Surfing the Waves of Sustainable Development:
A Cast Study on Local Perceptions of NGO Activities in Northern Peru

university of groningen

Faculty of Spatial Sciences

Master of Science
Society, Sustainablity and Planning
1st Supervisor: Ph.D. P. Hanna de Almeira Oliveira
2nd Supervisor: M.Sc. N. Nowara

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Carla Martinez Harms
s5700450
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Abstract

The northern coastal region of Peru combines artisanal fishing, surfing, and industrial activities, with the fishing village of Lobitos used as the focal point in this study. Originally an area for the Peruvian oil industry, Lobitos has become a centre for tourism and NGO activities. This thesis analyses the social impacts of sustainable tourism NGOs in Lobitos, aiming to contribute to the Social Impact Assessment discourse by examining both positive and negative NGO interventions, emphasising community empowerment and inclusive decision-making.

The study uses semi-structured interviews and participant observation to explore recent spatial changes in Lobitos and the interplay between different actors. It summarises the impacts of NGO activities on the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural landscape. Findings show that NGOs have driven economic change, and promoted resilient energy systems, educational opportunities, and environmental awareness. However, their role in tourism also brings challenges such as a process of gentrification, socioeconomic divides, and potential harm from insufficient community engagement.

The study aims to highlight the need for NGOs to maintain ongoing dialogue with local communities, respect their autonomy, and ensure that development initiatives reflect local needs and aspirations. Conclusions suggest that a community-based approach, integrating concepts like Social License to Operate and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, and balancing tourism benefits with socio-cultural and environmental impacts are essential for sustainable development. The findings aim to inform NGO strategies, promote sustainable tourism models, and enhance the effectiveness of development projects in similar contexts. Fostering a respectful and inclusive approach can lead to long-term benefits for coastal regions dependent on fishing and tourism, ensuring a balanced and sustainable future for Lobitos and beyond.

Keywords: Social Impact Assessment, Non-Governmental Organisations, Tourism, Coastal Areas, Rural Areas, Fishing Communities, Community Engagement

Spanish Abstract

La región costera del norte de Perú combina pesca artesanal, surf y actividades industriales. Este estudio se centra en el pueblo pesquero de Lobitos. Originalmente una zona para la industria petrolera peruana, Lobitos se ha convertido en un centro para el turismo y las actividades de las organisaciones no gubernamentales (ONG). Esta tesis analiza los impactos sociales de las ONG de turismo sostenible, con el objetivo de contribuir al discurso de la Evaluación de Impacto Social, enfocandose en el empoderamiento de la comunidad y la toma de decisiones inclusivas.

Mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas y observación participante, el estudio explora los recientes cambios espaciales en Lobitos y la interacción entre los distintos actores. Finalmente, resume las repercusiones de las actividades de las ONG en el paisaje económico, medioambiental y sociocultural. Los resultados muestran que las ONG han impulsado el cambio económico, han promovido sistemas energéticos resistentes, oportunidades educativas y la concienciación medioambiental. Sin embargo, su papel en el turismo también tiene retos como un proceso de gentrificación, las divisiones socioeconómicas y los posibles perjuicios derivados de una participación insuficiente de la comunidad.

El estudio subraya la necesidad de que las ONG mantengan un diálogo permanente con las comunidades locales, respeten su autonomía y garanticen que las iniciativas de desarrollo reflejen las necesidades y aspiraciones locales. Las conclusiones sugieren un enfoque basado en la comunidad, que integre conceptos como la Licencia Social para Operar (Social License to Operate) y el Consentimiento Libre, Previo e Informado (Free, Prior and Informed Consent). También pretenden orientar las estrategias de las ONG, promover modelos de turismo sostenible y mejorar la eficacia de los proyectos de desarrollo en contextos similares. Un enfoque respetuoso e integrador puede apoyar beneficios a largo plazo para las regiones costeras dependientes de la pesca y el turismo, garantizando un futuro equilibrado y sostenible para Lobitos y más allá.

Palabras claves: Evaluación del impacto social, Organizaciones no gubernamentales, Turismo, Zonas costeras, Zonas rurales, Comunidades pesqueras, Participación de la comunidad

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
DGC	United Nations Department of Development Communications
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
GIZ	German Development Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIMBY	Not In My Backyard
PIMBY	Please in My Backyard
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SLO	Social License Operate
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
WAVES	Water, Adventure, Voluntourism, Education, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Upon arriving in the northern coastal region of Peru, you can observe the Pacific Ocean teeming with activity. Artisanal fishermen cast their nets while surfers attempt to ride the best waves. Meanwhile, oil platforms and refineries line the coast, and industrial trawlers haul large quantities of fish from the sea, destined for plates across the country. Within this landscape lies Lobitos, a small fishing village founded in the early 1900s to meet Peru's petroleum needs and beyond (see Figure 1).

LOBITOS TIMELINE

Early 1900s
Petroleum

Development as a site for oil extraction. The British establish the Lobitos Oilfield Company, exploiting the area's rich oil reserves. Lobitos is also known as a small fishing village, with local fishermen relying on the marine resources for their livelihood

1970s
Military

The Peruvian military occupies Lobitos, taking control of the area, contributing to the decline of the town's civilian population and economic activity.

2000s
Tourism

Investments in tourism infrastructure start to increase. Small hotels, hostels, and surf schools open, attracting visitors from around the world.

2020s

Lobitos continues to develop into a tourist and surfing hotspot that combines its historical heritage with new tourist opportunities. Economic inequalities, environmental problems and possible cultural tensions accompany this development.

Future?

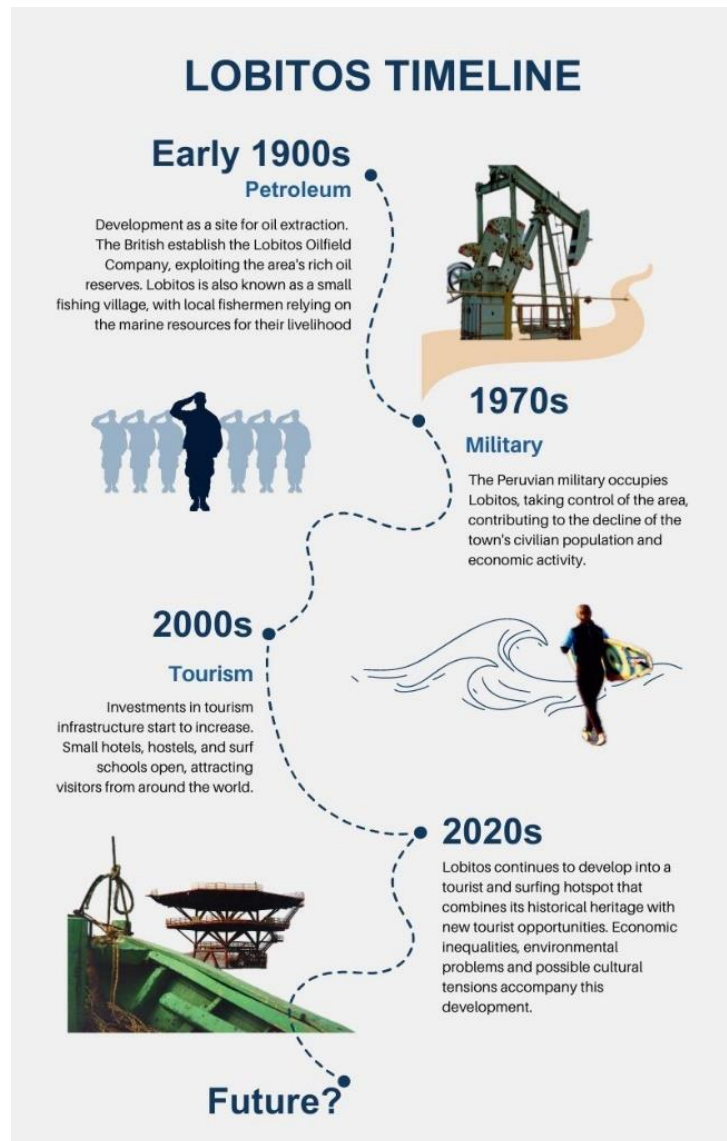*Figure 1: Lobitos Timeline (Source: Author, 2024).*

However, Lobitos and its surrounding regions are characterised by more than just their historical ties to the oil industry. In the 2000s, surfers discovered the area's waves, leading to a rise in tourism (Maya-Jariego et al., 2017). This increase simultaneously led to the establishment of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Lobitos. The future of Lobitos is

now at a crossroads. Ideally, tourism development could evolve into a sustainable model, involving the local community and fostering both economic growth and environmental conservation. However, there is also the risk of extractive tourism, which could create a significant rift between tourism activities and the local community. In this context, the role of NGOs aiming to support sustainable tourism becomes especially relevant. This study will further examine their impacts, focusing on how they influence the balance between tourism development and community well-being.

This study aims to contribute to the academic field of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) by providing an analysis of the social impacts of NGOs in the coastal rural region of Northern Peru. The existing SIA literature emphasises that even organisations that tend to do good can have unintended negative impacts on the communities they seek to help (Giderler, 2023). To mitigate the negative impacts, particular importance is attached to empowering local populations, participation and inclusion in decision-making processes (Becker & Vanclay, 2003). By focusing on the activities of sustainable tourism NGOs, this study not only aims to expand the scope of SIA research but also seeks to provide new insights into the interactions between NGOs and local communities.

This research is socially relevant for NGOs working in areas similar to Northern Peru, emphasising the importance of local communities. Understanding both positive and negative impacts can help NGOs to improve interventions and collaborate effectively with local communities. NGOs can use this case study to mitigate potential negative impacts and enhance positive outcomes for coastal communities reliant on fishing and tourism.

Overall, the research aim of this study is to understand the impact of NGO activities and explore the local perceptions of these influences. Therefore, the central question in this study is:

How do sustainable tourism NGOs influence the development of the coastal region of Northern Peru?

To find an answer to this main question, three sub-questions are answered in this process, which are listed below. The first sub-question seeks to explain the overall development of the research area and identify changes. The second sub-question intends to highlight and understand the interplay between the different actors that are of importance regarding that case study. The third sub-question aims to create and summarise an overview of possible positive and negative impacts NGOs may have on the research area and similar regions that are dependent on fishing and tourism.

1. What are the recent spatial changes in the research area?

2. What is the interplay of the different actors in Lobitos regarding the area's development?
3. What are NGOs' positive and negative impacts on coastal communities dependent on fishing and tourism?

The following Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework for the research, with theories and research on NGOs in Latin America, SIA and tourism literature. Moreover, the research area and an NGO operating in Lobitos are being introduced. In Chapter 3, the research methodology with semi-structured interviews and participant observation is outlined. Chapter 4 summarises the findings and Chapter 5 links the results with the theoretical framework. Finally, conclusions are drawn, and an overall reflection of the research process is conducted.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

First, the role of NGOs in the Latin American and Peruvian context is analysed. Further, the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) discourse is introduced, adding to the discussion that all projects including those that intend to do good, may produce harm if the community affected is not correctly addressed. To elaborate further the principles of Social License to Operate (SLO) and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) are used, both emphasising community engagement and participation in projects to reduce possible negative impacts. To understand the role of (eco)-tourism in the area, insights into different perspectives are provided. Finally, the conceptual model summarises and connects the different discourses.

2.1.1 Non-Governmental Organisations

> *"[NGOs are] powerful advocates for the right, the left, the poor or the environment; others are efficiently providing public services; others both advocate and efficiently provide public services. Some NGOs are close to grassroots groups, and others are close to powerful elites. Some NGOs are accused of opportunism, illegitimacy and commercialism; others are attributed greater indigenous authenticity"* (Meyer, 1999, p.46).

An NGO, or non-governmental organisation, is commonly referred to in the context of nonprofit, private entities dedicated to developmental work, marked by their commitment to social missions (Eversole, 2016). The United Nations Department of Development Communications (DGC), offers a broad definition of NGOs, highlighting key traits that encompass their scope and function: *"A non-governmental organisation (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organised on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven*

by people with a common interest [they] perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to Governments, monitor policies, and encourage political participation at the community level." Furthermore, they aim to encourage political participation by spreading information. They are instrumental in providing analysis, and expertise, functioning as early warning systems, and helping to enforce and observe international treaties (DGC, n.D.). Meyer (1999) emphasises the importance of financing and describes NGOs as autonomous entities that secure external funding to support their staff and programs, actively participating in promoting sustainable development. Over the years NGOs have become crucial players in the socio-economic and global political spheres (Alasino, 2008; Eversole, 2016; Fifka et al., 2016). While the dominant concept of the private sector is rooted in entrepreneurship and profit-making, the non-governmental sector is traditionally based on voluntarism and the goal of solving social problems without a profit motive (Giderler, 2023). Nevertheless, it must be recognised that more than $6 billion in development aid is channelled through NGOs worldwide each year (Eversole, 2016), revealing a potential shift of NGOs into social enterprises. Social enterprises operate with both mission and profit motivations and NGOs, particularly those emphasising accountability and sustainability, are increasingly adopting social enterprise business models (Mikołajczak, 2020; Giderler, 2023). For many NGOs, expanding projects or programs is an obvious strategy for increasing impact (Edwards & Hulme, 2013). The challenge is to maintain the quality of interventions while scaling up operations (Robinson, 2013).

It is important to consider NGOs' special role that they take in the Latin American context.

NGOs play a fundamental role in sustainable and social development in countries with weak institutions and governments prone to corruption and abuse of power (Fifka et al., 2016). They fill the gap for projects and issues that address the interests of vulnerable groups, such as women and children, indigenous communities or groups and areas affected by climate change (Juarez, 2023; Lindt, 2023). NGOs therefore aim to be important agents for sustainability and social issues, intending to operate outside the economic and corporate spheres (Lin, 2010). This position sets them apart from the government and in theory, makes them less dependent on economically powerful companies and sectors. The institutional weakness of the government has been a major reason for the proliferation and rise of the importance of NGOs in Latin America (Brum, 2010; Pinheiro Barbosa, 2013; Price, 1994).

In Peru in particular, the mining sector is an example of the monetary dependency of the government on large companies. Peru is an important mining area due to the possession of minerals such as copper, silver and gold, while at the same time (Indigenous) communities are displaced and biodiversity and ecosystems are destroyed (Bebbington & Burry, 2009). Nevertheless, literature shows that there are different standpoints and opinions on NGOs

within Latin America and Peru and that NGOs differ from one another (Alasino, 2008; Fifka et al., 2016; Eversole 2016). A differentiation can therefore be made between NGOs that highlight political, social and sustainability problems within the countries, organise protests, and provide support through campaigns and educational work. In Peru, these NGOs are sometimes perceived as *caviar left*, "privileged players who are committed to progressive causes" (Feldman & Núñez, 2023, p.1). The example of the mining industry shows that there can be different perspectives and points of view: on the one hand, human rights are violated, and areas are destroyed (Lindt, 2023); on the other hand, these companies provide jobs and are an important economic factor for the country. NGOs that criticise these projects can therefore receive no support from the workers who are economically dependent on these companies and misunderstandings can arise. For Indigenous groups affected by displacement and the destruction of nature by the mines, NGOs are an important point of reference for legal issues and political and social support (Lindt, 2023). Therefore, NGOs can be perceived as ambivalent.

Another type of NGOs operating in countries of the Global South are those from "outside" (Alasino, 2008; Eversole, 2016; Fifka et al., 2016). NGOs from the Global North, intending to support sustainable and social change in the countries with development aid projects and financial support. This type of support is seen as particularly helpful in rural areas in Peru, where many infrastructural problems dominate, such as poor water and electricity supply, poor road and transport infrastructure and low autonomy (Eversole, 2016; Fifka et al. 2016). Points of conflict here are the mostly Western perceptions about problems and solutions that are projected onto these areas (Alasino, 2008). In addition, project cycles are sometimes temporary and there is a constant change of volunteers who could clash with the local community, values and views. NGOs are organisations that aim to support poor people and communities, but they are usually not founded by these communities. As Eversole (2016) summarises: *"These NGOs may act in local communities as catalysts, organisers, educators, solidarity workers, or bearers of money, supplies, and information […] but they also bring along outside biases and interests"* (p.11). The goals of outsider NGOs can differ greatly from the goals of the community. Mistrust must be overcome, and a common basis created before a productive relationship can be established (Alasino, 2008; Eversole, 2016; Fifka et al., 2016). The NGO highlighted in this study (Section 2.3: NGO EcoSwell) is a combination of local and international cooperation. This NGO could nevertheless be categorised as an outsider NGO, as many volunteers come from abroad and the founders of the NGO come from Lima and not from the local project context, namely the region of Piura in Northern Peru.

A short discourse explains the last-mentioned comment: Lima, as the capital of Peru, is often perceived by Peruvians as a globalised city with economic opportunities and access to

reputable educational institutions (Ipsos, 2019). A study by Pancorbo et al. (2019) reveals that people from Lima with a high socioeconomic status were more likely to associate Peruvians from rural areas with a low socioeconomic status. They valued White Peruvians (usually of Spanish or other European descent) as members of a high-status group who were seen as competent and developed. Conversely, Indigenous and African Peruvians were identified and valued to a lesser extent, perceived as underdeveloped, low-status groups. This highlights the deeply rooted discrimination, racism and division within the country and why Lima is mentioned in this research as a distinct region from the other regions in Peru. The study also highlights that this is not solely the case in Peru, but overall, in Latin American countries (Pancorbo et al., 2019).

NGOs play an important role in Peru, especially in rural areas. Despite differing perceptions, they are still perceived as helpful and supportive in this context. NGOs can be seen as drivers and crucial players of change and of great importance for the sustainable development of Latin American countries. They can serve as legal aid, support and organise social and sustainable movements and provide resources for communities. Their role is especially relevant in contexts where governmental institutions are unwilling or unable to ensure certain economic, social, or environmental standards through legislation and regulation (Fifka et al., 2016). Collaboration and cooperation with government and other partners have become increasingly important for NGOs to generate project success, obtain public support and promote deep change (Alasino 2008). Nevertheless, even though NGOs aim to work across national boundaries to foster change, their impacts can be highly localised and transitory. Edward and Hulme (2013) mention the potential failure of NGOs to make the right linkages between their work at the micro-level and wider systems. Additionally, even if NGOs aim to work at a small-scale level and with the communities, the nature of NGOs' relationships with communities and the actual impact of their work is poorly understood (Eversole, 2016). This research gap leads to the research aim of this study, to understand the social impacts NGOs have on local communities.

Referring back to Meyer's quote at the beginning of this section, NGOs operate in different spheres, positions and interests. Their impact and effectiveness are often determined by these different dynamics, which requires a deeper understanding of their roles in different contexts. Ultimately, while their intentions may be largely focused on positive change, the complexity of their operations and interactions with local stakeholders requires critical assessment to fully understand their contributions and challenges. This includes reviewing the alignment of objectives with local needs, the possible imposition of external cultural values and the potential use of the "NGO" concept as a business model.

2.1.2 Social Impact Assessment

The SIA discourse is based on the field that came out of environmental impact assessment (EIA) in the early 1970s (Becker & Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay, 2020). In the guidance document published by the International Association for Impact Assessment, SIA is defined as *"the process of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions"* (Vanclay et al., 2015, p.1). SIA is a field of research, practice and a paradigm consisting of a body of knowledge, techniques and values. It is best understood as an umbrella that contains the evaluation of all impacts on humans and how people and communities interact with their socio-cultural, economic and biophysical surroundings. It aims to create a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment through community development and empowerment, capacity building and the development of social capital (Becker & Vanclay 2003). SIA involves a wide range of stakeholders including government regulators, financial institutions, NGOs, and local communities.

For the understanding of SIA, it is crucial to comprehend social impacts. Those are all issues that affect people, directly or indirectly including people's way of life, culture, political system, environment, health and wellbeing, personal and property rights and fears and aspirations (Vanclay, 2001). SIA addresses everything associated with managing social issues throughout the project lifecycle. Social issues can vary in time and space, are complex and are mostly cumulative (Vanclay, 2020).

The discourse of SIA enshrines a professional value system characterised by a commitment to sustainability, scientific integrity, openness, accountability and the protection of human rights. Particular importance is attached to empowering local populations and improving the position of women, minorities and other disadvantaged and marginalised groups (Becker & Vanclay 2003). Core values of SIA include fundamental human rights and protection by law, the right to a healthy and quality living environment, participation in decision-making processes and recognition of the value of local knowledge and experience. SIA's principles include the promotion of equality, democratisation, diversity and community acceptance of projects. To achieve the aforementioned, community engagement is at the centre of the SIA discourse. Achieving a Social Licence to Operate (SLO), meaning acceptance by the local community, requires community buy-in and trust through respectful engagement, transparency and demonstrating the social added value of projects (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Moving from a "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) to a "please in my backyard" (PIMBY) mentality is critical to project acceptance. Achieving this change requires genuine, sustained efforts to harmonise project goals with the values and needs of the community. This includes the active involvement of

community members in decision-making processes and the consideration and inclusion of local knowledge. Transparent communication and prioritising long-term relationships over short-term gains can help promote a positive attitude towards development projects (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019).

Overall, the primary focus should be on achieving positive outcomes and ensuring that development and project maximise their benefits and minimise their costs (Becker & Vanclay 2003). Even good projects can have unintended negative consequences and all projects can be managed better to reduce the negative impacts and improve the benefits (Giderler, 2023). Communities should be treated with respect and empowered, with projects delivering social value and local benefits and respecting the rights of local communities.

2.1.3 SIA, NGOs and Tourism

In the following section, the SIA concepts of SLO and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) are explained and related to NGO literature. Finally, the discourse of ecotourism and SIA, which play an important role in this research, is discussed.

Social License to Operate

The concept of a Social License to Operate (SLO) reflects the level of acceptance a company or project receives from local communities (Jijeleva & Vanclay, 2016; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Despite the challenge of making SLO measurable, organisations can seek public approval through strategic planning and action. Key benefits include minimising harm to communities and generating value for the organisation. The core concepts here are legitimacy, credibility and trust, which are promoted through fairness, deep understanding of local dynamics, respectful behaviour, transparent information, technical competence and social engagement. The overall aim should be to gain the community's trust through co-ownership and psychological identification (Jijeleva & Vanclay, 2016). To achieve SLO, companies must implement effective community engagement activities, social impact assessments, environmental and social management procedures and grievance redress mechanisms that are compatible with human rights (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Respecting local cultures and addressing community concerns early on improves SLO. Simply put, companies should "think good, be good and do good" (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019, p.1), implement a good project well and do the right thing for the local community. Companies and organisations should adopt the following principles to achieve an SLO (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019):

- Hiring qualified employees for social performance
- Conduct meaningful and inclusive stakeholder engagement
- Fairness
- Transparency

- Respect for human rights and local cultures
- Technical expertise, benefit to local communities
- Involvement in decision-making processes
- Accountability

Social risks are real business risks and must be taken seriously. If an SLO is not achieved, the community might respond with protest actions which can be a real business risk and harm the reputation (Hanna et al., 2016).

For NGOs, recognising and applying the principles of an SLO is of great importance. As autonomous organisations operating in local communities, NGOs must ensure that their projects and initiatives are accepted and supported by these communities. This is crucial to bring about long-term positive change and ensure the sustainability of their programmes. The work of NGOs often touches on sensitive social, environmental and economic areas that have the potential to have a significant impact on the living conditions and well-being of the local population. By placing the principle of trust at the centre of their activities, NGOs can increase their effectiveness by ensuring that their actions are perceived to be fair, transparent and in the best interests of communities. For NGOs, establishing a solid SLO also means minimising conflict, improving collaboration with stakeholders and creating a stronger basis for mobilising resources and implementing projects. Involving and actively listening to the needs and concerns of communities helps to develop customised solutions that are more widely accepted and effective. Especially if the NGOs do not emerge from the local context, it is important to put their views and values last and to put the needs of the local community first.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) recognises the inherent and prior rights of indigenous peoples to their lands and resources, respects their legitimate authority, and stands for equality and respect (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013; Vanclay & Esteves, 2011). FPIC is important to the concept of self-determination by providing Indigenous peoples with meaningful choices regarding their development trajectories.

The idea emerged in the mid-1980s in the context of the involuntary resettlement of Indigenous peoples and emphasises the need for free, prior and informed consent without coercion, intimidation or manipulation (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013; Vanclay & Esteves, 2011). This should take place before the commencement of any activity on community land after full disclosure and in a language acceptable to the affected communities (Hanna, & Vanclay, 2013). The term ethnodevelopment emphasises that development should be culturally contextualised, with communities having the right to decide their future and the use of their resources. Nevertheless, there is a risk that FPIC becomes a process that is merely used to fulfil legal

requirements. Despite the recognition, few companies have publicised their commitment to FPIC. FPIC should not be limited to indigenous peoples but should be extended to all local communities to foster a relationship of trust between companies and communities. Organisations that fully implement FPIC can benefit from reduced conflict, lower risk of reputational damage and reduced risks and costs (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013).

Implementing FPIC in NGOs, like the concept of SLO, legitimises the existence of the NGO and its projects. Particularly important is the consideration of ethnodevelopment, also within the NGO structures: all projects and implementation must be culturally contextualised, and communities must have the right and access to decide on the future use of resources.

Tourism

Tourism in the Latin American context is considered an important contribution to economic development coupled with the potential to reduce poverty (Croes & Rivera, 2015; Seminario et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the risks of mass tourism are evident, which is why the role of ecotourism has become increasingly important and has taken on a major role in Latin America (Esparza-Huamanchumo et al., 2023).

Ideally, ecotourism aims to be "nature-based, ecologically sustainable, environmentally educational, and economically beneficial" to the local community (Esparza-Huamanchumo et al., 2023, p.5). Based on these characteristics it contributes to the protection and conservation of natural environments and employment and empowerment of communities (Higham, 2007; Seminario et al., 2023). Seminario et al. (2023) emphasise the great potential of ecotourism in Peru, contributing to the national GDP and development areas while at the same time conserving unique ecosystems and species. On the other hand, Higham (2007) argues that the development and rise of ecotourism must be analysed critically. The ideal of a balance of preserving and developing at the same time seems more like a wishful idea than an actual sustainable implementation. Ecotourism could lead to the degrading of habitats and landscapes, the depletion of natural resources and the disturbance of economic systems. Furthermore, outcomes such as non-realisation of promised benefits, no or weak development, absence of management and the lack of coordination between stakeholders involved affect local communities (Ashley, 2000; Higham, 2007; Esparza-Huamanchumo et al., 2023).

In addition to these issues, tourism can exacerbate geographical disparities and regional inequalities through tourism gentrification (Cocola-Gant, 2019). One notable phenomenon is exclusive displacement described by Marcuse (1985), where people are unable to move into certain areas due to gentrification. This can be seen in surf colonialism, where surf culture from Western or predominantly white communities influences coastal areas, often in the Global South (Hough-Snee & Eastman, 2017; Tantamajarik, 2004). This influence can manifest in

economic displacement through rising property prices and the cost of living, alongside broader power imbalances where the interests of wealthier, often Westernised, individuals take precedence over those of local communities (Hough-Snee & Eastman, 2017).

Tantamjarik (2004) has compiled an overview of the potential positive and negative impacts of surf tourism in Costa Rica (see Table 1). Further important issues to mention are the potential loss of the local culture, clashes between visitors and hosts and ethical issues (e.g. increased criminal activities).

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Environmental	- Raising environmental awareness - Environmental conservation - Alternative employment - Regulation	- Threatening and Degradation of ecosystems from tourists and development - Depletion of Resources - Pollution
Socio-cultural	- Brings together the Community - Fosters peace	- Change or loss of Indigenous culture, identity and values - Host and visitor clashes - Social stress on the physical environment - Ethical issues
Economic	- Foreign exchange earnings - Generates jobs through tourism-related businesses - Contributes to the local economy through tourists patronising local businesses - Contributes to Government revenue through tourist taxes and fees - Stimulates infrastructure development and improvements	- Leakage of tourism earnings - All-inclusive tourism - Infrastructure costs - Price inflation on goods and services - Dependency on Tourism

Table 1: Positive and Negative Impacts of Tourism (Adapted from Tantamjarik, 2004)

Vanclay (2012) adds the consideration of the cumulative effects of different influences, such as tourism, industrial development and climate change, specifically in coastal areas. It is important to design tourism in a way that is consistent with the identity and future vision of local communities. Therefore, the integration of the local community and the sociocultural characteristics must be considered in ecotourism projects (Esparza-Huamanchumo et al., 2023; Seminario, 2023). Differences between stakeholders must be accepted and respected. The overall importance of introducing ecotourism to an area lies in creating shared visions, developing commitments and assessing the intrinsic value of landscape, nature, biodiversity and heritage (Vanclay, 2012). Finding legitimate ways to balance new opportunities against social impacts and take measures to protect vulnerable communities from exploitation is crucial (Ashley, 2000; Esparza-Huamanchumo et al., 2023; Vanclay, 2012). If this is ensured, it can lead to positive impacts such as raising environmental awareness, alternative employment and stimulating infrastructural development (Tantamjarik, 2004; see Table 1).

NGOs can contribute to the development of ecotourism in coastal and rural regions. Ashley (2000) emphasises that *"NGOs working at the community level can facilitate the process of local decision-making and implementation in ways that enable residents to adapt their plans to their priorities or to voice their priorities to others"* (p.28). In the case of this study, it is important to add that an NGO must consider both the positive and negative effects of ecotourism. They should not directly assume that new economic opportunities will automatically bring positive effects and support the communities in addressing potentially negative impacts (Ashley, 2000). It is important at all levels to understand the social impact of tourism on communities so that measures can be taken to reduce the likelihood of community backlash against tourists and tourism development (Deery et al., 2012).

2.1.4 Conceptual Model

NGOs play an important role in the discourse on SIA, especially in rural areas, by supporting communities, providing resources and mediating between stakeholders. To be effective, NGOs must obtain an SLO, treat communities with respect and equality, and work culturally contextualised (FPIC). Critical self-reflection on their role and impact is crucial, especially in ecotourism projects that can lead to different outcomes. While ecotourism can bring economic and conservation benefits, it can also cause cultural disruption and environmental damage. Therefore, NGOs must ensure that their efforts promote sustainable and equitable development. A conceptual overview of how the different literatures and theoretical backgrounds fit together is summarised in the Conceptual Model (see Figure 2).
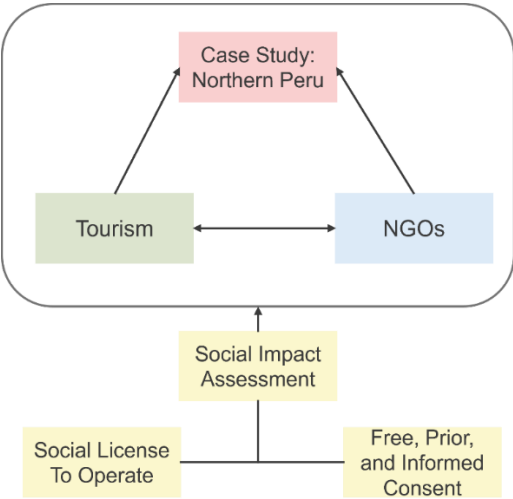
Figure 2: Conceptual Model (Source: Author, 2024).

The conceptual model highlights the interplay between NGOs and tourism and how this influences the case study in Northern Peru. Furthermore, the analysis is viewed through the lens of social impact assessment, with a focus on the concepts of SLO and FPIC.

2.2 Research Area

The research area identified for this study encompasses the northern region of Piura, Peru, with a particular emphasis on the small towns of Lobitos, Piedritas, Negritos, and Talara (see Figure 3). The region of Piura is distinguished by its environmental attributes, including the presence of a tropical dry forest and an expansive coastline. The tropical dry forest faces severe threats from mass extinctions, deforestation, biodiversity loss and habitat degradation (Flanagan, 2020). Additionally, it is notably affected by the El Niño phenomenon, an occurrence of non-cyclical, altered ocean currents. This dramatically transforms the climate from arid desert conditions to periods of intense rainfall, showcasing the region's vulnerability to climatic fluctuations. The high risk of El Niño floods has caused considerable damage to buildings and infrastructure, food insecurity and income difficulties in the past (Godden, 2012; Blue-Green, 2018). Additionally, a study by Valladares-Garrido (2023) et al. highlights the region's vulnerability to food scarcity and mental health risks due to earthquakes and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
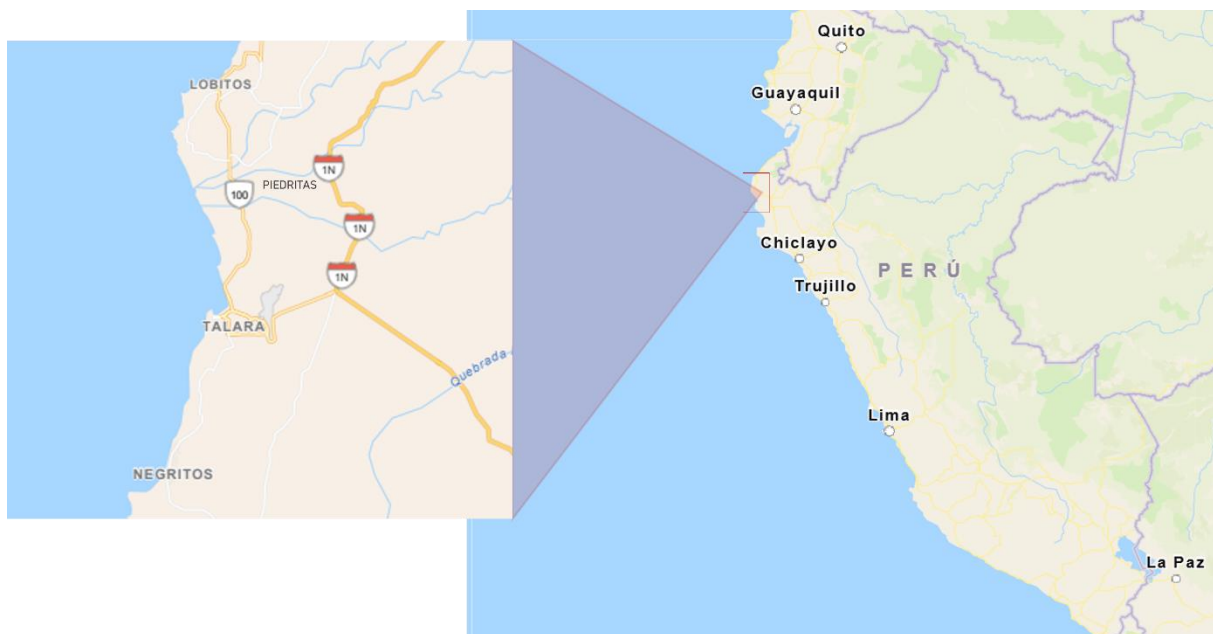
Figure 3: Localisation of Research Area (Source: Author, 2024).

Piura is noted for its petroleum exploitation, fishing industry, and surf tourism hotspot (Maya-Jariego et al., 2017). This study focuses primarily on Lobitos, where a significant number of the NGO's projects are concentrated (see Figure 4).
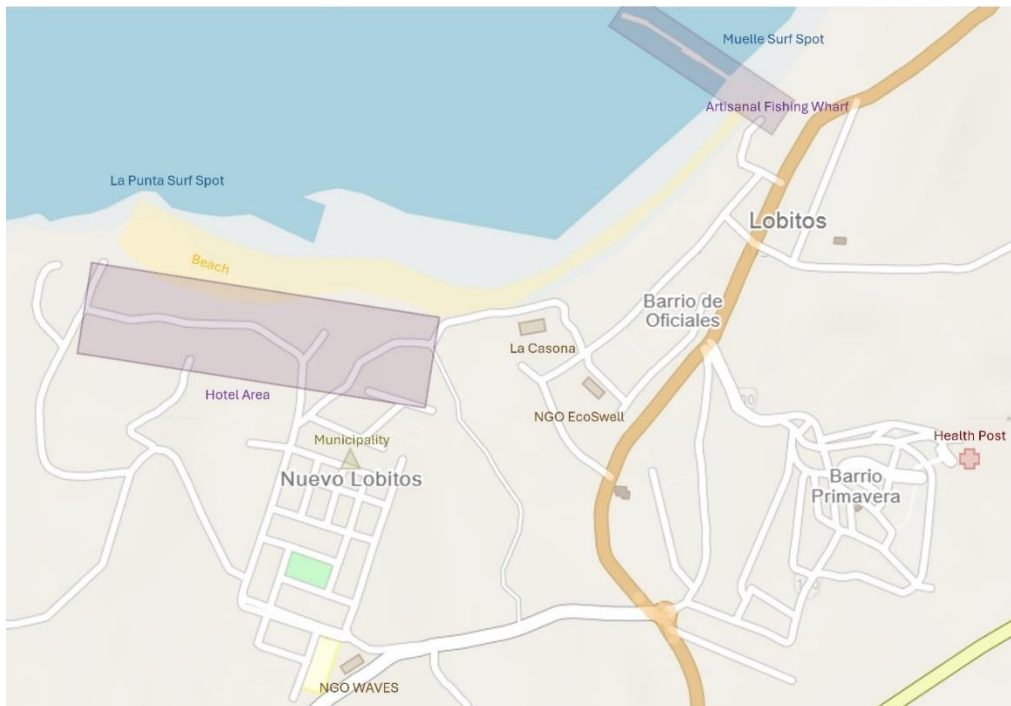
Figure 4: Map of Lobitos (Source: Author, 2024).

2.2.1 Lobitos

In 1902, Lobitos went from being a fishing town to a British colony for exclusive use by the oil company's affiliate, British Petroleum and international petroleum companies prospered from the extraction in the area (see Photograph 1). The company, which had leased land from the Peruvian government, pushed ahead with the expansion of Lobitos' infrastructure such as roads, a pier, desalination plants, electricity, a hospital etc. In 1968, political changes in Peru led to the expulsion of the oil companies, the government took control and military installations replaced the British buildings. However, the military presence was short-lived as Peru signed a peace treaty with Ecuador. After the dissolution of the military base, Lobitos became vulnerable to looting, which led to the destruction of the buildings and infrastructure. The constant and cumulative spatial changes of Lobitos have made it infrastructurally unstable over time (Dupre, 2018; Godden, 2012; Maya-Jariego et al., 2017; see Figure 1). Lobitos currently has a population of around 1600 inhabitants, consisting of a community of 133 fishing families, some soldiers and a travelling population consisting mainly of foreign tourists (Maya-Jariego et al., 2017). Nowadays, Lobitos is experiencing a resurgence due to its popularity with surfers from all over the world, promoting ecotourism in the region and opening new financial possibilities (Abilio Bosquetti et al., 2020).

Photograph 1: Oil Extraction Site Lobitos (Source: Author, 2024)

It is important to note that the local fishing community has yet to benefit from this upswing and that the introduction of ecotourism can also have potential risks (Dupre, 2018; Maya-Jariego et al., 2017). In Lobitos, the local fishing community contributes significantly to the region's economy, with 50% of the population working in artisanal fishing (Engineers Without Borders & EcoSwell, 2020, see Photograph 2). Nevertheless, fishermen struggle to compete with foreign investors benefit from economic growth and continue to live in poverty (Dupre, 2018; Maya-Jariego et al., 2017). In the past, they were supported by the community, which paid salaries from oil tax money, but these funds are declining (Abilio Bosquetti et al., 2020; Dupre, 2018)

Photograph 2: Fishing Vessel (Source: Author, 2024)

The coexistence of fishing communities and the oil industry is complex and potentially conflictual. Offshore oil exploration increases maritime traffic, causes pollution, damages fishing gear and sometimes prevents access to traditional fishing grounds (Maya-Jariego et al., 2017). In recent years, the fishing effort of the artisanal fleet has continued to increase, while the total catch and catch volume per vessel have decreased. In this context, intensive fishing is seen as a major threat to the survival of artisanal fisheries (Maya-Jariego et al., 2017)

The town lacks fundamental public services required for its public and environmental health and suffers under constant energy cuts with high prices (Valladares-Garrido, 2023). All municipal wastewater systems have collapsed, and domestic wastewater is released untreated into the environment at various points (Smyrilli et al., 2018). This poses a health risk to the local population and pollutes the land and ecosystems. Open defecation is also a problem that can affect the most vulnerable population, whose living conditions are the simplest (Smyrilli et al., 2018). Additionally, a study by Bosio Vier (2023) concluded that mismanagement and inadequate training and education on waste segregation led to an accumulation of waste at various critical points in Lobitos, increasing the number of infectious and contagious diseases. In addition, the landfill as a final disposal site does not fulfil the minimum health and safety requirements necessary for proper waste disposal.

2.2.2 Regional Dynamics

The north coast of Peru is characterised by having both the oldest oil industry and the most productive industrial fishing industry (Maya-Jariego et al., 2017). The region plays a critical role in Peru's economy as a hub for oil and mineral extraction. Talara was founded by the International Petroleum Company and is now a refining and shipping port for Peru's main oil-producing region (Goldberg, 2005; Petroperú, 2024). It is known for its significant oil fields and is considered one of the main industrial and oil extraction sites in Peru (Goldberg, 2005; Petroperú, 2024). The city is also a hub for surfing due to its beaches and *Punta Lobo* (Surfline, 2024). Similarly, Negritos is recognised for its petrochemical industry, marking another significant point for oil extraction within the Piura region (Petroperú, 2024). Negritos is part of the broader environmental and socio-economic landscape of northern Piura, likely facing similar issues of environmental degradation, economic challenges, and the need for sustainable development as Lobitos. Piedritas is a smaller, less developed town compared to its neighbours, but inhabits the same landscape with even more severe issues.

The most recent economic development is tourism, which is attracted by the beaches and strong winds for surfing (Godden, 2012; Maya-Jariego, 2017). The coast of Piura is known for its surfing conditions and attracts surfing tourists from all over the world. The town of Máncora is currently the most popular surfing town in the region. It should be noted that studies indicate a lack of tourism planning professionals and environmental authorities to monitor the

environmental impact of the tourism industry on local areas and predict unsustainable tourism growth and mass tourism (Estrada Ventura, 2020; Velarde, 2017). These studies from Máncora may also be important for the rest of the Piura region.

Surf tourism could also bring economic benefits to other regions and provide an alternative to the threatened economic income from artisanal fishing. Maya-Jariego et al. (2017) state that families are gradually shifting from the fishing to the tourism sector.

2.3 NGO EcoSwell

The aim of EcoSwell, an NGO founded in 2013, is to support Lobitos and the surrounding regions with infrastructure and conservation projects (EcoSwell, 2024). As the NGO states the overarching goal is to "design and implement sustainability projects aligned with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), taking a full bottom-up approach to developing communities, working jointly with them and leading by example" (EcoSwell, 2024). EcoSwells states that their projects operate within the areas of reforestation and conservation, water and sanitation, research, public health, renewable energies, ecotourism and volunteering. They state to provide resilient medical centres, install solar panels, promote ecotourism and bring together volunteers from all over the world. They claim to have directly impacted over 10.000 lives with over 38.000 beneficiaries (Pizarro, 2022). They partner with a wide variety of organisations such as the GIZ Ebamar, NEXANS Foundation, ENEL Green Power and many more to support and realise their projects (EcoSwell, 2024). The impact assessment is based on the SDGs, claiming to fulfil 10 out of the 17 goals (Pizarro, 2022).

EcoSwell promotes its volunteer program on platforms such as Volunteer World, Volunteer Match, and university websites (Volunteer World, 2023). The volunteer internship program supports various projects by involving interns in areas such as renewable energy and research. Volunteers are required to make a financial contribution, which EcoSwell states is crucial for funding, developing, and implementing initiatives, as well as covering operating costs. To provide an example, participation in the renewable energy program starts at $1269 for a two-week stay (EcoSwell, 2024).

Like many other NGOs in Latin America, EcoSwell is an example of an NGO stepping in when the government is falling short (Fifka et al., 2016). Even if the premise of EcoSwell is to do fundamental good, it is crucial to examine whether they can also have unintended negative impacts (Giderler, 2023). NGOs can be perceived as ambivalent, taking on many forms and views and potentially having different, conflicting interests (Alasino, 2008; Meyer, 1999). They are of great importance for social and sustainable projects, but social discrepancies can occur, especially in the case of outside NGOs providing financial and infrastructural support (Alasino 2008; Eversole 2016; Fifka et al., 2016). EcoSwell is based on voluntary work, including people

from different backgrounds and countries. Values, views and cultures can clash, and the real social problems of the communities might be forgotten or disregarded by outside views on the problem (Alasino 2008).

3. Methodology

Qualitative research as defined by Corbin and Strauss (1998) is about "persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours emotions and feelings as well as about organisational functioning, social movements [and] cultural phenomena" (p.11). A qualitative research approach therefore aims to gain a deeper understanding of complex issues such as feelings and thought processes or cultural contexts and to go one step further than conventional research methods (Corbin & Strauss, 1998).

To analyse the social impact of NGOs in Latin America, a case study approach is conducted. Yin (2009) defines a case study as an empirical investigation that examines a contemporary phenomenon in its real context. It is crucial to consider the immediate context and the broader socio-cultural, historical, and political context (Yin, 2009). Case studies involve using data from multiple data sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the case and to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings (Yin, 2009). Therefore, for the data collection in this research, a qualitative research approach is used, including semi-structured interviews and participant observations further explained in section 3.2. The data will be analysed through an iterative, inductive coding process (Cope, 2010). In the following section, the stakeholders are listed, and the methods of interviews and observation are explained. Finally, the data analysis and coding process are outlined.

While this case study may not aim for statistical generalisation, it can contribute to theoretical generalisation and transferability of findings by providing in-depth insights and descriptions of the phenomena of sustainable tourism NGO intervention in Latin America.

3.1 Stakeholders

The stakeholders identified in the study are EcoSwell staff with its management, employees and volunteers, tourists and the local community members of the research area. External funding agencies of the NGO, other NGOs operating in Lobitos, and the municipality staff are also of interest (see Table 2).

Stakeholders	Definition
NGO ECOSwell Management Employees Volunteers	NGO EcoSwell supports and organises local projects on the ground. It is important to look at how the various stakeholders within the NGO operate, the management, the local employees and the international volunteers.
Tourists Surfers Internationals Peruvian Tourists	Tourists contribute to the development of the area, they visit Lobitos, use the local offers and invest money. As surfing tourism is promoted in Lobitos, specifically surfers, international and local, are of importance.
Tourism Operators Hostels/ Hotels Surfing Schools Cafés	Tourism operators such as hostels and surfing schools are present in Lobitos. They build infrastructure and promote tourism.
Local Residents Fishing Community	Residents, especially the fishing community, are an important, if not the most important stakeholder in Lobitos. It is their home with friends and family, work and everyday life.
Other NGOs	Other NGOs might also be operating in the research area. It is important to consider their activities and possible interactions with the analysed NGO.
Municipality	The municipality is the main operator in the region and the representative of the national government. Understanding their project areas and interaction with the local community and the NGOs might be of significance.
External Funding Partners	To operate, partners that support an NGO financially or with other resources are of great importance.

Table 2: Stakeholder Table (Source: Author, 2024)

Based on Table 2, stakeholders were approached utilising a snowball sampling method, where interviewees provided contacts from their circle of acquaintances, creating a chain of references (Parker et al., 2019). The final set of interviews is presented in Table 3 in the next section.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data has been collected during fieldwork in Lobitos, from 30.03.2024 - 20.04.2024. The qualitative approach of this research includes semi-structured interviews and participant observations. During the time on site, 10 interviews were conducted in person and 2 more were held afterwards in online meetings (see Table 3). The participant observations were noted down daily and later translated into a field diary. In the following section, the methods will be further explained.

Identification	Stakeholder	Date (dd/mm/yy)	Time (h/m/s)	Place
Interview 1	Local Administrative Staff	03/04/24	00:32:25	On-site
Interview 2	NGO Partner (Nexans)	04/04/24	00:19:47	On-site
Interview 3	Manager EcoSwell	04/04/24	00:54:09	On-site
Interview 4	NGO Volunteer	05/04/24	00:17:01	On-site
Interview 5	European Tourist	07/04/24	00:19:31	On-site
Interview 6	Local Fishermen	09/04/24	00:53:01	On-site
Interview 7	Local Kitchen Staff	11/04/24	00:36:37	On-site
Interview 8	Manager WAVES	12/04/24	00:43:08	On-site
Interview 9	Café/ Hotel Owner	12/04/24	00:20:00	On-site
Interview 10	Local Cultural Centre/ Hotel	12/04/24	00:27:23	On-site
Interview 11	NGO Partner (GIZ)	19/04/24	00:28:00	Video call
Interview 12	Government Representative (Municipality)	16/05/24	00:38:37	Video call

Table 3: Interview Table (Source: Author, 2024).

3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research tool combining predetermined questions with the flexibility of adaptation during the interview (Berler & Magaldi, 2020). It emerged with the shift from positivist methodologies to a post-positivist lens and underlines the notion that investigated phenomena are complex and highly contextual (Berler & Magaldi, 2020). A semi-structured interview aims to be a reflective dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee, following a guide or protocol but at the same time allowing exploration and discovery (Berler & Magaldi, 2020). In this regard, they have found it to be successful in underlining the versatility of improvising follow-up questions based on responses (Kallio et al., 2016). The adaptability, flexibility and versatility allow for rich, qualitative data collection (Gibbs, 2007; Kallio et al., 2016). In alignment with this research, Belina discovers the effectiveness of semi-structured interviews in exploring informal civil society (2023). She mentions that "interviewing opens the way to a more radical and broad understanding of civil society" to "problems that are not immediately perceptible" (Belina, 2023, p.1). Focusing on diverse voices and perspectives from various stakeholders in this research is essential for uncovering the underlying issues within society.

Before the interviews, a semi-structured interview guide was created with determined areas for questions (Appendix V: Interview Guides). It provided a structure for the discussion during the interview but was not followed strictly. The interview guide structure by Kallio et al. (2016) is used in this research, following the steps of (1) identifying the prerequisites, (2) retrieving and using previous knowledge, (3) formulating the preliminary interview guide, (4) pilot testing, (5) and finally presenting the complete guide. During the conduction of the interview, the aim was to create a safe environment in which the interviewee felt comfortable reflecting and

sharing experiences and knowledge (Fylan, 2005). Therefore, the interviews were held in English and Spanish, using language familiar to the interviewee (Kallio et al., 2016).

The usage of semi-structured interviews aimed to uncover hidden aspects of the social life of the research area and facilitate a reciprocal dialogue between interviewer and interviewee. The qualitative data collected include meaningful human communication, providing an in-depth understanding of the area of interest (Berler & Magaldi, 2020; Gibbs, 2007). Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the limitations, potential biases and limited generalisability (Kallio et al., 2016). Additionally, reflecting on ethical considerations such as power dynamics and the researcher's positionality is crucial (Gibbs, 2007). This will be included at the end of the methodology section.

3.2.2 Participant Observation

To capture real-time insights, understand the contextual environment and complement the data of the semi-structured interviews, participant observations were used. It is a "fundamental base of all research methods" in the social and behavioural sciences and qualitative research, offering rich, in-depth data that is critical for understanding complex phenomena (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 389). Observations helped to capture the nuances and context of the study environment of human activities and physical settings in which those activities took place (Angrosino & Rosenberg, 2011). The observations were noted down in a field diary (Appendix III: Field Diary). Although field notes may be controversial as they can be subject to subjective interpretation, they were still used as a method as they are not used as a primary source but complement the interviews. Field notes are a key tool for making detailed and accurate records of observations, which are essential for understanding complex phenomena (Emerson et al., 2011).

3.3 Data Analysis

> *"Coding is in many ways a recursive juggling act of starting with initial codes that come from the research question, background literature, and categories inherent in the project and progressing through codes that are more interpretive as patterns, relationships and differences arise."* (Hay, 2010, p. 285).

The collected data is analysed in an inductive coding process using the ATLAS.ti software. As defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998), coding is used to manage large amounts of raw data, explore alternative meanings, and systematically develop theoretical concepts. The purposes of coding include data reduction, organisation, and theory building, and it can be applied both inductively and deductively. It identifies important themes, explores data recursively and encourages critical self-reflection in the research process (Hay & Cope, 2021). Therefore,

coding is an important analytical tool in qualitative research that enables systematic data exploration and theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

According to Cope (2010), coding can be divided into descriptive codes (simple category designations) and analytical codes (thematic and theoretical). Descriptive codes can lead to analytical codes, which delve deeper into topics and processes. Analytical codes can also be embedded in the research question and theory and exist from the beginning of the process.

In this study, an exploratory approach is used for the coding process, which includes both descriptive and analytical codes. The coding approach is iterative and evolves through continuous learning and refinement based on the data from field diary entries and interview transcripts while integrating theoretical concepts. The coding structure is based on grouping codes according to commonalities, content relationships and conceptual links (Hay & Cope, 2021). Within this structure, the codes are systematically organised and clustered and further refined iteratively as mentioned above. This allows for continuous improvement and deeper analysis during the research process. The benefits of coding emerge out of unexpected connections which can sometimes generate the most important insights (Cope, 2010). At the end of the coding process, a coding tree was created (Appendix I: Coding Tree). Exemplary in-vivo codes can be found in Appendix II: In-Vivo Codes.

The main topics that emerged out of the coding process are the area development, the local community, NGOs and Tourism (see Figure 5).
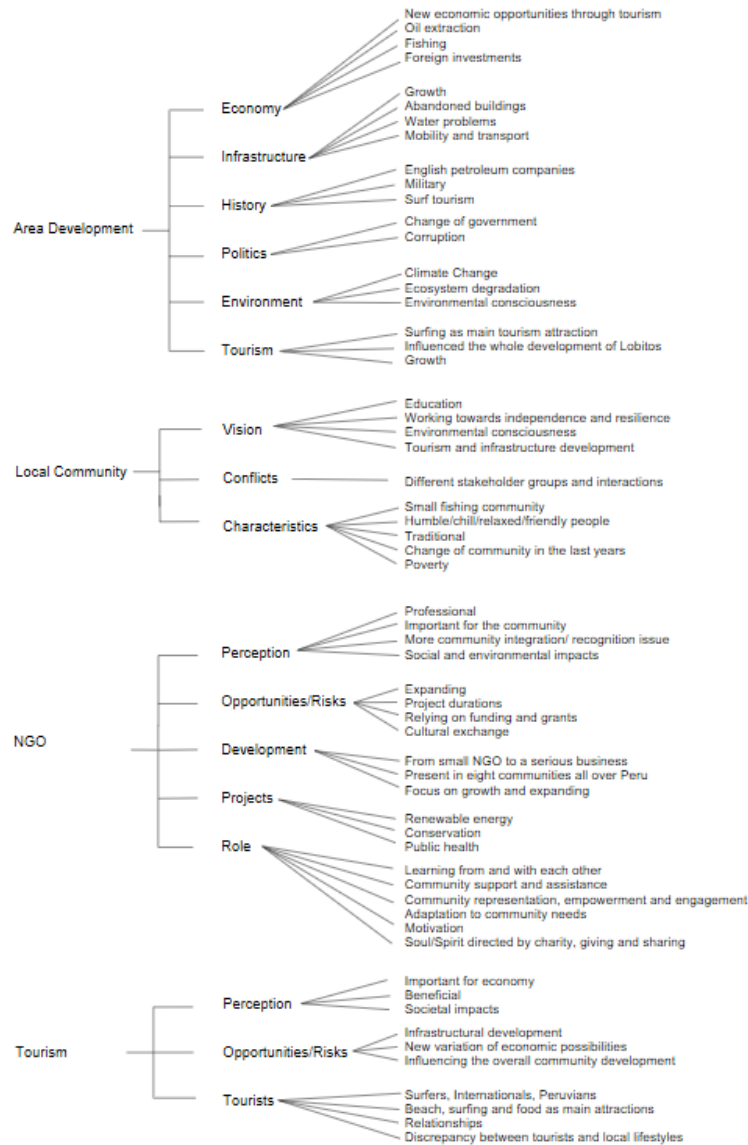
Figure 5: Coding Tree (Source: Author, 2024).

3.4 Positionality and Ethical Considerations

Researchers bring their backgrounds, values, and biases to the research process, which can affect every stage of the research, from the framing of questions to the interpretation of data (Tolich & Iphofen, 2018). It is important to self-reflect on one's position, to be transparent, to recognise possible power dynamics and to be aware and respectful towards the cultural context. In qualitative research conducted in Peru, the interplay of the researcher's Western values from a German upbringing with Peruvian heritage introduces a nuanced perspective on the culture and values of the research context. This bicultural stance enriches the research approach and ethical considerations but also carries potential pitfalls. There's a risk of biases in framing questions, observing, interpreting data, and possibly misrepresenting local experiences due to this dual background. Another important point is that there is a family

connection to Lobitos, as my grandfather was born in Lobitos. Therefore, it was possible to communicate with the local community on a more trustworthy level. Ensuring accuracy and respect for the local context requires ongoing reflection and an awareness of these challenges.

It should also be noted that an internship with the NGO EcoSwell was completed during the fieldwork on-site. Accordingly, more profound results can be achieved, but personal opinions can also be influenced. An attempt was made to counteract this through reflection and to adopt a neutral stance. EcoSwell was found through an internet search using the keywords: "Sustainability", "Peru", "Environment" and "NGOs". After establishing contact with several similar NGOs, the collaboration with EcoSwell seemed the most interesting due to their variety of work fields and personal interest in the rural coastal regions in which they work.

Ethical considerations in qualitative research involve respecting the rights, dignity, and welfare of the participants and communities involved in the study (Tolich & Iphofen, 2018). Recognising the role of the interviewer both in conducting the interviews and in collecting and analysing the data is crucial. The beginning of the research must be initiated with an introspection of one's epistemologies which is important for effective semi-structured interviews (Berler & Magaldi, 2020). Employing self-reflective memos and journaling can serve as valuable tools in identifying and addressing personal biases throughout the research process (Berler & Magaldi, 2020). Ethical standards also necessitate interviewer competence in managing the scope of information collected, specifically avoiding the accumulation of unnecessary or irrelevant data (Gibbs, 2007).

4. Findings

In the following chapter, the results of the qualitative data analysis based on the semi-structured interviews and participatory observations are presented. Firstly, the area development of Lobitos is explained by considering historical, economic, infrastructural, political, and environmental factors. Tourism development is also discussed, which is broken down further later in a separate section. Another important factor is to understand the local community and its characteristics and views. Accordingly, an attempt is made to get an idea of the local community from the perspective of the interviewed stakeholders. After discussing the broader context of the area analysis and the local community, the scale is narrowed down and focussed on tourism and NGOs, specifically EcoSwell.

4.1 Area Development

Especially in the last few years, there has been a lot of change in developments in the area. As Lobitos' past has already been explained in one of the previous chapters, this one will focus

on the current situation and future aspirations. Certain influences from the past will nevertheless be highlighted to explain current events.

4.1.1 History

Historically, as already described in section 2.2, Lobitos is marked by the time of the British petroleum companies and the military occupation. It is present in the minds of Lobitians, either because their own family worked for the British or the military, or because they are reminded of it daily by the abandoned houses and oil platforms in the water (Interview 6, Interview 7). The perception of that time is different for the various actors. While the people from Lobitos see the presence of the British and the military as a distant past and no longer identify with it, the EcoSwell manager, for example, also emphasises the advantages of this time. Especially during the time of the British colony, a lot was invested in infrastructure and education in Lobitos, and he states that there is not much left of this now (Interview 3). Despite these advantages of the times, the focus of the Lobitians seems to be on the importance of the present and future rather than the nostalgic past (Interview 1, 6, 7, 8,12).

> *"I hope that it will continue to grow [and] that we become more ecological. For example, we can use the renewable energy that is already being used, and that can also be accessible to us. [...] I also hope that the fishermen can sort of revive their fishing, and their activity as such, because they are suffering a lot.* – Local Administration Staff

> *"Lobitos does have a lot of potential to continue to grow in environmental aspects and position itself as an ecological district. [...] A sustainable city that has a significant reduction of its waste, that has well-developed green areas despite the scarcity of water, maximising resources."* - Municipality

4.1.2 Economy

Lobitos identifies itself as a fishing village, fisherpeople are still the largest part of the population and most people are engaged in this economic activity (Interview 1, 6, 7, 8). Although the oil companies Petroperú and Petromont are still present in Lobitos, they are not seen as a source of income, but as a private economic movement from which the local community does not benefit directly (Interview 8). The municipality provides further economic support for the community, which offers labour in various fields (Interview 6, Interview 7). These include educational work, security and sanitation (Interview 12).

Fishing in Lobitos has been extremely destabilised as a secure income source for many years. The pollution of the sea by the oil companies and the advancing climate change with the El Niño phenomenon led to ecosystem degradation and diminution of the fish population (Interview 6, Observation). In addition, large trawlers from Talara and Paita (a large city in Piura) invade their fishing grounds, using nets to take a large amount of catch with them

(Interview 1, Interview 6). In comparison, the local fishing people in Lobitos use artisanal fishing methods, which is fishing with hooks usually attached to a simple string (Interview 6, Observation).

Due to this decline in fish stock and catch, tourism, in particular, is seen as a driver of hope for new economic development (Interviews 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12). A range of career possibilities opened up in recent years (Interviews 1, 6, 7, 8). A variety of new opportunities through tourism are described, such as working in a hotel, restaurant, cafe or store, working as a taxi driver, surf instructor and photographer, selling artwork and food at the beach. However, a more critical look at this development shows that it is primarily external from Peruvian large cities and foreign investors who benefit from tourism in Lobitos (Interview 1). The owners of the hotels, restaurants and cafés are mostly from Chiclayo, Piura and Lima, who had the money to invest at the time when tourism was on the rise (Interview 1, 3, 8). One person states that tourism and the community are now developing together for the first time in 15 years (Interview 8), indicating that before that was not always the case. Nevertheless, people are optimistic about the development, and many would like to see this source of economic income continue (Interviews 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12). It is linked to economic security and independence and the desire to strengthen Lobitos as a community. In the future, Lobitians expect to be not just employees for investors and external tourism operators but also have businesses in which they can realise their full potential (Interview 8).

4.1.3. Infrastructure

The infrastructural development of Lobitos is characterised by different eras. The times of the British and the military are still present today, even if not in the identity of the people, but in the architecture and building environment they left behind. It could be observed that the historic old town of Lobitos is characterised by houses in the British colonial style, which are close to collapse or have already tumbled down (see Photograph 3). In the former military district, houses were built that are not adapted to the heat and climate of Lobitos and therefore do not offer pleasant living conditions (Interview 3). In the last years, uncontrolled infrastructural development has taken place due to the increase in tourism demands and therefore the building of various hotels and restaurants (Interview 9). The uncontrolled development led to irreversible damage to the ecosystem (Interview 3). In addition to abandoned and poorly constructed houses and ecosystem degradation, other problems limit the infrastructure of Lobitos: Water is largely cited by interviewees as a main problem, followed by roads and mobility infrastructure and electricity.

Photograph 3: Volunteers in front of a Collapsed British Building (Source: Author, 2024)

Due to heavy rainfall in recent years, public water pipes and networks have been destroyed, leaving households without water (Interview 6, Interview 7). However, water has not only been a problem in Lobitos for the last few years. As one resident states, "The problem we have suffered the most here for as long as I can remember is water" (Interview 6). An environmental engineer from the municipality adds that "*water scarcity is a national and global problem in the north of Peru […]. For more than two years now, Lobitos has not had a direct drinking water supply in the houses. There is no water in the pipes or the taps. We only depend on the supply by cisterns*" (Interview 12). The Lobitos community is highly dependent on cisterns, but the municipal company providing them cannot supply every household all the time. Even essential facilities like the medical post in Lobitos are not connected to a functioning water supply system. Nurses cannot wash their hands after treating patients, which could have drastic consequences for the spread of disease (Interview 4).

Improvements have been made in the development of transport and mobility infrastructure in recent years. Roads that were previously in poor condition or unpaved are asphalted now, improving mobility within Lobitos (Interview 6). In addition, investments were made in Lobitos' most important road: the road to Talara (see Figure 3 and Figure 6). This road is of great importance for Lobitos, as it connects the village with the nearest larger town, where supermarkets, hospitals and educational institutions are located. While the road is well-paved and constructed in Lobitos, it becomes unpaved and consists of sand and gravel once it crosses into the region of Talara (Interview 12). The local community fears being cut off in the event of heavy rainfall or other natural disasters (Interviews 1,6,12). These concerns are not unfounded, as this has happened in the past. In such events Lobitos becomes isolated, and the supply of goods such as food and medicine is hindered. Petroperú and Petromont are

responsible for maintaining the road through a public-private partnership, *"[they are] using machinery to compact and repair the road, but ultimately, this is only a temporary measure because they are not paving the road"* (Interview 12). The municipality emphasised that the completion of the road would be a political cause, but the various levels of government are evading their responsibilities:

> *"First the province should be questioned, which is Talara. If Talara does not have the resources, the regional government must take over, which is Piura. If it is too expensive for Piura the central government must react. It is all a chain. District. Province. Department. Central Government"* - Municipality

Currently, the central government's focus is on the new coastal highway, intended to connect the coastal towns in northern Peru and promote tourism in the area. The road from Talara exemplifies the consequences of a political system that shifts responsibility back and forth among the various levels at the expense of local interests. The new coastal highway highlights those economic benefits (in the form of promoting tourism) are prioritised over the well-being of local communities but will still face challenges regarding physical accessibility in case of extreme weather.

Figure 6: Road between Talara and Lobitos (Source: Estado Peruano, 2023)

Electricity is also a severe problem in Lobitos since many houses are not connected to a power grid. They either get electricity from their neighbours or use candles for light and wood for cooking, this could lead to increased inhalation of carbon dioxide or fires inside the houses (Interview 6, Interview 7). Some houses have been connected to solar panels in recent years and thus embedded in a more resilient energy system (Interview 1, 6, 7).

4.1.4 Politics

Regarding political developments in Lobitos, two historical events are worth mentioning: The Fujimori government and the last change of government in Piura and Lobitos.

Fujimori is a former president of Peru and was particularly popular within the fishing community. As a daughter of a fisherman states: *"[The fishermen] will tell you that Fujimori's government, which was the national government, granted them the fishermen's city, which was previously military property, and granted the fishermen's union."* After Fujimori's time in power, no important head of state seems to have come to Lobitos or anywhere near it, which is why relations with the Fujimori family are very tight (Interview 1).

Political change has taken place in the Piura region in recent years. The "Contigo, Region" party, which was elected in many regions, is currently in charge. As the municipality explains, the presence in lots of areas facilitates and improves cooperation between the different regions since they try to support each other (Interview 12). The local community emphasises the positive development of politics in Lobitos: cooperation between the municipality and community has improved significantly, and jobs and educational courses are being offered (Interview 1, 6, 7). Despite everything, the local community is also aware of the power hierarchies and corruption within Peruvian politics (Interview 1, Interview 6). This includes agreements between the government and oil companies where the local community does not participate and the prioritisation of economic benefits and private interests over collective well-being and public infrastructure.

4.1.5 Environment

The environment and its development play an important role. Apart from the fact that Lobitos is a small village located next to the Pacific Ocean, there are other reasons why the environment is an important factor. On the one hand, nature is the most important source of income for the community, on the other hand, it is endangered by many external influences.

Various concerns have been expressed about the degradation of ecosystems by the interviewed stakeholders: the pollution of the ocean, deforestation for coal, insufficient wastewater treatment, general waste problems and (the lack of) environmental consciousness (Interviews 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12).

Just recently, an environmental disaster occurred off the coast of Lobitos: an oil platform overturned, and a large amount of oil leaked into the water (see Photograph 4). In addition, outdated pipe systems are said to have holes from time to time and continue to pollute the sea (Interview 6, 11, 12, Observation). The fisherpeople said that the oil companies were only partially held responsible and that decisions about the consequences were made behind closed doors without any influence or participation of the affected communities (Interview 6, Observation). The pollution of the sea has an impact on the entire ecosystem and affects the fish stock (Interview 11). The future of oil extraction in Lobitos remains unsure. The contracts with Petroperú and Petromont will soon expire, and the municipality states that "there is also

the issue of the correct closure of their wells so that they do not leave environmental liabilities"
(Interview 12).

Photograph 4: Fishing Vessel with Oil Platform (Source: Author, 2024).

A resident of Lobitos commented on deforestation. This is being driven forward because the
wood is sold for carbon (Interview 7). Other environmental problems are wastewater treatment,
which is insufficient, and waste disposal, as there are no landfill sites (Interview 12). The issue
of environmental consciousness is assessed differently by the various stakeholders. On the
one hand, residents attribute a high level of environmental awareness to the people of Lobitos
and thus differentiate themselves from the rest of Peru, which is said to be less environmentally
conscious (Interview 1, 7, 8). Nevertheless, the employee of a hotel who comes from Negritos
says that she thinks environmental awareness should increase and that the people from
Lobitos should be more aware of their natural gifts (Interview 10). What everyone agrees on is
the importance and necessity of increasing this awareness and protecting the environment in
Lobitos.

4.1.6 Tourism

Tourism will be examined in more detail in the following section, which is why the development
will only be discussed here in brief.

All stakeholders agreed on one point: tourism development in recent years has had a major
impact on Lobitos and its community (Interviews 1-12). The approximate start of tourism
development was 15 years ago. The first surfing tourists are said to have come to Lobitos
around that time (Interview 1, Interview 7). A resident remembers that Lobitos resembled a
ghost town before that and was almost deserted (Interview 6). Although the growth is seen by
many as positive and hopeful, some also express concerns and fears about what the growth
could mean for the community. Despite job opportunities and improved infrastructure

(Interviews 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), discrepancies between locals and tourists, ecosystem degradation and possible increase in criminality were formulated or already experienced as fears (Interviews 1, 4, 5, 9).

4.2. Local Community

Analysing the influence of an NGO on an area, the local context and the people on the ground must also be understood. The following is an attempt to paint as accurate a picture as possible of the Lobitos community based on the information they provide.

4.2.1 Characteristics

> *"Here it's quiet, you can go camping on any beach that's close by, you can camp there, you can go at night, where the people take care of you, the same people take care of you if they see something out there, they give it back to you."* – Local Fishermen

Lobitos is a small, traditional fishing village characterised by its relaxed and humble community (Interview 6, Interview 7). On the one hand, due to its small size, Lobitians perceive each other like a family: everyone knows each other, everyone looks out for and supports each other (Interview 6, Interview 8). On the other hand, this also leads to scepticism from people from the outside and changes in the community (Interview 6, Interview 8).

> *"In villages like these, especially small fishing villages […] people are one family. As a single family, they protect each other, take care of each other and create close bonds. It closes its ties when something different, something strange arrives. Well, so to speak, as something new, they can't adapt easily to it. Because they are very closed in their cultures, in their traditions, in their religion."* Manager WAVES

It is also important to realise that the catholic tradition in small villages can lead to closed-mindedness in religion and views. A woman from Lobitos mentions that it used to be difficult for her to deal with these traditional views: "These behaviours that exist in the north of Peru concerning social issues, and also concerning women's issues. I suffered a lot from that" (Interview 1). Highlighting how deeply ingrained traditional beliefs, combined with the still dominant *machismo* (overemphasis on male potency, exaggerated feeling of male superiority*)* and patriarchal structure, can affect individuals, especially women, by imposing restrictive norms and expectations.

However, there is a noticeable change in the Lobitos community. People are becoming more open to other cultures and new influences, breaking out of traditional behaviours (Interview 1, 6, 8). A specific focus here is on the youth of Lobitos: they are seen as the future leaders of Lobitos who will bring sustainable change within the community (Interview 8, see Photograph 5).

Photograph 5: Children Playing on a Fishing Vessel (Source: Author, 2024).

One thing that is evident for Lobito's community is that it has been through tough times due to ongoing spatial changes and poverty (Interview 1, Interview 6). The various influences in recent years, as explained in section 4.1, have not left the community untouched. However, this has not made the people of Lobitos weak, but resilient, creative, and self-sufficient (Interview 1, 6, 7, 8).

4.2.2 Fishing Community

> *"They are people who are always very fierce. If a fisherman doesn't catch anything, he takes his motorcycle and goes to be a motorcycle cab driver. If there is nothing in the street, they go and look for it and get back up. They walk on the beach to catch fish and octopus, and they are people who have a very fighting character. Strong."* Manager WAVES

The fishing community makes up the largest part of the Lobitos community (Interview 6). When talking to the people of Lobitos, it is evident how much traditional and ecological local knowledge the community contains, especially regarding natural phenomena and artisanal fishing methods (see Photograph 6). During observation, it became apparent that despite difficult times, the fishermen go out on the boats every day to feed and support their families.

The fishing community comes together through the fishermen's association. This grassroots organisation works to voice the community's needs and provide support (Interview 3). Nevertheless, it is criticised that the fishermen's association lack motivation and that there are conflicts in cooperation with other entities such as tourism organisations or NGOs (Interview 3). A resident who is also part of a fishing family would disagree as can be seen in the quote

at the beginning of the section: he describes the fisher people as fighters and strong entities in the Lobitos community.

Photograph 6: Fishing Community (Source: Author, 2024)

4.3 Tourism

Tourism has a very intensive influence on spatial development and people's lives. In this section, these influences are broken down and the perceptions and the typical kind of tourist who comes to Lobitos are described. The section is rounded up by opportunities and risks of tourism.

4.3.1 Perception

Tourism is seen as an opportunity to promote the local economy of Lobitos and create alternative income structures (Interviews 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12). The local community sees itself as a direct beneficiary of tourism development (Interview 6, Interview 7). Tourism strengthens the community, promotes education and integrates capacity building into society (Interview 6, Interview 8). Nevertheless, it should be noted that this perception of tourism evolved over a lot of years (Interview 8). The cafe and hotel owners emphasised the importance of tourism in Lobitos. It strengthens the infrastructure and brings people from different regions to the area (Interview 9, Interview 10). A GIZ employee emphasises the importance of sustainable or ecotourism as an alternative for the fishing community. Fishing as an economic basis will become increasingly difficult in the future due to climate change and the decline in the fishing population (Interview 11).

There is hope for sustainable growth in tourism and the economy within the community. The EcoSwell manager emphasises that it might be too late, stating that "it grew much more than it should have. We have many more hotels and spaces for tourists than we need". Another concern is the development in the direction of Máncora. In recent years there has been

excessive tourism and crime. The fear of a possible shift towards that direction was mentioned frequently (Interview 1, Interview 9). Another perception of tourism was the impact of other cultural influences on the local community. Residents emphasised that tourism could lead to greater openness to the world and cultural exchange (Interviews 1, 6, 7, 8).

4.3.2 Tourists

The tourists who visit Lobitos are primarily surfers from various parts of the world, including Peru (Observation, see Photograph 7). Additionally, one hotel owner notes a growing influx of families and digital nomads (Interview 10). The main attractions that draw tourists to Lobitos are the beach, the food, and the opportunity for surfing (Interviews 4, Interview 5). Additionally, a hotel employee mentions that tourists can visit nearby areas like Negritos, offering alternative activities such as trekking and exploring natural sites, in addition to surf tourism (Interview 10).
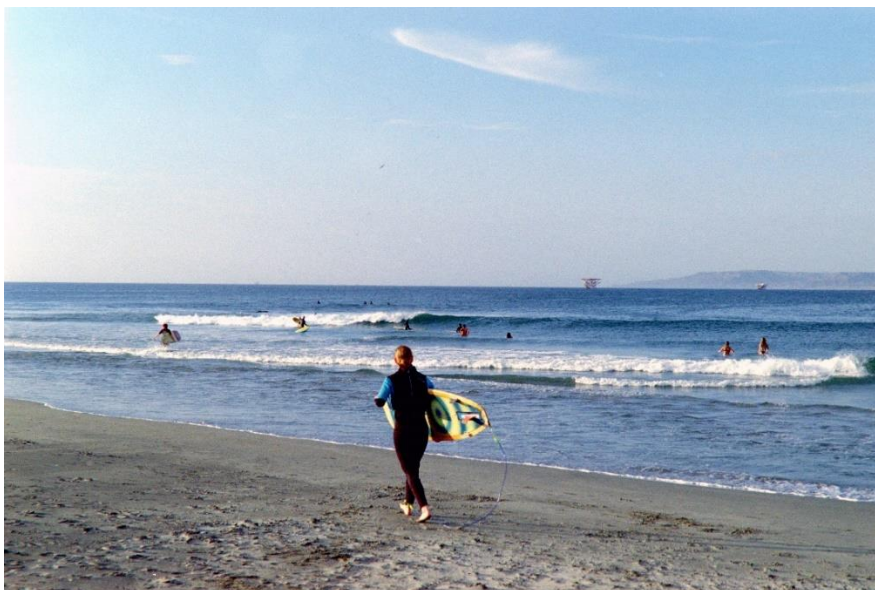
Photograph 7: Surfing Tourists (Source: Author, 2024)

Volunteers represent a distinct group of tourists who regularly visit Lobitos. They often participate in surfing activities, thereby integrating into the broader surfing community.

Three key points must be highlighted regarding the perception of tourists in Lobitos. First, there were initial difficulties including resistance from the local community towards tourists. Second, the differing perceptions of international versus national tourists. Third, there is a noticeable discrepancy between the living areas of tourists and locals.

> "*The people used to be very distant [...] because previously, due to this social, mental issue, of the whole population. It was like: We do not want them here; they want to take that land away from us. Because they came to the shore of the beach where there is a*

better view, and it was like that pain of not being in a better place." – Local Administrative Staff

A member of the local community explains that the initial influx of tourists was not viewed positively. Locals perceived tourists as a threat due to prevailing attitudes towards foreigners at the time. However, the relationship has since improved, with many locals becoming closer to tourists through economic opportunities in photography and surfing. WAVES emphasises its efforts to bridge the gap between the local population and tourists through educational initiatives, noting that these efforts are already bearing fruits. Additionally, WAVES highlights the importance of addressing the community's mental health and providing support, particularly for children.

> *"We receive Peruvian tourists in the summer season […] but being from Peru they do not take care of Peruvian resources. We are impacted by […] the excess of rubbish, perhaps the additional consumption of water, so they destroy something that is our heritage […] International. They are more careful, they kind of respect you a bit more, they value you a bit more, and there is a difference between [Peruvian tourists] and the international tourists."* – Local Kitchen Staff

The locals in Lobitos notice a clear difference between national and international tourists. Although national tourists are also valued because they consume local services and products, international tourists are considered more environmentally conscious (Interview 1, Interview 7). This is also confirmed by an interview with the municipality, which emphasises that the environmental standards in Lobitos should adapt to the apparently high sustainable standards of the international tourists who come to Lobitos (Interview 12). One tourist took a different view of the international tourists. A larger university group of volunteers from EcoSwell who were in Lobitos for several weeks were perceived by her as having an arrogant attitude toward the locals (Interview 5).

> *"I think also the tourists they go to like the really fancy places. They definitely see like the popular places of Lobitos. And if you walk around Lobitos you don't see the poorest places. You do not see like the houses across the street that are really poor."* – European Tourist

While tourists tend to spend time on the popular beach promenade and stay in Nuevo Lobitos to dine and socialise, most of the local population lives in Primavera. Consequently, there is little direct interaction between the tourists and the locals, leading to a significant socio-economic divide (Interview 3, Interview 5).

4.3.3 Opportunities and Risks

Tourism can create opportunities as well as risks. The following themes emerged from the interviews, which are seen as ambivalent: infrastructural development, new variation in economic opportunities, increased foreign influences and intercultural exchange.

Many see Lobitos' infrastructural development as a result of tourism (Interview 6). The road network and mobility have been improved for the arrival of tourists. However, the extreme interference in the ecosystem that this development has brought must also be considered: Some stakeholders stated that the wave of Lobitos has been so severely affected by the uncontrolled construction of hotels directly on the popular beach promenade and the surfing and swimming spot *La Punta* that it no longer meets the demands of advanced surfers (Interview 3, Interview 9). At the moment there is still the possibility to shift to another surf spot *Piscinas*, where the waves are somewhat stronger. Still, the most important surf spot of Lobitos has been damaged in the infrastructural development process. It should also be noted that a gentrification process has taken place with the infrastructural development. Foreigners, hotels and restaurants have settled on the promenade in Nuevo Lobitos, but due to different socio-economic backgrounds and income differences, these cannot necessarily be used by the local community. This is explained further in the discussion.

The new variety of economic alternatives is also often cited as an opportunity. It promotes the realisation of personal interests and offers new independence in the form of financial stability (Interview 8, Interview 11). Some fisherpeople start engaging in tourism opportunities, offering boat and fishing tours (see Photograph 8).

Photograph 8: Fishermen Offering Fishing Tours (Source: Author, 2024)

Nevertheless, it should be noted that external investors and tourism operators are the primary beneficiaries of tourism development and associated activities (Interview 1). They own the

properties, hotels, hostels, restaurants and cafés directly on the popular surf spot *La Punta*, which is regularly visited by tourists. At the time, the municipality supported the tender to external investors, despite the risk of causing lasting damage to the environment (Interview 1). A resident has also spoken of difficult working conditions in the hotels, stating *"In the hostel I worked in, I didn't work for a contract, they didn't give me my benefits. I would come per hour, from eight to four, but without lunch. So, it was a bit complicated"* (Interview 7). Further explaining that the bare act of resting and sitting down was controlled and observed. On the one hand, there are new economic opportunities arising from tourism development, yet the working conditions in some hotels seem not to be adapted to national labour laws.

Surfing is a sport that does not originate from Peru, it has only developed as a sport in recent years (Interview 8). As a result, many surfers who come to Lobitos as tourists are internationals and foreigners who bring their cultural views with them. The intercultural exchange is perceived positively by the locals (Interviews 1, 6, 7, 8). A tourist states that *"[Lobitians] try really hard. They are really interested in where you're from and what you do."* They enjoy interacting with the tourists and volunteers who come to Lobitos. However, the language barrier is often mentioned as an obstacle (Interviews 4, 5, 7).

4.4 NGOs

After the contextualisation of the area and the community and the introduction to tourism, the role and perception of NGOs now follow. In addition, the current projects are presented, and the opportunities and risks are explained. NGOs present in Lobitos are first discussed in general terms and then the focus is placed on EcoSwell.

4.4.1 Development

The first NGO was founded over 15 years ago in Lobitos by British tourists who worked in the Peace Corps in Northern Peru at the time. The founding of the NGO WAVES can be equated with the initiation of tourism development, since it was surfing that brought the founders to Lobitos and made them stay (Interview 8). They recognised the pressing issues facing the area, including the lack of basic amenities like water, electricity, and education and saw the potential of surfing being a catalyst for positive change in Lobitos. A few years ago, this NGO was taken over by a Lobitian and continues its work today.

Eleven years ago, EcoSwell was founded in Lobitos, starting as an organisation that wanted to support the community while having a good time. Today, EcoSwell is represented in Lobitos, and eight other communities spread all over Peru (Interview 3). Starting with grassroots organisations such as the fishermen's association or other neighbourhood organisations, EcoSwell's initial approach was a bottom-up collaboration with the community (Interview 3, Interview 8). This cooperation brought obstacles and complications, which is why the

partnership was terminated, stating that they "*are not working with fishermen until today […] because we just couldn't. The management of these organisations was all over the place, generally sitting on the responsibility of one only person which wouldn't necessarily be committed to the role or have the capabilities for the role*" (Interview 3). The frustration of the failed attempt is evident, as the manager explains: "*Today, I would be ashamed of myself because I was expecting so much out of the community.*" The further development of the NGO was based on projects such as the medical post and dry forest conservation, projects that do not include further cooperation with the fishermen's guild. Since the volunteer program started to grow, and therefore the NGOs financial situation started to improve, EcoSwell evolved into a more business-oriented model with a focus on expanding its activities and volunteer program to other regions and sectors, such as renewable energy systems, public health and conservation of ecosystems (Interview 3, Interview 8).

4.4.2 Role

> "*An [NGO] has a spirit, a soul and that soul is a soul that is driven by charity, by giving, by sharing.*" – Manager WAVES

Both NGOs describe their role as an entity that aims to support the community and support sustainable tourism development (Interview 3, Interview 8). Furthermore, the role of an NGO is seen as a mediator of knowledge and an initiator of new innovative ideas (Interview 12). NGO partners emphasise the importance of NGOs on the ground in local communities as mediators and facilitators. Through NGOs, projects can be realised and implemented in the communities and local stakeholders can be mobilised and educated (Interview 2, Interview 11).

The NGOs have a different approach to their role. WAVES focuses on community support through the education of children: they are given a place to practice surfing and skating, to learn English, or to have another place to go besides their home. Through these activities, the focus is on the awareness and importance of mental health (Interview 8). WAVES emphasise that their work complements that of EcoSwell explaining the impetus for the acceptance that they provide for the projects that EcoSwell implements in the community (Interview 8). WAVES emphasises the importance of adapting to the community's wishes and needs and learning from and together with them. An NGO is supposed to represent a community and strengthen it through empowerment and engagement (Interview 8).

EcoSwell sees its role in the community as a source of hope and motivation and a driving force for sustainable development and economy (Interview 3). They also state to strengthen the community's economy with the constant flow of tourists coming to Lobitos through the volunteer program and the local employees working for EcoSwellI (Interview 3). In addition, EcoSwell perceives its role as setting a standard that other companies can follow. The ethical

code of conduct and how EcoSwell works should serve as a model for other companies in Lobitos (Interview 3).

Both NGOs interpret the role of community support in different approaches. On the one hand, WAVES pursues a bottom-up approach, growth and learning should take place together with the community and an NGO should serve this purpose alone (Interview 3). On the other hand, it seems that EcoSwell operates in a business-oriented manner and tends to adopt a more top-down approach in which it wants to "dynamise the economy" and set an example for how businesses in Lobitos can follow their way of working (Interview 3).

4.4.3 Projects

As already mentioned, WAVES and EcoSwell focus on different subject areas. According to WAVES, these complement each other, as their education programmes form the basis on which EcoSwell's sustainable development programmes can be built.

WAVES started a health programme in the past, as most of the houses in Lobitos only had sandy soil. This jeopardised the children's health, as they were increasingly exposed to diseases through skin contact with the sand and the faeces of domestic animals. According to WAVES, they have built floors, bathrooms and roofs for the most vulnerable households. They then launched a credit programme to support the first businesses in Lobitos. These loans were used to buy motorised taxis and fishing boats and to open shops that still exist today. Now they are focussing on the current issue in the community: mental health. They want to offer the children a place to recover from family stress (e.g. poverty, unemployed father, lack of food) and learn to become resilient and bring out their best. One of their key initiatives is "Surf Therapy", which helps children develop essential soft skills. In this program, children learn teamwork, responsibility, and mutual care, fostering their growth into young community leaders (Interview 8).

> "I think our main impact in the Lobitos community is our capacity to generate income and economic productivity within the locality. That's our focus here. Our focus elsewhere is renewable energy, conservation, ecotourism, all of these things that we are projecting." –Manager EcoSwell

EcoSwell is active in the areas of renewable energy, nature conservation and ecotourism in regions such as Negritos and Piedritas. In Lobitos, on the other hand, EcoSwell focuses on generating income and economic productivity by employing locals and attracting volunteers throughout the year, even outside the main tourist season. Additionally, in Talara and Lobitos, there is the "Resilient Medical Centres" project, where medical facilities are powered by solar energy, making them more resilient to blackouts.

According to the manager, the renewable energy axis is the most effective and marketable with the highest number of volunteers and most funded projects. He emphasised that he would therefore like to build and focus on them in the future. The "Resilient Medical Centre" also falls into this area, as EcoSwell has installed solar panels with financial support from the NEXANS Foundation, a producer of cables and wiring systems. Stating that it has the highest impact, as it reaches the most people (counted by how many people live in the area). The collaboration between the NEXANS Foundation and EcoSwell is the first for the foundation to take place outside Lima. However, logistical challenges arise due to the geographical distance. With all personnel located in Lima, sending engineers and electricians for on-site support, such as installing solar panels or conducting educational sessions, becomes impractical. Consequently, NEXANS involvement is primarily limited to attending inaugurations and support through financial resources. Despite these constraints, NEXANS pledges to continue supporting EcoSwell until 2025 and intends to extend assistance to two additional medical centres in the region (Interview 2, Interview 3). Social capital helps to apply for funding projects in Lima. Another project that falls under renewable energy is the installation of solar panels for households in Lobitos that are not connected to an electricity grid. EcoSwell wants to promote this further to be recognised for it (due to a recognition issue explained in 4.4.4).

Conservation, on the other hand, is an area that is "harder to market", according to the manager. GIZ and EcoSwell are working together on conservation and ecotourism projects, which are financially supported by GIZ's Ebamar programme. Currently, there are two projects with ecotourism trails in Piedritas and Negritos and research is being conducted on water and bioremediation alternatives to reduce the amount of contamination in wastewater ponds. GIZ states that they maintain various forms of cooperation, whereby this collaboration relates exclusively to grants for economic support and EcoSwell enjoys extensive freedom in the realisation and implementation of the projects. The programme and the grants end in September 2024 (Interview 3, Interview 11).

The most important financial basis for EcoSwell is the volunteer programme. The manager states that it makes up almost 50% of the income of the organisation. He further emphasised that *"it is a very beautiful model because you are getting interns within the organisation that make a financial contribution to the organisation to work on the sponsored projects that serious organisations like GIZ, ENEL Energy, and NEXANS Foundation […] finance. In that way we can use both of our income streams to make something that has a beautiful impact in society and at the same time helps us be sustainable financially in time"* (Interview 3). In Lobitos, renewable energy, conservation and research interns are present and medical volunteers supporting the health post. However, one medical volunteer mentioned that while she liked the project, she felt not particularly needed and rather redundant, stating: *"I do like the project. I*

don't know how useful it is for Lobitos because if I wasn't there, they would just do the same thing without me. Like the nurse would see the patients instead of me" (Interview 4). Additionally, the nurse working with her noted that in the past, the language barrier has made it difficult for volunteers to communicate with patients. This time, though, the volunteer can be alone with the patients because she speaks Spanish (Interview 4). The conversations with volunteers revealed ambivalent experiences. While they express happiness in contributing to the Lobitos community, there is also a sense of feeling superfluous or ineffective. The issue of the high cost of internships was frequently raised, with one volunteer expressing dissatisfaction over the lack of clear information about project content beforehand. This led to a feeling of being drawn to Lobitos without a comprehensive understanding of what to expect (Observation). In response, one of the managers noted the challenges in offering full benefits, particularly for short-term stays. Emphasising that not everyone can install solar panels on family homes and explaining the importance of contributing through research efforts (Observation).

4.4.4 Perception

Overall, NGOs are recognised as important organisations in Lobitos as they bring people from all over the world and introduce new technologies and information to the community (Interview 8, Interview 12).

By the local community, NGOs are perceived as an *"organisation that gives"*, a resident corrects this misperception to an *"entity that supports"* (Interview 7), pointing out that a reciprocal relationship between NGOs and the local community is necessary. Rather than simply providing aid, NGOs aim to empower communities by teaching them how to provide for themselves e.g. teaching how to fish rather than simply handing out fish.

What EcoSwell as an NGO does and how it implements its projects do not seem to be adequately communicated and therefore sufficiently understood by the community. Additionally, local community members further note that there are issues with EcoSwell's recognition. The local community often lacks awareness of who EcoSwell is and does not fully understand which projects are initiated and implemented by them. Instead, projects carried out by EcoSwell have often been mistakenly attributed to WAVES, both in the past and continuing to this day. (Interview 1, Interview 7).

> *"But it was as if EcoSwell existed as anonymous. Because we knew more, well, I knew more about WAVES, the NGO, than about EcoSwell. Even when I found out about the solar panels at the health centre, I thought that WAVES had put them up, but later they told me that it was not, that it was EcoSwell. So, I was a little bit like, people were not well informed about what EcoSwell did."* – Local Kitchen Staff

One explanation is the earlier founding year of WAVES, through which more people tend to associate projects with this NGO. Additionally, it was noted that EcoSwell initially maintained a low profile, leading to scepticism among the local community to perceive them as *gringos, (*a term that refers to English speakers, mostly US Americans and British) who were there to take Lobitos' money (Interview 1, Interview 7). Today, perceptions have shifted due to initiatives like the "Planting Day" project, house visits e.g. energy consultations and social media presence. Additionally, EcoSwell's installation of solar panels at the fishermen's pier and medical centre has increased familiarity with the organisation among the local community. Another significant aspect is the generation of jobs for the local community, further enhancing acceptance and strengthening relationships (Interview 1, Interview 3, Interview 7). The work at EcoSwell is highly valued by the local community employed in the NGO. The working conditions at EcoSwell are better than at local companies, as the employees have a legal and official employment contract, which provides a regular and secure income (Interview 3). The working principle "*deja tu gente surfear*" (let your people surf) is appreciated, which includes going to the beach and taking breaks if work is too stressful or when having a bad day (Interview 1, Interview 7). A resident of Negritos employed in Lobitos emphasises EcoSwell's significant social and environmental impact on the community. Moreover, it was noted that EcoSwell's influence extends beyond Lobitos to other regions like Negritos, where the organisation implements projects and supports the development of the area (Interview 9). Another resident underscores the high importance of EcoSwell for Lobitos development, citing it as crucial to health success through the support of the medical post (Interview 8). Nevertheless, communication with the community remains an area with further necessary improvements (Interview 1, Interview 7).

Volunteers perceive EcoSwell as an opportunity to bring together various interests such as public health, environmentalism, and sustainable development to assist communities (Interview 4). In conversations, it has often been emphasised that they wish to apply their knowledge from their studies or other areas, and they feel that EcoSwell is making a positive and useful impact in the community. It was criticised that there seems to be a difference between the locals and the internationals in Lobitos, which leads to less interaction, partly due to the language barrier. As mentioned earlier in section 3.3.3, a tourist remarked that she found the group of EcoSwell volunteers disturbing when interacting with locals, stating that *"there was a really big group of English [volunteers] from university that stayed here. They would go to places and they were quite often very drunk […] and they would break stuff and not really fix it. They would leave a mess"* (Interview 5). This leads to a discrepancy between the NGO manager's statement of being a role model for other businesses in Lobitos and the apparent lack of oversight over the volunteers.

The external funding partners GIZ and NEXANS Foundation have a positive perception of the NGO EcoSwell. GIZ appreciates that EcoSwell was founded and works successfully with the community in Lobitos despite being from Lima. They are grateful for EcoSwell's cooperation and professional handling of complex German contracts and strict deadlines, including detailed accountability reports and numerous clauses. The NEXANS Foundation recognises that EcoSwell is well positioned within its NGO ranking and aligned with its mission and goals. They commend EcoSwell for consistently completing projects on time, providing comprehensive reports and working effectively with medical centres. This positive experience leads NEXANS to want to continue its partnership with EcoSwell in the future (Interview 2, Interview 11).

4.4.5 Opportunities and Risks

NGOs can bring with them various opportunities and risks. The interviews revealed these in the form of the expansion of the NGO, project durations, reliance on funds and grants and the introduction of other cultures through volunteer programmes.

To be profitable in the future and to impact more people, EcoSwell plans to expand further, move into other areas, and implement new projects (Interview 3).

> *"Our idea is not to stay here in Lobitos, [it] has its limits. It's a 1,300 people town […]. I'm seriously thinking that we need to expand into the Amazon, for example, into other areas of the southern highlands, and not only expand as a project developer, but also as a network of internship placements for other NGOs. That's our vision. That's where we want to arrive. We do not want to just stay being this little NGO from the north of Peru that develops a few projects every year. We want to have the capacity to develop projects around the nation, but also the capacity to connect through our volunteer internship network."* – Manager EcoSwell

This expansion could bring growth but also neglect projects on a smaller scale because of limited resources and attention. Balancing the pursuit of large-scale ventures with maintaining support for local initiatives will be crucial for ensuring sustained positive impact and community engagement.

Another challenge is the limited duration of projects. As a GIZ employee emphasises, many projects only run for a certain period. When the programme comes to an end, there is a high risk that its results will fall apart, and the local community will not be able to continue it without further support (Interview 11).

NGOs base their work largely on funds and grants, which they must apply for. If donors decide to discontinue these or no further funds can be generated, this could have consequences for the NGO and its projects (Interview 3). The partners of EcoSwell who were interviewed

emphasised the strong cooperation with EcoSwell and the continuation of collaboration with them is desired (Interview 2, Interview 11). In addition, EcoSwell secures further financial income from projects with international universities and the volunteer programme (Interview 3). The latter is also a challenge that EcoSwell brings with it.

The volunteer programme is based on regularly bringing tourists from all over the world to Lobitos, who then work on-site for the various programmes (Interview 1, Interview 3, Interview 7). These volunteers bring their world views and cultures with them. This cultural exchange can bring both opportunities and risks. Cultural exchange is seen as enriching by the local employees in EcoSwell, but the language barrier is still mentioned (Interview 1, Interview 7). Volunteers mostly speak English and are therefore unable to communicate with the local Spanish speakers (Interview 4). One resident also emphasises that many perceive the volunteers in Lobitos as the *gringos*. (Interview 1). They stress that they would like to see more interaction between the volunteers and the local community, as many locals do not even know what the volunteers are doing in Lobitos (Interview 1, Interview 7). One example provided as an opportunity to overcome that discrepancy is the "Planting Day" project, fostering interaction between the volunteers and the community through the planting of trees and plants (Interview 1).

5. Discussion

Understanding the role of NGOs in rural coastal areas like Lobitos requires explaining the spatial change, how the NGO contributes to that change and its positioning within the actors influencing that change – such as fostering tourism in a broader sense. Finally, this will lead to an overview of the positive and negative impacts NGOs can have and an overall conclusion.

5.1 Impact of Tourism Development

Lobitos has undergone significant spatial changes in recent years, mainly due to the infrastructure and tourism development along the beachfront promenade. This development includes the construction of hotels, restaurants and cafés near *La Punta* and a potential division between tourists and the local community.

5.1.1 Opportunities and Improvements

On the positive side, tourism has increased environmental awareness within the community and improved waste management practices. Additionally, tourism provides alternative employment opportunities (Seminario et al. 2023). According to GIZ, artisanal fishing methods are under threat from climate change and environmental impacts, and tourism offers legal alternative activities for those affected (Tantamjarik, 2004). Furthermore, EcoSwell employees

highlight the value of cultural exchange between volunteers, tourists, and the local community, fostering an atmosphere of mutual understanding and learning. Tourism also stimulates infrastructural development, leading to improvements in roads, water systems, public transport, and electricity. These developments can significantly enhance the overall quality of life for the community (Tantamjarik, 2004).

5.1.2 Tourism Gentrification and Surf Colonialism

On the negative side, this transformation has brought with it a clear socio-economic divide that is evident in the different areas where locals live compared to tourists (see Figure 7). Diving deeper into the processes driving this change, two important dynamics emerge: tourism gentrification and surf colonialism.
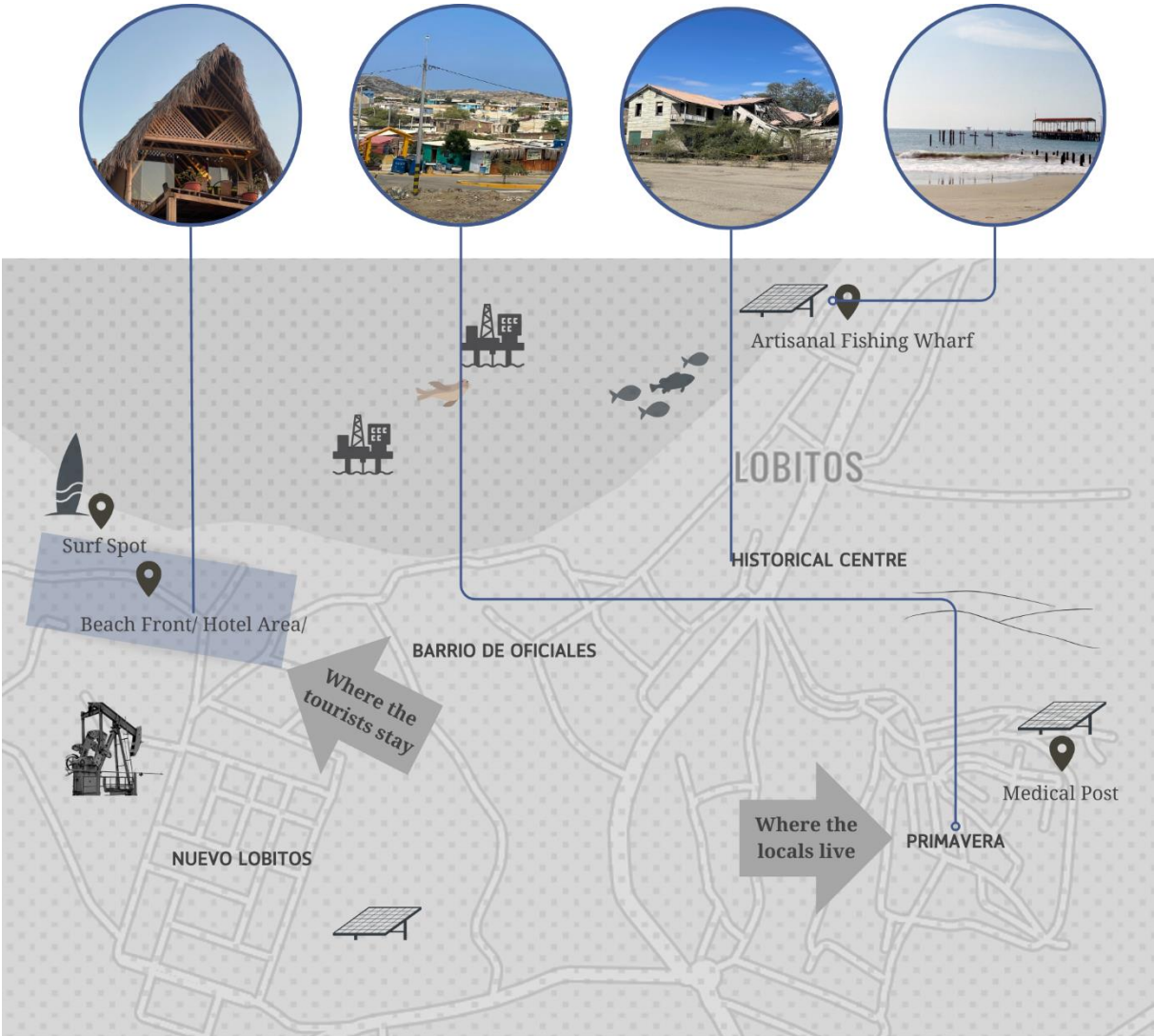
Figure 7: Map of Lobitos with Tourism Development (Source: Author, 2024).

Gentrification refers to the replacement of existing residents with individuals or businesses of higher socioeconomic status (Salas, 2021). Tourism gentrification, especially in places like Lobitos, involves the creation of tourist-friendly spaces with diverse consumption options and

clean environments (Cocola-Gant, 2019). Cocola-Gant (2019) argues that tourism plays a crucial role in the development and growth of peripheral countries such as Peru. However, it also exacerbates geographical disparities and regional inequalities. Although direct tourism gentrification in Lobitos may not yet be fully realised, its early signs are visible in certain areas, particularly along the beachfront promenade next to Nuevo Lobitos, a neighbourhood where locals also live. Although most locals live in Primavera, some also inhabit Nuevo Lobitos, albeit to a lesser extent. Therefore, the physical divide between the beachfront and Nuevo Lobitos may not be significant, but the underlying socioeconomic factors driving this divide are substantial. The streets lined with hotels and restaurants are predominantly devoid of residents, similar to the exclusive displacement described by Marcuse (1985), where people are unable to move into certain areas due to gentrification. The spatial changes in Lobitos caused by tourism have also led to rising property values and the land has been bought up and developed mainly by foreign and external investors. Another factor is the relegation of locals to service positions within the tourism industry. As the local economy becomes increasingly dependent on tourism, opportunities for economic advancement for locals are diminishing, forcing them to participate in tourism (Salas, 2021). It must be said that this process can be imposed from the outside but may also be desired by the local community.

Furthermore, the spatial changes in Lobitos are linked to the phenomenon of surf colonialism, where surf culture from Western or predominantly white communities influences coastal areas, often in the Global South (Hough-Snee & Eastman, 2017; Tantamajarik, 2004). This can manifest itself in economic displacement through rising property prices and cost of living, forcing local communities to leave their coastal areas. In Lobitos, the locals have not been directly displaced, however, they are not part of the newer constructions. Surf colonialism can also lead to environmental damage through the construction of surf resorts and the over-exploitation of natural resources (Tantamajarik, 2004). This can be seen in Lobitos, where the uncontrolled construction of hotels and hostels has changed the environment and caused lasting damage. The wave for surfing has been permanently changed. Furthermore, development reflects broader power imbalances where the interests of wealthier, often Westernised, individuals take precedence over those of local communities (Hough-Snee & Eastman, 2017).

5.1.3 NGOs Influence

EcoSwell and WAVES both contribute to and support the tourism development in the area. This does not necessarily have to be wrong. However, due to the points mentioned above, it should not only be viewed positively and can have negative consequences. Although the NGO manager of EcoSwell is critical of the intensive building and construction development on the beachfront, he explains the destruction is irreversible and now everyone must work with what

has already happened. WAVES's approach is to sensitise the community and offer English and surfing courses to connect the community with tourism. As the manager of WAVES emphasises, he wants the community in Lobitos to become the future leaders, opening their stores, restaurants and hotels. WAVES aims at strengthening the community from within and offering opportunities, giving it the resources and capacities to prepare for future tourism impacts. EcoSwell has been bringing volunteers to Lobitos for years, which drives tourism but without directly including the local community. By bringing tourists to the area and especially by promoting surfing, the NGOs have contributed not only to the economy and community engagement but also to the gentrification and surf colonialism process.

Besides the concerns of possible tourism gentrification and surf colonialism, the future of spatial development in Lobitos remains uncertain in its overall development. Firstly, the indicated decline by the interviewed stakeholders in wave quality is restricting the region's most important tourist attractions. While the local community envisions a tourism future with the expansion of Lobitos, the following considerations arise: a) Can Lobitos support such growth in terms of infrastructure, given that e.g. the water system is inadequate and the road to Talara is underdeveloped? b) What are the prospects for tourism growth in the absence of alternative services or attractions in Lobitos? EcoSwell's volunteer programme aims to address the latter issue by encouraging tourist engagement throughout the year, but whether it is sufficient for future tourism ambitions needs to be considered, particularly in terms of the potentially desirable rise of tourism. Negritos and Piedritas provide an alternative to surfing tourism with the newly established ecotourism trails by EcoSwell and GIZ. New tourist attractions could counteract the potential minimisation of tourism and make the region a coherent construct of different activities. However, if supra-regional tourism is planned, the infrastructure and road systems would have to be improved, as they are not yet sufficiently developed. As mentioned by the municipality, the implementation of a coastal highway connecting the different cities is in progress, whether this will be developed remains to be seen.

Additionally, the existing contracts with the oil companies are expiring. The pressing issue is the responsible closure of wells and the whereabouts of the associated machinery, such as the oil rigs on land and at sea, which could pose significant environmental hazards. Johnston et al. (2018) state that environmental damage resulting from improper well closure includes soil, groundwater, and air contamination and risks of accidents and pollution exposure for nearby communities. The environmental impact of an oil spill could have drastic consequences, especially for the fishing community and tourism development.

5.2 Interplay of Different Actors

The current spatial development in Lobitos is characterised by the interaction of various stakeholders, each with a different role and influence (see Figure 8). The three most important

stakeholder groups are highlighted further, which are the local community, the municipality and the NGOs.
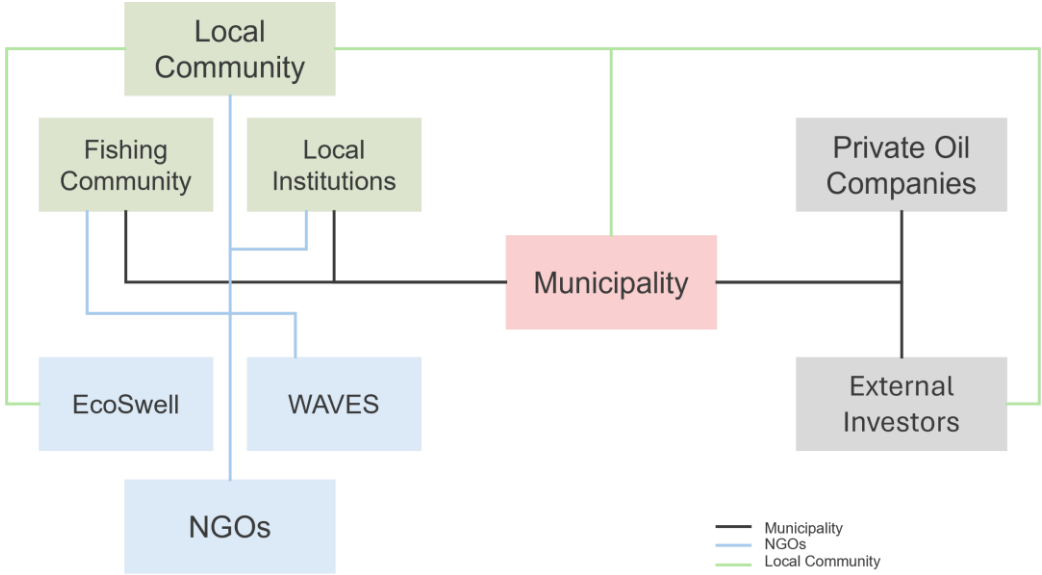
Figure 8: Stakeholder Interactions (Source: Author, 2024)

The local community's relationship with the outside investors is largely limited to an employer-employee relationship, with locals serving as labour for hotels and restaurants (Salas, 2021). This dynamic is problematic as working conditions are poor according to residents.

The municipality is the central actor and is connected to almost all other stakeholders that influence the development of the region. It thus forms the bridge between the local community, private companies and external investors However, this central role leads the fishing community to feel excluded from important decisions, such as the decision on the broken oil platform and its consequences for the oil companies. Similarly, decisions about land use on the beachfront are mainly made between the municipality and external investors, which often leaves the local community feeling left out and dissatisfied with the process. The municipality's lack of initiative to connect the various actors highlights a weak government structure that can cause severe consequences for the community and development. The UNCED (1992) states that *"local authorities construct, operate, and maintain economic, social, and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and subnational environmental policies."* Emphasising that for sustainable development, the level of governance closest to the people plays a crucial role in educating, mobilising and responding to the public. Several factors are crucial for sustainable community development: the community must have an institutional voice, the local population must be informed and engaged, and there must be a local capacity to negotiate agreements between competing interest groups (Brugmann, 1996). The latter is not fulfilled by the local authorities. In the past decisions have been made without community

involvement, such as the sale of land at the beginning of tourism development and agreements with oil companies behind closed doors. This indicates corrupt behaviour by the local authorities, also pointed out by the residents. If a local government fails to bring together different interest groups, this could lead to conflict, social fragmentation, uneven development, lack of support, inefficient use of resources, environmental degradation and loss of trust (Cardoso & Faletto, 2024; IPCC, 2021).

The institutional weakness of governments has been one of the main reasons for the rise and importance of NGOs (Brum, 2010; Pinheiro Barbosa, 2013; Price, 1994). In Lobitos, WAVES and EcoSwell fill this gap, not directly by publicly denouncing it or promoting it in their programmes, but indirectly through projects that address the community's basic needs (e.g. education and energy). However, the lack of collaboration at the community level represents a missed opportunity. The study by Nelson-Nuñez and Pizzi (2018) emphasises the potential for collaboration between local governments and NGOs in Peru. They highlight that NGOs can contribute (technical) expertise and knowledge, mobilise additional funding and advocate for innovative solutions. The latter is demonstrated by EcoSwell, which installs solar panels for sustainable and alternative energy solutions, and WAVES, which offers "Surf Therapy" to improve children's mental health. This is an innovative way of tackling important problems in the community.

Regarding the local community, the interactions differ between WAVES and EcoSwell. WAVES has a strong connection to the local community through its children's programmes, which aim to benefit the whole community and are widely recognised. WAVES also works with local institutions such as schools to provide English programmes.

EcoSwell worked with the fishing community and neighbourhood associations in the past, but this relationship did not last, indicating potential problems that led to the termination of the collaboration. Nevertheless, EcoSwell continues to engage with local institutions such as *La Casona*, which serves as a cultural centre in Lobitos. The local community is also connected to EcoSwell as locals work for the NGO. Despite these links, there are significant concerns about the lack of cooperation between EcoSwell and the local community, specifically the fishing community and the neighbourhood associations. The concepts of FPIC and SLO are used to further elaborate on the issue.

SLO reflects the level of acceptance EcoSwell receives from the local community (Jijeleva & Vanclay, 2016; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). The core concepts of SLO are legitimacy, credibility and trust. Gaining the community's trust should be at the core of every NGO. To achieve a level of trust, EcoSwell must act fair, deeply understand the local dynamics, behave respectfully, be transparent about their information, be technologically competent and engage socially (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). EcoSwell is transparent about its information, but how it and

if it reaches the community is not clear. They have technological expertise in renewable energies and conservation and engage socially through the "Planting Day" project. This makes them legit, but gaining the community's trust does not seem to be present, which can be further explained through FPIC.

FPIC emphasises on ethnodevelopment culturally contextualised development with communities having the right to decide their future and the use of their resources (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). Meaning to respect the community's legitimate authority and treat them based on equality and respect. Since EcoSwell does not emerge from a local context, it is important to put their views and values at the back and put the needs of the local community first. A statement by EcoSwell's manager describing the Lobitos community as a society that has "gone backwards" emphasises the discrepancies between the community and EcoSwell. This is further deepened by the statement that it is shameful to have trusted in the community's abilities. Such comments show not only a discrepancy but a disrespect towards the local community, its abilities and possibilities. This shows a profound rift, particularly with the fishing community. Many inhabitants of Lobitos do not know exactly which projects EcoSwell has implemented and what their exact tasks are. Initially, EcoSwell and its volunteers were met with suspicion and labelled *gringos*. Although this image has improved through projects such as the "Planting Day" and the installation of solar systems in public infrastructure, there still seems to be a lack of dialogue between all the different groups of the community and EcoSwell.

Referring back to Eversole (2016), external NGOs (which EcoSwell was categorised in) can act as catalysts, organisers, educators, and money and information givers, but they can also exert their outside biases and views. EcoSwell conducts a stakeholder engagement partially through "Planting Day", has technical expertise, aims to foster projects that benefit the local community and is transparent about its projects. Nevertheless, the absence of a profound respect for the local community, the delivery of its project purposes and the lack of involvement in decision-making processes do not provide them with an SLO and do not implement FPIC. The absence of FPIC and SLO means that EcoSwell's projects are implemented without the necessary consent and participation of the local community and the implementation of projects that they perceive as important for the community. If the local community does not feel that their needs and perspectives are respected and included, mistrust arises, and their development projects can fail or even be harmful (Hanna & Vanclay 2013). WAVES emphasises that they lay the foundation for the acceptance of EcoSwell projects by sensitising the community to sustainability and tourism issues. However, EcoSwell should not build on the work of WAVES, but establish a connection with the community out of its own motivation. Even if conflicts have arisen in the past, this does not mean that cooperation is ruled out forever. As Vanclay & Hanna (2019) point out, obtaining and maintaining an SLO from the community is

not a one-time effort, but an ongoing process of adjustments, engagement efforts, dialogues and the search for common ground. EcoSwell in its early days sought to gain community acceptance through engagement and committees, this approach and the involvement of SLOs and FPICs needs to be built upon again. Since they work on projects influencing the local community, obtaining FPIC and maintaining an SLO approach be again the highest priority for EcoSwell.

5.3 Impact of NGOs

Even projects and organisations that aim to do good can have unintended negative consequences and all projects can be managed better to reduce the negative impacts and improve the benefits (Giderler, 2023). Based on the categories by Tantamjarik (2004) in Table 1, the impacts were analysed in the environmental, socio-cultural and economic aspects (see Table 4).

Aspect	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Environmental	- Improvement of resilient energy systems through solar panels on medical posts, the fishermen's pier and private houses in Lobitos - Research on wastewater treatment e.g. Bioremediation - Planting plants and trees in Lobitos - Building eco-tourism treks in Piedritas and Negritos	- An increased influx of volunteers and tourists could harm the ecosystems - Contribution to infrastructural tourism development
Socio-Cultural	- Intercultural exchange between the locals working at the NGO and the volunteers - Educational offers - Improving mental health through the "Surf Therapy" project	- Cultural clashes and language barrier - Disrespectful behaviour of volunteers towards the community - Discrepancies between the local community and the NGO → Lack of a Social License to Operate → No consideration of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent - Contribution to tourism development that did not include the community in its initial stages - Being part of tourism gentrification and surf colonialism
Economic	- Offering jobs with legal contracts and benefits, additionally having an open work mentality "deja tu gente surfear" - Providing a year-long influx of tourists through the volunteer program	- Plans on expanding the NGO bring uncertainty on a low-scale level – A possible shift from NGO to Social Enterprise could emphasise the financial aspect over social values - Potential inflation and increased cost of living due to the influx of foreign volunteers and tourists

Table 4: Positive /Negative Impacts of NGOs that Promote Tourism (Source: Author, 2024)

5.3.1 Environmental Impacts

In the environmental domain, EcoSwell has made significant strides in improving resilient energy systems through the installation of solar panels on medical posts, fishermen's piers, and private houses in Lobitos. That makes the local community more resilient to natural disasters and more independent without relying on the electricity companies. Additionally, research initiatives on wastewater treatment, such as bioremediation, contribute to cleaner and safer water sources. Efforts in reforestation and planting trees in Lobitos not only improve air quality but also enhance local biodiversity and environmental awareness. Building eco-tourism treks in Piedritas and Negritos promotes environmental consciousness and conservation. Negative impacts are the potential of harming the ecosystems due to an increased influx of volunteers and tourists, and the contribution to the tourist development.

5.3.2 Socio-cultural Impacts

Socio-culturally, the NGOs foster intercultural exchange between locals and volunteers, promoting mutual understanding and learning. WAVES offers educational programs, including language classes, which enhance local skills and knowledge. Additionally, projects like "Surf Therapy" contribute to mental well-being by combining physical activity with therapeutic benefits. Despite these advantages, challenges exist. Cultural clashes and language barriers can lead to misunderstandings and tensions. Some volunteers exhibited disrespectful behaviour towards the community. Discrepancies between the community and NGOs, such as the lack of an SLO, and not considering FPIC can result in conflicts and a lack of trust and harm to the community (Hanna & Vanclay, 2019). Being part of the overall tourism development also has its implications. Both NGOs are driving this development forward, but WAVES is setting an example by strengthening the community from within and making it resilient to the impacts (as mentioned in 5.1). The negative effects of tourism development are not a failure on the part of NGOs, but the way these effects are managed can be. Potentially (and unintentionally) being part of tourism gentrification and surf colonialism processes, NGOs need to be acutely aware of these dynamics to avoid contributing to these forms of displacement and other significant social impacts (e.g. cultural clashes, prioritising Western values).

5.3.3 Economic Impacts

Economically, NGOs provide jobs with legal contracts and benefits, fostering an open work mentality and offering stable employment opportunities. This provides a healthy working environment, especially in contrast to the working conditions in other institutions in Lobitos. This is highly appreciated by the local community members working in EcoSwell. Moreover, the volunteer program by EcoSwell brings a year-long influx of tourists, supporting local businesses and generating income. However, the influx of foreign volunteers and tourists can lead to inflation and increased cost of living, making it difficult for locals to afford necessities,

especially in the tourist areas. Additionally, the expansion plans of NGOs can introduce uncertainty and instability to local economies in the future.

For many NGOs, the obvious strategy for increasing impact is to expand projects or programs (Edwards & Hulme, 2013). The challenge here is to maintain the quality of interventions while at the same time scaling up their impact (Robinson, 2013). The manager from EcoSwell is indicating the desire for an expansion of their program throughout different areas within Peru. As expansion occurs, changes in culture, structure and accountability may accumulate to change the organisation from a voluntary organisation to a public service contractor oriented towards servicing needs as defined by donors to the national governments (Edwards & Hulme, 2013). Also, a change from the NGO model to a social enterprise might be possible, since the manager is indicating a strong business focus in his statements. The potential consequences of an expansion could be (Edwards & Hulme, 2013; Robinson, 2013; Mikołajczak, 2020; Giderler, 2023):

- Decrease on the local-level quality of programs
- Simple replication of projects from one context to the other
- Potential loss of culturally contextualised projects
- Loss of a flexible and experimental stance
- Extension of the hierarchy within the organisation
- Focus on professionalism and a sub-domination of mission-related values
- Focus on financial gain over social impact
- Increase of planning in revenue and expenses, a more structured and stable way of operating

EcoSwell has already expanded its projects into the neighbouring areas of Negritos, Piedritas and Talara. The manager emphasised that the cooperation between EcoSwell, the local community and the governments is working well in those regions. Additionally, EcoSwell is well-positioned to navigate the NGO funding market through its professionalism, as the GIZ and NEXANS Foundation point out. Still, a further expansion could have consequences for Lobitos, as there is no SLO from the local community and the above-mentioned points such as a decrease in local-level quality could take effect. Should EcoSwell expand further, it should develop an efficient strategy to avoid the possible negative impacts.

WAVES ensures the long-term sustainability of projects by transferring ownership and management to the local community. This ensures that the benefits of development continue even after the NGOs have scaled back their involvement.

To ensure sustainable development, communities must be treated with respect and empowered. Projects must deliver social value and local benefits while respecting the rights and needs of local communities, as outlined by the SIA discourse (Vanclay 2013). Whenever people perceive an unwanted alteration in their immediate surroundings e.g. tourism, it invariably leads to anxiety and apprehension. Consequently, successful social performance in projects by NGOs should aim to help the communities manage such changes effectively (Vanclay, 2020). NGOs should not assume that new economic opportunities will automatically benefit communities. They need to help communities explore potential negative impacts and mitigate them (Ashley, 2000). Understanding the social impacts of tourism on communities is essential to prevent a backlash against tourists and tourism development (Ashley, 2000). Tourism initiatives should align with the identity and future vision of local communities (Vanclay, 2012), and ecotourism projects must consider the integration of local communities and their socio-cultural characteristics (Esparza-Huamanchumo et al., 2023). If further expansion is going to take place, EcoSwell must ensure that the quality of their small-scale projects is maintained and does not lead to negative impacts on local communities.

5.4 Conclusion

The role of sustainable tourism NGOs in the development of the coastal region of Northern Peru, particularly in Lobitos, highlights the complex interplay of their potential positive and negative impacts. The following section summarises the outcomes of this research, referring back to the central question: *How do sustainable tourism NGOs influence the development of the coastal region of Northern Peru?*

NGOs like EcoSwell and WAVES have significantly contributed to the spatial and economic transformation of Lobitos, fostering environmental awareness and resilient energy systems, and creating alternative employment opportunities. These efforts have enhanced infrastructure, facilitated cultural exchanges, and provided valuable educational and mental health benefits through innovative projects such as "Surf Therapy" and the installation of solar panels.

However, the rapid tourism development, partially driven by these NGOs, has also brought challenges, including a process of tourism gentrification and surf colonialism. The socio-economic divide between locals and tourists has become more pronounced, with an increased cost of living in some amenities potentially excluding the local community. Furthermore, the influx of volunteers and tourists risks harming local ecosystems and contributing to eroding local social cohesion.

The lack of sufficient community involvement and the absence of an SLO and FPIC in EcoSwell's projects highlight the importance of gaining the community's trust and ensuring that

development aligns with local needs and perspectives. While WAVES has successfully integrated community engagement into its programs, EcoSwell's approach has sometimes lacked the necessary respect and inclusion of local voices, leading to tensions and mistrust. Finally, the potential for future expansion by EcoSwell raises concerns about the quality and culturally contextualised nature of further projects and a possible shift from a mission-based organisation to a more business-oriented model such as a social enterprise.

To ensure sustainable development and prevent an extractive tourism future, NGOs must engage in continuous dialogue with local communities, respect their autonomy, and address potential negative impacts proactively. This includes not only mitigating environmental and socio-economic impacts but also ensuring that tourism initiatives reflect the identity and aspirations of residents. By adopting a more inclusive and respectful approach, NGOs can foster long-term benefits for the coastal region of Northern Peru, promoting a balanced and sustainable model of tourism development that empowers local communities.

6. Reflection

6.1 Applicability of Theories

The SIA literature, particularly concepts like SLO and FPIC, effectively explains how NGOs can engage with local communities. These theories highlight the importance of community engagement and adopting a community-based approach in projects, which aligns well with the findings of the case study. The tourism literature also provides valuable insights into how tourism can be both beneficial and harmful to regions like Lobitos. However, limitations were evident in the availability of sources for describing the overall regional dynamics and the towns of Talara, Negritos and Piedritas. Additionally, due to word count restriction, some discourses were not further explored but could have been interesting for the study: Deepening the exploration of positive and negative impacts of NGO expansion on local communities, comparing the case study to similar surf tourism developments in other Latin American countries (e.g. Costa Rica) or even within Peru (e.g. Máncora). Furthermore, the potential outcomes of collaborations between local governments and NGOs could benefit from a closer examination.

6.2 Use in Planning Theory and Practice

The conclusions drawn from the study have potential implications for planning theory and practice. First and foremost, there is an undeniable importance of genuine community engagement and adopting a community-based approach to planning. It is crucial that planning emphasises the integration of SLO and FPIC to ensure projects are accepted and supported

by local communities. Furthermore, the dual role of NGOs as both catalysts for development and potential agents of gentrification and cultural disruption must be recognised. Planning practices must account for this ambivalence, striving to maximise the positive impacts while minimising the negatives. The expansion of NGO projects should be carefully managed to avoid any loss of quality and contextual relevance.

When working in the tourism domain, planners need to strike a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the potential negative impacts. This balance involves creating strategies that mitigate the adverse effects such as tourism gentrification and surf colonialism. Sustainable tourism that aligns with the identity and future vision of local communities should be prioritised in both theories and practices. Planners must institutionalise mechanisms for dialogue and grievance mechanisms between all stakeholders to ensure the sustainable and inclusive development of rural and coastal regions.

6.3 Personal Reflection

For this master's thesis, it was important for me to choose a topic that connects my academic career with my family background. Upon arriving in Lima, I was surprised to learn from my grandfather that he is from Lobitos, the small fishing village I was trying to investigate. This revelation significantly enhanced my engagement with the local community, facilitating meaningful interactions. The use of semi-structured interviews and participant observation proved to be effective tools, providing rich qualitative data. My deep interest in the study topic helped me to invest much effort and thought. Additionally, my internship at EcoSwell provided valuable insights and allowed me to establish relationships with local workers and volunteers. However, these relationships sometimes made it challenging to maintain complete objectivity.

Reflecting on the experience, I realise that extending my stay in Lobitos would have been beneficial, although this was difficult within the constraints of a one-year program. Visiting surrounding areas more frequently such as Talara, Negritos, and Piedritas would have provided a broader perspective. Moreover, establishing a realistic scope for the thesis from the beginning would have prevented overly ambitious objectives that exceeded the study's limitations, I needed to realise that I could not address all the problems in Peru with my thesis. Nevertheless, this master's thesis not only helped me advance in my academic career but also fostered personal growth and more connection to my Peruvian identity.

The outcomes of the study appear convincing to me, although it is important to recognise the unique context of Lobitos, which has undergone significant spatial developments in a short time. This uniqueness makes it difficult to generalise the findings to other regions. Nonetheless, the outcomes highlight how NGO activities can vary even within a single region and reveal potential negative impacts. While discussions about NGOs often focus on positive sentiment,

it is important to challenge these views and consider the complexities and potential downsides of their activities since they work closest to local communities.

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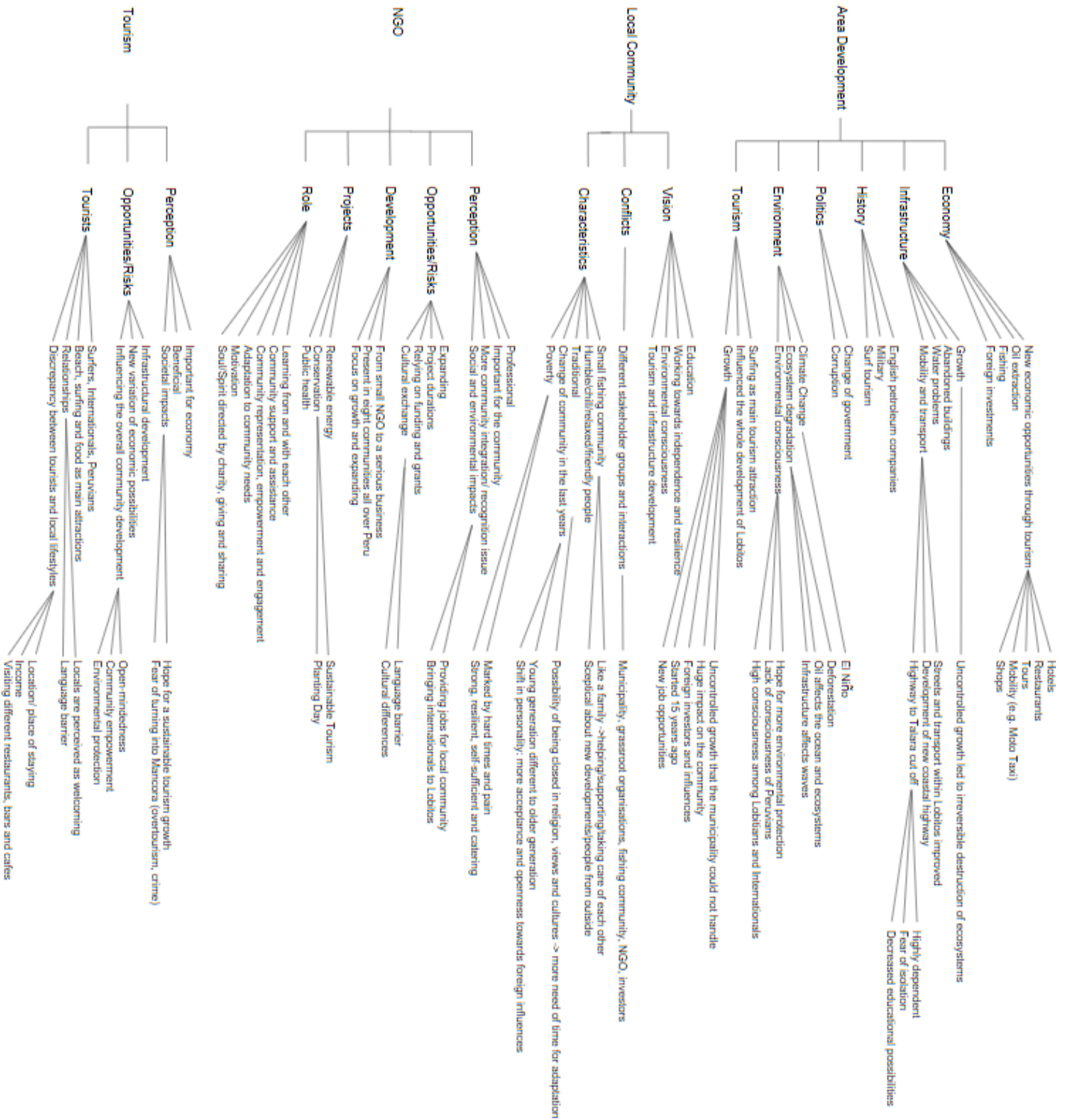
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Appendix I: Coding Tree

- **Area Development**
  - **Economy**
    - New economic opportunities through tourism
      - Hotels
      - Restaurants
      - Tours
      - Mobility (e.g. Moto Taxi)
      - Shops
    - Oil extraction
    - Fishing
    - Foreign investments
  - **Infrastructure**
    - Growth
    - Abandoned buildings
    - Water problems
    - Mobility and transport
      - Uncontrolled growth led to irreversible destruction of ecosystems
      - Streets and transport within Lobitos improved
      - Development of new coastal highway
      - Highway to Talara cut off
        - Highly dependent
        - Fear of isolation
        - Decreased educational possibilities
  - **History**
    - English petroleum companies
    - Military
    - Surf tourism
  - **Politics**
    - Change of government
    - Corruption
  - **Environment**
    - Climate Change
    - Ecosystem degradation
    - Environmental consciousness
      - Hope for more environmental protection
      - Lack of consciousness of Peruvians
      - High consciousness among Lobitians and Internationals
    - El Niño
    - Deforestation
    - Oil affects the ocean and ecosystems
    - Infrastructure affects waves
  - **Tourism**
    - Surfing as main tourism attraction
    - Influenced the whole development of Lobitos
    - Growth
      - Uncontrolled growth that the municipality could not handle
      - Huge impact on the community
      - Foreign investors and influences
      - Started 15 years ago
      - New job opportunities

- **Local Community**
  - **Vision**
    - Education
    - Working towards independence and resilience
    - Environmental consciousness
    - Tourism and infrastructure development
  - **Conflicts**
    - Different stakeholder groups and interactions
    - Poverty
      - Possibility of being closed in religion, views and cultures -> more need of time for adaptation
      - Young generation different to older generation
      - Shift in personality: more acceptance and openness towards foreign influences
    - Marked by hard times and pain
    - Strong, resilient, self-sufficient and catering
  - **Characteristics**
    - Small fishing community
    - Humble/child/relaxed/friendly people
    - Traditional
    - Change of community in the last years
    - Language barrier
    - Cultural differences
    - Municipality, grassroot organisations, fishing community, NGO, investors
    - Like a family ->helping/supporting/taking care of each other
    - Sceptical about new developments/people from outside

- **NGO**
  - **Perception**
    - Professional
    - Important for the community
    - More community integration/ recognition issue
    - Social and environmental impacts
  - **Opportunities/Risks**
    - Expanding
    - Project durations
    - Relying on funding and grants
    - Cultural exchange
    - Language barrier
    - Bringing internationals to Lobitos
    - Providing jobs for local community
  - **Development**
    - From small NGO to a serious business
    - Present in eight communities all over Peru
    - Focus on growth and expanding
  - **Projects**
    - Renewable energy
    - Conservation
    - Public health
    - Sustainable Tourism
    - Planting Day
  - **Role**
    - Learning from and with each other
    - Community support and assistance
    - Community representation, empowerment and engagement
    - Adaptation to community needs
    - Motivation
    - Soul/Spirit directed by charity, giving and sharing

- **Tourism**
  - **Perception**
    - Important for economy
    - Beneficial
    - Societal impacts
    - Hope for a sustainable tourism growth
    - Fear of turning into Mancora (overtourism, crime)
  - **Opportunities/Risks**
    - Infrastructural development
    - New variation of economic possibilities
    - Influencing the overall community development
    - Open-mindedness
    - Community empowerment
    - Environmental protection
  - **Tourists**
    - Surfers, Internationals, Peruvians
    - Beach, surfing and food as main attractions
    - Relationships
    - Discrepancy between tourists and local lifestyles
    - Locals are perceived as welcoming
    - Language barrier
    - Location/ place of staying
    - Income
    - Visiting different restaurants, bars and cafes

Appendix II: In-Vivo Codes

Themes	Important Quotes
Area Development	Change due to tourism: *"Lobitos has changed because of tourism, because before, it was a bit dull, there wasn't much entry. Lobitos was [...] a ghost town, because of the abandoned houses that had belonged to the English and were later taken over by the army. So Lobitos has grown in the last few years in terms of tourism, because now, as far as tourism is concerned, it has become more and more popular."* (Interview 6) Future hopes of Lobitos development: *"My hope for the future of Lobitos is [...] that it will continue to grow, that we will solve this political issue of the legal physical sanitation of the land as well, [...] that we will be more ecological. I also hope that the fishermen will be able to revive their fishing, and their activity as such because they are suffering a lot. [...] That we improve the issue of services, that we grow a little more [...] and that we continue to have a positive image for tourists [...]"* (Interview 1).
Local Community	Community Pride: *"Lobitos really belongs to the people of Lobitos and I am quite clear about that, not because of our right of ownership, but because it is ours, it is ours by history, by years, because we were born here, it belongs to us."* (Interview 8) Community Characteristics: *"Here the people are warm, they are nice. They will never close the door on you."* (Interview 7) *"Lobitos is characterised by its calm, humble people."* (Interview 6) Community Conflicts: *"Lobitos is a very particular place. There are very different people here and they don't talk to each other. The tourist sector and the fishing sector are totally divided".* (Interview 3).
NGO	Role of NGOs: *"What's the role of an NGO in this particular context? In the context of a society that doesn't believe in itself, that knows, that subconsciously knows that they have gone backwards. It's to re-motivate them, to give them new hope. We're not going to change the whole thing. We are going to provide hope in the form of these projects that bring light, bring health care, re-green, take care of water. And ultimately, with the volunteer program, dynamise the economy. [...] But it's also to be a good ethical business that other businesses can look up to. An NGO hopefully has within its foundations an ethical code of conduct. And its role is to make that code of conduct the standard of the place it is in."* (Interview 3) The mission of an NGO: *"An NGO has a soul. An organisation has a spirit, a soul and that soul is a soul that is driven by charity, by giving, by sharing. So that spirit is what makes an organisation have an impact and is well received by the community."* (Interview 8) Working at an NGO: *"Being here is like I've found a little jewel or a special kind of lover that makes me feel good."* (Interview 1)
Tourism	Opportunities: *"People themselves are looking for economic alternatives and the activity of tourism linked to the sea, to the coastal marine ecosystems or to sustainable tourism or ecotourism, depending on what we call it, is a relevant activity for these people, for this population."* (Interview 11) Awareness of possible negative influences of tourism: *"That's my hope, that we grow in tourism, that we grow in those services, in that wing of receiving people, but avoid the negative things that come. It brings a lot of good things, but you have to avoid those things. That's my hope that tourism will come and make us grow, but it won't bring us those little bad things."* (Interview 1).

Appendix III: Field Diary

Field Diary: Master Thesis Research, Surfing the Waves of Sustainable Development: A Case Study on Local Perceptions of NGO Activities in Northern Peru

Location: Lobitios, Piura, Perú

Duration: 1.4.24-15.4.24

Two days of the field diary are shown as examples.

Date	Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
05/04/24	Today was a working day in which I mainly worked in the EcoSwell house. In addition to the current 7 volunteers, there are also local workers at EcoSwell. The volunteer coordinator comes from Lobitos, as do the accountant and the cook. The cleaning staff also come from Lobitos. The project managers for renewable energies and conservation come from Lima. The cook cooks breakfast and lunch for us every day, even with a vegan alternative (mushrooms). The two project managers from Lima live in the staff house. The coordinator and the volunteers live in the EcoSwell house. The workers from Lobitos live in their houses in Lobitos. The cook also received a solar panel from EcoSwell, which meant she was connected to electricity for the first time. When we have lunch, there are mainly two groups. The Spanish speakers and the English speakers, and as one is mostly volunteers and the other the staff from Lobitos, there is no active interaction between us. This is also something that has already been mentioned by the employees. The question now, of course, is whether the employees should learn English or whether the volunteers should already have a certain level of Spanish. I would argue in favour of the latter, but I am sure that this would never be implemented. Too many people would drop out and the NGO's main source of income would be lost: Paying volunteers.	Hierarchy" in the NGO? Some employees come from Lobitos Language barrier Problem for interaction between volunteers and NGO employees The main source of income for the NGO is: the volunteer programme
06/04/24	This morning I spoke to a volunteer about her opinion and perception of EcoSwell. She had mixed feelings about the work she was doing here and admitted that she had imagined the programme to be different. She has paid around 2000€ for 3 weeks to work in the renewable energy sector. She is going through a phase in her life where she no longer wants to continue in her old job and is looking for alternatives. That's why she applied for an internship at EcoSwell to get to know	Volunteering programmes can differ from what is promised on the internet → Frustration and important to communicate better Here it is important to question the concept of volunteering in general and what ethical and

| | other areas of work. But all she is doing at the moment is reading through documents and looking at how to build a clay oven. Other volunteers have told me about similar experiences, that they pay a lot of money for what they perceive as a mediocre experience.

I later spoke to an NGO manager about this, and he said that the illusion of everyone getting maximum experience is also utopian. Not every person who arrives in Lobitos can install 20 solar panels for people every day, it wouldn't work that way either. A lot has to do with preparation and follow-up. But the question would then be, shouldn't the project perhaps be marketed differently? All volunteers pay very high prices, shouldn't they find solutions to meet halfway? The volunteer also said that she was not given answers to her questions and suspected that this could be because they wanted to remain as vague as possible about the project - the main thing is that she arrives first. If this is true, it would be highly problematic and not fair to the volunteers. Nevertheless, I have to agree with the NGO manager that sometimes volunteers think: I'm going to Peru for three weeks to change the world and help vulnerable communities. Okay, but are you doing it for the people or more for yourself? I have the feeling that the groups of volunteers I am here with have good intentions and are keen to put the theoretical knowledge they have gained during their studies into practice. After the English and two other volunteers left, it was a bit quieter in the house, which was very nice, since before we were around 30 volunteers. A German joined us today. Today we went to Piscinas Beach after work (a working day runs from 9 am to 5 pm). A beach in the north of Lobitos, where there is also another surfing spot. However, when we saw this one, it quickly became clear that it was definitely for advanced surfers. Las Piscinas is a bit remote, there were a few people there, but it's a beautiful beach. You have to walk past a few ruins to get there. | moral consequences it can have |

Appendix VI: Consent Form

Agreement to participate

Title: Surfing the Waves of Sustainable Development: A Case Study on Local Perceptions of NGO Activities in Northern Peru

The purpose of this research is to analyse the role of an NGO in a coastal region regarding sustainable development in northern Peru using a lens of social impact assessment discourse, which aims to identify positive and negative impacts that a project may have. Lobitos is used as a case study in this instance.

- I have read and I understand the information sheet of this present research project.
- I have had the opportunity to discuss this study. I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the study until the moment that the study has been published, and to decline to answer any individual questions in the study.
- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential. Without my prior consent, no material, which could identify me will be used in any reports generated from this study.
- I understand that this data may also be used in articles, book chapters, published and unpublished work and presentations.
- I understand that all information I provide will be kept confidential either in a locked facility or as a password-protected encrypted file on a password-protected computer.

Please circle YES or NO to each of the following:

I consent to my interview being audio-recorded   YES / NO

I wish to remain anonymous for this research   YES / NO

If YES
My first name can be used for this research   YES / NO

OR

A pseudonym of my own choosing can be used in this research   YES / NO

 "I agree to participate in this individual interview and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form and the research project information sheet."

Signature of participant:_____Date: _____

"I agree to abide by the conditions set out in the information sheet and I ensure no harm will be done to any participant during this research."

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

Please fill in the following information. It will only be used in case you want to be sent a copy of interview notes so that you have the opportunity to make corrections. Email:

Título: Surfeando las olas del desarrollo sostenible: Un estudio de caso sobre la percepción local de las actividades de las ONG en el norte de Perú

El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar el papel de una ONG en una región costera del norte de Perú en el desarrollo sostenible utilizando una lente del discurso de la evaluación del impacto social, que pretende identificar los impactos positivos y negativos que puede tener un proyecto. En este caso se utiliza Lobitos como caso de estudio.

- He leído y comprendo la ficha informativa del presente proyecto de investigación.
- He tenido la oportunidad de discutir este estudio. Estoy satisfecho con las respuestas que se me han dado.
- Entiendo que la participación en este estudio es voluntaria y que tengo derecho a retirarme del mismo hasta el momento en que se haya publicado, así como a negarme a responder a cualquier pregunta individual del estudio.
- Entiendo que mi participación en este estudio es confidencial. Sin mi consentimiento previo, no se utilizará ningún material que pueda identificarme en los informes generados a partir de este estudio.
- Entiendo que estos datos también podrán utilizarse en artículos, capítulos de libros, trabajos publicados y no publicados y presentaciones.
- Entiendo que toda la información que proporcione se mantendrá confidencialmente en una instalación cerrada con llave o como archivo encriptado protegido con contraseña en un ordenador protegido con contraseña.

Por favor, marque con un círculo SÍ o NO a cada una de las siguientes respuestas:

Doy mi consentimiento para que se grabe mi entrevista SÍ / NO

Deseo permanecer en el anonimato para esta investigación SÍ / NO

En caso afirmativo

Mi nombre de pila puede ser utilizado para esta investigación SÍ / NO

O

Se puede utilizar un seudónimo de mi elección en esta investigación SÍ / NO

"Acepto participar en esta entrevista individual y acuso recibo de una copia de este formulario de consentimiento y de la hoja informativa del proyecto de investigación."

Por favor, rellene la siguiente información. Sólo se utilizará en caso de que desee que se le envíe una copia de las notas de la entrevista para que tenga la oportunidad de hacer correcciones.

Appendix V: Interview Guides

All the Interview Guides are available in English and Spanish. In the following, the English versions are provided.

Included in all Interview Guides

Title: Surfing the Waves of Sustainable Development: A Case Study on Local Perceptions of NGO Activities in Northern Peru

The purpose of this research is to analyse the role of an NGO in a coastal region in Northern Peru using a lens of social impact assessment discourse, which aims to identify positive and negative impacts that a project may have. Lobitos is used as a case study in this instance

Note: The interviews conducted are semi-structured. Questions and schedules will be adapted to each individual collaborator. Therefore, it may be that not all questions are going to be used in each interview. A Spanish translation is provided at the end of the guide.

General Information
Thank you for taking part in this interview. You can take your time to answer each question. As this is about your personal judgment, there is no right or wrong. This is about your perception, and I would like to hear your opinion. If you have a question during the interview or don't know the meaning of a particular word, please feel free to let me know. Before we begin, I would like to reassure you once again that you are okay with me recording this interview? (*More or less flexible with every Interview*)

As last question:

Additional Information:
Any other topic you would like to discuss?

Interview Guide Fishing Community

Introductory Questions

1. Since when do you live in Lobitos?
2. How has it changed in recent years?
3. How would you describe your community?
4. How important is the preservation of local culture and traditions to you and your community?
5. Can you describe the role that fishing plays in the local economy and culture?

Tourism

1. How do you see the role of tourism in the development of Lobitos?
2. Does the local community also benefit from the growing tourism in the region?
3. How is your interaction with Peruvian tourists?
4. What about internationally?
5. What about the surfers?

Challenges and Concerns
1. What are the main issues or challenges facing the fishing industry in Lobitos?
2. What specific issues (environmental, social, or economic) are of concern to you and your community?
3. Have you observed changes in fish populations or marine ecosystems over time?
4. Aside from fishing, are there other economic opportunities or income-generating activities that members of the fishing community engage in?

Collaboration with Stakeholders
1. Do you engage with government agencies, NGOs, or other stakeholders on issues related to fishing (and sustainability)?
2. How can collaboration between different stakeholders be improved to better support the fishing community?
3. Do you feel that your voice is heard by local authorities and organisations when it comes to issues affecting the community(sustainability)?

Government
1. How do you see the role of the government in the development of Lobitos?
2. How is the interaction with the government?

Aspirations and Future Visions
1. What are your hopes and aspirations for the future of (the fishing industry in) Lobitos?
2. Are there any specific concerns or challenges that you feel need to be addressed to ensure the long-term sustainability of fishing activities?

Interview Guide Local Residents

Introductory Questions
1. Are you from Lobitos?
2. What is your connection to Lobitos?
3. Where are you working?
4. How has it changed in recent years?
5. How would you describe your community?
6. How important is the preservation of local culture and traditions to you and your community?

Challenges and Concerns
1. What are the challenges that you see right now in Lobitos?
2. What specific issues (environmental, social, or economic) are of concern to you and your community?

(Perceptions of Sustainable Development)
1. What does sustainable development mean to you personally?
2. How important do you think sustainable development is for the future of Lobitos?

Community Engagement and Participation
1. How involved do you feel the local community is in decisions and initiatives related to (sustainable) development in Lobitos?
2. Do you feel that your voice is heard by local authorities and organisations when it comes to issues affecting the community?

Local Initiatives and Solutions
1. Are there any local initiatives or projects aimed at promoting sustainability in Lobitos that you're aware of?
2. Have you or your community been involved in any related activities or programs?

Tourism
1. What do you think about the tourism development in the last few years?
2. Does the local community also benefit from the growing tourism in the region?
3. How is your interaction with Peruvian tourists?
4. What about internationally?
5. What about the surfers?

Government
1. How do you see the role of the government in the development of Lobitos?
2. How is the interaction with the government?

Partnerships and Corporation
1. Do you see opportunities for collaboration between residents, businesses, NGOs, and government agencies to promote sustainable development/ to tackle your aforementioned issues in Lobitos?
2. How can different stakeholders work together?

Aspirations and Future Vision
1. What are your hopes and aspirations for the future of Lobitos (in terms of sustainability)?
2. How do you envision the community's development over the next decade
   a. Possible subquestion: what role do you see yourself playing in this vision?

Interview Guide NGO Local Staff

<u>Introductory Questions</u>
1. Are you from Lobitos?
2. How has it <u>changed</u> in recent years?

<u>Working Field</u>
1. <u>How did you start working</u> with EcoSwell?
2. Are there <u>many locals working</u> alongside you?
3. Is it different working for EcoSwell than working for a commercial hotel?
    a. Is their staff different? Why?
4. <u>How is interaction</u> with (different kinds of tourists/volunteers)
5. W<u>hat is your position/working field i</u>n the NGO?
    a. Is there any perspective for <u>career growth?</u>

<u>Background</u>
1. <u>Since when did EcoSwell arrive</u> here?
2. <u>What changes</u> have been happening?

<u>(Perceptions of Sustainable Development)</u>
1. <u>What does sustainable development mean</u> to you personally?
2. <u>How important</u> do you think sustainable development is for the future of Lobitos?

<u>Community Engagement and Participation</u>
1. <u>How involved do you feel the local community</u> is in decisions and initiatives related to (sustainable) development in Lobitos?
2. <u>Do you feel that your voice is heard</u> by local authorities and organisations when it comes to issues affecting the community(sustainability)?

<u>Tourism</u>
1. How do you see the<u> role of tourism</u> in the development of Lobitos?
2. Does the <u>local community also benefit</u> from the growing tourism in the region?
3. How is your <u>interaction with Peruvian tourists</u>?
4. What about <u>internationally</u>?
5. What about the <u>surfers</u>?

<u>Government</u>
1. How do you see the r<u>ole of the government</u> in the development of Lobitos?
2. How is the <u>interaction with the government</u>?

<u>Aspirations and Future Visions</u>
1. What are your<u> hopes and aspirations for the future</u> of Lobitos?
2. How do you envision the community's development over the next decade
    a. Possible subquestion: what role do you see yourself playing in this vision?

Interview Guide NGO Management

Role and History of Organisation
1. Can you tell me about your NGO?
2. Can you provide an overview of the current projects in Lobitos? What works best? What doesn't work?

Context Lobitos
1. What made you decide to come to Lobitos in the first place?
2. How was Lobitos before EcoSwell arrived?
3. How was the interaction with the community at the beginning of your projects?

Perceptions of Sustainable Development
1. What does sustainable development mean to you personally?

Partnerships & Corporations
1. Which local partners do you work with?
2. Which other partners do you work with?

Involvement of the Community
1. How is the local community involved in the planning and implementation of your projects?
2. What measures do you take to ensure that the needs and perspectives of the community are taken into account?

Aspirations and Future Vision
1. How important do you envision sustainable development for the future of Lobitos?
2. What long-term strategies is your NGO pursuing to promote sustainable development in Lobitos?

Challenges and Opportunities
1. What do you see as the main challenges in promoting sustainable development in Lobitos?
2. What are your thoughts on the possible negative impacts ecotourism can cause in the long term? Can it accelerate mass tourism?
3. Can specific opportunities or resources help your NGO overcome these challenges?
4. Are there any specific commitments or initiatives you plan to undertake to further advance sustainability/ the sustainable development of Lobitos in your operation?

Interview Guide NGO Volunteer

<u>Introductory Questions</u>
1. <u>Where</u> are you from?
2. How did you <u>first learn about EcoSwell</u>?
3. Is it <u>your first time</u> in Lobitos? <u>What do you think</u> about Lobitos?
4. What made you <u>decide</u> to work at EcoSwell?
5. Do you s<u>peak Spanish?</u>

<u>Projects</u>
1. <u>Which project</u> are you working on?
2. What's your day like?
3. Are you w<u>orking together with the local community</u>?
4. Did you have to have <u>expertise </u>before coming?

<u>(Perceptions of Sustainable Development)</u>
1. <u>What does sustainable development mean </u>to you personally?
2. <u>How important </u>do you think sustainable development is for the future of Lobitos?

<u>Challenges and Concerns</u>
1. What are the <u>challenges that you see right now in Lobitos</u>?
2. Do you see any <u>risk of many tourists starting</u> to come here? If yes, what to do about it?
3. <u>Would you recommend Lobitos</u> to friends as a tourist destination?

<u>Reflection</u>
1. How would you <u>reflect on your international role working</u> in Lobitos?
2. W<u>hat would you recommend to future volunteers</u> coming to Lobitos?

Interview Guide Municipality

1. Occupation and projects
   a. What is your <u>position</u> and <u>since when</u> are you working for the municipality?
   b. <u>What are the projects</u> that you are realising <u>currently?</u>
      i. Which projects are <u>working fine?</u>
      ii. Which projects are <u>not working?</u>
      iii. Do you have a <u>government plan?</u> Who is the <u>party in charge?</u>
   c. What are the <u>long-term strategies</u> of the current government for Lobitos?

2. Context Lobitos
   a. How did Lobitos <u>change</u> in the last years?
   b. How would you describe Lobitos communities?
   c. What are <u>opportunities and issues/challenges</u> in Lobitos?
      i. How are you <u>planning on tackling those issues/challenges?</u>
   d. In the case of water: What specific plans do you have regarding that topic?
   e. In the case of <u>work and occupations</u>?
   f. In the case of <u>education?</u>
   g. In the case <u>of climate change?</u>
   h. Do you have projects with renewable energies?
   i. What is the tourism strategy?
      i. How important is it?
      ii. How has tourism developed over the last years?
      iii. What are the opportunities and challenges of tourism?

3. Perception of sustainable development
   a. What does sustainable development mean for Lobitos?

4. Associations and companies
   a. Are you working together <u>with local associations</u>? If yes, <u>with whom?</u>
   b. Do you work with the regional and national governments?
      i. Talara?
      ii. How is the interaction/ relationship with the national government?
   c. What is the role of NGOs in Lobitos?
      i. Do you know the NGOs?
      ii. Did you work together with them?
      iii. Are you collaborating with them right now?
      iv. What are the opportunities and challenges of working together with an NGO?

5. Participation of local community
   a. How does the <u>local community participate</u> in Lobitos development?
   b. What measures do you take to ensure that the community's voice and needs are heard?
   c. What participation strategies/approaches/forms do you have to include the community/ that they can participate?

6. Future aspirations
   a. What are your aspirations/ What is your hope for Lobitos future?

Interview Guide Other NGO

1. Function and history of the organisation
   a. What does your organisation do? What is the aim of your organisation?
   b. Why did you decide to initiate an NGO in Lobitos?
   c. What is your position in the NGO?
   d. Can you provide me with a general vision of your current projects in the region?
      i. Which projects work better?
      ii. Which projects do not work?

2. Context Lobitos
   a. What challenges did you experience working in Lobitos?
      i. How does it differ from other regions?
   b. What are your objectives for Lobitos future?
   c. How did Lobitos change over the last years?
   d. What is the role of tourism in Lobitos?
      i. You surf, how do you experience the tourism development in Lobitos?
      ii. Do you feel a difference between local tourist and internationals?
      iii. Does the local community benefit?

3. Local community
   a. How is the interaction with the local community in Lobitos?
   b. Do they participate/ collaborate with the NGOs?
   c. Does the local community understand the NGOs' work?
   d. Does a long-term strategy exist to support the community?
      i. Do you offer capacity building? Education?

4. Working with EcoSwell
   a. If WAVES already existed in Lobitos and it is quite small, why do you think EcoSwell was founded after you?
   b. Why do you think WAVES is more present in people's minds than EcoSwell?
   c. Do you work together with EcoSwell? Collaborations? Projects?
      1. Who is taking what role in the collaboration?
      2. Who initiated the collaboration?
      3. In which aspects are you similar?
      4. In which aspects do you differ?
      5. Do you think of collaborating in the future?
      6. What are the opportunities and challenges of working together?

5. Associations and companies
   a. Do you work together with local institutions? If yes, whom?
   b. Any other collaborations with different partners?

Interview Guide NGO Partners

1. Role and history of the organisation
    1. Could you tell me about your organisation?
    2. Can you provide an overview of the current projects in Piura?
        a) What works best?
        b) What does not work?

2. Working with an NGO
    1. Is it your first time working with an NGO in Piura?
    2. How and when did the collaboration with you and EcoSwell start?
        a) Wer übernimmt welche Rolle in der Zusammenarbeit? Who is taking which role in the collaboration?
        b) Who initiated the collaboration?
    3. Are you planning on working on more projects together?
    4. What are the challenges and opportunities in working together?

3. Context Negritos/Piedritas/Talara
    1. What challenges did you face/were you confronted with working in the region?
        a) How is it different from other regions?
    2. How are Lobitos and Talara equipped in the case of electricity (NEXANS)?
    3. What are future goals for the region?

4. Local Community
    1. How is the interaction with the local community?
    2. How does ecotourism contribute to the community (GIZ)?
        a) Does the community understand its purpose?
    3. Does a long-term strategy regarding the support of the local community exist?
       a) Maintenance of path/ ecotourism activities (GIZ)? b) Exit strategies? c)Capacity Building? d) Maintenance of solar panels (NEXANS)?

Interview Guide Tourism Operators

1. Current practices and offerings?
   a. Are you from Lobitos? Do you live here?
   b. Could you provide an overview of the tourism activities and services your operation offers in Lobitos?
   c. Since when are you in Lobitos?
   d. What made you come to Lobitos in the first place?

2. Community engagement and socioeconomic impact
   a. What kind of people visit your place?
   b. How does your tourism operation engage with the local community in Lobitos?
      1. How do you interact with the locals?
   c. What efforts do you make to ensure that your business contributes positively to the local economy and community engagement?

3. Partnerships and collaborations
   a. ¿Do you collaborate with other local businesses, NGOs, or government agencies? (to promote eco/sustainable tourism activities)

4. Impacts
   a. What are your perceptions about the change in the area?
   b. What are the current problems?
   c. What are problems that you foresee in the longer term?
   d. What is the role of tourism in this?
      i. National tourists?
      ii. International tourists?
   e. What are the possible impacts that tourism can have in the area? (Environmental, social, economic?)

5. Future aspirations
   a. What are your long-term goals and aspirations regarding tourism in Lobitos?

   b. Are there any specific commitments or initiatives you plan to undertake to further advance sustainability/ the sustainable development of Lobitos in your operation?

Interview Guide Tourist

Introductory Questions
1. Where are you from?
2. Is it your first time in Lobitos? What do you think about Lobitos?
3. What made you decide to come to Lobitos?
4. Do you speak Spanish?

Tourism in Lobitos
1. What is your day like?
2. Which tourism activities do Lobitos and the region offer?
3. Do you interact with the local community?
4. What is your perception of the local community?
5. What is your perception of the other tourists? National? International?
6. Where do you stay? Where do the other tourists stay?

Challenges and Concerns
1. What are the challenges that you see right now in Lobitos?
2. What do you think about the tourism in Lobitos?
3. Would you recommend Lobitos to friends as a tourist destination?

Reflection
1. How would you reflect on you being an international in Lobitos?
2. How do you perceive the possible negative impacts tourism can have?
3. How do you think you can contribute to the development of Lobitos?

NGOs
1. Do you know of some NGOs in Lobitos?
2. Did you interact with them? The volunteers?
3. What do you think about their work?

Affidavit

I hereby declare that this thesis "Surfing the Waves of Sustainable Development: A Case Study on Local Perceptions of NGO Activities in Northern Peru", is my own work and by my own effort and that it has not been accepted anywhere else for the award of any other degree or diploma. Where sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Carla Martinez Harms, 27.06.2024