

## **Pro-Poor Tourism as a Strategy to Fight Rural Poverty: A Critique**

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*Pro-poor tourism (PPT) is a development methodology that aims to use tourism as a tool for poverty reduction. PPT has been adopted by multilateral institutions, official development agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). PPT assumes an absolute definition of poverty that is based on net income. This definition allows the consideration of a tourism initiative as 'pro-poor' even though the income earned by the poor population may be marginal. This paper analyses whether PPT's concept of poverty adequately addresses the issues in rural poverty. We analyse one case of unequal distribution of income generated from tourism in the 1990s (Amantaní Island, Perú). The paper concludes that PPT's concept of poverty circumvents the fact that an unequal distribution of income could imply a loss in the quality of life for the majority of a rural population: the high-income social sector tends to increase its economic and political power to the detriment of other social sectors.*

**Keywords:** Pro-poor tourism, rural tourism, rural poverty, peasant differentiation, development cooperation

### INTRODUCTION

The past two decades have witnessed the growth of tourism as an instrument in the fight against rural poverty (Wearing McDonald and Ponting 2005; Hawkins 2010; Navarro and Romero 2012). Various methods have emerged to manage this new cooperation sector. Pro-poor tourism (PPT), developed through British cooperation at the end of the 1990s, is the most widely accepted methodology. PPT was swiftly adopted by multilateral institutions (UNWTO 2002), official development agencies (Hummel and Duim 2012) and non-government development organizations (Berruti and Delvecchio 2009).

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Despite the popularity of PPT, it has sparked a heated debate concerning its real capacity to combat poverty (Hall 2007). There are many critiques of the PPT method. First, PPT is considered an instrument that favours the business interests of the tourism sector. From this perspective, PPT generates excessive expectations regarding the capacity of tourism to combat poverty without taking into consideration the structural limitations of the sector (Nawijn et al. 2008; Spenceley and Meyer 2012; Trau 2012). Because PPT exclusively considers whether the impoverished population receives income, it legitimizes business practices that have serious consequences on the local economies, societies and ecosystems (Chok et al. 2007). Moreover, the discourse concerning PPT is not particularly critical. Therefore, the tourism industry has enthusiastically embraced PPT to improve its image (Scheyvens 2007; Higgins-Desbiolles 2008; Butler et al. 2013).

Some researchers have argued that PPT does not efficiently stimulate the interests of the business sector, which it considers an essential interlocutor for the application of policies that favour the poor (Scheyvens 2009; Hummel and Duim 2012). Moreover, since the 1980s, the World Bank and other multilateral agencies have alleged that PPT does not imply a contribution to the idea that tourism drives economic development (Harrison 2008). Similarly, PPT has been accused of not taking into consideration the environmental impacts of long-distance tourism based on air transportation, which is supported and encouraged by PPT (Harrison 2008; Nawijn et al. 2008). However, climate change is at the root of the environmental crises that highlight the vulnerability of the most impoverished rural areas of the globe, and air transportation is one of its causes (IPCC 1999; Gössling 2011; Gascón and Ojeda 2014).

Lastly, PPT has been accused of overestimating the growth of the tourism sector and rejecting the equal redistribution of its benefits as a strategy in the fight against poverty (Mowforth and Munt 2003; Hall 2007; Schilcher 2007; Gascón 2009; Scheyvens 2011; Cicci Pinto and Hidalgo 2012, 2013; Pérez Galán 2012; Scheyvens and Russell 2012). Opposition to redistribution as a necessity to fight poverty is one of the 'strongest attractions' of PPT, as repeatedly argued by its main proponents (Ashley 2003; Goodwin 2008; Mitchell 2012; PPT n.d.). This controversy is the central theme of the current paper.

Goodwin, one of the main theoreticians and champions of PPT, has illustrated that many of these critiques are centred on the practical implementation of the PPT method, rather than on its conceptualization (Goodwin 2008). The present paper attempts to overcome this objection and analyse PPT beginning from its theoretical principles. The purpose of the present study is to explore the approximation of PPT to developmental problems and PPT's perception of poverty. We aim to determine whether this perception is appropriate in the fight against rural poverty.

### THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY IN PPT

An analysis of the PPT methodology must be framed within the debates on the New Rurality. Initially, the concept of the New Rurality first appeared in academia: it described the changes that were taking place in the rural and agricultural world as a result of the globalization process. These changes were characterized by, among other things, the emergence of non-agricultural economic activities. However, as noted by Kay (2008), the New Rurality became a polysemous term when it was no longer uniquely understood as a descriptive concept and became a political objective of development (e.g. Echeverri Perico and Ribero 2002; Hernández González and Meza Huacuja 2006). This definition of New Rurality suggests that rural poverty can only be fought by changing traditional production

methods or by the 'de-agrarianization' of rural economic activities, which would allow peasants to connect with global agricultural and/or emerging markets, such as the tourism market (Bonnal et al. 2003; Losch 2004; de Grammont 2008). PPT proposes to fight poverty from this perspective.

PPT considers tourism an efficient tool for the reduction of poverty because it allows an increase in income for some impoverished sector of the population. Based on this premise, the main objective of PPT is to increase the 'net income' of the sectors with the lowest income. PPT defines 'net income' as the benefits associated with tourism development minus the possible economic costs. For instance, the reduction of agricultural land for the construction of tourism complexes or the loss of fisheries to the creation of sports infrastructure can imply a reduction in the traditional sources of income for the poor. According to PPT, if the median net income of the local community is positive, the tourism proposal can be considered pro-poor, even if the income gains are marginal and other social sectors receive a greater portion of the benefits generated by the activity. PPT considers that even if the benefits of tourism that reach the poorest sectors of society may seem insubstantial, they are significant in the context of limited domestic economies and can be important in their development (Ashley et al. 2001; Ashley and Haysom 2005; Goodwin 2008).

To reach this objective, PPT proposes several areas of action that aim to increase the opportunities for paid work, create local micro-businesses and generate community income. The result has been a number of diverse types of interventions that are described in the case studies presented on PPT's official web pages ([www.propoortourism.info](http://www.propoortourism.info) and [www.propoortourism.org.uk](http://www.propoortourism.org.uk)). These cases include the funding of Community-Based Tourism projects (Saville 2001; Williams et al. 2001), the support of tourism business policies with large investments that generate work or other benefits for the local population (Ashley 2006; Spenceley and Goodwin 2007; Erskine and Meyer 2012), and the promotion of the link between tourist complexes and the local agricultural and livestock sector in the provision of food (Torres and Momsen 2004; Meyer 2006, 2007). In this manner, PPT considers that the pro-poor policy is applicable to any tourism model, from mass tourism to nature tourism (Deloitte-Touche et al. 1999; PPT n.d.). However, PPT considers large-format tourism models to be the best policy for the concrete reduction of poverty (Ashley and Goodwin 2007; Goodwin 2008). PPT's objective is to determine feasible strategies that permit the incorporation of the impoverished sector of the population into the tourism market (Meyer 2009).

In sum, PPT determines the impact of tourist activities based on their capacity to increase the net income of the impoverished sector of the population. Any tourism model that achieves this objective is a valid model, regardless of whether its goals include the fight against poverty. Other factors, such as the impact on socio-economic differences and the distribution of benefits, are considered secondary issues (Ashley 2003; Goodwin 2008; Mitchell 2012). In fact, PPT accepts that the model not only represents a struggle for equity but can also imply problems for a portion of the population: 'Do not expect all the poor to benefit equally, particularly the poorest 20 per cent. Some will lose' (PPT n.d.). Charitable aid is the only solution that PPT proposes for alleviating the condition of people without the benefits of tourism (Goodwin 2008). PPT's official web page considers the works of Ashley et al. (2001) and Goodwin (2008) as bibliographical reference texts. For greater detail on the roles played by PPT, see also Cattarinich (2001), Ashley (2003), Roe et al. (2004), Mitchell and Ashley (2010) and the above-mentioned studies published on web pages that discuss PPT.

This concept of poverty considers poverty in absolute terms. The situation of an individual within the social structure is not important – or, at the very least, is not relevant to the PPT approach. This approach suggests that poverty can only be fought through an increase in net monetary income, regardless of whether the social structure remains the same or if differentiation increases. Again, we point to the following quote: ‘even if richer people benefit more than poorer people’ (Ashley et al. 2001, 2). According to PPT, it is not possible to establish universal indicators of poverty (Goodwin 2007). However, this inability does not imply that poverty is a relative concept. PPT simply indicates that the prices for goods and services vary from one market to the next. This factor must be taken into account when determining whether the net income provided by tourism is sufficient to alleviate poverty in the population.

Nevertheless, social scientists have debated relativist concepts of poverty for decades, including such economists as Amartya Sen (1981, 1985a) and Albert Berry (2003) and such sociologists as Robert Merton (1938) and Peter Townsend (1970, 1974; see also Townsend and Gordon 2002). Even when their positions fail to coincide (Sen 1985b; Townsend 1985), within the relativist conception, poverty and marginality do not depend as much on the amount of income as on the situation of the individual within the social structure. Therefore, an increase in socio-economic differences implies continued impoverishment, even if the poorest sectors achieve an increase in income because the least-favoured sectors in the distribution of riches can be excluded from the ordinary pattern of life and social activities. Furthermore, those in a better socio-economic position increase their economic power (through greater access to resources) and political power (through a greater role in the decision-making processes), resulting in a detrimental effect on the remainder of the population. When analysing empirical cases, even authors such as Berry – who, in theoretical terms, takes a middle ground when assessing the possibilities offered by absolute and relative definitions when fighting poverty (Berry 2003) – discover that the redistribution of wealth has a more prominent role in the reduction of poverty than policies oriented towards markets and growth (Berry 2004).

The objective of the current paper is to test the conception of poverty proposed by PPT. We scrutinize whether the concept is appropriate for combating poverty. For this examination, we focus on the specific case of Amantaní Island. This island is located in the Peruvian area of Lake Titicaca and is home to approximately 4,000 Kichwa peasants. Amantaní began the promotion of tourism in the second half of the 1970s. This island’s tourism is now known as Community-Based Tourism. As we will show, the distribution of resources was unequal because a minority of the social sector seized the economic benefits of the tourism. The private benefits that reached the remaining community were highly marginal or non-existent.

The current study addresses the following question: did the concentration of income in a few families on Amantaní negatively affect the levels of poverty for the remainder of the population? If changes in poverty indicators are the exclusive result of the net income derived from tourism activities, the sector of the population that does not receive any benefits should remain in the same condition. From a relativist perspective, the seized benefits could imply an increase in the internal differentiation of the community. If this is the case, those who do not obtain any benefits experience an increased level of poverty. The following section is based on an anthropological fieldwork study that was conducted between 1990 and 1999 for a doctoral dissertation (Gascón 1999a) and most of the research discussed was published in Gascón (1996, 2005a, 2011).

## THE CASE OF AMANTANÍ ISLAND: THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BENEFITS FROM TOURISM

### *An Economically Differentiated Society*

After the Spanish conquest, Amantaní became a zone of *haciendas* [large estates] and remained so until the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> For more than four centuries, the production relationship between the landowners and the islanders had the characteristics of what is called *yanacuna* in the Central Andes: in exchange for work, money or production, the landowner gave the peasants a large amount of land in usufruct (Matos Mar 1967; Montoya 1989).

Although the nature of the contract was similar for all of the islanders, Amantaní was neither a socially nor an economically homogenous society. The *hacienda* system promoted differences among the peasants because they did not receive the same quantity or quality of land. Social inequality was thus built on the basis of an unequal access to land. Peasants could obtain access to the usufruct of more land by employing different strategies, all of which involved establishing individual and bilateral relationships with the landowner. The key differentiating factor was the class system, through which the *hacienda* was organized hierarchically. Those settlers who reached the position of foreman (a position that was dependent on enjoying the landowner's trust) helped extract the surplus of the peasant population: they managed the agricultural work of the farm, controlled the hamlet and the warehouse, organized the transportation of the production to the city and so on. For this service, the foremen received part of the surplus in means of production (more land) and products (more food).

In the 1940s, the *hacienda* system found itself in crisis, and the settlers began to pressure the landowners to sell their estates. To this end, the settlers developed diverse strategies: from disobedience to forcibly taking over the land. Their claims succeeded: between 1949 and 1964, the settlers acquired the nine *haciendas* on the island. In this manner, these settlers became smallholder farmers.

Once a sale took place, the land was shared among the islanders. However, the distribution was unequal because the capital contribution of each peasant was very different. The *haciendas* were divided into lots, and the peasants who had contributed more were left with a larger quantity of land. The peasants who most benefited from this distribution system were the foremen. Because the foremen had more land in usufruct in the past, they were able to accumulate more capital and make larger contributions. The differences at the time of the contributions were considerable: in some cases, the foremen were able to contribute up to 17 times more than other peasants.

Therefore, except for a few cases, those who controlled more land continued as part of the leading socio-economic group. The disappearance of the *hacienda* system in Amantaní consolidated and accentuated the differences among the peasants in relation to their access to land.

During the third quarter of the twentieth century, land ceased to be the element that structured society in Amantaní. One of the factors that explain this change is demographic growth: the population increased from approximately 1,700 inhabitants in 1950 (Ávalos de Matos 1951) to 3,888 in 1993 (National Census of 1993). This growth must be framed in a context that was defined by the following: (1) free access to the capitalist market after the acquisition of land and the disappearance of the *haciendas*; (2) an inheritance system that did not expel part of the population but converted all of the members of a family into

<sup>1</sup> We have examined how the *hacienda* system worked in Amantaní in different studies (Gascón 1999b, 2000, 2005a,b).

landowners, regardless of the number of children and the amount of resources available; (3) a poorly developed peasant farming labour market that was characterized by an incapacity to absorb the supply of workers and was based on scarce, underpaid and temporary work; and (4) the incapacity of farmers to implement technologies due to a lack of capital and the absence of a credit system for small producers. Without the development of the means of production and with a population that was reluctant or unable to abandon their places of origin (due to harsh working conditions faced when emigrating and the ownership of the means of production acquired through inheritance), demographic growth changed Amantaní from an export region (during the time of the *haciendas*) to an import region for agro-food products and therefore accentuated its dependence on the capitalist market for goods and labour.

This process caused a reduction in landownership per capita, but it did not facilitate economic homogeneity. The islanders who had the most resources invested in other sources of income.

#### *Tourism Development and Disappointment (I): The Scarcity of Tourists*

Beginning in the mid-1970s, Taquile Island, which neighbours Amantaní Island, witnessed the development of cooperative tourism. Despite certain differences, the entire community benefited from transporting, hosting and/or selling handicrafts to tourists. The success of this initiative caused it to be studied extensively beginning in the early 1980s. Among other works, we cite those of Healy and Zorn (1983a,b), de Vidas (1995, 1996), Mitchell and Reid (2001), Zorn (2004, 2005), Zorn and Farthing (2006), Ypeij and Zorn (2007) and Escobar (2012). With Taquile serving as an example, the authorities in Amantaní began the necessary paperwork for the official recognition of the island as an area of tourist interest.

The Amantaní residents trusted that tourists would arrive in waves, which would benefit all of the residents. With this expectation, they carried out a series of actions that followed the model of neighbouring Taquile. Following norms of cleanliness and comfort, the majority prepared a room in their dwellings to house tourists. With support from the government programme CORPUNO (*Corporación de Fomento y Promoción Social y Económica de Puno*), the Handicrafts Hall was built in 1979 for each family to sell their handicrafts (e.g. weaving and basketry). At this time, two new institutions were created to guide and organize the new tourism activities, the Maternal Centre and the Community President's Office. The former, controlled by women, managed the sale of handicrafts through the Handicrafts Hall. The latter maintained the infrastructure, including the cleaning of hostel rooms and the care and improvement of roads and archaeological ruins. However, at the beginning of the 1980s, the Amantaní residents' hopes that tourism would solve their economic problems began to disappear because of (a) the scarcity of tourists in relation to expectations and (b) the control and seizure of the tourism industry by a small group of *amantaneros*.

The number of tourists travelling to the island was meagre compared with the initial expectations. Although tourism increased from 1980 to 1998, at the end of the 1990s, and in the high season (July and August), the island only reached a daily average of 15–20 tourists. Generally, these tourists did not stay for more than one night, and tourism was practically non-existent in the remaining months of the year. At the beginning of the 1990s, tourism practically disappeared due to the escalating armed conflict between the *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement guerrillas and the country's police and armed forces. After 1993, with the incarceration of the main guerrilla leaders, foreign tourism increased once again. Nevertheless, tourism did not fulfil the Amantaní residents'



initial expectations based on the Taquile example. This shortcoming was due to a number of factors that Amantaní lacked and that favoured the success of Taquile.

Two of these factors contributed to Taquile Island's monopolization of lake tourism. First, Taquile was geographically closer to the city of Puno, the point of origin for the tourist circuits on Lake Titicaca. Second, a successful marketing campaign made Taquile an experiential tourism icon internationally. For these reasons, Taquile transformed from a referent for the Amantaní residents to a competitor that they could not rival. The third factor that explains the success of tourism in Taquile and its failure in Amantaní is demographics. Taquile had nearly 1,300 residents at the end of the 1990s, and Amantaní had nearly 4,000 (INEI 2007). Therefore, the number of tourists in Amantaní would need to be three times higher than that in Taquile to achieve the same tourist–resident ratio.

### *Tourism Development and Disappointment (II): The Unequal Distribution of Benefits*

Tourism was initially proposed as a community resource because all of the residents had an *a priori* right to its benefits. We define a community resource as a source of income or provision that belongs to an entire community, without excluding any subgroup of its population. This situation is reflected in a more or less structured codification of policies, verbal or written, or in the entire community's understanding of these rules. This understanding does not prevent the unequal distribution of resources or the exclusion of community members from the benefits of tourism. In fact, as is the case with traditional resources (Fuenzalida et al. 1982; Mayer and de la Cadena 1989; Netting 1992), the benefits of tourism were not distributed equally among all Amantaní community members. Tourism was monopolized by a small group of Amantaní residents. As we will show later in this paper, this group owned the means that permitted the exploitation of the resource as individual private property in Amantaní and the city of Puno. In the 1990s, many Amantaní motorboat owners became 'wealthy' (we will refer to 'rich' and 'poor' peasants because these categories are used by the islanders) not because of their work transporting people and goods but due to their seizure of the benefits derived from tourism. Specifically, the motorboat owners housed the tourists they transported. Although the amount of tourism was insufficient to generate benefits for the entire community, the economic situation of the minority who seized these benefits visibly improved. Previously, many islanders had organized cooperative societies so that they could purchase boats and participate in the new source of income. Before 1980, there were six boats; by the mid-1980s, the number of boats had risen to ten; and in 1996, 16 boats were working. The number of domestic groups benefiting from the lodging of tourists increased from 65 in 1985 (11.4% of the total population) to 90 in 1995 (12.8%).

The remainder of the Amantaní population protested against this control. The 1980s marked the beginning of a continuous fight for tourism control between the minority who controlled this resource and the excluded majority. Opposition to the motorboat owners took several forms. Criticism was one. On occasion, critiques were manifested in graffiti art directed against the main motorboat owner leaders, who were accused of being thieves and mafia members. The most decisive action was attempts to create a system to distribute tourists among the population. On two occasions, an office of roundsman was created for a brief period. The roundsman managed the distribution of tourists among the islanders following a strict system. The first attempt took place between 1982 and 1983. A few months later, the motorboat owners began to boycott the tourist assignments established by the roundsman, arguing that he was taking advantage of his office to favour those close to him. The second attempt took place in 1993, when tourism began to recover in Peru. Julián H., the recently

elected mayor of Amantaní, was the proponent of this attempt. His first decision as mayor was to resume the office of roundsman. Similar to the previous decade, the motorboat owners accused the roundsman of favouring his relatives and friends, which was true. As in 1983, the wealthy elite boycotted the distribution efforts and once again escorted the tourists they transported to their own homes. The mayor reacted by increasing the municipal taxes on hostels. The motorboat owners responded by accusing the mayor of embezzling state funds and taking him to court, and the motorboat owners won once again. Julián H. cancelled the tourist distribution, possibly because city hall's accounts were not transparent. After observing the strength of the motorboat owners, the mayor became their ally (more or less openly).

The motorboat owners justified their seizure by asserting that tourism was required to cover the expenses of their craft. They argued that transportation was not profitable. The earnings that they obtained by transporting people and merchandise were used for the motorboats, including maintenance, improvements, taxes, fuel and mortgage payments. Transportation was a service to the community that generated work and problems but no benefits. For this reason, the motorboat owners considered it logical that they would be the main, if not the only, beneficiaries of tourism.

#### *A Calculation of Net Income and its Redistribution<sup>2</sup>*

In the mid-1990s, the number of tourists that visited Amantaní was between 20 and 35 per day in the months of July and August (high season) and between three and six per day for the remainder of the year. For tourists, the cost of transportation to Amantaní was US\$6, and a one-day stay (food and lodging) cost US\$8. An average tourist could spend another dollar in the grocery stores in Amantaní and another couple of dollars in the Handicrafts Hall. This spending translated into a total average income of US\$54,990 annually for the island, which supposes approximately US\$13.70 per capita per year for a population of nearly 4,000 inhabitants.<sup>3</sup>

The main benefit for the islanders offered by tourism is lodging. The income for lodging after 1993, when tourism began to grow in Amantaní and throughout Peru, reached previously unknown heights, and most of this income was earnings. After the initial investment to prepare a room, the only expenses were a slight annual tax and feeding the guests, which involved practically the same cost as that of feeding the host family. By contrast, a significant portion of transportation income was used in overhead and investment expenses. According to the motorboat owners, these expenses constituted almost the entirety of their income. The estimated income from lodging was approximately US\$22,500 in 1995 (taking into account an average of four tourists in the low season and 27 in the high season). An equal distribution of the income from lodging across the entire population would have implied US\$5.60 per person. However, this income was only distributed among the motorboat owners. In 1995, 15 motorboats were operating in Amantaní; thus, the income per boat was US\$1,500. The total number of motorboat owners was 90, which implies an average income of US\$250 per year per motorboat owner.

<sup>2</sup> These economic estimates have been made based on data obtained from observations for the duration of the fieldwork study and information obtained from the record book of the *Gobernación* (Governor's Office) of Amantaní, the record book of the City Hall of Amantaní, the record book of the beach officer of Amantaní, the record book of the transportation company for lake tourism (a company that brings together all of the motorboats), and the record books of various motorboat associations.

<sup>3</sup> Considering the maximums and minimums according to the price brackets, we note that the total income range is from US\$38,493 to US\$71,487, and the per capita income ranges between US\$9.62 and US\$17.87. For the sake of convenience, we use the average income estimation in this section.



The income that each motorboat received for lodging could be considered fairly distributed. The flow of tourists was not the same every day; however, the shift system established by the motorboat owners ensured that all of them carried out the same number of trips during the high and low seasons. However, the distribution of income varied across motorboat owners. The number of motorboat owners differed by boat, varying between four and eleven. Furthermore, the motorboat owners had different prerogatives. Certain owners had greater rights to the motorboat's property and obtained greater benefits because they contributed a greater amount of capital at the time that the motorboat partnership was created. For instance, the boat VC belonged to a sole owner. Boat S had four owners, who distributed all of the benefits equally. Boat I had ten owners, who distributed the benefits *pro rata* as a percentage representing their contribution towards the purchase of the motorboat, which was unequal.

Another important source of tourism income on the island was the sale of handicrafts. The sale of handicrafts served as a commercializing cooperative and grouped all of the residents of Amantaní together. The sales were centred in the Handicrafts Hall; marketing of handicrafts outside of the hall was prohibited. Inside the hall, the islanders were quoted a price and given exhibit space. When a handicraft was sold, the producer was given the earnings obtained minus a percentage to cover the maintenance expenses for the store. If we consider the same data source used to calculate the island's income from tourist lodging, the estimated sale of handicrafts in 1995 was US\$5,460 for the island; that is, slightly more than US\$1.40 per person per year. However, this amount is an average; some islanders were more successful at selling their crafts than others. Income from the sale of products to tourists in the *grocery stores* (soft drinks, beer, cookies and crackers) was considered private. In 1995, 23 stores operated throughout the island, each owned by a domestic unit. With the previous data, we can estimate that the total income for grocery stores was US\$2,820 in 1995, yielding an average of US\$122.60 per store. Nevertheless, the income from tourism varied considerably between the stores nearer the centre of town and those on the outskirts. This estimate considers gross income and does not take into account the acquisition and transportation expenses for the products, among other overhead costs.

### *Taking Control of the Gobernación*

Beginning in 1968, when Amantaní became a district, the *Gobernación* has been the most important political institution on the island, representing the central government. Interestingly, since tourism development was suggested in 1975, all of the governors, except two, have been motorboat owners (see Table 1).

Two factors permitted this phenomenon. First, the job was onerous, and until the early 1990s the governor did not receive any economic support from the state. The office also had high ceremonial expenses. In addition, the governor had to cover the costs of continuous trips to Puno to meet with the state institutions on which his office depended. Finally, the office required a large time commitment. The governor could not practice seasonal migration while occupying the office and had to transfer a large share of his work on the island to his relatives, friends and fictive kin. Due to the high costs of governorship, many governors and their families had to save for several years prior to assuming office, activating reciprocal relations with relatives and friends, moving temporarily or even selling a portion of their livestock. For these reasons, only islanders with sufficient economic capacity could take on the role of governor. Therefore, the term of office was only one year. The boat owners developed

Table 1. The governors of Amantaní and their economic characteristics

<i>Name</i>	<i>Year/s in office</i>	<i>Economic characteristics (apart from agricultural activities)</i>
Julián S.	1968	Owner of many lands
Mariano Q.Y.	1969	Rancher
Aurelio Y.	1970	Motorboat owner, owner of grocery store
Manuel M.	1971	Craftsman in leather
Julián J.	1972	Owner of grocery store
Mariano Q.P.	1973	Diversified activities
Félix J.	1974	Owner of grocery store
Ambrosio M.	1975	Motorboat owner
Francisco Q.	1976	Motorboat owner, owner of grocery store
Esteban J.	1977	Motorboat owner
Anastasio P.	1978	Motorboat owner
Eleuterio Q.	1979	Motorboat owner
Mariano P.	1980–1	Motorboat owner
Toribio J.	1982–3	Motorboat owner
Valentín Q.	1984	Motorboat owner
Albino Y.	1985	Motorboat owner
Gabriel C.	1986	Motorboat owner
Ignacio C.	1987	Motorboat owner, owner of grocery store
Mariano B.	1988	Motorboat owner
Pedro J.	1989	Craftsman in leather, for export
Moisés Y.	1990	Motorboat owner
Alfredo V.M.	1991–2	Motorboat owner
Gonzalo P.	1993	Motorboat owner
Cresenciano Y.	1994–5	Owner of many lands

Source: Record book of the *Gobernación* of Amantaní and fieldwork interviews.

mechanisms to aid the governor through loans. This debt had no set due date, but was partially returned by helping the other motorboat owners when they became governor.

The second factor that allowed the motorboat owners to control the *Gobernación* was the electoral system. The outgoing governor chose three candidates (a shortlist) to succeed him. The shortlist was presented to the Community Assembly, which selected the new governor from among the three candidates. The exiting governor's strategy was to prepare a shortlist based on the interest of his group. The candidates were always motorboat owners, their friends or persons who were not interested in the conflicts generated by tourism management.

Since 1975, only two people who were not motorboat owners have been chosen (although both had the approval of the motorboat owners). These individuals had no interest in participating in the conflict for tourism resources because they were dedicated to other activities. The motorboat owners sought and obtained control of the *Gobernación*, but what was their interest in a job that was onerous in both effort and resources?

### *The Interest in Controlling the Gobernación*

Two factors explain the motorboat owners' interest in the governorship. First, the position allowed them to counteract the opposition of certain community sectors to their monopoly on tourism. From this institution, the owners made any attempt at regulation to impose a fair

distribution of the tourism resources highly difficult. The success of the motorboat owners in their opposition to attempts to establish the office of the roundsman was due both to their control of the 'means of production' of tourism (the motorboats) and political support from the *Gobernación*, the main political institution in Amantaní.

Second, the position allowed the motorboat owners to take advantage of the island's labour force (in the manner of communal work teams) and other resources requested by the *Gobernación*. A survey of the record books of the *Gobernación* initiatives between 1975 and 1995 indicated that an important percentage of the proposed projects coincided with the interests of the motorboat owners. Based on the information offered by the record book of the *Gobernación* in Amantaní, the projects that were promoted by the governorship at this time can be classified into two categories.

The first category comprised general interest: construction of the soccer stadium; construction and repairs to schools; construction of a high school; construction of *huahuahuais* (day care centres); construction of a potable water system; street repairs; construction of the Handicrafts Hall; food aid requests in times of drought; aid requests for the reconstruction of agricultural infrastructure; church restoration work; creation of an irrigation system (unsuccessful); and requests for low-interest agricultural loans (also unsuccessful).

The majority of the projects fell within this first category. Many of these projects demanded only a slight effort (if any), because their funding was achieved by accessing government funds that were established for the specific purposes of the projects. For instance, educational infrastructure (projects 2–4) considerably improved between 1970 and 1990 as the natural result of the creation of Amantaní as a district and demographic growth. Furthermore, the creation of day care centres was subsidized by the government institution FONCODES (*Fondo de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Local*) in 1992. In addition, the construction of a potable water system (project 5) was a consequence of the district process. The aid obtained in emergency situations due to meteorological catastrophes (projects 8 and 9) came from government programmes that were created to that end. The construction of the soccer stadium (project 1) was almost completely subsidized by migrant Amantaní community members. The projects that were more difficult to fund because they were not considered a state obligation were not implemented. This funding failure is the reason why the dryland irrigation system project, which was viewed as a solution to demographic growth during the 1970s and 1980s (project 11), was unsuccessful.

The second group of projects exclusively or especially benefited the motorboat owner sector: the construction and expansion of docks and moorings; the reconstruction of docks and moorings that were damaged by storms; the legalization of Amantaní as a tourist destination; campaigns at Puno for tourism promotion; improvement of the infrastructure and monuments to promote tourism; the establishment of a handicraft festival to promote tourism; the construction of the Amantaní Hall in Puno to promote tourism and sell handicrafts (unsuccessful); and the construction of the gubernatorial headquarters.

The *Gobernación* record books reflect that most years included major projects to improve or maintain the port's infrastructure (projects 1 and 2). In the 1970s, practically all of the population centres on the island had a mooring consisting of jetties that allowed for the loading and unloading of people and materials from the boats. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, many of these jetties became docks that were able to provide a haven for two or more motorboats. The main dock also grew after the 1970s. The development of the port's infrastructure paralleled the increase in the number of working motorboats in Amantaní. The owners of the motorboats benefited the most from the construction and repair of the docks, as the docks were necessary to keep the boats safe from the buffeting of waves and wind. The

docks' usefulness for the remainder of the community was doubtful, because the growth of this infrastructure was the direct result of an increase in the number of motorboats and not in the transportation needs of the population. The 15 motorboats that were in operation in the mid-1990s exceeded the exclusive needs of the island. Taking into consideration only the transportation of islanders and merchandise, the maintenance of this number of boats was impossible. The creation of new motorboat associations was not a response to community demand; rather, it was due to the goal of benefiting from tourism. Because the motorboat owners were the principal beneficiaries of tourism, they were the most benefited in the projects designed to promote tourism on the island (projects 3–7). The construction of the gubernatorial headquarters (project 8) took place in 1991 with funding from a non-governmental organization (NGO). This construction allowed for a reduction in the ceremonial expenses for the governors because, previously, all of the meetings were conducted in the governors' homes, which required them to provide food and drinks for their guests.

We should note that a monetary evaluation of the cost of the majority of these projects is not feasible because they were performed with different resources: (a) monetary funds from the Government of Peru (e.g. new dock construction) or from the Amantaní Government's treasury (e.g. church repairs); (b) communal labour (e.g. dock reconstruction after storms); and (c) time invested by the authorities (e.g. the legalization of Amantaní as a tourist destination). Therefore, the list of projects does not allow for a comparison of the economic investment in the general interest projects and those designed to develop tourism; rather, the projects indicate the direction of Amantaní's governors' interest when it came time to designate Government or foreign resources.

## CONCLUSION

Two questions will be analysed in the conclusion. First, did the development of tourism actually reduce poverty in Amantaní even while increasing the island's net income? Second, based on that analysis, is PPT's approach, which exclusively considers net monetary income, adequate to transform tourism into a tool to fight rural poverty?

### *The Reduction of Poverty in Amantaní?*

Tourism increased the island's net income, but the distribution of this income was very unequal. The increase in net income permitted one sector of the population to improve its economy visibly, and the remainder of the community did not experience a decrease in their private economic resources; they could still receive a measure of private income from the sale of handicrafts (marginal benefits in terms of PPT). According to the principles championed by PPT, the tourism development of Amantaní could be promoted as pro-poor. However, based on the process that took place here, it is difficult to agree.

Beyond the frustration that a considerable portion of the population suffered due to the unfulfilled expectations from tourism, the process: (a) increased peasant stratification; (b) resulted in a loss of political capacity for the majority of the population; and (c) diverted public resources into the hands of a minority. Because of the funds they were able to obtain as a result of their monopoly over tourism and their position as an economic interest group, the motorboat owners took over the most important political office on the island, the *Gobernación*, which enabled them to take control of all of the available public resources. Thus, a substantial portion of the community resources and state funds designated for the island served to strengthen the interests of the benefited sector.

The governors were always economically wealthy peasants because the position was financially difficult to fulfil. Until the appearance of tourism, however, the *Gobernación* was not controlled by a specific interest group that acted as an oligarchy. In fact, in the past, the governor's office operated as a mechanism to redistribute accumulated surplus, by which means the community members who held more resources spent a share of their benefits on the community. In exchange, these members were given social prestige (Gascón 1999a). Prestige has a real value (not only symbolic value) in the indigenous world (Carlsen 1999). In fact, prestige is a mechanism that has been amply researched in Andean indigenous cultures (Alberti and Mayer 1974; Brass 1986; Gose 1994) and Mesoamerican cultures (Wolf 1959; Cancian 1965). Prior to 1975, the governors were not part of an interest group, and they did not propose strategies to obtain resources for the governorship.

The control of the *Gobernación* by a single group with specific interests that based its economic dominance on tourism changed this situation. The community decision-making processes were restricted, and as a result, the political participation of the majority of the community members was restricted. An illustrative example is the governor's election of 1988, which is one of the few detailed in the record book of the governorship of Amantaní (15 December 1987). A shortlist of candidates who were selected by the exiting governor was presented to the Community Assembly. There were 145 issued votes, each of which represented one domestic unit. At the time, there were 783 domestic units (CIRTACC 1991), which indicates that 18 per cent of the islanders participated in electing the highest authority.<sup>4</sup> In the four assemblies for the election of a governor that we attended between 1990 and 1996, the number of attendees was similar and largely consisted of motorboat owners and the friends of the presented candidates. The majority of the population was not interested in participating in the guided electoral process. In contrast, participation was very high before the 1980s, as reflected in the *Gobernación's* reports and in the longing recollections of the islanders as gathered in a series of field interviews.

Today, the majority does not benefit from tourism and has therefore lost its power to decide how public resources should be managed and spent (loss of political capacity) as well as a significant part of its economic livelihood (economic loss). Non-motorboat-owning families are now worse off because public resources are used to promote tourism to the detriment of their own needs and interests. For example, a substantial portion of the population of Amantaní did not have running water or electricity. The *Gobernación* could have devoted funds under its control to create the required infrastructure, but instead, the governors opted to construct new piers or to enlarge and refurbish existing ones.

Thus, the following result emerged: an unequal distribution of the earnings derived from the new resource (tourism) – economic stratification – and the creation of an élite that depends on the income generated by tourism. As a result of their new economic power and their transformation into an interest group, this new élite monopolizes all of the government offices, and public funds are used to satisfy this group's interests. The remainder of the population is impoverished because it has lost access to public resources. This process is not unusual. It is well known that when control over a certain resource (in this case, public funds) changes hands, the beneficiaries of that resource also tend to change, such that a group of people who had certain rights over the resource in the past may suddenly be excluded from it (Ostrom et al. 1999).

Furthermore, Amantaní became an example of local political conflicts in Peru. This conflict was characterized by the formation of a number of political cells and continuous accusations

<sup>4</sup> In the Community Assembly, each domestic unit has one vote.

of corruption and embezzlement by social leaders and institutional offices (Remy 2005). The conflict generated by tourism resulted in a loss of social capital in the sense that Bourdieu (2000) gives this term; that is, a set of resources related to the existence of a network of relationships that may or may not be institutionalized.

In summary, the unequal distribution of the benefits generated by tourism has increased the socio-economic differences in Amantaní. The social sector that has benefited from this process has increased its economic power (through greater control of the application of community resources) and its political power (through greater control of the decision-making processes), to the detriment of the remainder of the population. Nonetheless, from the perspective of PPT, the question is simply whether the net income of the community increased, and it did. However, as noted by Cicci Pinto and Hidalgo (2012, 2013), when PPT claims that 'some will lose' (PPT n.d.), PPT is ignoring Pareto's optimality concept, which states that nothing can be concluded about the collective welfare when there are winners and losers, because the gains obtained and the losses sustained by different people cannot be aggregated. In other words, it is only possible to discuss development when individuals can increase their well-being without hurting others.

#### *The Risk of Not Determining the Redistribution of Benefits*

The Amantaní case challenges one of the basic principles upon which PPT is based, which is that an unequal distribution of tourism benefits does not hinder the fight against poverty (Ashley et al. 2001; Ashley and Haysom 2005; Goodwin 2008; Mitchell 2012). On the contrary, the case seems to argue in favour of a relativist conception of poverty whereby poverty is seen as the result of socio-economic stratification rather than as the quantity of income obtained by an individual. Because an unequal distribution of resources implies an unequal distribution of power, those who benefit the least obtain marginal benefits. The case of Amantaní seems to reveal that whenever there is socio-economic stratification, those who do not benefit lose in absolute terms. This result follows because differentiation entails an inequitable distribution of power and community resources. PPT's absolutist view of poverty blinds it to the complex processes that are rooted in socio-economic differentiation.

As previously indicated, PPT has been criticized because of its close involvement with the interests of the tourism industry. In fact, this involvement is the natural consequence of its concept of poverty as an illness that can be isolated to its structural causes. Therefore, PPT advocates for the growth and expansion of tourism, which increases the poor's access to 'marginal benefits'. The PPT's absolute concept of poverty leads it to seek a compromise with the traditional tourism industry because its solution to poverty is to apply large-scale pro-poor policies and to favour the growth of the sector. In this manner, the impoverished social sectors receive a significant amount of marginal economic benefits to combat poverty:

The pro-poor tourism (PPT) approach was predicated on engagement with the mainstream industry and recognised from the outset that tourism could only make a significant contribution to the elimination of poverty where it occurred at a scale sufficient to impact on a significant number of households and to contribute enough to household incomes to raise them out of poverty. (Goodwin 2008, 56)

In contrast, the relativistic perspectives that consider socio-economic differences as the cause of poverty prioritize a redistribution of benefits and strict control of their growth within the environment's resilience capacity.



In fact, PPT emerged as a proposal by the neo-liberal orthodoxy, according to which economic development is critical to the fight against poverty (Bernstein 1992; Mowforth and Munt 2003; Scheyvens 2007). Furthermore, the participation of transnational capital is key, because it advises governments of the global South (poor nations) to support transnational companies (from wealthy nations) financially in the application of PPT policies. Although these policies can generate long-term business benefits, they also ensure that the medium- and short-term effects include an investment that these governments should support with public funds (Ashley and Ashton 2006). This approach is a classic strategy that considers that the best way to benefit society in its entirety is indirectly by establishing economic policies that favour the business sector (when they are not applying direct subsidies with public funds) and trusting that a share of the benefits will trickle down from the top of the economic pyramid to the base; that is, the most disadvantaged population. This outcome is the so-called *trickle-down* effect (Aghion and Bolton 1997). PPT acknowledges that the dominant tourism models can generate distortions and become untenable and that the trickle-down effect does not always work (Goodwin 2009). However, PPT considers that the problem is not the model but its administration. If the tourism industry voluntarily establishes correcting mechanisms, these dominant tourism models and the business sector that controls them become allies in the fight to alleviate poverty.

In the debates on the New Rurality, PPT shares the perspective that Cristobal Kay denominates as 'reformist': it considers tourism an adequate tool of public policy or cooperation that is destined to cushion the negative consequences of globalization. However, this approach is incapable of appreciating the limitations that globalization imposes on the peasant or the differentiation processes that they generate (Bretón Solo de Zaldivar 2005; Kay 2007, 2008). PPT celebrates and promotes the productive diversification of the rural world. Although, in certain cases, this diversification arises from the economic success of thriving peasants, it generally is a survival strategy in a context (globalization) that now makes the peasants' access to traditional agro-markets difficult (Arias 2006; Domenico and Miller 2007; Bendini et al. 2009; de Grammont and Martínez Valle 2009; Keyder and Yenal 2010; Neves and du Toit 2012). In this case, the production diversification consolidates the increasing marginalization of the farmers (Kay 2006) and legitimizes their exclusion from traditional agricultural activities (Monterroso 2010). PPT's concept of poverty cannot distinguish between pluri-activity as the result of implementing survival strategies and as an aspiration of middle- and upper-class peasants with accumulated capital. Therefore, PPT is also incapable of analysing whether the development of tourism fights the causes of poverty or justifies and consolidates them.

The relative conception of poverty helps us to understand and fight the structural causes of rural poverty. For PPT, adopting this perspective on poverty would presuppose a break from its naturally related methods: it would require the prioritization of redistribution and the relegation of the importance of growth.

Finally, it is necessary to bear in mind that the present paper is based on the analysis of one ethnographic example only, from the 1990s. It would be interesting to study other cases from the same perspective of differentiating among the diverse concepts of poverty. Such cases could enrich the debate on the capacity of development proposals such as PPT to address the structural causes of rural poverty.

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