The Right to the Waves

Surf identity, mobility and the construction of territorial belonging in

Gigante, Nicaragua

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Photograph on front page taken at Playa Amarillo, provided by Pie de Gigante Spanish School

All other photographs taken by authors in Gigante during our fieldwork period in 2018

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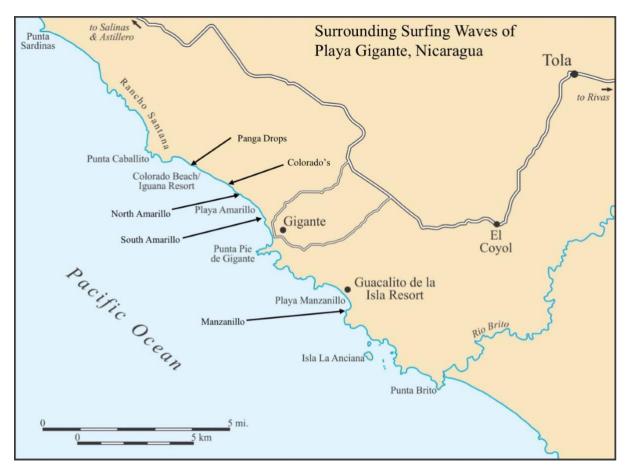
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Content

Map of the area

Figure 1: Map of the different breaks around Gigante (Witt 2015, 56)

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Saludos,
The college girls

Utrecht, the Netherlands
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Introduction

Introduction

On a cloudy morning at Playa Amarillo, we are sitting in the sand next to our surfboards. Even though we came well prepared - with an abundance of white sunscreen on our faces - we are hesitating to go in. The waves look big and intimidating today, the swell is starting to come in. Sandy and Jane arrive at the beach and ask why we are not surfing. "It's so big today...", Hannah mentions. "Let's go girls, just give it a try!", Sandy says while she runs into the ocean with her surfboard. We decide not to act like cowards, and follow them into the sea. We paddle out in the water and position ourselves on the outside of the wave where we have an overview over the surf break. The crowd of today is a mix of surfers from Nicaragua, Canada, Spain and the United States. Liam, a local surfer, and Ann, an expat surfer, paddle into the same wave. Even though Liam was closer to the peak, they both catch the wave and ride it together, parallel to each other. Ann comes paddling back to us and we complement her on the way she rode the wave. With a big grin on her face, she tells us: "I stole his wave because he always steals mine!"[1]

This situation shows that from Ann's perspective, Liam always steals her waves, which indicates how they can be seen as a possession. By using a possessive pronoun when talking about the waves, Ann shows that surfers can feel a sense of ownership over waves. This ownership is constructed by different territorial narratives which determine who has the right to the wave (Anderson 2013, 241). They are partly based on the surfer etiquette, a set of universal unwritten rules that indicate who has priority to catch a wave (Anderson 2013; Usher and Gómez 2016). In this specific situation, Liam had the right to catch the wave since he was closest to the peak. Another narrative is based upon the notion of 'being a local'. When someone is seen as local to a break, he or she has priority in the water and visiting surfers have to show respect towards them (Daskalos 2007, 162). Of course, the idea of being a local is subjective. Who is or is not seen as a local depends on individual interpretation. It is related to how someone constructs a sense of belonging at a locality or community and how they identify with this. And furthermore, how this is regarded by the community. It is therefore involved in processes of in- and exclusion (Garbutt 2009, 99). Lefebvre (1968) introduced the

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[1] Participant observation at Playa Amarillo, 03-04-2018 and 11-04-2018.

concept of the 'right to the city', in which an inhabitant does not only have the right of access to a city but also the right to change its nature (Harvey 2003, 939). In this thesis, we will argue how this can be applicable to a surf break, where being a local gives someone the right to set the local rules of behavior (Garbutt 2009, 91).

In line with the increased global connectedness of the last decades, surf mobility has become a widespread phenomenon: in search of the perfect wave, surfers travel around the world to new and often exotic locations (Anderson 2013, 242). The mobile aspect of the surf lifestyle has been incorporated into the lives and identities of surfers. Their desire for finding and surfing the perfect wave has become the core part of their lives, with jobs and relationships that are shaped around this drive (Anderson 2013, 242). Many surfers therefore decide to move to the places where they have found their perfect wave and start (surf-related) businesses (Usher and Kerstetter 2015). In this research, our participants are both local surfers and surfers who moved there from other countries. These groups may both claim the right to call themselves 'local', although in different ways.

Due to its proximity to the United States and the consistently good waves, Nicaragua has become one of the surf destinations (Usher and Kerstetter 2015). In this thesis, we use the case study of a small fishing village on the west coast of Nicaragua: Gigante. The tourism industry in Nicaragua is relatively new, in comparison to its neighboring country Costa Rica. Yet, the warm climate, beautiful beaches and excellent surf breaks around Gigante have attracted tourists and expats from all over the world. Therefore, the beaches in the area are starting to become more and more crowded with surfers, both local and expat (Witt 2015, 55). Surfers began visiting Nicaragua from 1990 and shortly after this, local residents also started picking up the sport. Thus, like many countries in Central America, surfing is introduced in Nicaragua by foreigners (Usher and Kerstetter 2015, 456). In Gigante, the surf community nowadays consists of people who were born in Nicaragua, who are born in other countries but moved here and who are visiting. In this thesis, we will call them respectively 'locals', 'expats' and 'travelers'. Yet, the distinction between the three can be a bit vague and differs per person.

In this thesis, we argue that surfing is not just about riding waves. It is involved with the construction of a surfer identity, transnational processes, conceptions of belonging and territorial narratives. We used these different concepts to operationalize the following main question: *How do both expat and local surfers perceive, construct and narrate a sense of*

territorial belonging in Gigante, Nicaragua? We will explore what it means to be a surfer and how this is integrated in someone's identity. We also examine the relation between (im)mobility and transnational ties and feelings of belonging to a particular locality and how this is connected to the idea of being a local. Furthermore, how the feeling of belonging and being local may lead to territorialism and ownership and how this plays out in the water, while surfing.

Methods and research population

In order to answer our main question, we have conducted ten weeks of ethnographic, qualitative fieldwork in Gigante, from the fifth of February until the fifteenth of April. Within our fieldwork we made use of participant observation, informal conversations, small talk, a focus group and semi-structured interviews as methods of our research. We chose to make use of multiple methods of qualitative research, or in other words methods triangulation, since this makes it possible to achieve a more holistic view of a phenomenon (Boeije 2010, 176). We used the first two weeks in the field mainly to meet new people and to get a closer look into the social structures within the village. Therefore, we focused on small talk and informal conversations, which are appropriate methods to find out what were important subjects for the local and expat surfers (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 141). Subsequently we conducted semi-structured interviews and a focus group to find a deeper layer of meaning on these subjects. Hannah conducted nine semi-structured interviews, one focus group with three local surfers and two informal interviews. Pascale conducted twenty semi-structured interviews with expats.

We chose a complementary approach to our research, in which Pascale looked at the lived experience of the expat surfers while Hannah focused on the local surfers. With these two perspectives, we explored how they construct territorial narratives to claim ownership over the same break, even though they may both perceive a sense of belonging at Gigante in different ways. By conducting qualitative and explorative research, we tried to define the relationship and the friction between transnationalism and localism, between the local community and the surf expats in Gigante, Nicaragua. The qualitative methods we used, allowed us to illustrate and interpret the surf community from the perspective of our participants (Boeije 2010, 8).

Within the surfer community of Gigante, we can distinguish the different groups of 'locals', 'expats' and 'travelers'. The general age of the local surfers is between ten and twenty-five years old. Most of the locals do not have time to surf when they get older, since they have to work or take care of their families. There are some local surfers that are a bit older, yet these are people who make a living of surfing, such as surf teachers. The expat surfers are between twenty-five and sixty years old. Many of them come from the US or Canada. Most of them are men, but there are some women as well. The traveler surfers could be surfers who are learning to surf here and get lessons or rent a surfboard, but also more experienced surfers who come to Nicaragua just for surfing. About half of them are women, who are usually less experienced than the male surfers. In this thesis, we have changed all the names to ensure the anonymity of our research participants.

Since Gigante is a small town we were always surrounded by our research population, also in informal settings such as having dinner or drinking a beer at a bar. For this reason we sometimes found ourselves in a grey space between conducting research and hanging out with friends. The day to day contact within informal settings made it possible to continuously built on *rapport* with participants, which made it easier to gather our data (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 47). Yet, the informal nature of our contacts may have also been misleading to our participants, since it was hard to distinguish personal information and data we could use for our research. In these situations it might not have always been clear if we were in the role of researchers or friends. This could be a violation of informed consent, which is an ethical priority in qualitative research (Boeije 2010, 45). We solved this by discussing the topics mentioned in informal conversations in the more formal setting of an interview.

Relevance

There is only a small amount of academic literature surrounding the subject of surf identity in Nicaragua and all research that has been done, is by the same authors. Since in ethnographic and qualitative research, the researcher is his or her own instrument, the findings are always colored by the view of the researcher (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 29). This does not necessarily mean that the research is invaluable, yet the discourse will improve by contributing a different view. By making use of a different theoretical and personal framework in our research, we can provide an addition to the debate surrounding surf identity in Nicaragua.

Gigante has been a very relevant location for our study since the population consists of a local community as well as an expat community living together. For this reason Gigante is an interesting case study contributing to the existing theoretical foundations about transnationalism, ownership, feeling of belonging and being a local. Furthermore, the town is surrounded by many different surf breaks, which all have their own atmosphere and character. The concepts from our theoretical foundation, mentioned above, are all expressed in different ways at these different surf locations. We mainly surfed at Playa Amarillo, since this location was the most accessible, and suited our skill level best. However, our participants could tell us a lot more about the other surf breaks in the area.

Content

In this thesis, we will answer our main question by exploring and describing how the concepts of surfer identity, transnational processes, conceptions of belonging and territorial narratives are intertwined. In the first chapter we present the theoretical framework as the basis of our research. Within this theoretical framework we will discuss themes such as globalization, mobility, identity, transnationalism, territorialism, belonging and ownership. In chapter two we will go into depth on the context of our research. In the first part of the context we will apply our theoretical framework to surfing, which will appear as a key subject within our thesis. In the second part of the context we will take a closer look at the rise of surfing in Nicaragua and at the specific location where our fieldwork took place: Gigante.

In chapter three to six we will present the empirical data we have collected in the field. The chapters are divided in both a local's as well as an expat's perspective. In chapter three we will go into depth on the surfer identity of both local and expat surfers in Gigante. The fourth chapter will focus on transnational processes they are involved with. In chapter five we will elaborate on the relation between transnational processes and feelings of belonging. We will conceptualize 'being a local' and the processes of becoming a local within this chapter. Furthermore, we will look at the relation between 'being a local' and feelings of belonging to Gigante. In the last chapter territorial narratives will be discussed based on feelings of priority and ownership. Finally we will conclude by giving an answer to our research question, and discussing the most important findings within our research.

Chapter 1

Theorizing territorial belonging

Chapter 1: Theorizing territorial belonging

Globalization and mobility | Pascale

Nowadays we are eating avocados and mangos from other continents. When we feel like eating Thai food, we just go to the restaurant around the corner. We order clothes through web shops which have made it possible to buy clothes from the United States while they were made in China and we maintain long distance friendships through Skype and Facebook. Distance has become irrelevant in many ways. The processes of connectedness that made this possible are referred to as globalization. Although global connections have always existed, nowadays global connectedness is a phenomenon impossible to ignore and interwoven into many aspects of life (Eriksen 2014, 1). In this paragraph, we will take a closer look into how global connectedness leads to the increased possibility to move and how this is incorporated in the many aspects of life. We will explore how global connectedness is distributed in different ways, and how this relates to a sense of (un)freedom.

According to Eriksen, global connectedness is closely related to processes of disembedding, with which he means the elimination of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space (Giddens *in* Eriksen 2014, 21). Something is disembedded when the location where something is made or done becomes unimportant. A result of this process is that matters, as for example language, time, temperature, money and distance, became standardized in a way that people all around the world can understand. These processes of disembedding have been disentangled in several ways (Eriksen 2014, 21). One of the most important developments in the evolution of disembedding was the invention of writing. Alphabets realized that people from different places could understand each other and that messages could be sent independently. Face-to-face contact became less relevant (Eriksen 2014, 22). Globalization has a significant effect on the accelerated process of mobility, since globalization has made it easier to move from one place to another. In this theoretical framework, the concept of mobility as movement will be approached in the broadest sense. Movement can be between countries or cities on the one hand. On the other hand it can have a less literal meaning, as in movement within social relations. Movement on the social ladder is an example of this.

Movement is filled up with meaning since mobile people are never simply people: "they are dancers and pedestrians, drivers and athletes, refugees and citizens, tourists or businesspeople, men and women" (Cresswell 2006, 4). This quote shows that mobility is distributed in various ways and that different social groups may have different possibilities of social mobility (Eriksen 1994, 73). For this reason mobility due to globalization can be a product as well as a producer of power, considering that mobile people are more powerful than immobile people (Cresswell 2006, 2). The reason for this is that mobile people often have the money, means and knowledge to be able to travel or move within the social hierarchy. This distinction can create friction between the mobile and the immobile (Tsing 2005, 214).

Modernity and mobility are two factors simultaneously connected. As Tim Cresswell (2006, 16) states: "The modern individual is, above all else, a mobile human being". The concept of mobility is in many Western countries related to perceptions like progress, freedom, opportunity and modernity. In developing countries people might relate to mobility as shiftlessness, deviance and resistance (Cresswell 2006, 1-2). Modernity makes us automatically think of technological mobility; traveling through time and space by train, car or plane (Cresswell 2006, 16). Therefore, time and space have become relative concepts. Traveling has become much easier and cheaper due to technological development running parallel with globalizing processes. Since 2000 the movement of people has been growing rapidly. Nowadays, in absolute numbers, there are more people than ever living outside the country they were born (Eriksen 2014, 103). This is due to an increase in both voluntary and involuntary migration. These technological developments have also led to an evolution in tourism as one of the aspects of mobility. In most parts of the western world this has unfolded from local, to regional to global. Contrary to how our grandparents would go on vacation within the country or to neighboring countries, nowadays destinations cannot be far and 'exotic' enough (Eriksen 2014, 106). Global tourism also initiated a glocal dimension, in which local culture comes together with global tourism. Tourist destinations are being provided with food and facilities suited for travelers from all over the world mixed with a local flavor (Eriksen 2014, 108). As Eriksen (2014, 109) describes: "tourist destinations are at least two places at one and the same time: A holiday destination and a local community". Mixing of different communities can create forms of homogeneity, but this usually happens in a glocal context in which the local community gives meaning to the global processes (Eriksen 2014, 118). This also works the other way around, where global processes reconstruct the local identity.

Nation-states are increasingly deterritorializing some of their activities. We see a lot of Western countries exporting their daily activities to more interesting or pleasant places. Think of students going abroad to other countries to study or pensioners in the search for the sun in southern Europe. This is strongly related to the positive notions of mobility. These people are not crossing borders because this is a necessity. Instead they are traveling to these places for a different climate, excitement, cultural similarities and expectations of a higher quality of life (Eriksen 2014, 105). Tsing (2005, 214) refers to this as 'freedom', which she defines as the removal of obstructions. On the other hand, Tsing mentions that movement can also illustrate the spread of 'unfreedom'. This contributes to the idea of mobility as a producer of power, mentioned before in this paragraph. Since not everyone is mobile in the same way, people can experience different levels of freedom.

Tsing mentions that the freedom to travel changes the way we imagine the places we call home. Traveling makes us think differently about certain places, since you start to see home in relation to the places you visit (Tsing 2005, 213). This moves us to change how we think about both local scales as global scales which has an influence on one's inner identity as well as on transnational identities (Tsing 2005, 214). Transnational identities are created because traveling people leave certain cultural traces at the places they visit. The next paragraph will discuss the intertwinement between identity and transnationalism.

Identity and transnationalism | Pascale

As discussed above, mobility relates to conceptions of identity and transnationalism. In this paragraph we will further explore these concepts. Identity means being the same as oneself as well as being different than others. In other words, an identity is constructed from within oneself (individual identity), and also in relation to others (social identity). Vertovec mentions that identities are constructed through internal and external factors within a specific social world. He notes that these internal factors are self-attributed in contrast to external factors which are ascribed by others (Vertovec 2001, 577). Human beings are continuously classifying people in social categories. This classifying creates an 'us' versus the 'other' relation. To be part of 'us' means to be socially integrated within the collectivity. This is in relation to the 'other', standing outside of this collectivity (Eriksen 1994, 79-80). This kind of classification says a lot about a society, their way of life and their self-identification. As society changes, identity may change as well, since identity is a social process of construction instead of a static

concept (Larrain 2000, 24). Wider social systems including power relations and different possibilities of social mobility are related to these systems of social classification and principles of inclusion and exclusion (Eriksen 1994, 72-73). Important to mention is that all of us can be fabricated into multiple different social identities (Eriksen 1994, 197). Through mobility one can form a different social identity constructed by both the places they visit and the places they call home.

Thus, global connectedness and processes of globalization have led to different forms of identity construction, such as transnational identity. With this is meant different global and cross-border connections which are often associated with migration and thus mobility (Vertovec 2001, 573). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, local communities change by the increase of people visiting (Eriksen 2014, 109). Some social identities can be "strengthened, invested with new or old symbolic content, some wane to the benefit of others, some are enlarged or shrunk, some become transnational, and others remain attached to place" (Eriksen 2014, 114).

Modern modes of communication and transportation carry out easier ways to effectively be both 'here' and 'there'. Transnationalism represents a new motion of flows of people, goods, information provoked by international labor migration. Migrants maintain diversified forms of contact with people and institutions in their place of origin. This contact has always existed, but the difference nowadays is that connections with the homeland have become more intense, in the way that they are continuously ongoing through means of electronic signals. This is instead of sporadic contact with the homeland, for instance sending a postcard once in a while. Processes of disembedding in combination with the rise of mobility have influenced the change of these connections (Vertovec 2001, 574). This has made the separation of social relations from the local context of interaction possible (Larrain 2000, 39).

Transnationalism and identity are strongly related in the way that many transnational connections between people are based on some sort of a shared identity. This can be a place of origin or cultural traits. However, Vertovec (2001) argues that this shared identity can go beyond a certain locality (Vertovec 2001, 573). These different places, in literature also referred to as 'diverse habitats of meaning' assemble people compromising their range of cultural practices. This influences the construction of identity and multiple identities (Vertovec 2001, 578). Vertovec refers to this as the 'portability of national identity' in which migrants

have the tendency to claim membership in more than one place illustrated in the following quote (Vertovec 2001, 575).

> Through these networks, an increasing number of people are able to live dual lives. Participants are often bilingual, move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries, and pursue economic, political and cultural interests that require their presence in both (Portes 1997, 812 *in* Vertovec 2001, 574).

Because people are living these dual lives, the construction of a place-bound sense of belonging becomes more complicated within globalizing processes alongside increased transnational connection. However, these dual lives are not only ascribed to people on the move, but also to people who stay in one place, since they experience globalizing processes in different ways. The construction, negotiation and reproduction of social identities are influenced by the multi-local or glocal world that is created by processes of globalization. These social identities determine individuals' positions within and across multiple places of attachment and a sense of belonging in the course of their everyday lives (Vertovec 2001, 578). Therefore unfixing identities can arise through transnationalism which can create new notions of culture and belonging which will be discussed in the next paragraph (Vertovec 2001, 580).

Belonging, territorialism and ownership | Hannah

As stated above, globalization and transnationalism both affect a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging involves "experiences of being part of the social fabric" (Athnias 2006, 21 *in* Garbutt 2009, 88). These experiences can be approached on both an individual and a collective perspective. In other words, the sense of belonging individuals construct for themselves and how this is regarded or accepted by the community. Therefore, in the debate surrounding belonging, there is a distinction between individuals' feelings of belonging at a particular community or locality and whether they actually do or do not truly belong there (Miller 2003, 217). These perspectives indicate a dialectic relationship between an individual's sense of belonging and a certain form of membership of a community and processes of in- and exclusion. In this paragraph, we will discuss how a sense of belonging is constructed within

this dialectic relationship and examine how this is used in territorial narratives to claim ownership over a locality.

Within this framework, we can distinguish three different aspects of belonging. The first aspect that constructs a sense of belonging, involves social connections. This refers to a sense of connection to a particular community of people. The second involves historical connections, a sense of connection to someone's past or a tradition. Finally, the third aspect is a sense of belonging that refers to geographical connections. This involves a sense of connection to a particular locality or place of residence (Miller 2003, 217). These aspects are not mutually exclusive, they are continually being influenced by each other. A historical connection, for example, influences the connection with the community if there is an idea of a shared history. Just like social connections in a particular locality can alter the connection someone feels towards a place of residence. If someone has a dense social network in – for example – a village, that person is more likely to experience stronger connections with that place. With this in mind, belonging concerns a particular kind of demeanor in the world, a way of being that is intertwined with these three aspects of belonging (community, history and locality) and therefore to whom and what we are or can be. This state of being is something that is constructed by individuals and communities, it is not a given or something that just happens to exist (Miller 2003, 223). It is involved in processes of globalization, identity construction and in- and exclusion.

Thus, belonging – in the sense of experiences of being part of the social fabric – does involve a certain kind of membership, with processes of in- and exclusion. However, by conceptualizing belonging solely as membership, it overlooks the agency of individuals and groups and their ability to contest boundaries. Furthermore, it neglects how individuals' senses of belonging may vary over time (Garbutt 209, 84). Therefore, in this theoretical framework, belonging is approached as a sense of connection to a community, history or locality which is always in the process of active construction. It is continually developed through constructing one's place as an individual and through one's positioning according to social structures. This approach focusses on practices, that can include different forms of daily routines, such as regular employment, cooking and sharing meals with others and engaging in sports, such as surfing (Garbutt 2009, 88).

As stated in the previous paragraphs, processes of globalization – and, as a consequence, increasing mobility – influence the creation of a sense of belonging. With these

processes, new, transnational attitudes on belonging come into being. Human mobility takes many different forms, such as commuting, long-distance travel and migration. These forms have different implications for an individual's sense of belonging. There is, for example, a considerable difference between voluntary or involuntary mobility. In this theoretical framework, however, we will focus on voluntary migration as a form of human mobility. Furthermore, belonging manifests itself at different spatial levels (for example neighborhoods, cities, countries and even on supranational level) which can be affected by mobility in different ways (Gustafson 2009, 491). Frequently traveling through Europe could, for example, create a European sense of belonging instead of a national sense. The influence mobility has, depends on the context of the situation and the spatial level in which belonging occurs. However, it is not mutually exclusive and the sense of belonging someone has towards, for example, a neighborhood may also affect that person's sense of belonging towards a country.

It is common to assume that a territorial sense of belonging is negatively influenced by increased mobility. For example, if someone travels on a frequent basis, he or she develops weaker ties to a particular place. In other words, mobile individuals are less likely to develop or maintain a strong sense of belonging and people with a high sense of territorial belonging are less likely to be mobile. Yet, according to Gustafson (2009, 491) multiple studies point out that this is not the case and furthermore, that mobility might even strengthen ties with a place and thus a sense of belonging.

In many places, belonging is formed around a specific social form in which individuals connect a locality with their identity through the idea of 'being a local'. This is an important form of local belonging, which weaves together identity and place. The distinction between whether someone is or is not a local partly determines who properly belongs at a place, who may claim cultural possession of a public space and who is or is not allowed to speak on behalf of a place (Garbutt 2009, 91). If a person is regarded as a local, it gives him or her a sense of authority: when you are traveling, you ask a local for directions and you rely on his or her advice for good restaurants or interesting places to visit. Furthermore, being a local gives someone the privilege of setting the local rules of behavior (Garbutt 2009, 90). It is thus a substantial element of establishing place-based power relations.

The idea of being a local seems – equally to a sense of belonging – to be based on membership, yet is repeatedly constituted through multiple practices of boundary-making (Garbutt 2009, 104). Furthermore, people have different interpretations of what it means to

be a local. An expat, for example, could be viewed as a local by a tourist's standard yet not by a person who was born there. Being or becoming a local is commonly defined by the duration of residence in a specific place. In other words, being local takes time. A local's sense of identity gradually emerges by building a personal, everyday connection to a place through the before mentioned aspects of belonging: community, history and geography (Miller 2003, 217). The amount of time that is required for this process is evidently open to interpretation. It is affected by the involvement of a person in the community, by practices of enrolling in daily routines and social activities. It could be ten years, forty years or five generations (Garbutt 2009, 92). Having multiple or transnational feelings of belonging could also influence someone's claim of being a local. Therefore, "maintaining boundaries of belonging to a people and a place (…) is as much about cutting networks as much as it is about making them" (Garbutt 2009, 97). It involves both breaking ties with other places and creating ties with a new locality.

Being a local gives someone the authority to claim ownership of a place. This claiming of ownership of a particular locality by a group or individual is defined as territorialism. Territorialism is not a way of survival from the distant past, it is an outcome of the processes of globalization. As explained in the previous paragraphs, increased mobility creates different interactions and imaginaries between people and places which influences identity construction. Territorialism is thus the result of the interaction between traditional, local attitudes and the untraditional events inspired by the era of globalization (Kent 2008, 292). As the boundaries between actual places and localities become more and more blurred, the notion (or imagination) of culturally distinct places becomes more and more significant. Thus, in the words of Gupta and Ferguson (1992, 18), "it is no paradox to say that questions of space and place are, in this deterritorialized age, more central to anthropological representation than ever".

Territory is not a natural given, it is a process of social, historical and geographical construction. From this perspective, we cannot speak of a reified territoriality. It has to be approached as *processes of territorialization* in which spaces and places are made, imagined, contested and enforced (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 18; Kent 2008, 290). In this sense, human territoriality is defined as the construction and contesting of boundaries around a particular space towards which a person or a group feels ownership. This ownership includes a notion of power which manifests itself in the regulation of behavior within that space. Territoriality

is present across different spatial levels, such as buildings, neighborhoods, cities and also beaches and oceans (Usher and Gómez 2016, 197). The manifestation of territorialism within beaches and oceans will be further explained in the context, where we elaborate on our case study: the surf community in Gigante, Nicaragua.

Chapter 2

Surf culture in Nicaragua

Chapter 2: Surf culture in Nicaragua

Surfer identity: transnationalism and localism | Hannah

> The experience of riding the surfed wave brings something new to the world of the surfer; the feeling of stoke becomes the shared passion that surfers align their lives around. As pro-surfer Mick Fanning states, surfing thus becomes 'the path we follow'. (Anderson 2013, 239)

This quote clearly states how surfing becomes part of an individual's life and the emotional ties one might have with the sport. A sport that is incorporated into an individual's identity and stretches beyond the actual act of sporting, is defined as a 'lifestyle sport'. Because of how intertwined these sports are with people's daily lives, they frequently evolve into subcultures with processes of membership based on how someone dresses, talks and how skilled they are in practicing the sport. People are considered members if they share certain identity characteristics. And, if they do not, they are not recognized as part of the subculture (Usher and Kerstetter 2015, 456). The sport of surfing has developed into a unique subculture with a distinct way of dressing and talking that can only be understood by the members of the surfing community, and can therefore be regarded as a lifestyle sport (Anderson 2013, 238).

Surfer identity is deeply embedded in place. The beach and the surf break (i.e. surfing locations) influence a surfer's identity, since most surfers spend hours in the water every day. They become acquainted with the local winds, current and tides that affect the waves. Surfers develop a strong sense of belonging and place attachment at these surf-shore locations. These locations are commonly referred to as someone's 'home-break', which could be the beach where they grew up, learned to surf or where they have committed many hours every day to surfing (Anderson 2013, 241). Furthermore, a surfer's sense of belonging is also constructed by the actual daily practice of surfing as a group activity, creating a sense of connection to a community (Garbutt 2009, 88). This contributes to the construction of an identity as a 'local surfer', in which surfers experience a strong sense of ownership over their home-breaks. (Daskalos 2007; Usher and Kerstetter 2015). However, this surfer identity is not static or only defined by the home-break. Surfers keep surfing wherever they go and, with the globalized

advances in transport and communication, surfers are increasingly mobile and surf at multiple places (Anderson 2013, 237).

Since the 1960s, images and knowledge about surfing have become commoditized. This is strongly linked to the entertainment industry, in which surfing magazines and films show a range of exotic surf spots and advertise for surf tours (Anderson 2013, 242). Consequently, these images and knowledge are distributed and advertised around the world and surfing has become more and more popular. With more people than ever starting picking up the sport, it has become a mainstream industry (Daskalos 2007, 155). With the growing popularity of surfing, the well-known surf breaks have become more and more crowded. The over-crowding of popular breaks, in combination with the increasing degree of mobility, leads to surfers looking for places further from home to go surfing. The increased surf mobility creates a friction within the surfer identity. On the one hand, the construction of a surfer identity is highly place-bound. Yet, with increasing mobility and migration, it becomes disembedded from physical locations. This disembedding contributes to the creation of a trans-local surfer identity which is only bound to the actual beach or break and less to the local community and culture. This suggests a dualistic relation between the local and the trans-local. However, in practice, most surfers combine both trans-local and local practices in their identity (Anderson 2013, 237-238).

Surf tourism and surf mobility are often viewed negatively in places with a well-established surf community. Since local surfers experience a strong sense of ownership over their home-break, the influx of mobile surfers is seen as a threat. According to the local surfers, the newcomers are changing the nature of the surfing culture and local community due to their trans-local attitude and values (Daskalos 2007, 163). A newcomer is seen as the colonizing 'Other' who steals their waves and threatens the cultural fabric of the surf community. Consequently, the influx of mobile surfers is faced with resistance from the locals, which often culminates in intimidation and physical violence (Anderson 2013, 244). This chronic aggression towards the outsider surfers from locals is referred to as localism (Usher and Gómez 2016, 198).

Localism can appear in different forms, we distinguish between mild and heavy localism. When visiting surfers are allowed in the break, local surfers expect to receive respect by following the surf etiquette. These informal rules include a social hierarchy, in which local and experienced surfers have the first right to the waves (Daskalos 2007, 162). If outsider

surfers violate the rules, localism may occur. Mild localism can comprise of local surfers giving them dirty looks or verbal warnings. Heavy localism can exist of not allowing visitors to surf at all or allowing access to the surf yet inflicting heavy punishment for breaking the etiquette, such as physical violence or property damage. Localism is a way of setting boundaries around surf breaks by local surfers. It is their way of expressing ownership and marking their space (Usher and Gómez 2016, 198-199).

Thus, localism is often based on a strong sense of ownership of the local surf break. And, as discussed before, a sense of ownership is not only justified by being born at a particular place. Migrant, or expat, surfers can also construct a narrative as being a local. This ownership and deep attachment surfers feel for a surf break is, similar to a sense of belonging, established by the amount of time a surfer spent in the water at a particular surf break (Usher and Gómez 2016, 199). In this thesis, we focus on local and resident surfers in Nicaragua, who may both feel a sense of belonging and ownership over the local surf break. Therefore, the boundaries between the local and trans-local become even more blurred, and different forms of ownership may occur.

Surf community in Gigante, Nicaragua | Pascale

Central America is often regarded as a 'surf Mecca', particularly by surfers originating from the United States. Nicaragua has become an upcoming destination for surf tourism, with exceptional surf breaks. Some of the surfers that traveled to Nicaragua to find less crowded breaks, decided to stay there and start their own (surf-related) businesses. Between 1990 and 2000 – when surfers first began visiting Nicaragua – local residents started picking up the sport and embody the surf lifestyle (Usher and Kerstetter 2015, 456).

Nicaragua has long been an agricultural country based on bananas, coffee, sugar, beef and tobacco (Witt 2015, 50). However, since 2001 more money was earned by tourism than by the two main exports of coffee and beef. Working in tourism has become a way to increase income originally earned by agriculture. Especially the younger generation is more and more working in the tourist branch rather than farming and fishing to earn money. With the arrival of mainly North-American surfers – since this is relatively close – locals found a way to support themselves by providing accommodation and surf necessities for the surfers. In Gigante we find a balance between locals earning money through tourism and those who still earn their money by traditional means (Earthart 2015, 3).

The region around Gigante gets waves most of the year, with more than 300 days of easterly winds. Lake Nicaragua – east of the region – creates this wind which is perfect for surfing. Not the entire coast is accessible for everyone because big resorts have been built close to Gigante (Witt 2015, 53). Gigante as surf destination is in its beginning phase of tourism development. It is the second biggest beach town close to San Juan del Sur. The beach of Gigante is located in a secluded bay which does not get many waves (Witt 2015, 55). Therefore it is a good place to go fishing or for boat tours, which are other tourist attractions in the region besides surfing (Earthart 2015, 4). In 2015 Witt estimated around a minimum of 150 visitors located in Playa Gigante. This number is increasing undoubtedly since people were building tourist accommodations next to their houses and restaurants at the time Witt was there (Witt 2015, 54).

The five surfing breaks around the town of Gigante on the Southwest coast of Nicaragua - Manzanillo, North and South Amarillo, Colorado's and Panga Drops - are attracting more and more North-American and European surfers (Earthart 2015, 3-4). Many tourist accommodations near the ocean have started to rent surf gear. Surf lessons have been included in the assortment of tourist activities (Earthart 2015, 9). Nicaragua has been declared the new surfing Mecca of Central America by both academic literature and entertaining articles. Some surf breaks are even getting as crowded as popular waves in California and Hawaii (Earthart 2015, 15).

Chapter 3

Child of the ocean

Chapter 3: Child of the ocean

On a Saturday afternoon, we arrive at the surf film festival that takes place in and around the *Cervecería* in San Juan del Sur, a city close to Gigante. We are standing in front of the building together with some local and expat surfers who came with us from Gigante. The event is meant to celebrate surfing in the area and create awareness of a sustainable surf lifestyle. Through the open door we can see the full crowd inside. People are sitting on the floor, on chairs and standing around the bar looking at the screen, which shows several surf movies. There are many travelers, expats and some locals who attend the event. Even though none of these people are surfing at this particular moment, we can tell that most of them are surfers by the way they look, talk and interact.[2] This demonstrates how surfing can be incorporated in someone's persona, while the diverse crowd also reflects the transnational character of surfing. In this chapter we will examine surfing as a lifestyle and explain how it has evolved into a specific subculture (Anderson 2013, 23). We will also elaborate on what it means to be a surfer to both expat and local surfers and how they construct an identity as a surfer.

A local's perspective | Hannah

The meaning of surfing

It is around two in the afternoon and I am sitting with Luke on the lounge chairs of a hostel overlooking the beach of Gigante. Luke is a local surfer in his early twenties, and one of the few professional surfers of Nicaragua. He tells me about his first time surfing, which was right here on the beach about ten years ago. He moved from a city to Gigante with his family when he was a kid. He saw some locals that were trying to surf at Playa Gigante and he became interested in the sport. The owner of a local restaurant on the beach had a broken surfboard, a big soft top, and gave it to Luke. The first time he went in the water with the board, he almost drowned: "Because the board didn't have a leash and I was trying to survive and asking for help from my friends and they were just going by me on the waves and they did not even care. They thought I was joking and that I knew how to swim."[3] Finally, he was able to get out of

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[2] Participant observation at San Juan del Sur Surf Film Festival 2018, 03-03-2018.
[3] Semi-structured interview with Luke, 01-03-2018.

the water, but it was very close. So the next time, he drilled a hole in the board and put a rope through it. He tied this around his leg in the absence of a leash and tried again.

Just like Luke, many local surfers started surfing when they were between ten and fourteen years old. They watched other people in the water and they thought it would be fun to try. Together with friends, they learned how to surf. Since Gigante is a small town, there is not much to do for young people. Surfing is one of the few ways to have a good time with your friends. Samuel tells me that he enjoys surfing most when he is with other people. He likes joking around in the water with his friends and with tourists too.[4] This is also visible at Playa Amarillo, where the local surfers are talking, laughing and competing together.[5] The daily practice of surfing with other people, creates a sense of connection to the surf community and contributes to the creation of an identity as a surfer (Garbutt 2009, 88).

Besides this social aspect of surfing, many local surfers mention their bond with the ocean as a reason to start surfing. They are sons of fishermen and spend a lot of time in and around the ocean. For them, surfing is a way to be closer to the sea. They feel in their place in the ocean, like everything is right. According to Anderson (2013, 241), a surfer identity is deeply embedded in place and is influenced by the beach and the ocean, since surfers spend a lot of time in the water. Alex, a local professional surfer in his early twenties, says that he liked the ocean since he was little: "I was always swimming the whole day. So when I started surfing, it was a very nice feeling because I could forget everything and concentrate on the ocean. Being in the water, the waves, the sea, everything is beautiful."[6] Thus, for most of the local surfers, surfing means creating and keeping social relations. Furthermore, surfing allows them to be closer to the ocean, which they describe as a positive and important experience. These social and place-bound connections to surfing lead to the construction of a surfer identity amongst local surfers.

Blond hair and boardshorts

Many local surfers mention how surfing changes you, both inside and out. It strengthens your body, tans your skin, lightens your hair and as Liam – a local surf teacher – says, it can lead to inner peace: "I think surfing opens doors. It can give you peace and it can give you health"[7].

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[4] Focus group with Samuel, Sebastián and Marcus 12-03-2018, translated from Spanish.
[5] Participant observation at Playa Amarillo.
[6] Semi-structured interview with Alex, 05-04-2018, translated from Spanish.
[7] Semi-structured interview with Liam, 21-02-2018.

Since surfing is incorporated in an individual's identity, it reaches beyond the act of sporting and we can therefore regard it as a lifestyle sport (Usher and Kerstetter 2015, Anderson 2013). Many locals I talked to, think surfers are easily recognizable. Some of them mention their long, light hair, boardshorts and flip flops. Also, there are some brands that are typical for surfers.[8] This points to the identity markers of surfing as a subculture. The membership to the subculture is based on the way someone dresses and how they look. If someone does not share certain identity characteristics, they are not recognized as part of the subculture (Usher and Kerstetter 2015, 456).

Yet, being part of this surfing lifestyle can be difficult for some locals. When talking to Thomas, a local surfer in his mid-twenties, he explains that he does not go surfing that much anymore. He says that when local surfers get a little older they have other responsibilities, like making money and taking care of their families[9]. Like Thomas, most of them do not have time anymore and stop surfing or just do it once in a while. This is illustrated by the fact that most of the local surfers are younger than the tourists or the expats.[10] Besides this, most of the locals started surfing on borrowed boards, because surfboards are very expensive. Tourists who leave Gigante and do not want to travel with their surfboards, give them to the local kids.[11] Project WOO, a non-profit organization located in Gigante, gave boards to children as well[12]. This means that the local children who want to surf, are mostly dependent on travelers and foreign organizations. The access to the characteristics of the surfer subculture differs between local and foreign surfers, as Luke tells me: "Some of the locals do not have the specific boardshorts to surf. The ones that are learning, some of them go surfing with short jeans. I met some kids like that. So it's different you know." For them, it is hard to get the clothing, which is quite expensive. So they just have to "go with what they can afford"[13], which is usually less than the traveler and expat surfers.

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[8] Semi-structured interview with Liam, 21-02-2018 and Luke, 01-03-2018.
[9] Semi-structured interview with Thomas, 25-03-2018.
[10] Participant observation at Playa Amarillo.
[11] Semi-structured interview with Sofia, 30-03-2018, translated from Spanish.
[12] Project Wave Of Optimism (Project WOO) is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2006 and was active until 2016. It was started as a way for surf tourism to give back to the local community and aimed to empower the local community in Gigante to guide the development of the village. In the ten years the project was operating, it developed – among other initiatives – a public bus route that allowed children to take the bus to school and a community health center in the village.
[13] Semi-structured interview with Luke, 01-03-2018.

Many local surfers do not have the means to fit into the image of a 'typical surfer' that is part of the surfing lifestyle. Yet, according to Liam, looking like a surfer can be deceivable and walking around with an expensive board and popular surf brands does not necessarily mean you are a good surfer: "I think you need to prove it, you know. Your words can be bigger than your actions. But in surfing, your actions should be bigger than your words."[14] Thus, someone's skill level in the sport of surfing is another aspect of belonging to the surfer lifestyle which is – as explained by Liam – more important than what someone looks like. In this way, local surfers can claim membership to the subculture without having access to the surf brands and clothing.

An expat's perspective | Pascale

Escaping the rat race

After exchanging several messages on Facebook I meet Sandy at her *casita* for a semi-structured interview. We tried to meet earlier, but every time the waves came in between. She jokes about how hard it is to make an appointment with surfers. After thirty-five minutes Elliot, a local surfer passes by, and we chat a little. He tells us that he is going to check out Amarillo. "It is working a little bit", he says. Sandy mentions she went to go surf at six in the morning, but it was completely flat. "Go check, now it's working." "Time to go surfing?", I ask. "Yes, time to go", Sandy answers, which means the end of the interview. [15]

This anecdote shows the dedication a lot of surfers have towards surfing. Many expat surfers told me they live healthily, get up early, and try to reduce their alcohol consumption to a minimum amount all to prioritize surfing. Many expat surfers mention that surfing has become a priority in their life. As mentioned by Usher and Kerstetter (2015, 456), there exists a whole lifestyle around surfing since surfing unfolds beyond the actual sport and becomes part of one's individual's identity. The surfer identity amongst expat surfers is distributed in many different ways, since the expat community is a diverse group of people who are used to surfing at many different surf spots around the world. It highly depends on where these people

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[14] Semi-structured interview with Liam, 21-02-2018.
[15] Semi-structured interview with Sandy, 02-03-2018.

come from. Everyone learned to surf at different places around the world, which gives all these people a different 'surf history'. Some of them grew up next to surf spots, while others learned surfing at a later period in their life. Some moved to Gigante, because they did not have a surf spot nearby in their home country, while others were looking for better, different, warmer, or more exotic places to surf.

Expat surfers go surfing for different purposes. They are all people who like outdoor sports, nature and have a strong affinity with the ocean. Expat surfers practice different forms of surfing including board surfing, body surfing, boogie boarding and stand-up paddle boarding. Some people go surfing by themselves and see it more as an individual sport. Other people like to go with friends or in a group. Expats surf to become one with nature and synchronized with the ocean.[16] Expats use surfing both as meditation as well as a therapy. For some people it is a way to take distance from previous lifestyles. People have told me that surfing has completely changed their life in a positive way. As Noah mentions, it can transform them both mentally as physically: "Surfing changes what you look like, how you think, and how you behave, what you are, what you want to be."*[17]*

Surfing has been a guidance through the lives of many of the expat surfers and affected the life decisions they made. Many surfing expats have traveled a lot, and most of the expat surfers travel mainly to surf. A lot of expat surfers mention that they want to build their life around surfing, and manage to find a way to make money and surf as much as possible. For some of the expat surfers, working in the surf industry comes as a solution for this. I met surf teachers, surf guides and surf photographers who turned their hobby into their job. As Ben mentions about working in the surf industry: "We don't want to surf crowded waves, but our job is to bring people to the waves. (...) If you're not gonna do it, somebody else will do. But you are sharing something beautiful."[18]

Since surfing can be such a big part of people's lives, surfing can evolve in a subculture (Usher and Kerstetter 2015, 456). Because the group of expat surfers is so diverse, different subcultures can exist within this group. I have discussed a couple of these with some expat surfers I interviewed. Aiden tells me he is not a *soul surfer*, who wakes up and goes to bed with surfing every day. For him being a surfer is more of a background thing. He feels like a

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[16] Semi-structured interview with Roxy, 04-04-2018.
[17] Semi-structured interview with Noah, 13-03-2018.
[18] Semi-structured interview with Ben, 15-04-2018.

part of the surf culture, but not in a conscious way.[19] According to Ben surfing is a sexy culture, since it is associated with the beach, fitness, freedom and spirituality. He also tells me about *holistic searchers*, the surfer who is always on the move to find the perfect waves.[20] Jason tells me more about the *weekend warrior*, the surfer who can only surf on the weekend because of a full time job.[21] Some expats have at one point in their life been all one of these various surfers. Surfing can become a dilemma between money and time. You can have a full time job, and the money to buy surf equipment, but no time left to go surfing, because you are working all the time. Trying to find this balance plays a role in the degree of how free expat surfers feel.[22] Many expats moved to Gigante to step out of the standard work cycle of working from nine to five, also referred to as a *rat race*.[23] Most expats were familiar with this routine back in their home countries.[24] In the next paragraph I will look closer at the commodification of surfing and how stereotypes have evolved from this.

Commodification of surfing

As Peter mentions, there are many stereotypes about surfing: "I don't think a lot of people understand the amount of dedication it takes to surf well. I don't think this is understood. Look at this easy thing, you're hanging out on the beach and chasing girls, partying, and having bonfires at night." [25] The whole idea of the surfer as a *beach bum* with long blond hair is portrayed in several movies, of which *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) is often mentioned as an example.[26] Surfing appearing in modern media has not only led to stereotypes around surfing, it has also commodified surfing as Ben mentions: "Surfing is a commercialized trend that can be bought and sold, and stylized to a point of profits."[27] You do not have to be a surfer to work in the surf industry and earn money through surfing, since surfing has become a business just like many other sports and activities. This also turns it into a potential area of consumption. With enough money anyone can buy surf equipment such as a surfboard and surf clothing, and take these out in the ocean. As Noah mentions in the interview I conducted

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[19] Semi-structured interview with Aiden, 30-03-2018.
[20] Semi-structured interview with Ben, 15-04-2018.
[21] Semi-structured interview with Jason, 04-04-2018.
[22] Semi-structured interview with Marley, 21-02-2018 and Jane, 10-03-2018.
[23] Semi-structured interview with Jason, 04-04-2018.
[24] Semi-structured interview with Fletcher, 14-03-2018 and Shane, 14-04-2018.
[25] Semi-structured interview with Peter, 27-02-2018.
[26] Semi-structured interview with Charlie, 21-02-2018 and Peter, 27-02-2018.
[27] Semi-structured interview with Ben, 15-04-2018.

with him: "He is behaving like a surfer, but he doesn't know how to surf."[28] Since many people see surfing in movies and other forms of media, many tourists want to try to surf and rent boards for a day in Gigante, but do not particularly know how to surf. Dorian mentions that the nature of surfing in Gigante and Nicaragua has changed:

> "It used to be people that knew how to surf, you knew what the waves would be like. In that sense it was very much a sport, I am literally going to surf my brains out, and now it's open to everybody. Now there are many more people that come to learn, there are travelers who like to learn to surf. It is a different type of surfer."[29]

Thus, commercialization of surfing has led to more people becoming part of the surf lifestyle without being specifically good at surfing.

In this chapter we have shown that different surfers give meaning to being a surfer in various ways. For local surfers, this meaning is based upon the social aspect of surfing and their connection to the ocean. Expat surfers also express this affinity to the ocean, yet for them these different meanings lie further apart, since expats all come from different places and they have a diverse surfing history. We have explained how surfing can play a big role in the lives of both expat as local surfers, which is illustrated by the different identity characteristics that people ascribe to surfers (Usher and Kerstetter 2015, 456). Despite their limited access to surf brands in comparison to expats, local surfers are part of this surfing lifestyle by 'proving' their skill level. For expat surfers the lifestyle of surfing is often involved around traveling to new surf breaks. In the next chapter we will have a closer look at what it means for both locals as well as expats that people are crossing borders to surf. We will look into the intertwinement between these different groups and at the influence on the construction of transnational identities.

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[28] Semi-structured interview with Noah, 13-03-2018.
[29] Semi-structured interview with Dorian, 06-04-2018.

Chapter 4

Gallo pinto with a Bloody Mary

Chapter 4: Gallo pinto with a Bloody Mary

On a Friday night we arrive at the weekly Pizza Night at a restaurant owned by expats, overlooking the beach of Gigante. The surfboard that is standing next to the bar operates as a menu, on which the three different pizza options are written down. Just like every week, the place is busy with people. There are expats and travelers who are sitting at tables and enjoying their pizza with a cold *Toña* or cocktail. A group of locals is playing pool at the pool table on one side of the restaurant. We sit down at a table with Ann, Dorian and Charlie, who are all expat surfers living in Gigante. While our Barbecue Hawaiian pizza is being served, we listen to the rehearsal of a band from Managua that is going to play tonight.[30]

This Pizza Night is one of the many recurring events in Gigante that is attended by both locals and expats. The nights are a mixture of local and global influences: a Nicaraguan band is playing and people are eating Western food while drinking local beers, or eating the Nicaraguan specialty *gallo pinto* and drinking an international cocktail. As Eriksen (2014, 108) explains, tourist destinations are designed around travelers as well as the local community, which he refers to as a glocal dimension. In this chapter, we will discuss how local and global processes come together as a result of the increasing mobility of surfers. Furthermore, we will elaborate on the mobile aspect of the surfer lifestyle and how this is intertwined with the construction of a transnational identity of both local and expat surfers.

Negotiations between the local and the global

Since tourism has started to rise in Nicaragua, the last couple of years the town has grown, with more tourists and expats coming here every year (Witt 2015, 54). Many surfers mention how there is an increase in restaurants, bars and hostels. Many of these businesses are owned by expats and some are owned by locals. You can regularly find both locals and expats at the same restaurant or at the same party. Yet, there is a division visible between the local and the expat community. There are some areas where many expats live, sometimes referred to as 'gringo road' or 'expat road'. The houses here are bigger than the average houses in Gigante. Besides this, some of the restaurants and bars in town attract mostly expats and travelers,

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[30] Participant observation at a restaurant in Gigante, 16-03-2018.

while others attract mostly locals. This division is also visible in the price range and in the different kinds of food that are being sold. At many places there is a mix of locals and expats, however there is a different level of consumption between these two groups.

Some of the locals do not like to go to events at places where they know only expats and travelers go to. When talking about one event, a local surfer says he did not go because "that is for them"[31]. In which he means the expat community. He would not feel comfortable in going when he knows he will be the only local. This uncomfortableness is also illustrated by an expat business owner: "They feel like if there is a party at a gringo bar, sometimes they don't feel welcome, or they don't want to interrupt. It is their choice not to attend because they feel maybe uncomfortable or a little shy."[32] According to him, this also works the other way around. If there is a local party, expats and travelers would attend but also feel this same uncomfortableness. These two perspectives illustrate an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy between the expats and the locals. When talking about the division between two different groups, one expat says "I try to be part of them".[33] He tries to integrate with the local community, yet he still uses the 'us' and 'them' jargon. This shows how the relationships between local and global are on the one hand undeniably intertwined, while on the other they are involved in processes of 'othering' between the two groups. In the next paragraphs, we will look deeper into how expats are continuously influencing the village of Gigante and how this is perceived by the locals. Furthermore, we will explain how both expat and local surfers are involved in transnational processes, even though their level of mobility is distributed in different ways.

A local's perspective | Hannah

When mobile meets local

For many locals it is difficult or even impossible to travel outside Nicaragua.[34] Since they are not able to go to different surf breaks in different countries, they do not belong to the category

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[31] Informal conversation with Liam, 08-04-2018.
[32] Semi-structured interview with Shane, 14-04-2018.
[33] Semi-structured interview with Shane, 14-04-2018.
[34] Semi-structured interview with Thomas, 25-03-2018, translated from Spanish.

of 'mobile surfers' as described by Anderson (2013, 242). This shows how mobility – in the sense of being able to travel – is distributed in different ways between locals and expats, which creates a power hierarchy between these groups, since mobile people have the money, means and knowledge to travel (Cresswell 2006, 2). Yet, local surfers all made connections around the world by meeting travelers and expats in Gigante. Also, for some locals surfing has become a way to make money. Two of the local surfers are sponsored and have become professional surfers. They travel to different places in the world to surf competitions. Besides this, some of them give surf lessons to tourists. They work for a surf school or hostel or just approach tourists and tell them they are giving lessons. According to Liam, the tourist industry pays a lot more than a 'normal' office job[35], which makes them more financially mobile. Therefore, they are involved in the increasing mobile aspect of the surf lifestyle, even though most of the local surfers have never traveled outside Nicaragua or will never have the means to do so.

As illustrated above, Gigante has changed due to the growing amount of tourists and expats coming here. According to Elliot, a local surf teacher, there is more movement in Gigante. He mentions how there are more young people who surf and they pick up parts of the cultures from travelers:

> "The culture has also changed. Canada, Europe, the US they all have their own culture. Now the culture is mixed with the local culture. The village and the beaches are not 100 percent *Nica* any more. It is *una mezcla* [a mix]. But it's good because now we learn from you."[36]

This *mezcla* of different cultures, both in the village and in the break, illustrates a glocal context, in which the local community gives meaning to global processes (Eriksen 2014, 118). Just like Elliot, many of the local surfers – especially the youths – mention the educational aspect of the encounter between different cultures. When they meet people from different countries, they like to learn about their cultures and they also like to teach them about the life in Nicaragua. As explained by Larrain (2000, 39), the rise of mobility and processes of disembedding have caused the separation of social relations from the local context of interaction. Local surfers in Gigante made friendships with people all over the world, which

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[35] Informal conversation with Liam, 25-03-2018.
[36] Semi-structured interview with Elliot, 14-03-2018, translated from Spanish.

they can maintain by keeping in contact on social media.[37] These cross-border connections are a form of transnationalism (Vertovec 2001, 573) and can also be helpful for the local surfers that are able to travel to different countries. Some of them travel to participate in surf competitions or to meet with friends. When they are traveling, they can stay at their friend's houses. They have a network of friends who help each other out. According to Luke, this reciprocity is an important part of what it means to be a surfer: "Surfers help each other. You might need a place to stay or need a hand, any kind of help. They are just there for each other."[38]

According to Eriksen (1994, 197) being mobile can change a person's identity, since it is both constructed by the places they call home and the places they visit. Yet, as shown in this chapter, a person does not necessarily has to be mobile – in the sense of being able to visit different places – to be a part of these processes of change. The mobile travelers and expats are not the only actors of these processes, there is a reciprocal relationship between people on the move and the locals they meet.

An expat's perspective | Pascale

The endless summer

Together with Hannah and Nicky, a former expat of Gigante, I am sitting on a boat, watching the surfers at a break near Gigante. We were offered a ride on the boat with five expat and three local surfers and we decided to come with, even though this break is too difficult for us to surf. While we are watching the others, we are having a conversation about what Gigante used to look like. Nicky mentions how much the group of expats has changed from when she was living here two years ago. She says there were different people and they formed a more tight-knit group of friends. Also, they used to go to other restaurants and hostels, which are now less popular.[39]

This illustrates the constant flux of expats and travelers, which contributes to a continuously changing community in Gigante. This seems to be closely connected to the

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[37] Semi-structured interview with Lucas, 11-03-2018; Thomas, 25-03-2018; Liam, 08-04-2018; Luke, 01-03-2018; Alex, 05-04-2018 and Focus group with Samuel, Sebastián and Marcus 12-03-2018.
[38] Semi-structured interview with Luke, 01-03-2018.
[39] Informal conversation with Nicky, 21-03-2018.

lifestyle of surfing, since traveling and surfing amongst expat surfers have become closely connected. A lot of the expat surfers of Gigante seem to be mobile and constantly on the move, since they all traveled to get to Gigante. The following quote from Charlie illustrates this.

> "I am always trying to plan a trip. It's become a big part of my life. It is like, where can I go next. Where is the next spot I haven't been, where I can go. It's become a bit of a priority for surf. If I am not somewhere I am able to surf, I am absolutely dreaming of the next time I will be. It is a constant need to get in the water, and get some good waves. It's an addiction."[40]

Some people within this expat community only live in Gigante for a part of the year and live somewhere else the rest of the year. Some of these people chose to escape their home country for the winter months, and go back for summer. In this sense they claim membership in more than one place and live dual lives (Vertovec 2001, 575). Because expats come and go, the formation of expats is constantly changing. However there is a recurring group of expats, they are never all in Gigante at the same time. Since most expats living in Gigante still go back home either to visit, organize things, or to make some money, they did not cut ties with their home country. This also becomes clear while talking about the term 'expat' with one of the expat surfers: "I guess I am an expat. I just feel like that word is like, to stone around, I am not an expatriate. I still go back to my country. I don't want to like forget where I am from. But I guess I do technically fall under that category."[41]

Since all the expat surfers have cross-border connections such as family or friends living abroad, this resulted in transnational identities amongst expat surfers (Vertovec 2001, 573). They take pieces of their home countries to Gigante, as Ben mentions in the following quote: "It is already a diverse community bringing aspects of their culture. I also found that when people are away from their home-town, they accentuate what it is what their culture is even stronger."[42] An example of this is an expat from Canada who owns a restaurant. He puts food he knows from his home country on the menu of the restaurant.[43] About this he notes: "that's

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[40] Semi-structured interview with Charlie, 21-02-2018.
[41] Semi-structured interview with Charlie, 21-02-2018.
[42] Semi-structured interview with Ben, 15-04-2018.
[43] Semi-structured interview with Shane, 14-04-2018.

what we do, try to find some similar things." This confirms he maintains ties with the home country.

In this chapter we have illustrated that the community of Gigante consists of a mix between expats, travelers and locals. Although it is impossible to avoid a certain degree of mixing between locals and expats, we have shown that these two groups do not always blend together since we have observed an 'us' versus 'them' distinction. This distinction is also visible in the distribution of mobility between the two groups, since mobility can be distributed in various ways among different social groups (Eriksen 1994, 73). Yet, as we have shown both expat and locals could be seen as mobile in their own way.

By bringing influences of their home countries, expats have left their mark in Gigante. This also works the other way around as there exists a constant learning process between locals and expats. In the next chapter we will have a closer look at what other influences expats brought to Gigante and how this affects their feeling of belonging to this place. Furthermore, we will look at how locals construct feelings of belonging. We will zoom into the concept of 'being a local', and what this means for both locals as expats.

Chapter 5

Home is where the wave is

Chapter 5: Home is where the wave is

"They say home is where the heart is. It is the same with me and surfing."[44]

This quote by an expat surfer illustrates how the connection towards surfing or a particular break influences his feeling of belonging. Most expat surfers travel to places where they can surf world class breaks (Anderson 2013, 237). As explained in chapter 3, their connection to the ocean and thus being close to a surf break also influences a local's feeling of belonging. In this chapter, we will explore how expat and local surfers construct a sense of being at home in Gigante and how this contributes to the feeling of belonging there. We will clarify this in line with the three concepts of belonging mentioned in the theoretical framework; social, historical and geographical connections (Miller 2003, 217). We will also elaborate on different ways of being or becoming a local, as an aspect of belonging that is involved in processes of membership.

A local's perspective | Hannah

The paradise of Gigante

One evening Thomas and I are sitting on a piece of drift-wood at the north end of Playa Amarillo to conduct an interview. It is around 5:30 and the sun is starting to go down. We are facing the ocean and we can see the surfers in the distance on the southern side of the beach. We talk about whether he feels like he belonged to Gigante. Without hesitating, he says yes and explains how he has been here his whole life and that his family lives here and that he knows almost everyone. He tells me about how he experiences familiarity and tranquility here, which is important for him to feel at home in a place. While pointing at the hill that separates the bay of Playa Amarillo and Gigante, he says: "it is a paradise."[45]

Belonging and feeling at home at a particular place is continually constructed and involves an individual's ties to a community, history and locality (Miller 2003, 217). When

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[44] Semi-structured interview with Peter, 27-02-2018.
[45] Semi-structured interview with Thomas, 25-03-2018, translated from Spanish.

talking about the feeling of belonging in Gigante, the locals always mention their ties to the community, the familiarity with the people, as the most important reason. Most of them have lived here for all of their lives and grew up here. They have family and friends living here and they know practically everyone. Being part of the community and having friends and family here is for most locals equal to the feeling of belonging in Gigante. Besides the social connections, many locals also experience the second aspect of belonging, the geographical connection. They say the town of Gigante is beautiful and describe it, just like Thomas, as a paradise. Especially the fact that it is next to the ocean is mentioned as important. Their strong connection to the ocean is also one of the reasons why they started surfing and their acquaintance with the local break leads to a strong sense of belonging and place attachment (Anderson 2013, 241). Since the local surfers are born in Gigante or Nicaragua, they have their roots in the country.[46] They are inherently connected to the country and have been part of the culture of Nicaragua their whole life, which constructs the third aspect of belonging: historical connections.

Some people were a bit more hesitant to say they would be in Gigante for the rest of their lives. They said that home is not necessarily where you come from but where you make it home, where you feel at peace and where you fall in love with the place. The people that said this, were the people that have traveled before, for either surfing or vacation. They have seen different places, which affects the way they imagine the places they call home. According to Tsing (2005, 213) traveling makes us think differently about certain places, since you start to see home in relation to the places you visit. Furthermore, many local people do not have the means to either travel or move somewhere else, so they might not be able to imagine living at another place or calling another place home. While talking to Luke, who has traveled a lot for surfing, it became clear that 'home' is a very strong feeling which is hard to define: "Home... It just sounds so good. Every time I'm in a different country I'm like 'I can't wait to get home'. And you don't realize that until you're in a different area. You get out of your comfort zone. That's home, your comfort zone."[47] Thus, he determines the concept of 'home' by comparing it to the other places he has visited.

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[46] Semi-structured interview with Sofia, 30-03-2018, translated from Spanish.
[47] Semi-structured interview with Luke, 01-03-2018.

Being a local

An important aspect of belonging is the idea of 'being a local'. This is more than just an individual's feeling of being at home, since being a local gives someone a sense of authority over a place (Garbutt 2009, 91). Being a local is therefore constructed from both an individual's perspective and how it is regarded by and through the community. When someone is or is not seen as a local, differs from person to person. Many people have different interpretations of what it means to be a local, also within the community of local surfers. Despite this, it is possible to distinguish some coherencies. The majority of the local surfers recognized time as an indication of being a local. They would see someone as a local if they lived here for a longer period of time, about three or four years. On the other hand, many of the locals I talked to said that you will only be seen as a local if you are born in Nicaragua, or even only in Gigante. But you could come close when you interact with the community. This interaction is mentioned by all the local surfers I talked to as the most important thing to become a local.

While talking about the impact of expats living in Gigante, almost all locals explain how many expats have helped the community to develop and they give Project WOO as an example of this. Sofia, a local woman who has worked closely with Project WOO, tells me that there used to be no electricity or running water in the village. Foreign organizations have worked together with the local community to improve this. She has seen Gigante change over time and expects it to change more, with more tourists and expats coming. According to Sofia, the increase in jobs is a positive outcome of this. Yet, she also recognizes a negative side. She explains how foreigners have brought drugs to the village, which local children have started to consume.[48] Other locals mention how expats buying up pieces of land will eventually push the local community out. Despite these negative effects, many locals recognize how the influx of foreigners has as a positive influence on the development of Gigante, when the expats try to help the community. If they talk to the people who are born here, are friends with them and also if they help them, they will become integrated and accepted into the community. Thus, by interacting and becoming familiar with the community and creating a personal and everyday connection to a place, a person can construct a local identity for him or herself. With

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[48] Semi-structured interview with Sofia, 30-03-2018, translated from Spanish.

time – and the effort of a person to be involved in the community – this local identity will gradually emerge.

Yet, there will always be a division between the people who are born in Nicaragua and the people that moved here from other countries. The expats that are actively involved in the community, are often referred to as 'foreign locals' or '*gringo* locals'. When talking about foreign and Nicaraguan people who moved to Gigante, Alex tells me that someone is a local when he or she is born here or has lived here for most of his life. He is a bit more hesitant to call Nicaraguan people who moved to Gigante locals, but then he explains to me that when your family is from here, it makes you a local. When your family is from outside the country, you are not. Yet, you are more than a tourist because you live in Nicaragua.[49] This reluctance to call someone a local shows the meaning that is attached to the concept of being a local. As stated in the theoretical framework, being a local gives someone authority to claim cultural possession of a public space (Garbutt 2009, 91), which it why it will not easily be given. Therefore, instead of a clear division between local and non-local, multiple categories have emerged and being a local in Gigante exist on a continuum. It starts with tourists or travelers, then there are 'foreign locals', then people who are born in Nicaragua and then people who are born in Gigante and have lived here all of their lives. These different categories are also visible in the water while surfing.

Another thing local surfers brought up while talking about becoming a local, are the feelings of home and belonging. They gave examples of people that have built their lives here and feel like this is their home: "For him [an expat] this is his home. He feels like it because he has been here for a while and knows everyone. So he feels it, they are feelings. And then, he talks to everyone and shows respect."[50] Being seen as a local or not will define whether someone 'properly' belongs at a place and therefore legitimizes a person's own feelings of belonging. As stated above, these feelings and ties to the community are an important part of why the locals feel a sense of belonging at Gigante. Thus, they use this as a criterion for both their own feelings of being at home and whether they regard someone else as a local.

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[49] Semi-structured interview with Alex, 05-04-2018, translated from Spanish.
[50] Semi-structured interview with Liam, 21-02-2018.

Cold beers

On a Sunday afternoon Hannah and I arrive at the hotel on the hill where a pop-up market takes place. Around the swimming pool, there are different stands. In the corner there is a stand with drinks where you can exchange the tokens you bought earlier for a cold *Toña*, a Mimosa or a Bloody Mary. Other people are selling colorful blouses and necklaces made out of shells and silver rings in the shape of waves. Marley and a friend walk around in matching turquoise blouses with a matching turquoise feather in their hair. On the other end of the pool, a lady is doing Chinese cupping therapy. This is supposed to cleanse you of toxins. A girl who just finished mentions: 'I've been dying to do a cupping session! In the USA you pay eighty dollars for this.' Aiden walks around with big red dots on his back due to this therapy. His partner, who is sitting in the pool makes pictures of his back to show him what it looks like. 'I look like an alien!' he says. Sydney and Joel are sitting around the pool, celebrating that Joel sold all three of his surfboards at the market. 'You want a Mimosa to celebrate?', he asks his girlfriend.[51]

This pop-up market was one of many events we attended where we would find the same group of expats. There is a strong social connection within the expat community of Gigante. This social connection between expats from Canada, the United States and some other countries is one of the aspects of belonging to a place according to Miller (2003, 217). Some expats referred to the life within the expat community as living in a bubble.[52] This could be the case, since you would not see many local Nicaraguans at the event described in the vignette. However mixing with the local community is unavoidable since Gigante is very small. A lot of hotels, restaurants, and bars are owned by expats. However, many Nicaraguan people work at these places, so it seems that the increase in tourism has led to more jobs in the village. Expats told me that foreigners have brought new kinds of knowledge with them coming to Gigante, which they share with the local community in different ways. Local people have been setting up businesses of their own in co-operation with expats.[53] A lot of expats consider the expat community of Gigante as an active community which contributes to the

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[51] Participant observation, 08-04-2018.
[52] Semi-structured interview with Ann, 23-03-2018.
[53] Semi-structured interview with Brad, 17-03-2018 and Shane, 14-04-2018.

community in different ways.[54] A park for kids is being set up, garbage cans have been put up, and there are active beach clean-ups. After a local holiday, when there was a lot of trash on the beaches of Gigante and Amarillo the expat community gathered people together on the Facebook page *Gigante times*[55] to pick up trash.[56]

Another aspect of belonging to a place is a historical connection (Miller 2003, 217). A couple of expats have lived in Gigante the same amount of time or longer than Nicaraguans. According to many expat surfers surfing has been brought to Gigante by expats often referred to as the pioneers of surfing in Gigante who were the first ones surfing breaks in the area.[57] Someone told me that the first local surfers were surfing on broken boards left behind by expats. There have been times that there were no options to rent surfboards at all. Knowledge about waves was mainly in possession of the existing surf camps owned by expats.[58] As Ben mentions about surfing: "It is not an indigenous Nicaraguan thing."[59] Ben and Dorian mention that there used to be nothing else to do besides surfing. Gigante has been changing a lot since the first expats got to the village. Back in the days there was no electricity, and there were only dirt roads. Gigante has been developing over the years. The number of vehicles increased, more houses are being built and restaurants and surfboard rental businesses are popping up. The Wi-Fi password of one of the hostels is 'cold beers', because there used to be no electricity to keep the beers cold back in the days. Expats can use these different things they brought to develop Gigante as a way to legitimize that Gigante is home for them.

Also geographical connections can lead to feelings of belonging to a place (Miller 2003, 217). Many expats have a literal geographical connection, since many of them have bought land in Gigante. Most expats feel more free living in Nicaragua than when they lived in their home countries. This could be due to the fact that people can measure their degree of freedom by being able to compare Gigante to other places they have been to. One of the important reasons to feel more free in Gigante seems to be that Nicaragua has fewer rules and laws than in other countries. People seem to appreciate this on a very small level as being

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[54] Semi-structured interview with Scott, 27-03-2018.
[55] *Gigante times* is a Facebook page that it created as a social platform to connect people living in Gigante. It is often used as a way to advertise businesses from both locals and expats. The page is founded by expats and the main language is English. Even though there are also local members, the most active members are all expats.
[56] Semi-structured interview with Shane, 14-04-2018.
[57] Semi-structured interview with Scott, 27-03-2018
[58] Semi-structured interview with Dorian, 06-04-2018.
[59] Semi-structured interview with Ben, 15-04-2018.

able to make music without angry neighbors or being able to walk around your house in underwear all day.[60] Not having as many rules can also be seen on a larger scale. Expats are making dreams come true of having their own businesses and building their own houses, where back home you would have to deal with many permits.

Becoming a local

> "Any Nicaraguans who live here obviously are locals. Any of the locals who bought property or not even bought property, but lived here regularly for at least months out of the year, are at least somewhat local. They are not local local. It's a tough question, but I would say, if you are around a lot and frequently. There are some people who I met, and they come here for a month and a half, and they are like 'I'm kind of a local', and I am like have you been here before? And they are like 'No', and I am like 'are you buying property or are you coming back?', and they are like no, you've been here for two months, I don't know if you are a local if you have lived here for two months."[61]

The quote above illustrates that the term local can be interpreted in different ways (Garbutt 2009, 104). According to Garbutt (2009, 91) being a local is strongly connected with feelings of belonging. Some of the expats I talked to, see themselves as a local or believe that one can become a local. Being a local or becoming a local is dependent on many different factors. One expat described becoming a local as a spectrum in which you can reach different degrees of being a local depending on different factors.[62] Being local or becoming a local is related to the number of years someone has lived in Gigante or how much time someone has invested in this certain place.

A big part of the expats goes back to their home country to visit friends or family, to earn some money or to enjoy the summer months back home. Expats who are considered as local or who consider themselves as local to Gigante live the biggest amount of the year and come back frequently. Having Nicaraguan citizenship or residency can also play a role in feeling a local to Gigante. Having a Nicaraguan residency gives people living in Gigante benefits as not needing to do a border run every three months to renew their visa. This can result in a more

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[60] Semi-structured interview with Charlie, 21-02-2018 and Aiden, 30-03-2018.
[61] Semi-structured interview with Aiden, 30-03-18.
[62] Semi-structured interview with Aiden, 30-03-18.

permanent stay in Nicaragua. People who call Gigante their home are more inclined to call themselves a local to Gigante. They are either not planning to leave Gigante any time soon or they have children or family members living in Nicaragua[63], as Scott mentions:

"Lots of people say I am more *Nica* than many *Nicas*. When I get wound up I even start talking Nica Spanish. It is different from Mexican Spanish. You know, my son came here to study. (...) My daughter has been here three or four times. My son proposed to his wife upstairs at the bar. My kids are vested in Nicaragua, they love Nicaragua. They don't want to go pub crawling in San Juan del Sur. They want to be in Gigante."[64]

Having ties with both the expat community as with the Nicaraguan local community is also an important component on when someone feels a local or is seen as a local. Shane mentions that you are a local when you gain the respect of the Nicaraguans and once they consider you as a local.[65] They are often people who are actively trying to integrate into the Nicaraguan community by working together with the people from this community. A really important element of becoming a local seems to be speaking the same language as the Nicaraguans to be able to communicate with them. Expats have mentioned that it does not matter if you lived here for many years, if you do not speak Spanish you cannot become a local.[66] Other expat surfers I talked to will never see themselves as a local, because they see a local as someone who was born in Nicaragua and grew up in this area or in Gigante specifically. Other expats mentioned that you can never become a local, because you have the choice to be in Gigante and always have another place to go back to. It is a choice to live here in comparison to Nicaraguan locals who grew up here. Expats I talked to who did not see themselves as a local or had the opinion an expat can never become a local often referred to themselves as 'gringo' or 'foreigner'.

In this chapter we went into depth on the feelings of belonging to Gigante, in line with the three aspects of belonging Miller (2003) describes: social, geographical and historical connections. We argued that these connections are more common sense for locals than for

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[63] Semi-structured interview with Scott, 27-03-2018 and Ben, 15-04-2018.
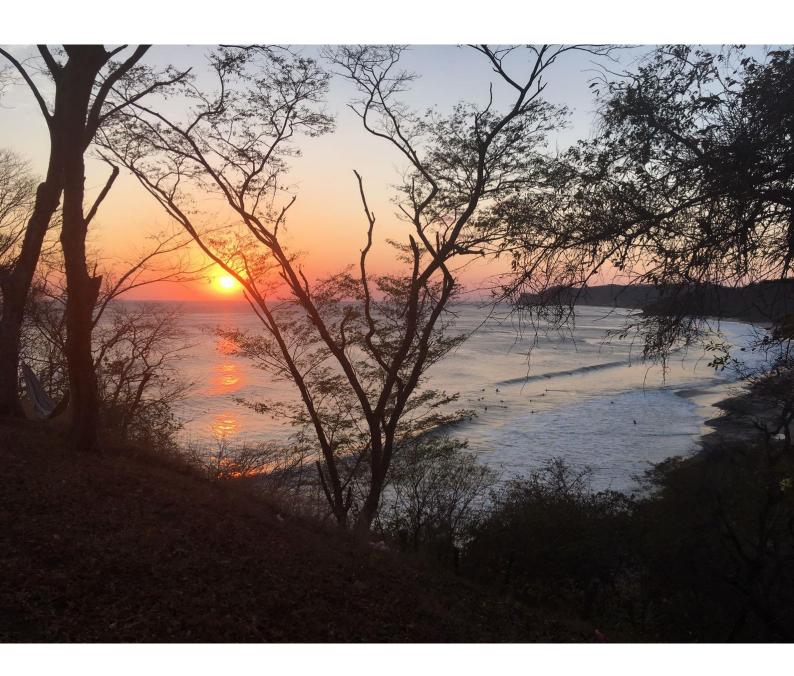[64] Semi-structured interview with Scott, 27-03-2018
[65] Semi-structured interview with Shane, 14-04-2018.
[66] Semi-structured interview with Scott, 27-03-2018 and Aiden, 30-03-2018.

expats, since they grew up in the country they still live in. Yet, expats have also constructed feelings of belonging which they legitimize by time and energy they put into the community. Furthermore, we explained processes of being and becoming a local, as a specific social form that determines who properly belongs to a place (Garbutt 2009, 91). Becoming a local is involved with different processes which expats – in contrast to locals – do not automatically abide by, such as living at a place for a longer amount of time, speaking the native language and having ties to the local community. In the next paragraph we will discuss how feelings of belonging can result into territorial behavior among locals and expats both in surf breaks as well as on land. We will explore different territorial narratives organized around surf etiquettes, the concept of localism and exclusivity.

Chapter 6

Narrating territory

Chapter 6: Narrating territory

Around sunset, we walk to the nearest *pulpería* to buy some water. In front of the store, a couple of expat surfers are drinking beers and sharing stories about surfing in different countries. We join them and end up having a discussion about rules within surfing and breaking them. According to them, the rules should be known by all surfers over the world and breaking them has consequences. They give examples of localism in Hawaii, Brazil and California and compare it to Nicaragua. Brad tells us that he would not hesitate to push a kid under-water for a while, if he ignores the order of priority. When he says that this is an educational experience for the younger surfers, everyone laughs.[67] This illustrates the awareness of certain rules within surfing that everyone knows or should know. However, these are merely social rules which are not being controlled by a referee, which is common in other sports. Therefore, the rules are often referred to as etiquettes.

In this chapter, we will elaborate on these different etiquettes and how they are involved with the idea of 'being a local'. The etiquettes are a way of regulating behavior within the space of surfing. They are a way of showing ownership, which is involved with constructing and contesting boundaries around a place (Kent 2008, 290). The boundaries of a territoriality are constantly made, imagined, contested and enforced (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 18). They are narrated by different people in various ways. Despite the universal awareness of the etiquettes amongst the surfers in Gigante and the casual way in which they discuss using force when someone breaks them, aggression or disputes have never been visible at Playa Amarillo during our period of fieldwork.[68] Yet, both local and expat surfers express feelings of ownership and construct different territorial narratives – based on skill level, being a local and exclusivity – to legitimize these feelings. In this chapter, we will explore these narratives, and explain how they can also reach beyond the ocean.

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[67] Informal conversation with Brad, Noah and Charlie, 30-03-2018.
[68] Participant observation at Playa Amarillo.

A local's perspective | Hannah

Local priority

"Duro, Hannah, duro!" Alex yells at me when I am paddling for a wave. When I feel the wave underneath me, I follow the advice several surfers have given me and try to paddle a few more times before I stand up. Even after weeks of surfing here, I still feel a bit wobbly on my board but I ride the wave to the beach. When I make my way back towards the other surfers in the water, they cheer at me. Even though I know it was far from what the others would consider a good wave, I understand the feeling of happiness surfers always mention when telling me about riding waves. It is quite busy in the water at Playa Amarillo this morning, there are about fifteen surfers, both local and expat. I am sitting on my board and chatting with Pascale, Ann and Liam while we are watching the waves. Next to us, Alex is talking with two other local surfers. There is a good wave coming in, and most of the surfers start to paddle for it. A local surfer is at the peak of the wave and thus has the best position to catch it. He stands up and Liam - who is next to him - does so too, even though according to the etiquettes it was not his wave. They both ride the wave and laugh together when they paddle back towards the others.[69]

While surfing, there are certain rules that indicate who has priority on the wave (Anderson 2013; Usher and Gómez 2016). The most important one is that who is in the best position – in other words, closest to the peak of the wave – has the right to catch it. This is an international rule that all surfers know or should know.[70] The situation above illustrates how not all surfers at Playa Amarillo always keep to the etiquette. In many instances, both local and expat surfers catch a wave that is not considered theirs according to these rules of priority and 'steal' the wave or ride it together. Yet, this is usually due to a friendly competition and has never resulted in any arguments or aggression during our fieldwork.[71] Most of the local surfers also said that locals have priority to catch the waves or that some foreigners give them priority, since they surf there every day and others are just visiting. Yet, some local surfers disagree and say that the ocean is for everyone and it is just important to have fun, be nice

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[69] Participant observation at Playa Amarillo, 05-04-2018.
[70] Semi-structured interview with Liam, 21-02-2018.
[71] Participant observations at Playa Amarillo.

and above all; show respect to each other. According to Elliot, it is possible for every surfer to surf everywhere if they have the right attitude:

> "Every beach is different and has a different energy, but you are connected to the ocean at every place, the whole planet. Having respect is the most important. If you have respect you can surf everywhere. If you are *tranquilo* and greet everyone and share and wait for your turn, everything is fine."[72]

Showing respect towards the surfers that live near the break and surf there every day, is seen as important by many local surfers. In the water, the scale of being a local is also visible: there is a distinction between foreign locals, Nicaraguan people and people who are born here. The locals who surf at Amarillo, would not be considered locals at Popoyo or other places along the coast, even though it is very close. This is because they do not surf there regularly. Yet, it is easier for them to surf there than for foreign locals, since they are from Nicaragua.[73] Still, they always have to be respectful towards the other surfers in the water, otherwise arguments could occur.

At Amarillo, the surfers that are catching the most waves, are the locals and the foreign locals.[74] It is clear that most local people know how to catch the waves best. They are more experienced at this particular break and more confident in the water, since they have been surfing here regularly for a long time. This confidence is also important in the priority of catching waves. Liam mentions how he – and other locals – do not always give priority to the person closest to the peak, if they think someone is not able to catch a wave:

> "If it's a beginner, no. Because they won't get on the wave. We [local surfers] could know when someone is going to catch the wave or not, so that's why we paddle. And if the other person on the peak gets the wave, then we know how to get off. So the other person can keep going."[75]

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[72] Semi-structured interview with Elliot, 14-03-2018, translated from Spanish.
[73] Focus group with Samuel, Sebastián and Marcus, 12-03-2018, translated from Spanish.
[74] Participant observation at Playa Amarillo.
[75] Semi-structured interview with Liam, 21-02-2018.

This could be seen as a violation of the rules. Yet, from experience, they know how to pull back or how to ride the wave together without being in the other person's way. This is all about the confidence of knowing how the waves work and how to surf them well.

The local surfers that have traveled before, say that they prefer surfing in Nicaragua. Partly because they know many people here and partly because at other breaks it is more difficult for them to catch waves. There, they always have to follow the rules and give priority to the locals. By surfing in other countries, they learned what it is like to be a tourist in the water: "When I am outside of the country, I have the feeling that I am a tourist. So I have to follow all the rules and sometimes I cannot catch a lot of waves."[76] Luke, who travels to many different breaks in other countries, explains how this also changed the way he surfs at home, since now he knows how it feels to be the visiting surfer:

> "(...) sometimes I'm being super rude at my break and now I know how the tourists feel. You learn that until you start traveling. And then you feel the opposite, like the whole thing just changed and you're like against the wall and like trying to get waves but you know that you have to wait for your turn. Like here, I don't have to wait for my turn. I can get every wave that I want."[77]

Thus, for locals it is easier to get waves, since they have a certain kind of priority which is largely based on their knowledge of the particular break. When you are surfing at a break where you are not a local, you have to show respect to the local surfers. Some local surfers told me that you could not just paddle to the peak of the wave, you have to start on the outside and greet everyone to slowly wait your turn and make your way to the peak.[78] Like stated in the theoretical framework, the surfer etiquette is based upon a social hierarchy, in which local and experienced surfers have priority (Daskalos 2007, 162). These two narratives are connected, since (foreign) local surfers are more experienced to surf at their break.

Friendly vibes

When surfers break the etiquette, it could result in arguments (Anderson 2013; Daskalos 2007; Usher and Gómez 2016). This does not happen often in Amarillo, but it does at Colorado or

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[76] Semi-structured interview with Alex, 05-04-2018, translated from Spanish.
[77] Semi-structured interview with Luke, 01-03-2018.
[78] Semi-structured interview with Liam, 21-02-2018 and Elliot, 14-03-2018, translated from Spanish.

Popoyo, which are breaks in the area of Gigante. As stated in the literature, the aggression in the water is usually addressed towards outside surfers, as a way for locals to express ownership over the break, which is called localism (Usher and Gómez 2016, 198-199). Yet, the arguments local surfers told me about are not just between locals and foreigners, but also between different foreigners. These are usually people who come here for just a week and thus have less time to surf. Therefore, they do not always follow the rules and they feel more pressure to catch waves. In contrast to (foreign) locals, who can go every day.[79]

All surfers agree that the ambiance in the water at Amarillo is really relaxed and friendly. More so than other beaches: "At Amarillo it is super relaxed. Everyone is laughing and catching good waves. All surfers are happy in the water and I think that is very nice, since at other beaches this can be different."[80] This is partly due to the fact that there are a lot of beginners here, who are not very competitive. Furthermore, there are not many surfers in the water at Amarillo, so there are more waves per person. The local surfers at a particular break are also of influence on the vibe in the water. For example, many of the local surfers mention that the locals at Popoyo are more competitive and aggressive. Here, the locals are more relaxed, which is also due to the above reasons.

The local surfers that have surfed in different countries, mention California and Hawaii as examples of places where there is a lot of localism and aggression in the water.[81] As stated in the theoretical framework, localism and aggression towards the outside surfer occur because the influx of mobile surfers can be seen as a threat (Anderson 2013, 244). The newcomers are regarded as change-agents of the nature of the local surfing culture, since they have different attitudes and values (Daskalos 2007, 163). In Nicaragua surfing is a relatively new sport and the first people that surfed here, were expats and travelers. There is a less well-established surf community than in places such as California or Hawaii. Therefore, the local surfers do not feel the need to be protective of the local surf culture, which is why they are less aggressive towards outsiders.

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[79] Semi-structured interview with Luke, 01-03-2018.
[80] Semi-structured interview with Alex, 05-04-2018, translated from Spanish.
[81] Semi-structured interview with Luke, 01-02-2018 and Alex, 05-04-2018, translated from Spanish.

Playground versus battlefield

Surfing a home break or being a local at a certain surf break sometimes gives people a certain sense of ownership over a wave. Even though most expat surfers agree on the idea that this should not be the case since the ocean is for everyone and nobody, it is experienced in practice. According to many expat surfers, territorial behavior is based on the understanding that surfers who are considered local to a break know the wave well and are able to catch any wave they want. Jason compares surfing to traffic in the following quote:

> "It's kind of like traffic, if you have a traffic jam, and you have a car that is working very well, and the driver is paying attention to everything, he will move out of the way pretty quickly, rather than when you are driving through a city, and you are all lost, you need to check on your phone whether to take a left or a right, and you start to make a traffic jam, people start honking at you, you might bump into someone. On a surf break it's the same thing."[82]

Thus, 'the drivers' referring to the surfers of Gigante do not have to be from Gigante to understand the traffic that's going on in the waves. As mentioned before, who is considered local is multi-interpretative, and because of this who carries out localism is as well (Garbutt 2009, 99). Expat surfers told me that the localism you see in the water, is either carried out by expats or by Nicaraguans copying expats.[83] Expat surfers have been giving me examples of territorial behavior in California, Hawaii, Mexico and Brazil, which they often use as their standards.[84] Many surfing expats mentioned that localism in the sense of behaving aggressively in the waves is something brought by expats rather than it being something Nicaraguan.

There are unspoken rules or etiquettes in the water which are mainly about mutual respect. However, it depends on the crowd if surfers follow these rules. Usually, they take it per case, if they are going to follow the rules. Sometimes when they are surfing with a lot of inexperienced surfers, they feel like they can drop in on them, because the inexperienced

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[82] Semi-structured interview with Jason, 04-04-18.
[83] Semi-structured interview with Chase, 22-02-18.
[84] Semi-structured interview with Charlie, 21-02-18, Noah, 13-03-18 and Brad, 17-03-18.

surfers probably will not make it into the wave anyway.[85] Talking to female expat surfers taught me that not following etiquettes in the water sometimes also seems to be gender related.[86] Surfing is certainly a male-dominated sport with sometimes macho characteristics. Four female surfers told me that male surfers often assume that female surfers will not make it on a wave or that they will not surf the waves as good as possible, and for this reason snake or drop in on the wave.[87] In this sense gender and skill level are related.

Territorial behavior is carried out differently at different breaks around Gigante, since the crowds of people vary at the different surf spots depending on the location and the quality of a certain break. Everyone mentions how friendly the vibes are at Playa Amarillo, in comparison to other breaks in Nicaragua. A key factor to friendly vibes in the waters of Amarillo seems to be the Nicaraguan surfers being really friendly, welcoming, and open to sharing waves with other people. When I was out surfing with Hannah, people would help us catch waves by giving us tips all the time. No local ever got angry when we would be in the way. When locals dropped in on each other it usually seemed like they were doing it for fun. Friendly vibes at Amarillo could also be related to the skill level of people surfing this break. Since Amarillo is not the best quality wave in the area, better surfers tend to go to other spots. You can get much more people in the line-up at other spots which creates a much more competitive atmosphere since surfers need to share the waves, which Brad referred to as a resource.[88] Amarillo seems to be more of a 'playground' where people are learning and practicing. This is in contrast to Playa Colorado where there is a more serious, competitive and aggressive atmosphere which Cooper illustrates with the following statement: "When you get there you got to put your helmet on, your pads on, your jersey, because you are stepping into an arena."[89] Expat surfers mentioned that people with less time usually become more territorial in the water, because they have more pressure of catching as many waves they can get. Mainly tourists who are staying for a short amount of time tend to have a more territorial reputation. You do not really get this at Playa Amarillo, because there are no hotels or resorts at this beach. In the next paragraph I will discuss private developments, which can sometimes contribute to territorial narratives.

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[85] Semi-structured interview with James, 11-03-2018.
[86] Informal conversation with Sandy, 12-04-18.
[87] Semi-structured interview with Roxy, Jane, Sandy and Ann.
[88] Semi-structured interview with Brad, 17-03-18.
[89] Semi-structured interview with Cooper, 06-04-18.

Keeping it exclusive

Besides in the ocean, territorial behavior is also performed on land on different levels. The main goal of this behavior is to keep certain surf breaks secret or exclusive for certain people, since surf breaks like Playa Colorado can get very crowded (Witt 2015, 55). This happens on a small scale where surfers do not tell other people about certain surf breaks to keep crowds away as Peter mentions in the following statement: "I was just replying on a post yesterday on Facebook about a spot up in San Juan, and the person posted the name of the spot. I replied and a bunch of other people 'please don't put the name of the spot up there'. It's a 'locals only spot'."[90]

This territorial behavior also happens on a bigger scale where private developments seem to contribute to territorial behavior. There are a couple of different private development in the area of Gigante. Because mainly expats live at these different developments, they are often referred to as gated communities.[91] They territorialize certain breaks by blocking access of the road to the beach for people who are not staying at this private development.[92] In theory all beaches are supposed to be public. In practice this is not completely the case. Playa Colorado is a good example of this. You can reach this beach from Playa Amarillo when you walk there and cross the rocks, but this takes up to forty-five minutes. Finding the time to walk to Playa Colorado can be a struggle for surfers from Gigante, since they have work and other responsibilities.[93] Iguana, the private development at Playa Colorado has put up a gate that blocks the road to the beach. With this they are blocking people from surfing this break to keep it exclusive for people who can afford to stay at the private development. This is a good example of mobility as a producer of power, since people who have the money to stay at the private development, are also free to surf at the break in front of this development without the need to walk for forty five minutes (Cresswell 2006, 2).

Within this chapter we argued that territorial narratives are constructed by local and expat surfers based on skill level, being a local and exclusivity. These three narratives are all intertwined, since locals and 'foreign locals' who surf a break every day develop experience of surfing this particular wave which makes it easier to catch them. Since surfing has become

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[90] Semi-structured interview with Peter, 27-02-18.
[91] Semi-structured interview with Fletcher, 14-03-18.
[92] Semi-structured interview with Fletcher, 14-03-18.
[93] Semi-structured interview with Dorian, 06-04-18.

more popular, as mentioned in chapter 3, some surf breaks have become so crowded that expat and traveler surfers are looking for new surf spots with fewer people (Daskalos 2007, 155). In Nicaragua surfing has recently become more popular. Surf breaks with hardly any people are now becoming famous (Witt 2015, 55). Expat surfers may recognize overcrowding breaks from places they came from, and respond to this with wanting to keep certain surf spots secret and exclusive, which is also carried out outside the ocean. For locals this is less of a problem, since they are not part of an established surf culture that is in need of protection yet.

Conclusion & Discussion

Conclusion & Discussion

In this thesis we have argued that surfing can involve more than just riding waves. We have aimed to answer our research question: *How do both expat and local surfers perceive, construct and narrate a sense of territorial belonging in Gigante?* We have done this by demonstrating that a surfing community engages with a surfer identity, transnational processes, conceptions of belonging and territorial narratives both in the waves as well as on land.

Different surfers have their own way of ascribing meaning to being a surfer, and multiple subcultures and stereotypes that come along with being a surfer arise. For local surfers, surfing is a form of social contact with friends, family, and travelers. By surfing, they create and maintain social relations. Furthermore, surfing for them is strongly intertwined with their connection with the ocean. This is related to the fact that local surfers have been in and around the ocean from a young age. For expats this works a bit differently, since not all expats grew up next to surf spots. Often expats made a more conscious decision to surf and arrange their life around surfing than locals did. The group of expat surfers is a very diverse group on its own with people who all learned to surf at different places and different moments in their life. This creates different subcultures within this group.

Surfing has reached beyond the sport on its own. Modern media have led to the commodification of surf culture. With the growing amount of merchandise around surfing, it is easier to become part of the surf lifestyle without being good at surfing. Yet, both expat and local surfers have mentioned that people have to prove themselves at surfing, before they would call someone a surfer. This shows how an identity as a surfer is constructed by both internal and external factors (Vertovec 2001, 577). This points to the processes of in- and exclusion that are involved with surfing as a subculture. Being part of the lifestyle of surfing is not possible for all local surfers, since they have other responsibilities from an older age. Furthermore, they do not always have the means to buy a surfboard or the clothing brands that are associated with surfing. This shows how social mobility is distributed in different ways (Eriksen 1994, 73), since expats have relatively more financial freedom than local surfers. Since most locals can only start surfing when they are given a board, they are dependent on foreign organizations or expats. This illustrates a social hierarchy in which the expats and travelers

have the money, means and knowledge to surf and also share surfing with others. Therefore, mobility can be a producer of power (Cresswell 2006, 2).

In contrast to most locals, expats have had the means to travel or move to Gigante and the other places around the world where they have surfed, which shows they are mobile people. By meeting expats and travelers, locals make connections around the world, which they can use as a resource when they travel themselves. Thus, even when they are not mobile in the same way as expats, the locals construct and maintain transnational ties and are therefore involved in the mobile lifestyle of surfers. Because expats are constantly on the move, the mix of expats continuously changes. These different expats take influences from their home countries with them, which contributes to the glocal character of Gigante, where global mobility and tourism come together with a local flavor (Eriksen 2014, 108).

Gigante is a small town and expats and locals both go to the same places to surf, drink a beer or do their groceries. However, there is a difference in consumption and behavior between the two groups, and they do not always mix together. Some places or events are only attended by expats while others only by locals. This is not because they are not welcome there, but because both groups would experience an uncomfortableness. They would describe it as an event for 'them', which illustrates processes of 'othering'. The degree of interaction between expats and locals influences how these groups construct a sense of belonging to Gigante and whether or not they would see themselves or are regarded by others as a local.

We explored the feelings of belonging to Gigante among both locals and expats in line with the three aspects of belonging to a place according to Miller (2003, 217); a social, historical and geographical connection. Locals all mention their interaction with the community as the most important reason why they belong to Gigante. They have friends and family members living there, which is why they experience a strong social connection. Within the expat community there exists a strong social connection between the different expats. Different projects are being set up by the expat communities which brings inhabitants of Gigante together. In Gigante it is unavoidable to work together with locals which means that their social connections do not only involve other expats, but also locals.

Another aspect that influences feelings of belonging is the connection locals and expats feel towards the locality of Gigante. Most locals describe Gigante as a paradise, a place they would not want to leave. Especially their strong affiliation with the ocean is of importance in this geographical connection. Some expats are bound to the locality of Gigante in a literal

sense, since they are the owner of land in the area or because they built a house in Gigante. Many expats feel attached to Gigante because they feel more free living there than in their home countries. This is in line with what Tsing (2005, 213) writes about how the freedom of traveling changes the way one imagines 'home', since you see home in relation to the place you visit. In this sense freedom between expats and locals is distributed in different ways, as expats have places to compare their degree of freedom in contrast to most locals.

The affiliation locals feel towards the ocean is also linked to a historical connection, since it is constructed by the fact that Gigante has traditionally been a fishermen's village. Furthermore, locals have lived in Gigante or in Nicaragua since they were born. Their roots are in Nicaragua, which means they have an inherent historical connection to the country and to Gigante as well. Expats have their roots in other countries and do not have this natural form of belonging that locals have. This is why they actively need to create and narrate a sense of historical belonging for themselves in Gigante. Since Gigante started developing quite recently, expats play a big role in bringing knowledge to the village. Besides this, expats and travelers have brought knowledge about surfing and surf equipment to Gigante. Locals make use of this knowledge and of the surfboards that are left behind by travelers to start surfing themselves. This forms a historical connection expats have to legitimize their belonging to Gigante.

The social, geographical and historical connections someone has constructed and narrated for his or herself, influence whether they are seen as a local of Gigante. Since belonging is constructed by different aspects and everyone experiences these in different ways, being a local (or not) is not a clear dichotomy. It exists on a spectrum that varies from a traveler who is passing through, to an expat who is living in Gigante for a couple of years, to someone who is born in Nicaragua and moved to Gigante, and to someone who is born in Gigante and has been living there his or her whole life. We have explained being or becoming a local as a form of belonging that is involved with processes of membership. If someone is seen as a member, or in other words, when their local identity is recognized by the community, they receive a sense of authority and ownership over a place.

This relation between being a local and feeling a sense of ownership is also visible in the waves, while surfing. The universal surfing etiquettes are based on giving priority to the surfer who is closest to the peak and showing respect towards locals. These are inherently bound together, since the visiting surfers who are surfing a new break, are expected to be

friendly towards the local surfers in the water and wait their turn before they go to the peak of the wave. Otherwise, they are not welcomed in the water, which can result in aggression. However, the necessity to follow these etiquettes differs per break and is influenced by the local and foreign local surfers in the water.

At Playa Amarillo, the order of priority is taken less seriously, which is highly depended on the skill level of the different surfers in the water. Amarillo is defined as a beginner break, with many people that try to learn how to surf. Locals as well as expat locals have surfed this wave for a long time and know best how to catch it. Another reason for the relaxed atmosphere at Amarillo expat surfers mentioned, is the fact that it is not part of the culture of Nicaraguans to be aggressive or territorial. This is also because there is no established surf culture in Nicaragua, which is why visiting surfers are not seen as much of a threat. Expats are often used to the established surf cultures in other places such as Hawaii or California, which is a reason why they are more used to territorial behavior. Since they travelled to find less crowded surf spots than at their home countries, they want to keep these newly discovered surf spots secret by making them exclusive. Private developments feed this exclusivity by blocking access to the beach.

Even though they will never reach the same degree of being a local as Nicaraguans that were born in Gigante, for expats an identity as a local can gradually evolve depending on multiple aspects. Belonging and being seen as a local gives someone a certain authority over a place (Garbutt 2009, 90). This comes together in a territorial form of belonging, in which locals or foreign locals set boundaries around the place they consider home. This plays out in the surf break, where (foreign) locals have the experience and the knowledge to be able to catch more waves and can therefore bend the universal etiquette to their benefit. Thus, by being a local, a surfer can narrate a right to set the local rules of behavior and therefore has the right to the waves.

Notes on the research

By talking to our research population, we learned that our research has to be interpreted as a case study that differs from other places. Both expat and local surfers told us stories about localism and much more aggressive atmospheres in Popoyo and the surf breaks around San Juan Del Sur, than at the breaks around Gigante. Furthermore, in our theoretical framework we have incorporated works about localism in Nicaragua of Usher and Kerstetter (2015) and

Usher and Gómez (2016). Even though these studies are conducted just a bit north of Gigante, a place where some of the surfers we interviewed also surf, they paint a different picture than what we have experienced at Playa Amarillo. Therefore we cannot generalize our research in Gigante to all surf spots in Nicaragua.

Even though we have positively experienced our period of fieldwork in Gigante, we have faced some limitations within our research. One of the limitations was our level of surfing. Although both of us have surfed before we came to Gigante, we were still seen as beginners when we first entered the waters at Playa Amarillo. Our level of surfing did not get high enough to surf at other breaks in the area, such as Playa Colorado. If we would be able to surf there, we could have compared the atmosphere in the water between different breaks. We solved this by asking local and expat surfers from Gigante how they experience the differences between the breaks. This way we were able to incorporate it in our research.

Besides our skill level of surfing, we also faced some struggles with mastering the Spanish language. Learning the language took longer than we had anticipated beforehand. Even though we were able to have conversations in Spanish, it would be easier to do more in-depth interviews if we were able to speak Spanish fluently. Yet, learning the language while we were in the field, was also a way for us to connect with people, since some locals wanted to help us with improving our Spanish, which was an easy way to begin conversations. The most important limitation was the short amount of time we had. With more time, we would have been able to interview more different inhabitants of Gigante to create a more holistic image. With every interview or every conversation we had, we found other interesting things we wanted to look into. Yet, in these ten weeks of fieldwork, we were not able to elaborate on all of them. Therefore we would like to make some recommendations for further research on the topic of surfing in Nicaragua.

Within our fieldwork we were often reminded of the gender aspect within the surfing culture both from locals as well as from expats. This could be interesting since we have never met a female local surfer. We did include this topic into our interview questions, but we never got to talk to any female local surfers. Gender has also been discussed with female expat surfers. They all agreed on a visible distinction between male and female surfers. Male surfers are often expected to be better surfers than female surfers. Surfers anticipate upon this discourse in surf breaks. In further research about surfing, one could look closer into the gender aspect of the surfing community. In the field we also learned about private

developments, which are also referred to as resorts and gated communities. This is something we did not focus on beforehand, but which caught our attention while being in the field. We touched upon this subject within the interviews we conducted, but we did not find the time to visit one of the private developments in the area. We discussed private developments in the chapter about territorial narratives, but in further research one could go in much more depth on this topic.

Epilogue

On the 19th of April we drive through Managua to get on a bus to Granada. We change busses at the UCA bus terminal located next to the university campus. Our bus is surrounded by students who are protesting against the government of Daniel Ortega who introduced plans to cut pensions and social security. Since this first event the protests have been ongoing ever since. More than 200 people have died in Nicaragua since the unrest first began.[94]

We feel very sorry for the current situation in Nicaragua, and we are aware that the situation in Gigante completely changed since the ten weeks we stayed there for our research. Since the situation is so different now, we understand that dynamics within the community changed completely. Through the Facebook page *Gigante times* and through the contacts we have acquired, we stay informed of the situation. We have been mindful of the fact that many expats of Gigante left Nicaragua, since many expats have a second home to go back to. This, again, illustrates the mobile aspect of most expats in contrast to the locals living in Gigante. We hope a solution will be find soon for the inhabitants of Gigante and Nicaragua. We wish all the people who are still living here the best in these difficult times.

¡Cuidate, Buena suerte!

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[94] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/nicaragua-protests-180530130717018.html

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Appendix

Summary in Spanish

En esta tesis, hemos argumentado que el surf puede implicar algo más que simplemente montar olas. Nuestro objetivo fue responder a nuestra preguntas de investigación: cómo perciben, construyen y narran los expatriados y los locales un sentido de pertenencia territorial en Gigante? Hemos hecho esto demostrando que una comunidad de surfistas interactúa con una identidad de procesos transnacionales, concepciones de pertenencia y narrativas territoriales tanto en las olas como en la tierra.

Los diferentes surfistas tienen su propia forma de atribuir el significado de ser un surfista, y surgen múltiples subculturas y estereotipos que surgen al ser un surfista. Para los surfistas locales, el surf es una forma de contacto social con amigos, familiares y viajeros. Además surfear para ellos está fuertemente entrelazado con su conexión al océano, esto está relacionado con el hecho de que los surfistas locales han estado en los alrededores del océano desde una edad temprana. Para los expatriados, esto funciona de manera un poco diferente, ya que no todos los expatriados crecieron en una comunidad de surfistas, a menudo los expatriados tomaron una decisión más consciente para surfear y organizar su vida en torno al surf que los lugareños.

El surf ha llegado más allá del deporte propio. Los medios modernos han llevado a la mercantilización de la cultura del surf con la creciente mercadería en torno al surf, es más fácil formar parte del estilo de vida del surf sin ser bueno para surfear. Sin embargo, tanto los surfistas locales como los expatriados están de acuerdo en que la gente tiene que demostrar su capacidad dentro del agua, antes de llamar a alguien surfista. Esto apunta a surfear como una subcultura, que está involucrada en los procesos de inclusión y exclusión. Ser parte o poder permitirse el estilo de vida del surf no es posible para todos los surfistas locales, ya que tienen otras responsabilidades desde una edad más avanzada. Además, no siempre tienen los medios para comprar una tabla de surf o las marcas de ropa que están asociadas con el surf. La libertad se distribuye de diferentes maneras entre los expatriados y locales, ya que los expatriados tienen relativamente más libertad financiera que los surfistas locales. Esto se ilustra por el hecho de que los expatriados han tenido los medios para viajar o trasladarse a Gigante y a los otros lugares del mundo donde han surfeado.

De esta manera, los surfistas expatriados son relativamente más móviles que la mayoría de los surfistas locales. Debido a que los expatriados están constantemente en movimiento, la mezcla de expatriados cambia continuamente. Estos diferentes expatriados toman influencias de sus países de origen con ellos a la ciudad de Gigante. De esta manera, los lugareños establecen conexiones alrededor del mundo, que pueden usar como recurso cuando viajan. Por lo tanto, incluso cuando no son móviles de la misma manera que los expatriados, los lugareños construyen y mantienen vínculos transnacionales y, por lo tanto, están involucrados en el estilo de vida móvil de los surfistas.

Estos vínculos transnacionales convirtieron a Gigante en un lugar donde la movilidad global y el turismo se unen con un carácter local. Gigante es un pueblo pequeño y los expatriados y lugareños van a los mismos lugares para surfear, beber una cerveza o hacer sus compras. Sin embargo, hay una diferencia en el consumo y el comportamiento entre los dos grupos, y no siempre se mezclan. Algunos lugares o eventos solo son atendidos por extranjeros, mientras que otros solo por locales. Esto no es porque no sean bienvenidos allí, sino porque ambos grupos experimentarían una incomodidad. Lo describirían como un evento para "ellos", que ilustra los procesos de "otros". El grado de interacción entre los extranjeros y los locales influye en cómo estos grupos construyen un sentido de pertenencia a Gigante y si se verían a sí mismos o si serían considerados por los demás como locales.

Exploramos los sentimientos de pertenencia a Gigante entre los lugareños y los expatriados en línea con los tres aspectos de pertenecer a un lugar; una conexión social, histórica y geográfica. Todos los lugareños mencionan su interacción con la comunidad como la razón más importante por la que pertenecen a Gigante. Tienen amigos y familiares que viven allí, razón por la cual experimentan una fuerte conexión social, dentro de la comunidad de expatriados existe una fuerte conexión social entre los diferentes expatriados. Diferentes proyectos están siendo establecidos por las comunidades de expatriados que reúne a los habitantes de Gigante. En Gigante es inevitable trabajar junto con los locales, lo que significa que sus conexiones sociales no solo involucran a otros expatriados, sino también a los locales.

Otro aspecto que influye en los sentimientos de pertenencia es la conexión que los lugareños y los expatriados sienten hacia la localidad de Gigante. La mayoría de los lugareños describen a Gigante como un paraíso, un lugar del que no querrían irse especialmente su fuerte afiliación con el océano es de importancia en esta conexión geográfica. Algunos expatriados están vinculados a la localidad de Gigante en un sentido literal, ya que son los

propietarios de la tierra en el área o porque construyeron una casa en Gigante. Muchos expatriados se sienten unidos a Gigante porque se sienten más libres viviendo allí que en sus países de origen. Los expatriados tienen lugares para comparar su grado de libertad, en contraste con la mayoría de los locales.

La afiliación que los lugareños sienten hacia el océano también está vinculada a una conexión histórica, ya que está construida por el hecho de que Gigante ha sido tradicionalmente un pueblo de pescadores. Además, los lugareños han vivido en Gigante o en Nicaragua desde que nacieron. Sus raíces están en Nicaragua, lo que significa que tienen una conexión histórica inherente con el país y también con Gigante. Los expatriados tienen sus raíces en otros países y no tienen esta forma natural de pertenencia que tienen los locales. Es por eso que necesitan activamente crear y narrar un sentido de pertenencia histórica para ellos en Gigante. Desde que Gigante comenzó a desarrollarse recientemente, los expatriados desempeñan un papel importante en llevar el conocimiento a la aldea. Además de esto, los expatriados y los viajeros han traído conocimiento sobre el surf y el equipo de surf a Gigante.

Dado que la pertenencia se construye por diferentes aspectos y todos los experimentan de diferentes maneras, ser un local (o no) no es una dicotomía clara. Existe en un espectro que varía desde un viajero que está de paso, a un expatriado que vive en Gigante desde hace un par de años, a alguien que nació en Nicaragua y se mudó a Gigante, y a alguien que nació en Gigante y ha estado viviendo allí toda su vida. Hemos explicado ser o convertirse en un local como una forma de pertenencia que está involucrada en los procesos de membresía. Si alguien es visto como un miembro, o en otras palabras, cuando la comunidad reconoce su identidad local, recibe un sentido de autoridad y propiedad sobre un lugar.

Esta correlación entre ser un local y sentir un sentido de propiedad también es visible en las olas, mientras surfeas. Las etiquetas de surf universales se basan en dar prioridad al surfista que está más cerca del pico y mostrar respeto hacia los locales. En Playa Amarillo, el orden de prioridad se toma con menos seriedad, lo cual depende en gran medida del nivel de habilidad de los diferentes surfistas en el agua. Amarillo se define como un descanso para principiantes, con muchas personas que intentan aprender a surfear. Los lugareños y los lugareños expatriados han surfeado esta ola durante mucho tiempo y saben cómo atraparla. Otra razón para la atmósfera relajada en Amarillo, es el hecho de que no es parte de la cultura de los nicaragüenses para ser agresivo o territorial. Esto también se debe a que no existe una cultura de surf establecida en Nicaragua, por lo que visitar a los surfistas no es visto como una

amenaza. Los desarrollos privados pueden actuar de forma territorial bloqueando el acceso a las playas. Esto a menudo se lleva a cabo para mantener las olas exclusivas.