.
[279] 1999, 48.
[280] 1997, 142.

> [I]nstead, traditional sexual paradigms predominated which demanded modest conduct from the women, as the repositories of 'revolutionary honour.'[281]

Although notions of gender and sexuality have undergone changes in El Salvador since the war, traditional sexual paradigms may be one reason why twenty years later women are not strongly encouraged to surf. Surfing permits a subversive attitude toward sexuality. "The current generation of professional surfers," writes surf historian Douglas Booth, "has no qualms about marketing their sexuality in ways that, they claim, boost their public profile and image."[282] Because sport "extends limits to physical expression," riding waves grants women power over their bodies.[283] Thus, Salvadoreñas are free to confront stagnant ideas of gender and femininity, and they must continue to ask themselves what they want from the experience of the "dream glide." As Gordon Waitt and Andrew Warren write:

> Rather than assuming that surfing masculinities can be theorised exclusively within universal terms of patriarchal analysis, we turn to the influential work of Probyn…who calls our attention to the lived experiences of surfers through her concept of the 'spatial imperative of subjectivity.' … Probyn's conceptual framing allows close attention to the *feelings* of those who express a love of surfing to play a crucial role in fixing and bounding spatialities of the surf.[284]

Understanding the limitless power behind feelings, from a post-feminist stance, Salvadoreñas can use "their bodies as a form of liberation, and their own decisions to display their bodies demonstrate that they are in fact in control of how the images are projected. Rather than seeing the system as confining, they recognize and capitalize on its opportunities."[285] Furthermore, the female sporting body is no longer considered "passive, inactive [and] inert."[286] Rather, "it is both a 'signifying and signified agent. … [It] is a social entity, created through the interaction of cultural norms and sex differences [that] encode[s] historical and cultural

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[281] 1997, 143.
[282] 2001, 11.
[283] Prakash 1990, WS-19
[284] 2008, 356.
[285] Carty 2005, 134.
[286] Adams, Schmitke, Franklin 2005, 19.

meanings in sexually specific ways.'"[287] The image of a woman as a muscular, independent athlete is less compatible with Salvadoreño ideals of femininity.

Accounting for patriarchal norms, which do exist and necessitate acknowledgement, no doubt surf tourism generates interactions that expose Salvadoreñas to the global industry's structural flaws. These imperfections reinforce a gender hierarchy where heterosexual male surfers typically reign supreme. In El Salvador, the cultural meaning of machismo institutionalizes the same hierarchy that impedes Salvadoreñas' quest for equality in the ocean. Although women may retain certain privileges at breaks such as Punta Roca, standards do not exist, and outcomes are unpredictable when foreigners enter the mix. Machismo ideology also traps Salvadoreñas on the lower rung of the sport's competitive ladder, where surf-industry members who hold the highest positions of power consider their skills less significant. This perspective produces many consequences; the most obvious one is Salvadoreñas' take-home earnings. As tennis star Billie Jean King once remarked, "Money is what people respect, and when you are a professional athlete, they want to know how much you have made."[288] The source of inequity lies in prize winnings at the national level. In the 2011 Circuito Profesional de Surf de El Salvador, sponsored by FESASURF, a man who finishes first in one "open category" contest earns $150 -- 50 percent more than a woman who accomplishes the same feat in the damas (ladies) category. A man who finishes ninth or tenth earns the same amount as a woman who places third. Even a junior who clinches fifth place per contest earns $10 more than a woman who walks away with fourth.

Cognizant but not necessarily driven by contest-earnings disparity, in May 2009 Karol Baule (originally from Panamá) and Manuela Miranda founded Mujeres Salvadoreñas Surfers

[287] Ibid.
[288] Baker 1982, 296-297.

(MUSASURF). They based MUSASURF on two platforms: "igualdad y unidad femenina / equality and female unity."



Categories	1st place	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th & 8th	9th & 10th
Open (men only)	$150.00	$75.00	$60.00	$50.00	$40.00	$30.00	$25.00	$20.00
Juniors (men only)	$75.00	$45.00	$20.00	$10.00	$10.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Longboard	$75.00	$45.00	$20.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Ladies	$75.00	$45.00	$20.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Master	$75.00	$45.00	$20.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00

Figure 4.3: Information is translated from El Salvador' official tourism site, which features FESASURF's 2011 contest schedule and prize earnings. As of September 2011, no one has updated FESASURF's website since 2010.

It formed three months after FESASURF announced it was restructuring "a parte del incremento en el interés de surf / due to the increase in interest of surfing."[289] Alfonso Álvarez, dueño of Casa de Mar and the contested private beach access point in El Sunzal, assumed the role as the federation's president. An interviewee who requests anonymity charges that since power changed hands in 2009, cracks plague the new foundation:

> La federación cambió. La gente que está en la federación tiene negocios, restaurantes, hoteles, y quieren llamar la atención, como, ser populares para que sus negocios llamen atención y poner más atención - pero solo para su negocio. / The federation changed. The people who are in the federation have businesses, restaurants, hotels, and they want attention, like to be popular for calling attention to their businesses and focus more attention -- but only for their business.

[289] López 2009.

The reorganization did not include allocating a position for a female representative in the all-male committee. According to another interviewee who requested anonymity, there are no women in FESASURF because:

> el presidente de la federación no quiere animar a los jóvenes de aquí. El año pasado empezó a entrenar al hijo de él. Entonces, quiere que Quiksilver que lo patrocine el hijo de él. / the president of the federation does not want to encourage the youth here. Last year he began to train his son. So, he wants Quiksilver to sponsor his son.

Álvarez, an avid surfer who spends the majority of the workweek in the city, was unavailable for comment. Instead, FESASURF urged women to organize their own "club." With eight members, they did. Explains Miranda in an interview with Benjamin López of *La Prensa Gráfica*: "El objetivo es tener más fuerza y seguridad en el surf. En el mar todos somos iguales. / The objective is to have more strength and security in the surf. In the sea we are all equal." López the journalist notes: "El club no aspira a reivindicaciones de género, pero [Miranda] reconoce que su trabajo tienen incidencia en lo social. / The club does not aspire to gender demands, but [Miranda] recognizes that her work has social implications."[290]

The social implications could have a longer shelf life than MUSASURF, which hit a series of setbacks following its inception. López Corvera switches from past to present tense as though she harbors hopes the club will transcend all barriers nonetheless, even though the current state of affairs is challenging:

> Nosotros organizamos con las chicas un club atraer más chicas. … Hicimos también este calendario. …Entonces, estamos organizando para animar a las mujeres de El Salvador, pero como no nos ayuda a las empresas. No pudimos hacer mucho. / We organize a club with girls to attract more girls. We also made this calendar. So we are organizing to encourage the women of El Salvador, but companies do not help us. We couldn't do much.
> B: ¿Por qué no ayudan? / Why don't they help?
> E: No quieren dar economía aquí. … [La Prensa] Gráfica solo nos ayudó, saliendo el periódico, y 'Reggae' nos dio artículo, nada más. / They do not want to spend energy here. [La Prensa] Gráfica only helped us out with the newspaper, and 'Reggae' gave us an article, nothing more.

[290] 2009.

A surfing industry in which women and men receive equal amount of media coverage and financial support necessitates structural changes at the national and global level. While such equality seems nothing more than a pipedream, women can work for a larger share of media coverage and prize money. For many Salvadoreñas, the civil war sparked a mental metamorphosis, providing an opportunity in which they could encourage individualism and solidarity simultaneously. A woman named Letty highlights this duality -- the coexistence of a personal and revolutionary project -- writing:

> … [W]ithin a revolutionary framework, a woman is allowed to develop and realize herself as a full human being, to be 'for herself' as well as for others. She develops her own unique personality, but she also serves something greater than herself -- her people and their struggle. She goes from being a woman only 'for herself' to being a woman who is part of the revolutionary process.[291]

Surfing is a constant process for both sexes, and Letty's perspective is one that resonates beyond the parameters of gender. Recollecting the consciousness their female predecessors' attained as revolutionaries enables surfers to transcend hierarchal barriers, if only within their own minds as a starting point. If "…a generation later sees women's status as surfers and increasing resistance to subordination as a growing feature," Salvadoreñas will cement El Salvador on the global surfing map not only as the Land of Rights, but also as a powerful nexus of raw, marketable talent.[292] There are challenges, no doubt. As a different cycle of struggle brews, gaining respect in a predominantly masculine environment seems fruitless. Yet just as their predecessors did, women are organizing. Even without financial support, Salvadoreña surfers are slowly mining the opportunities -- a necessary change for the

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[291]Paley 1989, 147. It is important to note that Marxist ideology and re-conceptions of gender were not all Salvadoreña revolutionaries' motivation and "source of commitment." Some women, such as Ana Guadalupe Martínez, who occupied the highest command position in the FMLN, were not "ideologically driven." Martínez says: "Our participation was a natural process of realizing the injustices around us and then beginning to act. The participation carried us to deeper and deeper commitments, which we naturally accepted because…of our decision to struggle" (Golden 1991, 167).

[292] Ford and Brown 2006, 91.

moment when surfing's importance as a national sport gains traction. In the long run, every step they take will further diversify and refine the concept of Bourdieu's sporting social world.

When Bourdieu analyzed the sporting social world, he saw it primarily through the prisms of class and class fractions. What he struggled to fully develop and incorporate was the powerful role that gender plays in the hierarchy of organized sport. Although capital and leisure time indeed influence the professionalized future of an athletic individual, so does gender, particularly in El Salvador's realm of competitive surfing. As demonstrated, the opportunities to profit from waveriding differ for male and female Salvadoreño surfers. In general, gender-based income disparity continues to characterize the competitive component of the sporting social world. As far as surfing is concerned, income inequality will prevail as long as the global industry's structural deficiencies remain in place.[293] Yet this deterministic perspective does not overshadow the dynamic nature of the habitus. In its ideal form, the habitus does not discriminate. Individuals who surf despite being disabled, for instance, challenge the patterns of objectives and practices. Ultimately, the malleable nature of the habitus unifies the social sporting world with surfing's nondiscriminatory identity. United, these elements force structuring structures to readjust. What this means for surfers in El Salvador remains unknown.

[293] For some historical insight into pay disparity in the women's tour sponsored by the Association of Surfing Professionals, read Laura Hilgers "Endless Bummer." *Sports Illustrated Women* 3.7 (2001): 20.

Conclusion

The amount of information about El Salvador's surfscape that remains undisclosed seems as immense as the ocean itself. One thing is certain: The future is unwritten, uncertain yet potentially promising for Salvadoreños who recognize surfing as a lifestyle, sport and business. The neocolonial surf narratives, where brave men laud themselves for conquering breaks like Punta Roca, no longer resonate among a growing throng of educated, self-critical travelers. Every move a surfer makes on behalf of the search for empty waves abroad leaves a lingering economic, environmental and cultural imprint. Sometimes that imprint fades; sometimes it destroys; oftentimes it inspires. In El Tunco, it has re-ignited a three-tiered firecracker in which local Salvadoreños appropriate, reject and envision surfing's identity in ways that are enduring and subject to continuing explosions. Although the methodology is changing, on the whole, women are still systematically excluded from the master surf narratives. This exclusion screams volumes about the cultures each writer is visiting as well as representing.

As Aihwa Ong's theoretical perspective reveals, in El Tunco surf tourism operates as exception. While some locals succeed within the confines of their otherwise-stagnant economy, others lament the loss of cherished land and exploitation of resources that breed the same monetary benefits. What is happening along the coast of El Salvador is reminiscent of late 19th to early 20th development patterns throughout other parts of Latin America. Thus, potential complications arise. The land grab for coastal property near quality surf breaks poses three major threats. The first is environmental destruction due to tourism and manufacturing. El Salvador has a poor track record in preserving its natural environment in comparison to other Central American countries (namely Costa Rica). All appropriate governmental agencies must work on and implement a model of eco-minded tourism despite challenging economic

conditions and big-business resistance. Manufacturers also must work with relevant entities and establish initiatives that support sustainability.

The second threat involves property laws that cater to the elite. When coastal development runs amok, beach laws become totally inadequate -- as the case of El Sunzal demonstrates. Henri Lefebvre's insight is the perfect intellectual balm for chapped discussions about spatiality in surfing. On-the-ground research shows that privatizing access points to popular breaks aggravates social tensions and perpetuates problems that maintain rather than change stratified landscapes. On multiple accounts, tourism serves as a culprit. Yet the historical theme remains the same: It is a recycled version of land-tenure and class-relation issues that were pertinent during the civil war and even earlier, going back to the extension of haciendas at the expense of small farmers in the late nineteenth century. El Salvador has an opportunity to learn from its past conflicts and combine public beach access with expanding tourism. Governmental support, improved property rights, and endorsement from CORSATUR are essential. The final hazard pertains to (g)localism, both a need and contradiction in El Salvador's surfing identity that is built on exploiting waves as a resource.

Technology is partially to blame for wave exploitation. It has created an arsenal filled with tactics of domination (e.g. surfcams, global surf reports), thereby giving rise to an era of Internet surfers. Arguably, some of these individuals are more concerned about the quality of surf they are seeking than the foreign communities upon which they are descending. Daniel Defert and Walter Benjamin's theoretical meditations allow a concerned surfer to situate the country's history into the surfing narrative while making sense of the cultural aftermath. No doubt a saturation of surfers leads to more instances of (g)localism. Eric Ishiwata's analysis of localism in Hawaii applies to El Tunco. Beyond his ideas, a high incidence rate coupled with overt civil strife and gang activity affects the waves' international reputation and reduces the

desirability of visiting El Salvador. Fewer visitors mean less revenue from surf tourism, a disaster for towns such as El Tunco.

El Tunco is a touristic and a rural zone that is afflicted by three perennial problems: poverty, a hierarchical structure of corruption, and foreign abuse. Ignoring these issues creates the illusion of a wavetopia; identifying them demands critical analysis. Where surfers choose to locate themselves in these realms and what they offer in terms of change is up to them. Respecting the land, ocean and people fosters harmony. Assuming the role of a neocolonial, culturally inept, historically ignorant, narcissistic, self-enterprising tourist does not. One area neglected in this investigation is unequal athletic opportunities based on race, which, in conjunction with class, will be the focal point in a future dissertation that explores how surf tourism and the global surf industry affect Central America as a region. For now, gender takes the center stage. To attain equality in the ocean, as MUSASURF encourages Salvadoreñas to do, female surfers must charge harder and determine the most effective, self-redeeming ways to promote their bodies, personalities and athletic feats. Fear is a force within that courage ultimately must overpower. Sexuality -- even the hetero-normative sort -- is not always a woman posing demurely on a beach in a bikini as she assesses wave conditions. This surfing image exists everywhere. The issue is how Salvadoreñas can create an image of themselves that is athletic, national, and appeals to international tastes. Action shots of women surfing El Salvador's more "difficult" breaks such a Punta Roca on big-wave days is a start.

Finding a balance within the aesthetic confines of an industry that has "cultivated a cultural affinity for" an archetypal "surfer look" will be a challenge, but it is possible. As sports historian Baker notes: "Commercial sponsors similarly judged women athletes and in the early 1970s found them profitable investments."[294] Forty years later, the same outlook applies to the surfing industry. Pursuing the traditional surf *marcas* (brands), however, may

[294] 1982, 296.

not be worth the time or effort, particularly when patriarchal and hegemonic-influenced companies such as Quiksilver are not financially solvent and depend on external loans to stay in business.[295] Salvadoreños -- both men and women -- are better off utilizing whatever amount of cultural capital they have, being proactive rather than passive about their careers as professional surfers, and branching outside the global surf industry for sponsorship opportunities and support. For those who simply enjoy the ocean, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus broadens the definition of what it means to be a surfer in the social sporting world. As the stories of Jimmy Rotherham and Juan Carlos Ramos Amaya suggest, capital determines how lucrative a male Salvadoreño professional surfer's future likely will be, and how marginalized women are in both the playful and competitive realms.

In the competitive arena, to achieve monetary success, athletes *must* learn how to read, write, recognize and approve non-exploitative contracts. They must also knock on opportunity's door rather than wait for the knock on theirs. A surf brand's symbol is nothing more than the result of an image to promote a corporate ideology. Athletes may as well solicit and endorse non-surf-specific global companies (e.g. a beverage corporation such as Cristal; a food-maker such as Nestle).[296] Bypassing the traditional route along the corporatized surfscape and moving toward other bottomline-driven corporations may produce two results: 1. Athletes can actually elevate their financial status. 2. More capital at their disposal enables surfers to participate in additional international contests, which will increase their exposure and diversify the global competitive circuit. To naysayers who bemoan the corporatization of surfing, they can thank Volcom, Quiksilver, Billabong and Hurley -- all of which carved the initial wounds when they became publicly traded companies. Such re-imaginings take time to digest. In the words of Salvadoreña poet Claribel Alegría, who recalls the importance of

[295] For a quick article about the popular industry giant's persistent financial challenges, read Tiffany Montgomery's "Quiksilver gets new loan to pay down Rhone debt." http://shop-eat-surf.com/news-item/2138/quiksilver-rhone.
[296] These are only suggestions, and I am not implying they are ideal companies.

"Time": I turned over / my past / my future / and all at once / my present / caught light.[297] If subsequent generations of Salvadoreño surfers envision themselves as part of national dialogue, dreams that compelled a handful of their wave-riding ancestors could become reality.

Finally, El Tunco is in an appealing position in terms of surf tourism, and there are several steps the community can take to enhance the town's overall attractiveness as a surfing destination in El Salvador. Salvadoreños should solicit CORSATUR or the appropriate governmental agency for funds to construct a lifeguard tower and establish a formal lifeguard committee. Local shapers should initiate (or continue) dialogue with independent surf-oriented retail outlets to sell their boards to surfers with disposable income who live in the city. The market is small, but it does exist. Utilizing the Internet and e-commerce sites to advertise to surf consumers outside of El Salvador could be beneficial, provided that access to capital and technology is not an issue. Lastly, if the government cannot fulfill its promises to improve infrastructure, and remittances are bypassing beach towns, Salvadoreños should encourage nonprofit associations such as Project Wave of Optimism or WAVES for Development to consider their country as a future site for "surf voluntourism."[298] To legitimize surfing as something more than what foreigners do, the men and women of El Salvador must promote it within the country, and increase the number and range of its participants. A national surfing identity and culture can be based on more informal than formal means. Young people can give lessons to students for free (provided that kids already know how to swim). Popularizing contests for young people with small prizes but national prestige could cultivate a strong foundation for future generations of Salvadoreño surfers. Promoting the sport as simple fun

[297] Hopkinson 1989, 114.
[298] For a more thorough explanation of WAVES for Development, please visit: www.wavesfordevelopment.org/who-is-waves/.

also works. It will only be through a national interest in the sport that governments and domestic investors start investing in surfing. This takes time, but it can be done.

Appendix 1

Sample list of standardized questions for interview subjects

1. ¿Cómo escribe su nombre? / How do you spell your name?

2. ¿Ha vivido acá toda su vida? / Have you lived here your entire life?

3. ¿Cómo se siente cuando la gente extranjera viene, compra el terreno y abre un negocio? / How do you feel when foreign people come, buy land and open a business?

4. ¿Ha visto muchos cambios aquí? / Have you seen many changes here?

5. ¿Piensa que el turismo de surf es bueno para la comunidad? / Do you think surf tourism is good for the community?

6. ¿Por qué la mayoría de los surfistas salvadoreños son hombres y no hay más mujeres? / Why are the majority of Salvadoran surfers men and there aren't more women?

7. ¿Qué es su preocupación más grande con la llegada de turistas? / What is your biggest worry about the arrival of tourists?

8. ¿Le molesta cuando la gente extranjera en particular fuma marihuana o busca otras drogas? / Does it bother you when foreign people in particular smoke weed or look for other drugs?

9. ¿Qué puede más hacer El Tunco para ser sostenible afuera del turismo? / What more can El Tunco do to be sustainable outside of tourism?

10. ¿Cuál es su visión para el futuro de El Tunco? / What is your vision for the future of El Tunco?

11. ¿Cuántos años tiene? / How old are you?

12. ¿En cuál año abre este hotel? / When did this hotel open?

13. ¿Piensa que el gobierno hace buen trabajo para promocionar estos lugares turísticos, o puede hacer más? / Do you think the government does a good job promoting these touristic places, or can it do more?

14. ¿Cuál es su nivel de educación? / What is your level of education?

15. ¿Hay una nacionalidad de viajeros/extranjeros/surfistas que prefiere? / Is there a nationality of travelers/foreigners/surfers whom you prefer?

Appendix 2

Sample list of standardized questions for interview subjects:

1. ¿Cuándo aprendiste a surfear? / When did you learn how to surf?

2. ¿Por qué le gusta surfear? / Why do you like to surf?

3. ¿Quién le enseno a surfear? / Who taught you how to surf?

4. En tu opinión, de donde viene los mejores surfistas (surfeadores)? / In your opinion, from where do the best surfers come?

5. ¿Piensa que un día El Salvador puede producir los mejores surfistas del mundo? / Do you think one day El Salvador can produce the best surfers in the world?

6. ¿Cuáles son las limitaciones de ser una mujer que surfea? / What are the limitations of being a woman who surfs?

7. ¿Cuál es su visión para el futuro de surf para los Salvadoreños? / What is your vision of surf for Salvadorans?

8. ¿Tienes patrocinadores? ¿Le pagan usar sus fotos en las revistas de surf y los cárteles? / Do you have sponsors? Do they pay you to use your photos in surf magazines or posters?

Appendix 3

List of interview questions for Cecilia Vega:

1. What is your official title?

2. How long have you been in this position?

3. How many years have you been involved in El Salvador's tourism industry?

4. Do you know the ration of Salvadoreño-owned small hotels to the foreign-owned equivalent?

5. Do you have tourism data on specific provinces such as La Libertad?

6. Do you believe Salvadoreño hotel owners are at an advantage if they speak English?

7. Do you believe Salvadoreño hotel owners must have Internet access in order to compete in the local tourism market?

8. Do you believe Salvadoreño hotel owners are at an advantage if they have developed a website for their hotel?

9. What do you believe salvadoreño small-hotel owners must do to compete against the larger, foreign-owned hotel chains?

10. Do you know how much revenue tourism generated in El Salvador in 2009? Any public financial data or press releases would be greatly appreciated.

11. Can you please explain the process that small-hotel owners must go through to receive an official license to operate in El Salvador?

12. Is access to finance an issue for aspiring small-hotel owners?

13. Regarding surf tourism: How are salvadoreño small-hotel owners responding to the growth of the globalized surfing industry? Do you think there are more small hotels along the coast geared toward international and local surfers?

14. Do you think eco-tourism is becoming more popular here?

15. Finally, which main factors/threats do you think affect tourism in El Salvador?

16. Is there anything else you would like to add? Is it OK if I contact you via e-mail later if I have additional questions? Thank you so much for your time.

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