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A STUDY OF SURF SCHOOLS' INFLUENCE ON OVERCROWDING IN SURFING IN AUSTRALIA

MASTER THESIS IN TOURISM STUDIES BY
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Abstract

This master thesis is concerned with the subject of surf schools as a tourist attraction in Australia in the context of overcrowding in surfing. It is discussed that commodification of surfing has given everyone access to surfing in the form of surf wear and merchandise and that the identity of surfing is being sold to a broad audience outside of the surfing world.

Surfing lessons are being sold as an adventure tourism product across Australia, sometimes running large surf classes. It is argued in this study, that surf schools can be seen as a product of commodification, placed between the entirely commodified form of surfing and the physical activity of surfing.

It is suggested, that overcrowding, apart from being defined by numbers, is also a socially constructed phenomenon and that behavior in surfing is to a certain degree decisive for whether a spot is perceived as overcrowded. Surf zones are examined and it is stated that the surf zone is the place where surfers gain relational sensibility, which covers the feeling of pure joy and is also referred to as stoke.

Risk is discussed in relation to adventure tourism and surfing respectively and the terms desired risk and undesired risk in relation to surfers' perception of risk are coined stating that desired risk is a mandatory part of reaching the stoke. Desired risk covers natural factors such as wave speed and ocean powers, factor that cannot be controlled by man. The desire of these is in the rush that it gives one to overcome it, thus surfers gain something from desired danger. Undesired danger are all the factors that are man made and potential danger, both in the form of physical injuries and collisions but also the danger of 'wasting waves'.

There is a general perception that surf school students do not continue surfing and therefore surf schools are effectively an adventure tourism attraction first and foremost before being a surfing school.

Distribution of waves is examined in terms of localism, seniority and performance claims and it is argued that surf schools, due to their regulated nature in an unregulated activity, create two more privilege claims, a *restriction privilege* and a *safety privilege.* As surf schools do not have any priorities over other beach users, they cannot physically claim rights to a beach break, but due to permits and regulations of safety and where they are allowed to work, they will sometimes have no other choice than working in an

area where somebody is already surfing. It is argued, that other surfers, above a certain skill level support these special privileges because they have an assumption that it will keep beginners out of crowded areas.

Beginner surfers, who are not with a surf school might feel trapped in this hierarchy. Other surfers give surf schools special privileges in the hope that they might keep beginners out of the line-ups.

Surf schools are not creating overcrowding in the number of surfers, as most students at surf schools do not continue surfing, but they can possibly be a change for better by partly dissolving giving up their restriction privilege whenever possible. Lastly it is argued that surf schools can possibly be a positive in relation to overcrowding related issues in surfing by endorsing good etiquette, even though there is a general perception that surf school students in general do not continue surfing, and thus there is no reason to teach surf school students this.

Keywords: Surfing, Surf schools, Australia, Overcrowding, Commodification of surfing, Adventure tourism, Risk, Privilege

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people, whom I would like to acknowledge for their support during the course of this thesis writing.

First, I would like to thank to my supervisor Tina Jørgensen for valuable feedback and advice and for showing an interest in a subject that might not be of interest to many in Denmark. Next, I would like to show my sincere appreciation to Aalborg University and the international office for co-funding my stay in Australia, which would not have been possible without their help.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to all the Surf School owners, instructors, students and local surfers who took their time to participate in an interview and without whose help and useful answers, this thesis would not have been possible. A special thanks to Tom 'Bomber' Johnston, Jamo Borthwick and Sean Riley and his guys for going out of their way to help me reach relevant interviewees.

Next, I would like to acknowledge some of the people most special to me, without whose support and encouragement I would not have been able to finish this thesis. My parents, Inger and Ulrik, and my brothers Johannes, Martin and Anton for their everlasting love and support. Further, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Amanda Sears, Anja Johansen, Charlie Bellmore, Inessa Nicolajsen, Jim Adkins, Kye Carroll, Mette Edvart, Tom Vinkel and Trent Walker for their support, understanding and encouragement throughout the entire process of the production of this thesis.

Finally, a shout out to my California boys Taylor, Austin and Alonso for introducing me to the thrill of riding the waves in the first place.

Karen Kirstine

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Most of the Australian population live close to the coast and the beach is a big part of the Australian identity (Australia.gov.au, 2016). With a population of approximately 24 million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016) and an estimated 2 million active surfers in Australia (Lazarow N. , 2007, p. 13), that makes it over 8% of the Australian population who are believed to be surfing on a regular basis.

In 2015 there was 7,428,600 international arrivals in Australia (Tourism Australia, 2016), whereas for 5,530,600 of those visitors the purpose was leisure/holiday (Tourism Australia, 2016). If any of these visitors are up for challenging themselves in the waves, they have plenty of opportunity to do so. "Australia is a place of pilgrimage for surfers the world over" (Australia.com, 2016). According to Surfing Australia, there are, as of the end of 2015, 115 accredited surf schools in Australia, operating from over 600 beaches across Australia (Surfing Australia, 2015, p. 23). Surfing is still gaining popularity. A rising number of new surfers and a stagnant number of surfing breaks, challenges are building for surfers and actors with an interest in surfing. In an activity that is reliable on natural resources, due to the nature of the activity, simply building more facilities is not an option. "While the numbers of surfers continues to increase, the number of surf breaks remains constant" (Nazer, 2004, p. 655). Hence, surfing is becoming overcrowded. "With an increasing number of surfers all over the globe, overcrowding of surf spots has become a serious issue" (Alemann, 2015, p. 2). Overcrowding can be dangerous, especially in an activity that does not have any official guidelines, but rather user generated and user enforced rules (Caprara 2008). Even if everyone are adhering to the code of conduct[1], overcrowding can be dangerous, because simply paddling around a wave can cause dangerous collisions (Nazer, 2004).

In an activity that is traditionally an individual activity, where the participants prefer to conduct the activity alone (Nazer, 2004) and where there is a general consensus that only one surfer rides a wave at a time (Surfinghandbook.com, 2016), overcrowding at popular surf breaks tend to create annoyance and

[1] This code of conduct will be elaborated in the next chapter

sometimes even leads to rage and violence. Especially if somebody 'Drops in' on you[2]. Additionally, it is argued, that an increased number of surfers sometimes leads to surfing territorialism, known as localism. Localism is described as "territorial defiance in defense of a surf spot" and is often used to exclude others from surfing at specific surf spots (Scott, 2003, p. 8). In other words, natural resources are claimed to belong to someone, despite the ocean in theory being free for all. In some destinations, in countries such as Maldives, Fiji and Indonesia (especially in places known as "surf slums") surf breaks have been bought by luxury resorts, having security guards present at the surf spots to make sure that only guests have access (Scott, 2003, p. 4). This is however not the case in Australia, where all of their 10,685 beaches are free for all. "There are no privately-owned beaches in Australia - beaches are public places for all to enjoy" (Australia.gov.au, 2016). Hence, gating beaches in Australia is not an option to manage overcrowding at surf breaks.

Overcrowding in surfing is also a concern of councils in different parts of Australia, especially on the Gold Coast in the eastern state Queensland:

There is no doubt that surf breaks on the Gold Coast (coupled with the region's favourable climate) represent some of the best and most easily accessible breaks in the world. As a result, they attract a high number of local and visiting users who represent disparate skill levels; and are sometimes unfamiliar with the local surf etiquette. Additionally surfers are not the only users of the beaches and surf breaks and this has led to increased potential for conflict between different user groups (City of Gold Coast, 2016, p. 8)

Overcrowding in surfing has to a limited extend been examined in relation to different issues, perceptions and possible management solutions in academic literature e.g. distribution of waves (Alemann, 2015), Waves as a limited resource (Comley, 2011), Safety issues and legal rights (Caprara, 2008) and explanations of how surfing zones work (Anderson J. , 2013). Additionally, surfing has been discussed through different cultural lenses e.g. the story of surfing, commodification and social status of surfing (e.g. Lanagan 2003, Booth 2013, Anderson 2016), localism and territorialism (e.g. Nazer 2004, Daskalos 2007, Bandeira, 2014) and gender roles in surfing (e.g. Booth 2001, Waitt 2008). Further, sustainability

[2] Throughout this thesis, surf jargon will be explained to non-surfers using footnotes. To drop in on someone means to steal a wave that somebody with the right of wave is about to take off on or is already riding by taking off on the same wave in front of that person. Dropping in is the deadliest sin possible to commit in surfing (Surfinghandbook.com, 2016)

aspects of surfing (e.g. Buckley 2003, 2008) have been discussed and cases such as *Surfers Against Sewage* (Surfers Against Sewage, 2016) have been examined.

Surf tourism is in general not a concept that has received much attention in academic literature: "Surf tourism has been shown to be a significant and yet under-researched part of the sport tourism market" (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003, p. 12). Surf tourism has been discussed by some authors (e.g. Ryan 2007, Ponting & McDonald 2013), but these tend to focus on competent surfers and tourists who see surfing as a lifestyle and therefore are motivated by the search for the perfect wave. This kind of tourism is in literature described as 'serious leisure' (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013, p. 113) and serious leisure surf tourism is mostly based on the sole purpose of surfing and finding the best waves.

Something that has however been almost completely ignored in relation to surf tourism and surfing academic literature in general is the concept of surf schools (not only) in Australia and the possible influence of these on issues, challenges and values in an overcrowded surfing culture. A reason for this can be that there is discrepancy of whether surf schools are actually worthy of the 'surfing' label. At present, the limited literature mentioning surf schools label them as adventure tourism (Buckley 2003). It seems that there is an assumption that surf schools are mostly a tourist attraction creating a fun day for tourists as surf schools traditionally cater to people who have never tried surfing before and often tourists. In the few instances where surf schools have been defined in academics, they have been defined as a type of tourism where "backpackers can take a day's surfing lesson as part of their travel experience, even though few will subsequently become serious surfers" (Buckley, 2003, p. 133). Because of this, a prior assumption might be that surf schools should not be attributed any significant meaning in surfing. Considering the amount of surf schools in Australia, the fact that surf schools operate their lessons at popular locations, and the fact that surf schools are often endorsed by the official, Australian surfing cooperate body, Surfing Australia (Surfingaustralia.com, 2016) it however seems relevant to examine what influence surf schools might have on overcrowding. Both because of and despite being a tourist attraction. This thesis therefore focuses on what the seemingly attraction of surfing for tourists in Australia can mean to the activity of surfing, whether there is a link between surf schools and overcrowding and if surf schools can be seen as more than a tourist attraction in relation to surfing and overcrowding.

The examination of the above will be based on the following research question:

1.2 Research question

How may the presence of surf schools as a tourist attraction in Australia influence the creation of overcrowding in surfing and what responsibilities do surf schools have in this context?

1.3 Research aims

- Identify why surfing is an attraction for tourists who have never surfed before
- Discuss the implications of different actors shared interest in waves
- Examine the significance of socially created surfing spaces in a individualistic activity
- Examine the link between commodification of surfing and surfing as a tourist attraction and what implications this might create in surfing culture
- Discuss what future implications and influences surf schools might have on surfing culture and the continued creation of surfing space

1.4 Motivational background

The subject of this thesis concerning the role of surf schools is of special interest to me because I am somebody who only fell in love with surfing rather recently, around 2 years ago, when I, in an attack of boredom, impulse and a feeling of being stuck in life, decided to travel to California to learn how to surf. Not really knowing anything about surfing, other than it looked like a lot of fun, I found a surf school at Manhattan Beach in Los Angeles, operating out of a beat up van. I signed up for a private two week course, my head full of expectations and imaginaries of how I was going to ride the biggest waves and barrels and doing jumps and turns, within a couple of hours. While this fantasy did (obviously) not come true, the experience still spiked an interest in this peculiar activity and even more peculiar people who called themselves surfers, who seemed to have some rather odd priorities. The most memorable without a doubt being the choice of riding another wave rather than paddling for their life when their 'local' Shark, amongst the local surfers known as 'Bruce', decided to cruise by on a quiet Tuesday morning. After feeling the rush of the ocean, being pushed of my board by playful dolphins and experiencing the

adrenalin rush of actually riding the waves, surfing became a part of my life. After moving to Australia, realizing how big of a deal surfing actually was in this part of the world, how big of a tourist magnet it seemed to be and experiencing the chaos and sometimes anger of surfing in Australia, the questions of what impact surf schools might have on surfing became of interest to me.

1.5 Structure

This research will take the following structure: In the following, I will commence with an account of surfing and surf schools in Australia in order to give an overview and an understanding of what surfing is and how it came to be what it is today. The methodology, the theoretical framework and the analysis will follow this. Lastly, the findings will be summarized in a conclusion.

2.0 The Case of Surfing, Surf Schools and surfing in Australia

'Catch a wave and you're sitting on top of the world'

(The Beach Boys, 1962)

2.1 The story and cultural development of surfing

The exact birth of surfing is still debated. Some authors suggest it to to be as long as 4000 years ago in the pacific islands. It is suggested, that back then surfing was the sport of the indo-pacific royals (Finney & Houston, 1996, p. 21). Although the first surfboard arrived in Australia in 1915 with Hawaiian, Duke Kahanamoku (Dolnicar & Fluker 2003, p. 1), it was not until the start 1960's that surfing became popular in wider society (Lanagan, 2003). Back then, surfing was however still seen as pastime for the unemployed and social outcasts. It is only in the past approximately 35 years that the world has seen surfing transformed from an underground activity to a worldwide and mainstream phenomenon(Lanagan 2003, pp.169-171).

"So what is this surfing thing anyway?" (Nazer, 2004, p. 657)

The definition of the activity of surfing is still argued upon and has apart from being defined as a sport, been argued to have a mythological status (Ponting 2008, 2013), to be a "Zen-like" experience (Comley,

2011) and to be a space of spirituality (Taylor 2007, Anderson 2013) among others. Today, the global surfer population is estimated to be 35 million (Anderson, 2016, p.213). Nowadays, surfing takes place everywhere in the world from Antarctica to Equator, in lakes, rivers and oceans. From 1 foot waves in Florida US to 10-15 foot waves at the infamous Pipeline in Oahu, Hawaii. Traditionally warm-water destinations are however most popular for surfing. South America, Southern California, Asia, South Africa, Southern Europe and Australia are all popular surfing destinations (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003).

To understand the process of surfing's rise in popularity, it is necessary to know the story of surfing that has influenced the process. Surfing has gone from being seen as an 'underground, wasteful activity' within a subculture associated with social outcasts, junkies and unemployment to being a recognized activity with sponsors and stars (Lanagan, 2003), many of them being Australian e.g. 3-time world champion of Surfing, Mick Fanning (mickfanning.com.au, 2016). The reason for surfing being defined as a sport was, according to Booth (2013), a respond to the controls and regulations that many local authorities put on the activity in Australia, USA and South Africa. By surfers organizing themselves in formal sporting associations, they were now identified as sports-persons and this helped gain the activity of surfing a larger credibility with society in general (p. 5). The definition of surfing as a sport has however been questioned and opposed by many who instead want to define surfing as a 'dance with the elements', a 'ride to benefit one's soul' (Booth 2013) or a 'state of spirituality' (Ponting 2013). "As anyone experienced with surfing cultures can attest, including surfers themselves, Surfing isn't easily categorized. It is based in sport, but can drift into art, vocation and avocation, even religion" (Taylor, 2007, p. 924).

As surfing is a mixture of all of these definitions including sport, and none of these terms covers the complexity of surfing including surfing as tourism, I will simply refer to surfing as an activity. The different definitions and perceptions of what exactly surfing is, whether it is a sport or 'the art of dancing with the elements', will be included in more complex discussions later in this thesis.

Preston-Whyte describes surfing as "the art of riding a board across the face of a breaking wave"(p.307). Today surfing is no longer just riding a board across the face of a breaking wave however. Neither is it a subculture consisting of longhaired uneducated bums. Today it is estimated that surfing have a worth of 20 billion dollars US (Anderson 2016, p. 213). Surfing companies such as Billabong, Rip Curl, Hurley, Roxy and Quicksilver do not only manufacture and sell surfboards and wetsuits, but also hats, t-shirts,

accessories and other 'surf-themed' clothing and merchandise (Lanagan, 2002; Anderson, 2016). Surfing is also a part of popular culture (Booth, 2013) including movies such as Endless Summer (1966), Point Break (1991) and Blue Crush (2002) and different musical acts focused around surfing with the 60's *The Beach Boys* being most famous. Surfing also takes place at organized sporting events such as the World Championship Tour, featuring the world's 44 best surfers competing for the world title, each event named after a different sponsor e.g. Rip Curl and Quicksilver (Buckley 2002, p. 411).

According to Barbieri & Sotomayor (2013) "Surfers are characterized by the time and effort they invest in surfing and their propensity to travel in search for the perfect wave" (p.111). It is argued, that surfing is still a male dominated activity, despite more and more females engaging in the activity (Booth 2001; Waitt 2008; Waitt & Warren 2008).

Today the word surfing covers a range of physical activities and can be done in many different ways, including but not limited to: windsurfing, kitesurfing, wakeboarding, paddle boarding, body boarding, surf kayaking, surf-skis and the original form of surfing, which is the type that this study is concerned with, riding a surfboard across the water, standing up with a surfboard as the only equipment (Jennings G. , 2007, p. 8).

2.2 Surf schools in Australia

As the name implies, a surf school is somewhere where one can learn to surf. "The first surf instruction schools were opened in the 1910's, when tourists flocked to Hawaii. Back in those days, the Waikiki beach boys were the first surfing teachers of the sport. Modern surf schools started to flourish in California during the crazy 1960s, but the biggest surf academy boom kicked in the early 1990s, when surfing dropped its "alternative" image in favor of one promoting a healthy lifestyle" (Surfertoday.com, 2016). The first surf schools started appearing in Australia around 1987 (Go Ride a Wave, 2016).

As mentioned in the introduction, surf schools have not been discussed thoroughly amongst academics and this might be caused by the lack of a definition of what surf schools actually are. The lack of a precise definition of where surf schools fit into a tourism framework also makes it difficult to define the kind of tourists who participate in surf lessons. The high number of products usually offered by surf schools further complicates the definition of what kind of tourism (or if even as a tourism business) that surf schools should be defined as. Many surf schools offer a variety of products and programs ranging from

$150 private lessons to group lessons with 25 participants over Vegemite and Weetbix Grommet[3] school programs sponsored by Surfing Australia, to special designed programs for engaging in charity with the goal of teaching autistic children how to surf. Most surf schools in Australia are however mainly targeted at beginners and people with no prior surf experience (Surfingaustralia.com, 2016), which is also the market that this thesis will be concerned with.

Additionally the size, capacity and range of products differ immensely from surf school to surf school. Some surf schools operate their business out of a van (pic 1) or a trailer (pic 2) and some surf schools have actual stores where they also sell clothing, surf school merchandise, go pro cameras and other electronics and rent out bicycles, beach equipment and surfboards (pic 3). Moreover, some surf schools have several branches around Australia (Surfingaustralia.com, 2016). Hence, surf schools are present at many locations throughout Australia.

(Pic 1 Own Resource)

(Pic 2 Own Resource)

(Pic 3 Own Resource)

Surf schools are usually located in areas where tourism is big and surfing is a popular activity with the locals at the same time e.g. around Gold Coast in Queensland or Surfing town Byron Bay in New South Wales (Surfingaustralia.com, 2016).

[3] Young surfer (Surfing-Waves, 2016)

3.0 Methodology

This chapter presents, discusses and reflects upon the methodological considerations, approaches and strategies taken in the development of the research design in order to require knowledge and an understanding on the subject of surfing and surf schools.

3.1 Research philosophy

In all research studies, it is necessary to explain the research paradigm, which is the foundation of research, as this allows for an insight into the researchers framework and way of thinking. Wahyuni (2012) describes a paradigm as "a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher" (p. 69). According to Porta and Keating (2008 p. 21), a paradigm includes three aspects: An ontological base which relates to the existence of a real and objective world and the nature of this, an epistemological base concerned with *how* we know things and how these are studied and a methodological base referring to how research is conducted (Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 21).

3.1.1 Ontology

For this thesis, social constructivism is the foundation of the ontological base. In social constructivism, it is assumed that individuals seek to understand the world that they live in and develop subjective meanings of their experiences directed towards things and objects (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). In social constructivism, the ontology perceives that individuals are actors in the creation and consumption of social phenomena. Bryman elaborates: "constructivism is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). Constructivism thus accepts that multiple realities exists.

In this thesis, social constructivism shows in examining the experiences of the different interviewees' perception of surf schools' influence on surfing. As people are different, these experiences and views are different. A researcher in social constructivism aims to understand the complexity and variety of the meanings, experiences and opinions of the research objects rather than categorizing and narrowing the meanings (Creswell, 2003). As every individual possess their own view on the world, it is important to be aware that a single truth does not exist in social constructivism. Hence, it is not possible to generalize in social constructivism. The individuals studied and interviewed for this thesis all have subjective views

and experiences related to surfing, created through prior experiences with surfing. It is then the researcher's intent to make sense of these experiences others have about the world, even though it might be the same world.

Social constructivism also influences the way that research questions and interview questions are designed. Questions are usually broad and general, allowing the participant to "construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). Social constructivism further makes sense to use in this thesis, as the topic of surf schools is not something that has been studied widely, and thus the researcher is highly dependent on the views and experiences of surf schools from those implicated. I as a researcher also need to acknowledge that my own background and experiences with and passion for surfing shapes the interpretation of the results and where I 'position myself' in the research (Creswell, 2003) and thus the interpretation of the data is subject to my own perception of the world.

3.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to how knowledge is created and how the social world is studied. "Epistemology is the study of knowledge and justification" (Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 350) Epistemology refers to the position that the researcher takes in analyzing the literature sources and the opinions and experiences of the studied actors.

The epistemological approach in this thesis is *phenomenology*. In phenomenology, the focus is on "trying to understand or comprehend meanings of human experience as it is lived" (Laverty, 2003, p. 22) and is "concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them" (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). In phenomenology, analyzes are made from the standpoint that the world should be understood through experiences and meanings made from individuals rather than as the world being set apart from the individual. It makes sense in this study to use phenomenology, as it is an aim to understand how different actors experience overcrowding in surfing, taking their prior experience with surfing into account. Further, phenomenology acknowledges and includes what might be taken for granted (Laverty, 2003) and "through reclaiming day-to-day, subjective experience as a means through which knowing is created, phenomenology repositions the knower in his or her own world as central to which is known" (Ladkin, 2014, p. 613). The existence of a reality is acknowledged in phenomenology, but also that reality

is created by the individual, thus realities might be constantly altered and contemplated, as the individual have new experiences. Consequently, phenomenology builds on an assumption that a reality exists, but only by the virtue of the realities of individuals.

3.1.3 Methodology

The methodology applied for this study is qualitative, which is concerned with words, images and situations rather than numbers and facts which is the case in quantitative studies (Bryman, 2012). Methodology encompasses the research strategy chosen to examine the research question(s) and approaches taken to collecting and analyzing data (Porta & Keating, 2008). According to Hannam & Know (2010) "three major groups of methodologies fall under the […] qualitative: participant observation, interviews and focus groups, and discourse analysis" (p. 180). For this study, the first two are used. The practical use of the qualitative methodology for this thesis will be explained throughout the methodology chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The methodological approach to this research is a mix of deductive and inductive research. Deductive research builds on a theoretical approach and using already existing theory as a framework. The questions asked and methods used are influenced by existing theory, whereas inductive research is decided by finds in the field which leads to final conclusions and findings being based solemnly on discoveries made from the data collected. Hannam & Knox (2010) stresses that "in practice, rather than being either deductive or inductive, most research projects combine elements of the two in an iterative manner" (p. 179). This thesis has a slightly bigger focus on inductive research due to the fact that not much research has been conducted on the specific topic of surf schools. It is beneficial to work with a mix of deductive and inductive research in this thesis because it provides a literary foundation for the research, but still allows for the use of data collection to specify and explore the relevant issues and interesting themes in the questions of the role of surf schools in surfing in Australia.

3.2.1 Data triangulation

For this thesis, data triangulation is used. Data triangulation refers to using mixed methods to collect data and research the topic of interest. "Triangulation is about using different research methods to complement one another" (Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 34) .Sometimes it can refer to using a mix of qualitative and

quantitative methods, but in this thesis it consists of a mix of only qualitative methods; Semi-structured interviews, netnography and short-term participant observation. It is especially relevant to make use of data triangulation because overcrowding in surfing is a rather uncovered topic in academics and using more than one method might make for a more covering and deeper insight to the topic. "In social science triangulation is defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic. The mixing of data types, known as data triangulation, is often thought to help in validating the claims that might arise from an initial pilot study." (Olsen, 2004, p. 105)

3.2.2 Desk Research/deductive research

Before starting my data collection, I read through a variety of academic literature, newspaper-articles, surf-magazines and online debates regarding surfing experiences, overcrowding and the reasons for and consequences of overcrowding in surfing. By comparing these different sources, I found that the link between overcrowding and surfing as a tourist attraction, especially the matter of surf schools, is a relatively overlooked topic in academic literature, though it seemed to be of big concern to some actors, e.g. forum members of the Australian surfing website swellnet.com. By doing this, I narrowed down the topic in order to create the research design and make sure to collect relevant data, and used this information to pick my destinations for data collection.

3.2.3. Reflexivity

In social science research it is argued that it is impossible for the researcher to be completely objective and it is important to be aware of this. "It is not possible to make research entirely objective […] and so it is, instead, necessary for researchers to embrace their own bias and take account of their own mental worlds their own ideas, their influence on the research process and their own understanding of what they are seeing and doing" (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 186). This is taken into account when working with a social constructivist approach to doing research.

In my role as a researcher for this thesis, there were a number of factors that I needed to take into consideration, especially when conducting the interviews.

- I am a female researching an activity that is traditionally performed by males
- I am not Australian which means, that I have another background and most likely another perception of the world than most of the interviewees
- I did not grow up with surfing

- I am not a part of any 'surfing community'
- As a non-local I can potentially be seen as an intruder
- Although I am fluent in English, it is not my first language and I speak in an American accent rather than an Australian accent
- Being only above a beginner surfer myself, the power relations between researcher and interviewee when interviewing skilled surfers and people for whom surfing is a profession, in one way or another, can be a disturbing factor and possibly affect the data

The data for this thesis consists of 38 semi-structured interviews of varying length from two to 40 minutes, 26 netnographic samples concerning opinions on surf schools and field notes from short-term participant observation in a surf lesson.

In the following part, I will explain my approach to conducting interviews and discuss how different factors such as power relations between researcher and interviewee, settings of interviews and approaching possible interviewees can affect the data and data collection.

3.3 Interviewing

3.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The primary source of data for this thesis comes from interviews with seven surf school owners, 5 surf instructors, 9 surf school students and 17 local surfers. The youngest interviewee was 19 years old and the oldest was 72.

All interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews, although differing in the level of structure. Some of the interviews leaned more towards the unstructured interview form, whereas others leaned more towards a structured interview. Healy & Rawlinson (1993), Jennings (2005) and Tracy (2013) all outlined the differences between structured and unstructured interviews, and when it is appropriate to use either: Structured interviews are mostly quantitative, good for collecting factual information and measuring large amounts of data. Unstructured interviews are mostly qualitative, conversation like, have only a topic of interest and are helpful in exploring new topics and problems.

The semi structured interview form have the advantage that there is room to 'let the conversation wander' if relevant, while at the same time making sure that relevant themes and questions are covered. Additionally "questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by the interviewees" (Bryman, 2012, p. 471) For this thesis, this led to the interviews varying in length according to the amount of information that the interviewee gave and how talkative the interviewee was. "Semi-structured interviews […] have a flexible agenda or list of themes to focus the interview, although between interviews with different participants the order of discussion will vary." (Jennings, 2005, p. 104)

As shown in figure 1, the distribution of the interviews shows that the interviews with surf school owners and instructors leaned a bit towards the unstructured interview form. This make sense following the statement by Hannam & Knox that "Unstructured interviews are perhaps most effective where you are interviewing an expert or an enthusiast who happens to have a well-developed personal opinion" (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 182). These interviews were in general longer and more in-depth, than the interviews conducted with local surfers and surf school students, and had a tendency to uncover new, not originally planned topics in extension of some of the questions asked. Moreover, it was mostly the case that the interviewee still had something to say when the interview was coming to an end.

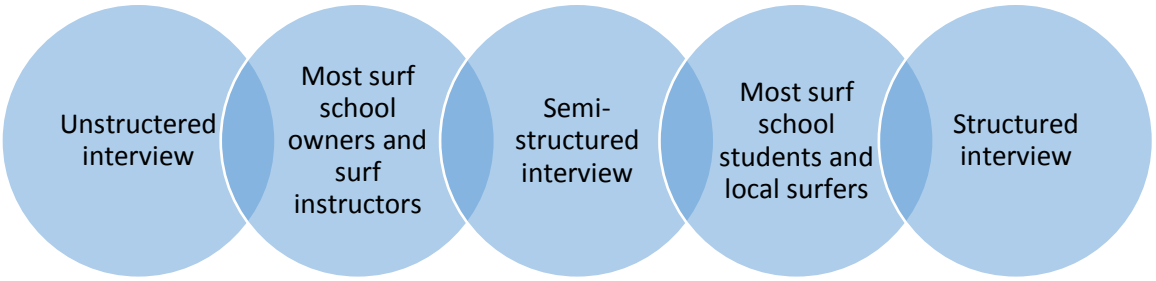


Figure 1 researchers own work

The interviews conducted with surf school students and local surfers were usually shorter and more direct answers were given. The reason for indicating that they leaned more towards structured interviews is that the interviewee rarely had a lot to add, only answered the questions asked and in many cases the researcher had to ask the interviewee to collaborate on their answer. It was however necessary to keep these interviews short and more precise because there was little chance that the interviewee would want to spend a large amount of time answering the questions, why the interview guide was shorter. Another issue that occurred was that some local surfers and surf school students at times seemed nervous about whether they were giving the right answers. This could be due to what they might have felt as some kind of power balance. "Sometimes you as the researcher or the university student will be seen as more knowledgeable than your research subjects" (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 186). This was especially the case with surf school students, who also at times had a language barrier.

One of the interviews conducted with surf school owners ended up being a paired interview as I was told that the surf school was owned by a couple when I arrived, why it was relevant for both of them to participate in the interview. "Paired interviews involve two related persons in an interview, such as a

couple" (Jennings, 2005, p. 100) It turned out to be a benefit for the interview because they could compliment each other in answering the questions.

It needs to be mentioned that there of course were exceptions to these general conclusions, and that fig.2 should only be seen a simple outline of the format of the interviews.

3.3.2 Information checklist

Before I started conducting interviews, I created a list of information to give the interviewees before the interview (app IX). The purpose of this list was to make sure, that every interviewee was adequately informed about the purpose of the interview. The list was created to help the researcher in conducting interviews and was not showed to any interviewees. After giving them this information, I made sure to ask if they had any further questions about the interview and in that context two of the interviewees informed me that they did not want to discuss their financials. Since their financials was not of any relevance or interest to me, this was not an issue. Another purpose of this checklist was to create trust between the researcher and the interviewee and to assure them that the information would not be used for any other purposes. "A promise of confidentiality is reassuring to respondents and is likely to make them more cooperative and open" (Healey & Rawlinson, 1993, p. 351). The latter was in particular important when interviewing surf school owners and surf instructors, since these might be more aware about not disclosing sensitive or confidential information if they were in any way unsure about the researcher's intentions.

3.3.3 Interview guide

Prior to the interviews, four different interview guides were created; 1 for interviewing surf school owners (App. I), 1 for interviewing surf instructors (App. II), 1 for interviewing surf school students(App. III) and 1 for interviewing local surfers (App. IV).

The interview guides changed along the way, but the themes covered remained the same. The changes occurred, if there was a question that was unclear to the interviewees or turned out to be irrelevant and in the same way, more questions added if new, relevant topics occurred during interviews.

When creating an interview guide for semi-structured interviews, it is important to create it in a way that allowed the conversation to wander, to skip questions and to avoid closed questions, where the interviewee can simply answer yes or no. (Bryman, 2012) The questions should be open-ended and

encourage the interviewee to elaborate on the topics. The interview guides were prepared in 'everyday language', meaning that instead of the questions being in a theoretical and heavy language they were shaped in a language so everyone could understand them without necessarily having any background knowledge on the topic. "The interviewer questions should be expressed in the everyday language of the interviewees" (Kvale S. , 2007, p. 57)

I made sure to always start the interviews out on a casual/soft note by asking easy questions. With the surf school owners and instructors, I started out the interviews by asking what surfing meant to them personally. I did this for several reasons: First, because I figured that it was relevant and to some extend showed a sincere interest in the interviewee as a person.

The first minutes of an interview are decisive. The interviewees will want to have a grasp of the interviewer before they allow themselves to talk freely and expose their experiences and feelings to a stranger. A good contact is established by attentive listening, with the interviewer showing interest, understanding and respect for what the subject says (Kvale S. , 2007, p. 56)

Second, there is a chance that when interviewing business owners they have an interest in making their business seem as good as possible (Healey & Rawlinson, 1993). Thus, I figured, that if I got these people in the mindset of thinking of surfing in connection to their personal interest or passion, that they would might be more aware of possible issues in the mindset of surfers themselves, they might possibly answer my questions in a more honest way. Asking this question also gave the researcher an idea of the 'person behind the business owner', which could possibly help the researcher to better understand the business owners' point of view.

3.3.4 Approaching interviewees – Entering the field

The way in which a researcher approaches a possible interviewee can have a great effect on the outcome. One of the most important factors in this is to be on the same level with the interviewee and giving the appropriate information. "When approaching […] the tourism field site […] know your research and present it's purpose, impacts, impacts, processes and benefits clearly and articulately with language levels and style appropriate to the setting. Respect questions and answer them authentically" (Jennings, 2005, p. 107). The possible implications of entering the field will be throughout the next parts in different contexts.

3.3.5 Delimitations

Before I approached any possible interviewees, I set a number of criteria, or delimitations, for who to approach. Delimitations do in general refer to what the researcher is not going to do and the boundaries of the research that the researcher decides relevant. Delimitations are important to establish because "Delimitations impact the external validity or generalizability of the results of the study" (Timothy & Levy, 2009, p. 332). Some of the criteria were specific for one group of interviewees and others were covering all interviewees.

The first criterion was that the interviewee had to be at least 18 years old. The reason for this was first that people of at least 18 years of age are legal and therefore can make decisions by themselves e.g. to participate in an interview without the researcher having to get their parents' consent. This criterion proved most difficult when collecting data from local surfers, since it is not always possible to tell somebody's age from looks, but by approaching people that looked at least a few years older than 18, I got the interviewees I needed. The youngest local surfer interviewed is 19 years old. This criterion was easier to fulfill in relation to interviewing surf school students, since I could explain the aim of my research and interviews to a group of students at the same time and in that context mention that I was looking to interview people who were at least 18 years old. The criterion was not relevant concerning surf school owners or instructors since these businesses do not employ people younger than 18 years.

The second set of criteria concerned the activity of surfing and varied according to the four sample groups and can be seen in figure 2.

Surf School Owner	Surf Instructor	Surf School Student	Local Surfer
• Had to either own/direct or be the head manager of a surf school in Australia • Have to either teach surfing currently or have teached surfing in the past	• Had to actively teach surfing in Australia	• Had to have participated in at least 1 surf lesson in Australia	• Had to surf on a regular basis, preferably at the same beach • Had to surf on the type of surboard where one stands up when riding

Figure 2

By setting these criteria, it was my aim to get as useful a sample as possible without too much irrelevant information that could interfere with the relevant data.

3.3.6 Approaching Surf Schools and students

When approaching a business there are many possible obstacles to take into consideration. Especially being a student without anything to offer in return. One of them is that it can be difficult to get access to a business as an outsider. "Business organizations are bounded institutions to which the research worker has to seek, negotiate and gain access." (Healey & Rawlinson, 1993, p. 340)

I reached out to 11 Surf Schools in all. I did this by sending an email. In the email I shortly explained who I am, what I am doing and why it would be interesting for me to get in touch with the surf school and made sure to address it to the surf school owner/director. "In most cases, access to a business is made through a person who is a senior or somehow in charge" (Healey & Rawlinson, 1993, p. 346). In each email, I explained why the specific surf school was of interest to me. "Your first approach should be by letter or (increasingly) email, and you should be sure to demonstrate that you know who you are communicating with, why and what they can do for you" (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 183). In the email, I also asked whether it was possible for me to interview some of their instructors and students. Only one

surf school replied that it was ok. The rest ignored that part of my request, which I then repeated when I met with the surf school owners in person. Only three of the surf school owners agreed to let me interview their instructors and students and in one of the cases, the owner decided which instructor I could interview. This decision did however mostly seem to build on an assumption from the side of the owner that this instructor would be the only one who would have anything of relevance to say. I could have sought out the relevant people whom I was not allowed to interview afterwards, but I found that it would be rude after the owner had taken time out of their schedule to do an interview with me without getting anything in return. "The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants" (Creswell, 2003, p. 201)I n that case, the lack of other views than that of the surf school owner must be taken into consideration when analyzing the interviews. "It needs to be recognized […] that interviews with business owners and managers will provide the research worker with material from only one particular viewpoint." (Healey & Rawlinson, 1993, p. 340) I as a researcher however chose to have 'good faith' and believe that the viewpoints stated in the interviews are the true and genuine opinion of these interviewees and that they were not trying to trick me or otherwise mislead me. Approaching the surf school students was in this case with the help from either the owner of the surf school or one of the instructors, who introduced me to the students and told them that I was doing research and asked them to help me out. This could potentially have made some of the students feel they were pressured into participating in the interviews, which is something the researcher should take into consideration, when analyzing the data. I made sure to inform them that nobody should feel pressured into participating in an interview.

3.3.7 Approaching local surfers

All the interviews conducted with local surfers took place on the beach or in the carpark of popular surf beaches. None of these were scheduled beforehand. It is important for a researcher to know how to behave in a certain environment. Because I was in a surfing environment, and from online-debates had learned that some surfers are not overly positive towards official organizations such as *Surfing Australia* or authorities wanting to control surfing, I made sure to dress in a casual way. "When approaching […] the tourism field site, consider your attire, ensure it complements the situation" (Jennings, 2005, p. 107). I had a presumption that if I looked too 'official', the surfers might not want to talk to me. I therefore decided to dress in *Surf Wear*. "A rule of thumb is to present yourself similarly to participants" (Tracy, 2013, p. 71)

The surfers were rather simple to identify since all of them were carrying a surfboard and/or wearing a wetsuit. In the beginning I approached anyone who matched this description, but all the surfers who were on their way out in the water all responded either that they were busy or agreed but told me that it had to be very quick because they were on their way out in the water. Inspired by Comley (2011) who faced the same issue when approaching surfers at two different beaches in California, I therefore decided to focus on approaching surfers who had finished their surf. This had the advantage that the surfers were more willing to talk to me and did not seem as rushed.

When I approached the surfers I usually started out by asking if it was a good session, how the waves were, or something similar, in order to break the ice. "Starting an interview on the right note is important" (Healey & Rawlinson, 1993, p. 349). I then presented myself, my research and the purpose of my research and asked them for permission to ask a few questions. Before starting the interview, I made sure to give them the relevant information from the information checklist in order to make sure that they felt informed and comfortable with doing the interview. I furthermore made sure to get their permission to record the interview. "When introducing yourself, the protocol should include statements of confidentiality, consent, options to withdraw, and use and scope of the results" (Rabionet, 2011, p. 564). In situations where I regarded it to be appropriate, I offered the interviewee a muesli bar. I did this with the intention of sending a signal that I, as the researcher, understood their needs (represented in the form of needing energy after working out) and that they might therefore be more willing to trust me and open up to me. "The most important factors contributing to a successful interview are trust and […] 'sympathetic understanding' is the attitude most likely to promote such an atmosphere and hence yield the best response. The social skills of the interviewer are thus a key factor" (Healey & Rawlinson, 1993, p. 349). It was a small gesture, but almost all the interviewees accepted the offer. The fact that this also worked as a bit of an icebreaker and to make the situation a bit more relaxed was not predicted, but a positive effect.

3.3.8 Setting of the interviews

All the interviews took place in an open setting either on the beach, a parking lot of a beach or at a café. Apart from two interviews which took place in a closed setting, a van belonging to the surf school. Hannam & Knox (2010) outlined the difference between an open and a closed setting: "Open settings are those that you can freely access, without requiring special permission […] Closed settings, however,

require you have gained prior consent to enter the research context" (p.184). Even though it might be easier to get access to doing interviews in a public setting, there are some possible risks connected to doing interviews in an open setting. There is a good chance that most interviewees will not express extreme or radical views on the subject they are being asked about, directly to another person (in this case the researcher) in public, which should also be taken into consideration when assessing the truthfulness of the data. "The setting[…] may create may create barriers to the acquisition of rich data" (Lofland et.al. 2006, p. 21)

3.3.9 Recording interviews

All the interviews conducted were recorded. Before recording the interviews, I made sure to ask permission from the interviewee to record. Recording interviews has the benefit that the researcher can focus fully on the interview instead of writing notes. This might have the benefit of getting more in depth and relevant interviews because the researcher easier can focus on adjusting the questions during the interview. It can also create risks however, e.g. the case of technical failure or settings that can worsen the quality of the recording for example a large amount of noise in the background (Tracy, 2013). To eliminate these risks I made a test recording before every interview was conducted, and where possible, looked to conduct the interviews in silent surroundings.

3.3.10 Transcribing interviews

There is no universal way to transcribe interviews, but it is important that all interviews for a research project are transcribed the same way (Kvale S. , 2007, p. 95). I chose to partly transcribe the interviews for two primary reasons: First, it would take a lot of time to write every single word that the interviewee was saying and second, a lot of irrelevant information would have been included. When transcribing I removed irrelevant comments and information such as"I went to Brisbane to see a show instead that day". I furthermore left out silence, pauses, the interviewees uttering non-words such as eh or uhm or repeating the questions.

Instead of the interviewees name I used codes which will be how interviews are referred to in the analysis. The codes consist of a title e.g. owner, number interview in its category and a time code for when the interviewee started making the statement referred to in the analysis. The codes are outlined below.

Type of interviewee	Code
Surf School Instructor	Owner, No. interview in appendix, timecode e.g. (O1, 01:00)
Surf Instructor	Instructor, No. interview in appendix, timecode e.g. (I1, 01:00)
Surf School Student	Student, No. interview in appendix, timecode e.g. (S1, 01:00)
Local Surfer	Local, No. interview in appendix, timecode e.g. (L1, 01:00)

3.3.11 Findings

During the transcribing of the interviews, a number of common patterns and themes emerged. Some specific for the sample group, others were more general:

General themes	Surf School Owners	Surf Instructors	Surf School Students	Local Surfers
•Surfing is synonomous with Australia •Surfing is cool •Standing up on a surfboard is a big rush •Surfing is fun •Surfing is exciting	•Tourists perceive surfing as a tourist attraction •Tourists do not continue surfing •Lack of skill, knowledge and etiquette is dangerous •Have a large focus on safety •Overcrowding is an issue in some cases •Surf schools stick to the white wash and thus do not disturb any other surfers •Surfing is present everywhere e.g. in commercials •The smaller the number of other surfers out, the better •Surfing is a passion	•Tourists perceive surfing as a tourist attraction •Tourists do not continue surfing usually •Other surfers are a hazard •Overcrowding is an issue in some cases •Will teach etiquette if they estimate that the student is serious about surfing •Almost always do a safety briefing before surfing •The Smaller the number of other surfers out, the better •Surfing is a passion	•Wanted to try surfing because they were in Australia •Want to keep surfing •Surfing was fun •Lessons are quite expensive •Not scared of other surfers •The idea of surfing was exciting to the tourists	•Overcrowding is an issue •Beginners are a cause for annoyance because they waste the good waves •Beginners in the line-ups are a hazard •Surf Schools are partly to blame for overcrowding but mostly not •A lack of etiquette is a cause of annoyance and anger •The smaller the number of other surfers out, the better •Surfing is a passion

3.4 Netnography

The second method used for data collection for this thesis is netnography. Netnography is a variation of ethnography conducted, as the word implies, online and "involves searching for and analyzing relevant computer-generated data to address identified research questions" (Mkono, 2012, p. 554). Netnography draws on ethnography, which is by Kozinets described as:

An inherently open-ended practice. It is based upon participation and observation in particular cultural arenas as well as acknowledgment and employment of researcher reflexivity. That is, it relies heavily on "the acuity of the researcher-asinstrument" (Sherry 1991, p. 572) and is more visibly affected by researcher interests and skills that most other types of research. (Kozinets, 2002, p. 63)

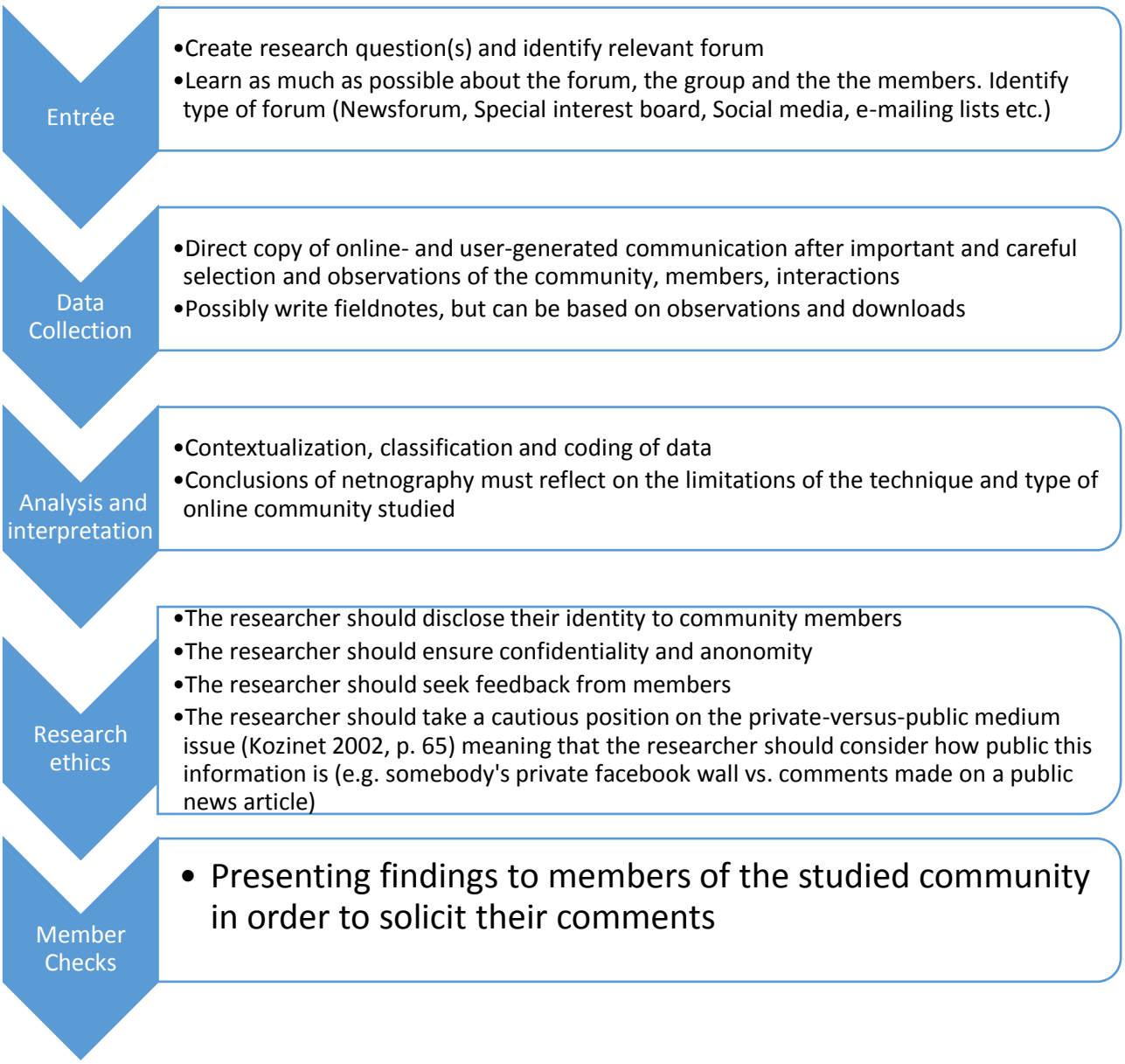
Netnography is a newer phenomenon arisen similarly with normal people's opportunities to create and post content online (Mkono, 2012). Netnography is a useful tool to obtain knowledge about different groups and communities online. Originally, the method was developed as a tool for studying consumer trends online (Langer & Beckman, 2005, p. 192), but it can also be a useful tool for researchers in social science to study communities formed by a common interest online. Especially communities that might be hard to reach elsehow. Online, people can find and get in touch with like-minded people e.g. car-enthusiasts, fans of a particular band or as in the case here, surfing (Kozinets, 2002). This can make it easier for the researcher to find the study subjects since these groups are already shaped by the similar interest. It could be argued however, that netnography should not stand alone, due to the fact that it can be hard to validate the identity of the person expressing their opinion (Solomon, 1996). It can however be a very useful tool if used in triangulation with other ethnographic methods. "Triangulation of "netnographic" data with data collected using other methods, such as in interviews, focus groups, surveys, or traditional in-person ethnographies may be useful if the researcher seeks to generalize to groups other than the populations studied" (Kozinets, 2002, p. 67).

Netnography is sometimes a faster, less extensive way to collect data (Kozinets, 2006, p.281) Data it is already generated, whereas in classic ethnography the researcher must first approach and convince the possible interviewees or studied people to talk to them (Hine, 2008).

For this thesis, the biggest advantage of using netnography as a part of triangulation is, that when researching a topic that involves potentially sensitive topics such as conflicts, rage and expressing hatred, there might be a bigger chance of people opening up when they can be anonymous. "Respondent anonymity can serve as a benefit[…] From behind their screen identities, respondents are more apt to talk freely about issues that could create inhibitions in a traditional face-to-face group, particularly when discussing sensitive topics" (Solomon, 1996, p. 11). This means that research subjects might be more vocal about these things when they can hide behind a screen and when they do not need to act under their own name. "Netnography makes particular sense for attempts to analyse communities where access based on conventional methods is difficult" (Langer & Beckman, 2005, p. 192). Whereas it might not have been hard to the researcher to get in touch with surfers in general, getting people to be brutally honest and discuss negative aspects of surfing, having negative views on beginners and tourists might have been a bigger challenge.

3.4.1 Approach

When approaching the site of data collection it is important to be prepared and to know what to look for. Kozinets (2002) suggested five stages for conducting netnographic research. These are outlined below along with a short description of each step. Due to the fact that these stages by Kozinets are 14 years old (although still relevant), the stages have for the purpose of this thesis been moderated slightly, in order to have a higher relevance for the internet of 2016 (e.g. with the addition of social media) and the aspect of analysis have been put in relation to interpretation.

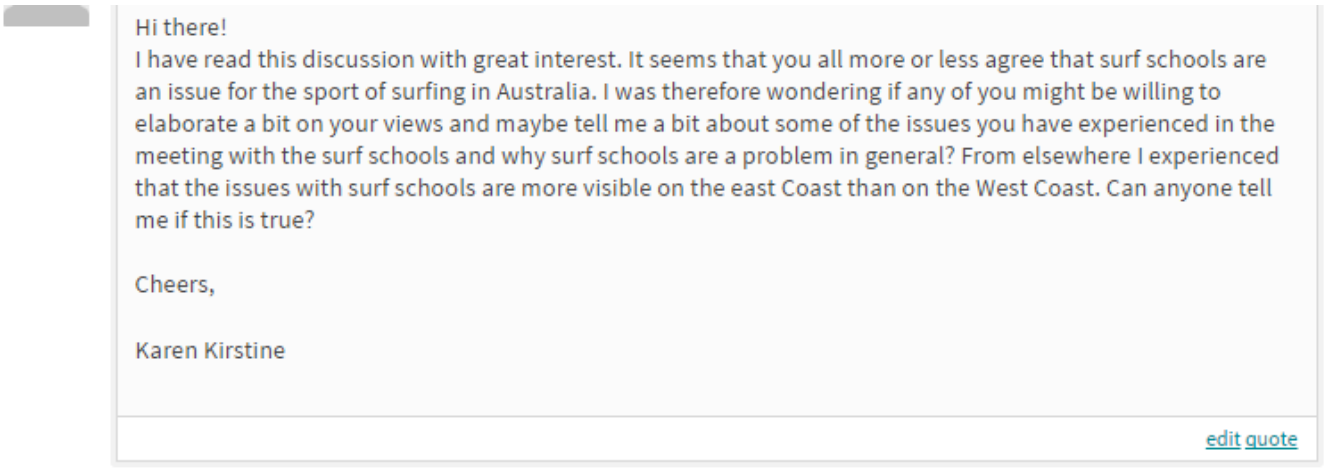


My approach did not religiously follow Kozinets' five stages. In particular, the last two stages changed in my approach.

The netnography for this thesis took place in an online forum on swellnet.com, which is an Australian website dedicated to surfing. It contains both articles about surfing and an online forum, where users can discuss different subjects and topics related to surfing. In order to comment or take part in the debate one must register as a member. (Swellnet Forum, 2016) Kozinet (2002) stresses that:

Generally, online communities should be preferred that have either (1) a more focused and research question relevant segment, topic or group, (2) higher "traffic" of postings, (3) larger numbers of discrete message posters, (4) more detailed or descriptively rich data, and (5) more between-member interactions of the type required by the research question. (Kozinets, 2002, p. 65)

Swellnet.com is a relevant online community to choose because its members are gathered because of their shared interest in surfing. I acted like a participant observer by participating in a thread started by a member going by the name *Doghead* where he or she argued that overcrowding is the product of too many surf schools. "Passive data collection from online settings can appear an easy and convenient route to cultural observation, but repeatedly ethnographers have found that more active engagement pays dividends" (Hine, 2008, p. 257) I did however try to stay as neutral as possible and asked the participants if they could elaborate on some of their views (pic.4). I did not mention that I was doing research, but I tried to keep my language in a professional and at the same time every-day tone. Looking back at the initial starting comment I made however, the tone and the language might seem a bit too professional and like I was looking for specific answers, compared to the language used by the other members. If I had kept my tone in a more every-day language, I could possibly have been accepted as part of the community to a higher degree.


Hi there!
I have read this discussion with great interest. It seems that you all more or less agree that surf schools are an issue for the sport of surfing in Australia. I was therefore wondering if any of you might be willing to elaborate a bit on your views and maybe tell me a bit about some of the issues you have experienced in the meeting with the surf schools and why surf schools are a problem in general? From elsewhere I experienced that the issues with surf schools are more visible on the east Coast than on the West Coast. Can anyone tell me if this is true?

Cheers,

Karen Kirstine

edit quote

Picture 1 Swellnet.com

The other participants in the thread replied to my request in an everyday-language and took the debate further by discussing with each other, which was my goal with participating in the debate in the first place. The users involved all acted under pseudonyms such as *Doghead*, *Sharkman* and *thebeard*. I was the only participant in the debate who did not act under a pseudonym. Surnames are not shown. The debate got quite heated between some users, but I did not participate more than my initial inquiry.

Because of the chance to be anonymous it is relevant to be aware that there is no way to verify the identity of the participants in the thread and whether they are actually expressing their honest opinions or just commenting hateful things to make a stir. The fact that there is no way of knowing who these people are in real life can affect the validity of the data and this should be taken into consideration when using these comments as data. Additionally, it should be considered that only written text is available which, can possibly restrain someone who would otherwise participate, from expressing his or her view (e.g. people who are not able to read or write). Moreover, observations of non-verbal reactions cannot be observed online (Kozinets, 2006, p.282) Lastly, it needs to be considered that comments can be moderated or deleted by either the user or moderators of the forum, which means that the data can be manipulated or changed.

Considering the above, there are however some factors that might give the comments from swellnet.com higher credibility:

- The comments were all made by users on an Australian surf related website, why it is fair to assume that the users have a sincere interest in surfing.
- It is mandatory to create a user and register an email address in order to comment and start new debates
- There was a general tone that the participants seemed to 'know' each other from the forum already

3.4.2 Knowing the crowd

Another aspect which might affect the netnography is who the studied community is and how big their involvement with the topic and the other users is. Kozinetss (2002) suggests four different levels of involvement (fig. XX): Tourists, Minglers, Devotees and Insiders (p.66).

Tourists	Minglers	Devotees	Insiders
•No strong social ties with other users •Lacks a deep interest in the topic •Posts casual questions now and then	•Strong social ties with the group •Minimal interest in the activity	•Strong consumption interests/interest in the topic •Few or no attachments to the online group	•Strong consumption interest/interest in the topic •Strong social ties with the online group •Long standing members of the online group •Post frequently

Kozinets (2002) argue that "devoted, enthusiastic, actively involved and the insiders represent the most important data sources" (p. 64).

I will argue, that most of the users on swellnet.com can be classified as *devotees* or *insiders*. First, because Swellnet.com is a website devoted to surfing. Surfing is a specific interest, why I will argue that it is fair to assume that the users signed up and created a profile because of their interest in surfing. I will further argue that there is a bigger chance that the users have a sincere interest in the subject, because they have to put more work into being able to comment. Finally, as mentioned before, there seemed to be a tone amongst the users that they knew each other quite well (online) as there was a tone of familiarity between the members. This is further backed up by one of the replies a user got when asking who Surfing Australia is (NS22). This was followed by the reply "who are you?" by one of the other members (NS23).

3.4.3 Ethical considerations

There is (obviously) an ethical aspect in using these comments for data without asking the people who made the comments for permission beforehand.

According to ethics, I did not follow Kozinetss' five stages. I did not 1) inform the users that I was doing netnography or 2) Go back in the forums and show them my findings. It could be argued, that I, by not following the two last steps broke the ethical code of conduct, although I will argue that this is not an issue to a large degree. This statement builds on the fact that the purpose of my netnography was not commercial. The five stages are originally developed for the purpose of marketing research. I was not trying to direct or sell any product to anyone involved and the results are not published anywhere. Furthermore, I did not disclose anyone's identity, neither by (real) name, nor picture. Additionally, the comments made in the debate on Swellnet.com, however it can be argued that because you do not need to be a member to see the debate, the information is publically available to everyone. "The more the venue is acknowledged to be public, the less obligation there is on the researcher to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of individuals using the venue, or to seek their informed consent." (Bryman, 2012, p. 679)

It is important when conducting netnography, that the researcher is able to distinguish useful and useless data and to be conscious of the merits and limitations of this type of research (Mkono, 2012, p. 554). Some of the comments made were not useful as data e.g. comments that were written to intentionally annoy or mock other users or completely irrelevant. The data obtained from Swellnet.com consists of 27 netnographic samples (app X), whereof 26 of these are comments made on the topic of surf schools

started by a user going by the name 'Doghead', arguing that surf schools are to blame for overcrowding. The last is the researchers own comment. Despite not all of the netnographic samples being used directly in the analysis part, it was still relevant to include them all(apart from the ones mentioned in the latter) as they have a coherence and often a comment is a reply to a prior comment or question. In the thesis, the individual netnographic samples will be referred to as NS (netnographic sample) and number of netnographic sample e.g. NS1. The comments were grammatically edited when necessary. The content of the comments was in no way edited.

3.3.4 Findings

There was a surprisingly big difference between the findings from the netnography and the findings from the interviews regarding the views on surf schools, especially on the topic of whether surf schools were to blame for overcrowding or not. In general people online were considerably more negative and spiteful towards beginners and other surfers than the surfers interviewed on the beach.

I did expect a difference between data collected online and data collected in face-to-face interaction, due to the different prerequisites and surroundings of the different methods, as explained above, but it is nonetheless interesting that the differences are that significant.

3.5 Being a tourist - Short-term participant observation

The third method used for this thesis is short-term participant observation. This method was used as a secondary means of collecting data. In order to get a deeper insight into the social interactions taking place and how surf schools interact with surf school students, surfers and the surroundings, I found it necessary to research this in practice. "Participant observation involves attempting to understand and interpret the meanings and experiences of a group" (Cole, 2005, p. 64) Thus, I decided to sign up for a group surfing lesson.

In classic anthropology, participant observation often requires spending large amounts of time in the field. (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 181) Following that line of thought, it is fair to question how much useful data I could actually get out of participating in one 2-hour surf lesson. My goal with doing

participant observation was to examine how a surf lesson functions in practice at a specific destination, observing to identify specific themes and acts and experiencing how people, who in the case were already assigned specific roles to play(surf instructor, surf school student, local surfer) were interacting. The background or lives outside of this specific situation was of no interest or relevance to me in this specific situation, only the situation and interactions of the specific tourism activity we were all involved in, was of interest to me. Thus, I will argue that short-term participant observation was still relevant. "It could be argued that relatively short-term engagements with places are the perfect way to engage with patterns of behavior and communities that are transient, such as those that come together around the practices of tourism" (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 181). Due to the short period of time this research lasted, I decided to exclusively look for and focus on possible specific patterns, events and themes based on the knowledge obtained from the data already collected instead of looking at 'the bigger picture'.

3.5.1 Prior research and planning

Before choosing the surf school to do lessons with, I did some prior research. I decided from the beginning not to sign up with any of the surf schools from where I had interviewed people engaged in the surf school. This was due to the high chance that the surf school owner and/or instructors would know that I was doing research even if I did not inform them of it. Further, the fact that they already knew me could possibly change their behavior. I had an assumption that not disclosing the true purpose of my participation in a surf lesson would make the individuals act in a more natural way than if they knew that they were the object of research. "The researcher relations in the field will heavily influence the accuracy and truthfulness of the data collected" (Cole, 2005, p. 64).

I chose to sign up for a surf lesson taking place on the Gold Coast because this was a destination where I had learned from prior research and data collection, had many problems related to overcrowding in surfing. I looked through a number of surf school websites and in the end decided on *Get Wet Surf School*, operating at The Spit on the Gold Coast in Queensland. Get Wet Surf School advertised that with them I could "Experience the thrill of surfing" which they defined as "an iconic Australian leisure activity" (Get Wet Surf School, 2016).

3.5.2 Approach

I decided to conduct this part of the research as covert research. This meant that I did not to inform the instructors or the other students in the surf class of my real purpose of participating in the surf lesson.

Doing covert research might create ethical issues about whether it is right to observe people who do not know they are being observed (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 186). I decided however, as there was very little chance of harming anyone, the potential benefits were of bigger concern than slight ethical issues. "While it might be argued that such research is unethical inasmuch as it involves deceit by omission if not commission, serious ethical debate seldom lingers on this research situation"(Lofland et.al. 2006, p. 36). A further argument relates to the idea described earlier of open and closed settings. As a public beach is an open setting, I did not invade anyone's privacy.

3.5.3 Field notes and documentation

For the participant observation I made sure to record and document the activities."The most important thing researchers have to do is record what they see, usually in field notes" (Delamont, 2007, p. 213)

Optimally, field notes need to be written down as soon as possible after making observations (Lofland et.al., 2006, p. 108). It is quite impossible to take notes while being in the water however. As it was not possible for me to write field notes during the lesson, I wrote them as soon as possible after the class. Sometimes it is necessary to postpone the writing of field notes when doing participant observation, especially when doing covert participant observation. "Sometimes it is possible to write down, or otherwise record, activities as you go along; at other times, observations and conversations must be committed to memory and written down as the opportunity arises" (Cole, 2005, p. 65). It can be problematic to try to remember every experience however. "Mental notes […] have a very high rate of decay" (Lofland et.al. 2006, p.109). There are other ways to record and remember experiences than field notes and mental notes however. I therefore reached out to my friend who agreed to take pictures of my participation in the surf class. The point of getting these pictures taken was for the researcher to be able to look through them afterwards and remember the situation and encounters of the surf class. Pink and Morgan argue that short-term ethnography can last longer than just the fieldwork, through re-engagement. "Even when the encounter is short and very intense our ethnographic engagement with the fieldwork context can be much more, through online involvement, and re-engagement through video, potentially lasting for years" (Morgan & Pink, 2013). Even though Morgan & Pink advocate for videotaping being the way to go, I decided that pictures could do in this instance since the main purpose of these was to remember the specific situations and encounters of the lesson.

Before the surf lesson, I briefed my friend about what situations I was specifically interested in getting documented, according to my research design and prior planning. I asked her to focus on and photograph the interactions between instructors, students and other surfers, where people placed themselves in the water (pic 4) (e.g. whether they walked/paddled directly in front of other people etc.) and of the learning process (pic 5), (e.g. the instruction on the beach).

Picture 2

Picture 3

While the pictures of the latter might not be able to tell what information was given, they could help the researcher to remember the situations and thus function as a means to lengthening the fieldwork, drawing on Morgan and Pink's ideas about re-engagement (ibid).

3.5.4 Obstacles

During this form of participant observation, I encountered a number of potential obstacles, some predicted and some unpredicted. The first one showed already in the meeting with the other students. As two of them turned out to be Danish, I had to quickly inform my friend (who is also Danish), that it was important that she did not speak to me about the research in Danish. We solved this problem by just not speaking at all and since I already briefed her about the research and her part, there was no need for further conversation.

Another possible issue relates to the ethical issues of photographing. Since I was doing covert research I could not ask the other participants, the surf instructor or other surfers whether they were okay with: a) being on the pictures that my friend took or b) me using these pictures in my research. It can however be

argued in this case, that because the surf lesson took place in an open setting (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 184), it is legal for everyone to take pictures.

In the end of the lesson, the instructor asked if we (the students) could please pose for a picture for the Surf Schools Instagram feed and Facebook page. I estimated that there would be very little risk of 'blowing my cover' connected to posing for this picture and I therefore agreed. I estimated the risk to be non-existing because first, not many, if any apart from my friend, knew that I was going to do research on this specific day and with this specific surf school. Moreover, since this was a part of the tourist experience with this Surf School (posing for a 'surf-shot') I reckoned it would make sense to pose for the picture (researcher on the left).

Picture 4 Getwetsurf Instagram

Finally, this research was conducted primarily as a way for the researcher to understand the situations and encounters taking place in a surf class situation and the data obtained will be reflected upon as

secondary to the data obtained from interviewing and netnography. Because of the short length of participant observation, extreme care is necessary when analyzing the results.

3.5.5 Findings

When comparing the field notes of my own experiences and findings from the semi-structured interviews, there are a number of differences, the most visible on the surfing zone and safety. In the interviews all the surf school owners and instructors all put an emphasize on the importance of the safety briefing but at the lesson the instructor only briefly mentioned rips and jokingly told us that they would take us out to shore if we got caught in one. Further, our surf lesson took place in a place where other surfers were present as well.

3.4 Limitations

During the data collection there were a number of different limitations that could possibly affect my research. Limitations refer to the possible challenges and issues that the researcher cannot control him/herself (Timothy & Levy, 2009, p. 332). Limitations can in worst case scenarios affect the entire data collection, e.g. a core or expert respondent who pulls out of a planned interview last minute. There can also be a challenge in trying to convince somebody to take time out of their work-day/leisure time by participating in an interview without the researcher being able to offer anything in return.

The first limitation that could possibly affect the data is, that some of the interviewed surf school owners would not let me interview their instructors or students, which means that in those instances I only got insights from one point of view.

Another limitation is my own set of skills in surfing. Although I am not a beginner, I am not good enough to be in 'out back'. [4] If my skills allowed this, I could have observed culture, social reactions and dynamics of a group of surfers first hand. Instead, I had to rely on the descriptions of the surfing environment in Australia given by skilled surfers.

A factor that further deserves attention in this context is the gender ratio, which is a tad odd in this case. Every single surf school owner (expect for one in a paired interview), surf instructor and local surfer I

[4] Beyond the breaking waves. This is where surfers usually sit in the water, waiting for a wave

spoke to were male. In the case of owners and instructors, there were no females represented in these positions. In the case of local surfers, there were a few female surfers, but the ones I approached all rejected talking to me. On the other hand, 8 out of 9 students were female. This lack of representation on both sides could possibly have affected the data and a more equal ratio in all categories might have given a more nuanced insight.

3.5 Validity and reliability

In social science, *reliability* refers to whether results of a study are trustworthy and consistent (Kvale S. , 2007). It can be hard to assess whether results in qualitative research are trustworthy as results often are influenced by the researchers role and who the interviewees are, thus trustworthiness could be seen in relation to whether another researcher with the same methods and with the same research interviewees would get the same results (Tracy, 2013). A way it could be investigated in the case of this study could be if a male was to conduct the exact same study with the same methods, talking to the same people in relation to the limitation mentioned in the above.

Validity refers to whether a method investigates what it is supposed to investigate (Kvale S. , 2007, p. 122) and whether the claims made for one case can be generalized to other cases (Porta & Keating, 2008). In this study it can be transferred to mean whether the chosen methods investigates the attitudes towards and possible link between surf schools and overcrowding in Australia (internal validity) and whether the results can be transferred to other destinations with the same possible issues e.g. California and to what extend the results are applicable (external validity). It needs to be mentioned that the results cannot be seen as final answers, but certain aspects might work as indicators on other similar contexts.

3.6 Analyzing qualitative data

When collecting data it is important to take into consideration how the data is going to be analyzed (Creswell 2003, Lofland et.al. 2006, Porta & Keating 2008, Bryman 2012, Tracy 2013). The data collected for this study will be analyzed using *qualitative data analysis*. According to Bernard (2006) qualitative data analysis refers to ”interpretive studies of texts, like transcriptions of interviews” and in this kind of analysis “Investigators focus on and name themes in texts. They tell the story, as they see it, of how themes are related to one another and how characteristics of the speaker or speakers account for the existence of certain themes and the absence of others. Researchers may deconstruct a text, look for hidden subtexts, and try to let their audience know […] the deeper meaning or the multiple meanings in

it"(p. 4). For this study, the method is used to analyze the context of the opinions and experiences expressed in the interviews and online. The observations made during participant observation and related field notes will be used as a secondary means to support and compare. Coding was done to categorize the data in order to give an overview of the general perceptions of surf schools and overcrowding in surfing in Australia. "Coding is the process of organizing the material into 'chunks' before bringing meaning to those 'chunks'. It involves taking text data or pictures, segmenting sentences(or paragraphs) or images into categories and labeling those categories with a term" (Creswell, 2003, p. 192)

In the respective sections of this chapter, the findings from the different methods have been outlined and common themes have been presented. These findings and themes will shape the foundation of the analysis, along with the theoretical ideas presented in the next part.

4.0 Theory

4.1 Theory introduction

This chapter presents, discusses and reflects upon relevant literature concerning various areas of surfing and its link to the scope of the study. I start by placing surfing as a tourism activity in the category of adventure tourism. Here I will discuss how surfing can be seen as a tourist activity in relation to the functional characteristics of adventure tourism and how these characteristics might help in assessing what experience tourists will have with surfing.

Next, I discuss the concept of commodification of surfing, in order to explain why surfing might be a popular activity and what commodification of surfing has meant for how access to surfing and the visibility of surfing has changed. I discuss what this means for the identification of surfers and the potential consequences of the changes in surfing into a commodity. Additionally I put surf schools in relation to commodification as a commodified type of surfing and discuss what the commodification concept might mean to the attitude towards surf schools. I will draw comparisons between adventure tourism and the commodification of surfing.

In the third part, I discuss surfing zones as a physical and a mental place respectively along with the creation of surfing space and the link between surfing zones and surfing space. I discuss the ideas of relational sensibility (Anderson 2013) and Stoke (Evers 2007, Booth 2013) in surfing, and what these concepts might mean to the perception of other surfers' presence in a surfing zone. In this part, I also discuss different attitudes towards danger and risk in surfing, and how these concepts might have an impact on the surfing experience.

In the last part, I discuss the distribution of waves and the perception of waves as a limited resource. I examine different attempts to regulate access to surfing and waves. I explain and discuss different ideas of priority rights in surfing. I discuss the implications of trying to control access to a public resource and what the fact that surfing is an unregulated activity means in relation to the attitudes of overcrowding in surfing. Last, I will recap the findings and theoretical points from theory, before starting the analysis.

4.2 Adventure tourism

A variety of authors classify surfing as adventure tourism (Reynold & Hritz 2012; Buckley & McDonald 2013; Ponting & McDonald, 2013). "Over the last forty years, surfing tourism has become a significant part of both the tourism and adventure tourism industries" (Ponting & McDonald, 2013). Adventure

tourism has been defined in a variety of ways and has been placed in a number of different categories of tourism e.g. eco-tourism (Buckley 2003). Mostly it has been described as a niche under special interest tourism (e.g. Williams & Soutar 2009, Reynolds & Hritz 2012). The broad perception is that adventure tourism is an organized activity that takes place in natural settings and often rely on these, includes a guide or instructor and generally require some sort of specialized equipment fitted for the activity (Buckley 2007) e.g. a surfboard. Further, it is important that there is an element of excitement to the activity. "Adventure tourism […] mean(s) guided commercial tours where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity which relies on features of the natural terrain, requires specialised sporting or similar equipment, and is exciting for the tour clients" (Buckley, 2003, p. 127). The notion of excitement is correspondingly stressed by Hritz & Reynolds: "Adventure travel participants are thought to engage in active pursuits that are authentic, unique, interesting, educational, and exciting" (Hritz & Reynolds, 2012, p. 3).

There is a variety of different types of adventure travels and experiences, where some provide all equipment and some provide nothing else than a guided tour and the participants have to bring all the equipment themselves. These types of tours are usually meant for experts, e.g. very experienced mountain climbers (Buckley 2003).

There seems to be a disagreement between different scholars about who the adventure traveler is. Williams & Soutar (2009) state that "adventure tourism consumers tend to be young, educated, affluent, active thrill seekers who spend significant sums of money in their pursuit of adventure"(p.415). Reynolds & Hritz (2012) have a different perception and argue, that the adventure traveler are all kinds of people and add that the adventure tourist engages in a variety of adventure related tourism activities, both *hard* types of adventure tourism such as rock climbing and *soft* types of tourism such as horseback riding (p.3). They agree that adventure travelers tend to spend more on adventure than other types of travel activities (p.2). This can be a sign that the level of excitement and the experience that the adventure tourist get, means more than the price he or she pays to participate. Further, adventure travelers today, are not necessarily travelers who travel in the pursuit of a specific interest, but rather people who have a desire to experience something unique and *exciting*. "Adventure travelers of today have little or no experience in their adventure activity of choice, expect high levels of instruction, and require assistance and safety

monitoring" (Hritz & Reynolds, 2012, p. 2). The latter is the definition that this study will build on, as most surf schools in Australia specialize in beginners (Surfing Australia, 2016).

Additionally, apart from the notion of excitement as mentioned above, adventure tourism have a notion of risk. Some authors argue, that the level of risk is a mandatory part of an adventure tourism product. "risk can be portrayed as part of the manifest attraction of certain activities, so that the voluntary nature of risk engagement in leisure activity is an important factor" (Cater, 2006, p. 318). The level of risk included in the activity is expected to match the participants own skills nonetheless (Hritz & Reynolds, 2012). Cater links the skills of the participant in a certain activity with how well the notion of risk meets skills and expectations.

"Where the risk is increased, but competence decreased, adventure occurs, and when the two are matched there is the condition of peak adventure" (Cater, 2006, p. 319)

An important point to make is however, that even though risk is expected, the participant expects the provider of the activity to take responsibility for the level of risk (Cater, 2006). This idea goes well with the concepts of surf schools, where the instructor is the one expected to be in charge of the risk during the lessons. This leads me to suggest, that what participants are looking for is a cushioned adventure with a portrayed risk, without serious chance of the presence of risk turning into an actual dangerous situation. Again, it needs to be considered that the level of risk expected to be involved in order to reach the 'peak adventure' differ according to the skills of the participant. If the balance between risk and skill level is equal, the tourist will have a good experience. Further, I will link the notion of risk together with the notion of excitement which was discussed above, especially in relation to surfing. Buckley stresses that "Surfing can carry significant risks […] With good surf, however, several waves each session can provide a rush"(Buckley 2012, p. 966). Here, I will argue that rush and excitement are two terms which are fair to put in the same category. It needs to be recognized, that what Buckley is talking about in the specific case, is the perception from the side of skilled surfers and thus what a 'good wave' is will also differ from experienced surfers to beginners. This, along with the specific risks of surfing will be discussed in depth later as they relate to other areas of surfing.

The functional characteristics of adventure tourism discussed here, can be used as a framework to understand what tourists are looking for when they participate in a surf class and whether they will have success or not.

To sum up:

- Adventure tourists do not necessarily have any skills in the activity they participate in

-The level of expected risk must match the skills of the participant

-Adventure tourists expect a cushioned adventure that is exciting

-Adventure tourists expect somebody else to carry the overall responsibility for the level of risk

In this part, surfing has been examined as an adventure tourism concept and surf schools have been examined in relation to the characteristics of adventure tourism. These characteristics might be of relevance later in order to understand tourists' future ambitions of surfing. A last point to highlight is that adventure tourism is no longer just a type of tourism. Adventure tourism along with the characteristics of adventure tourism, such as risk and outdoor activities, is now argued to be 'trendy' and the image of adventure tourism is now used to sell other products: "Adventure tourism may have grown from outdoor recreation, but both have now become inseparable from the clothing, fashion and entertainment sector" (Buckley, 2003, p. 133). This change is further relevant for surfing and the development of surfing into a tourist attraction. In the next part, I will discuss the notion of commodification of surfing and discuss what commodification means to surfing, the surfing experience and how surfing is advertised and sold.

4.3 The commodification of surfing

Surfing and the image(s) of surfing has during the past 40-50 years been broader accepted, reached a larger audience and is now available for everyone to take part in in different ways (Lanagan, 2002, 2003; Booth, 2013).This development should be examined through the concept of commodification of surfing. Hannam & Knox (2010) defined commodification as "the process whereby exchange value is attached to objects and subjects […] the original use value is replaced with an economic price" (p.188).

It can be difficult to see how surfing might be commodified considering the fact that surfing in its basic form, riding a surfboard across breaking waves (Preston-Whyte, 2002), is an activity taking place on open sea, which means no entrance fee needs to be paid (at least not in Australia). Paying an entrance-fee is, however, an important feature when talking about commodification of public resources (Hannam

& Knox, 2010, p. 38). Thus, it can be argued, that there is a bit of a paradox in talking about commodification of surfing if you look at surfing as simply being the act of having a board and going into the ocean, the ocean that everybody have access to. For that reason, it is important to look into the image(s) created of surfing to understand this connection.

Surfing is an activity with a strong lifestyle association, meaning that for many people surfing does not only take place in the water, but as much (if not more) on land (Moutinho, Dionísio, & Leal, 2007). Lanagan (2002) argues that surfing has been commodified through the image of surfing and that the commodified form of surfing is seen through so-called surf-wear, attaching sign-value and identity to the concept of surfing. "Surfing elicits, of a pleasurable and playful lifestyle, has been appropriated and commodified, resulting in a profitable market that is based on the sale of clothing and other merchandise that is often described as surfwear" (Lanagan, 2003, p.173). Surf-wear can be said to be a way to express how surfing is a part of your lifestyle (Moutinho, Dionísio, & Leal, 2007). "Surfwear is not only consumed for its use value […] but also for its sign value – that it signifies a particular attachment to a lifestyle" (Lanagan 2002, p.286).Surf wear includes every clothing item or accessory connected to surfing, e.g. shirts and hats. It is however relevant to mention, that wetsuits, rash-shirts and board shorts do not take up a significant part of the market of surf-wear, despite being more or less the only actual necessities for surfing, along with a surf board (Anderson 2016, p. 213). Lanagan suggests surfing capital as being the powers behind surfing today. Surfing capital is a term that he has suggested to describe 'the big three', covering the three major global surf-wear producers Australian company *Rip Curl* (Ripcurl.com, 2016), American company *Quiksilver* (Quiksilver.com, 2016) and Australian company *Billabong* (billabong.com, 2016).

4.3.1 The influence of commodification on surfing

Lanagan (2002) states that the commodification of surfing has had a threefold influence on the activity: A shift away from the beach into other and non-related contexts; the understanding of surfing by wider society has been altered; symbolic ownership of the sport has changed from surfers to surfing capital. The latter, meaning that surfers are no longer in charge of deciding how the image of surfing should be projected (e.g. in the 60's when they decided that it should be seen as a sport, Booth 2013) and used. The image of surfing is now sold and used to sell, and globally people are now more aware of the presence of surfing in the world. Daskalos (2007) explains: "Images and knowledge about surfing are globally

disseminated in a variety of media formats, such as song, cinema, television, and the internet" (Daskalos, 2007, p. 155)

4.3.1.1 The separation of surfing

One of the most important things to note in relation to commodification of surfing in the form of surf-wear is that surfing, or at least the idea and image of surfing has become accessible to everyone, not just surfers. One does no longer need to be a surfer in order to look like a surfer or to take part in the surfing culture. In fact, one does not even need to live in close distance to the ocean anymore to take part in surfing culture. It is important to highlight, that what everyone have access to however is the *commodified form* of surfing and not necessarily the actual activity of surfing. Due to this it can be argued, that commodification of surfing takes place, mostly on landIn this way, surfing and commodification of surfing can with (extreme) care be separated as two different things, although entwined. One being the 'fashion' side of surfing (Buckley 2003), shown through the image of surfing and 'surf-wear' (Lanagan 2002) and used in completely different contexts, and the other being the actual act of riding a board across waves.

This separation of surfing and the commodified form of surfing is interesting. It is interesting to discuss whether this separation of surfing influences the social structure of surfing. It is argued, that the commodification of surfing has 'twisted the idea' of what surfing is, and the fact that surfing is being packaged and sold now is aggravating the activity and the idea of what surfing is, leading to frustrations out in the water. Booth (2013) argues that violence at surf breaks (a topic that will be discussed later in this thesis) is a product of "the twin forces of the commercialization of surfing culture and the codification of surfing as a sport" (p.7). Henderson (2001, p.326) argues, that the commodification and diffusion of surfing into a broader section of the population estranged the surfer from the classical signifiers of surfing identity (e.g. surfwear).

This discussion is relevant because it is argued, that the commodification and the easy access to images and ideas of surfing also creates new surfers as Daskalos (2007, p.155) points out. Hence, it can be suggested that commodification of surfing to a certain extend can be argued to attract and create new surfers, reaching the borderline between the commodified form of surfing and the 'non-commodified' form of surfing. In relation to that, it can be suggested that overcrowding in surfing might be a part of

the reason for physical overcrowding in surfing. Understanding the commodification of surfing can help understanding the possible power structures influencing the activity of surfing as it functions today.

Additionally it is interesting to apply the notion of commodification of surfing to the concept of surf schools. A surf school as a concept could be argued to be surfing in its most commodified form, seeing as it is an organized way of selling surfing, but at the same time a type of commodification that connects the commodified form of surfing taking place on land with actual wave activity, by selling surfing lessons. Surf-schools can be said to have elements from both 'sides' of surfing. In that light, the concept of surf-schools is an interesting factor in the world of surfing and it is interesting to look into whether they might have a bigger impact than what they have been ascribed in prior research.

Commodification thus an interesting concept in relation to surfing because it seems to create a paradox; The ocean is in play as the most important resource for surfing, but the commodification of surfing takes place mostly on land and often reaches a large number of non-surfers, e.g. when used in marketing campaigns for completely unrelated products (Lanagan, 2002). At the same time, commodification propagates surfing, resulting in more surfers, resulting in a change in social structures in surfing.

In the next part I will discuss the construction of physical surfing zones and surfing space.

4.4 Surf zones and the construction of surfing space

Surfing takes place at certain 'surf spots' or beach breaks, in a limited geographical area. This area is in surfing terms defined as the surf zone. The term refers to the area from the shore out to where the waves break in other words, the area wherein the physical act of surfing takes place (Surfing-Waves, 2016). This area is a mobile area, defined (mostly) by natural elements (e.g. where the wave breaks on a certain day or where the rips[5] are, if the wind is on-shore or off-shore etc.). For that reason, it can be hard to geographically define a surf zone. Physical borders can hardly be drawn in water that is constantly moving and it is not exactly possible to fence waves either.

4.4.1 Getting stoked – dreams of the surf zone

The notion of the surf zone can have many connotations assigned to it. In this part, I will argue that it is both a physical and an emotional place. Physically the surf zone is a 'littoral' space, meaning a space

[5] An area in the water with strong currents created by water running back into the ocean. A rip can potentially be life-threatening if caught in one. (Surf Life Saving, 2016)

that is related to, situated at or co-joined with the shore (Anderson 2013). It is a border zone where "land, sea and air meet- it is the border zone where these physical media interact, clash and combine. This border zone is thus not wholly terrestrial or wholly aquatic; it is a meeting place that enfolds both extremes into one dynamic and provisional entity/process" (Anderson, 2013, p. 956). Further, the border zone is created of natural factors that cannot be controlled by human kind. "From the perspective of social and cultural geography, the surf zone is a 'liminal' space. This definition re-emphasises the in-betweenness of such spaces, with liminality describing the 'threshold or margin at which activities and conditions are most uncertain" (Anderson, 2013, p. 956).

These forces of nature also make the surf zone a dangerous place at times. Anderson (2013) argues for the surfing zone as being a liminal 'in-between' space between land and sea. In this sense liminal refers to the possibility that everything can happen in this area (Anderson 2013). Thus, it is a space where there is a feeling that everything can happen and further, it is a place for escaping. Not as much in a physical sense as in a mental sense. It the place where the surfer experiences 'relational sensibility'. Anderson explains relational sensibility as an "emotion felt within a human being, but produced through the co-constitution of that human with, in this case, wax, wetsuit, etc." (Anderson, 2013, p. 957).

This feeling is somatically expressed through smiles and joy and the expression is in everyday surf-terms described through the term *Stoke* (Anderson, 2013, p. 957). Booth(2013) defines Stoke as "a perception of one's whole body emanating from its somatic sensations or vitality affects … [citing founder of the Surfer's Medical Association, Mark Renneker:] 'There is no confusion, anxiety, hot or cold, and no pain; only joy'" (Booth, 2013, p. 9).

Anderson highlights the notion of the sublime and in particular the surfing-sublime. The sublime builds on the concept of awe. Ford & Brown (2006 p. 11), identified awe as a "relational sensibility articulated as 'astonishment, mental panic and momentary amazement [that] overwhelm[ed] reason and jolt[ed] into the present" (Ford & Brown, 2006, p. 11).

The surfing-sublime is different from the classic sublime because surfing is not just observing something beautiful or majestic. Surfing is being in it and feeling the sublime as an embodied experience, becoming one with the wave and 're-entering' nature (Anderson, 2013). Looking at the surfing sublime as an embodied and individual experience it could be argued, that the surfing sublime can only be felt by one

surfer at a time at each spot (taking that everyone adheres to the rules), because only the surfer who rides the wave experiences and feels the true embodiment of "becom[ing] converged into a higher entity [where] there is no longer 'a surfer' and 'a wave', but 'a surfed wave' (Anderson, 2013, p. 958). Thus, this feeling is also a short feeling. "It's like a drug. You get the thrill fairly easily at first, but then it becomes harder to achieve and you have to ride larger and larger waves in order to get that feeling again." (Stranger 1999, citing interviewee, p. 267)

It should not be totally rejected that on-lookers, and possibly especially tourists who are not on a daily basis exposed to the Australian beach can get a feeling of the sublime by watching surfers catching waves, when following the idea that the sublime is something different than what people are used to. If imagining somebody who has never seen the ocean before in real life and the first time they are exposed to the ocean and the beach is on a picturesque Australian beach, watching surfers riding big waves, doing jumps and turns, it is not hard to imagine them getting a feeling of the sublime simply by watching how the forces of nature are playing with the surfers and vice-versa. This might be a plausible reason for why tourists in Australia, who have never had a connection with the ocean naturally because they grew up far away from any coast, sign up for surfing lessons and surf camps. While on-lookers might not get the surfing-sublime which is "engendered in humans through their 'convergence-with-water' [which is] the experience that produces a strong sense of transcendence with surfers" (Anderson, 2013) they might still achieve at least a hinge of feeling the sublime from observing. This will be elaborated in the analysis part of this thesis. Something that is worth noting is that this feeling of the surfing sublime or relational sensibility seems to create some sort of spiritual or almost religious feeling for surfers. As mentioned earlier, the codification of surfing as a sport seemed to be a problematic term for some surfers who instead described surfing as a "dance" with a "natural energy form" in which the rider shares an intimate relationship with nature" (Booth, 2013, p. 5). The idea of the surfing sublime supports this idea, that surfing is not a sport, but instead an experience of something higher, a sort of out of body experience. Booth highlights the concept of affect as being important when understanding the feelings and reactions of surfers, in situations related to surfing and argues for the concept of affect to be at the bottom/root of surfing narratives. He stresses the difference between emotion and affect as "affect refers to 'primary', 'non-conscious' experiences felt at the level of the body. Emotion indicates a more psychological [and] interpretive experience" (Booth, 2013, p. 9)

In this context, it makes sense to also consider surfing as an embodied experience, however at the same time one where the body 'becomes one with the wave'. Almost like an 'out-of-body' experience. Thus it could also be argued, that 'stoke' is highly an embodied experience that requires some sort of 'good experience' in order for the affect to create the stoke.

4.4.2 Desired risk

The possibility of obtaining the feeling of stoke makes the surf zone a special place to surfers. The potential dangers in surfing might be a contributing factor in attracting surfers to the activity. According to Anderson (2013) the adrenalin rush and thrill of doing something dangerous is a big part of the attraction of surfing. This correlates with Buckley's (2012) idea of rusk as a key element in surfing, when it goes well, as explained in the first part of this chapter. This is supported by Stranger who stresses that: "Surfing is a risk-taking leisure activity; not because it has a high fatality rate or results in serious injuries, but because it is pursued primarily for the thrills involved - a quest that typically entails critical levels of risk" (Stranger, 1999, p. 267). It is relevant to notice however, that these dangers do however not address other surfers' presence in a surf zone. It seems to be a very specific type of risk, which serves to build the narrative of 'the perfect wave' which is described as: "[an] ideal and perhaps unattainable vision. It is assumed to exist, is difficult to describe and is the source of a quest that leads surfers in search of spaces where this wave can be found" (Preston-Whyte, 2002, p. 311) . I will term this type of risk, *desired risk.* I will argue that desired risk posits the thrill and adrenalin rush a surfer gets when riding a wave, a part of the surfing-sublime. I will argue that desired risk covers risk only in the imagined form, in the way that the thought of e.g. encountering a great white shark while surfing will only be a desired risk as long as it does not become real. Thus, desired risk should not be taken as a wish to drown (or being close to drowning), encounter vicious sharks or be badly injured by hitting rocks or corals, but it is rather entwined in the idea of doing something potentially dangerous. Desired risk builds on knowing that surfing can be dangerous and thus it is thrilling. It is a part of the 'unknown' aspect of surfing, the uncontrollable circumstances that attracts surfers to the activity because surfing projects a dream (Ford & Brown, 2006). By uncontrollable circumstances, I will refer to nature's forces that cannot be controlled by man. Additionally the surfers gain something from desired risk. By participating in surfing, accepting the possible natural risk of the ocean e.g. being attacked by a shark or drowning, the surfer can gain 'the stoke' as explained above. I will even argue, that desired risk is a rather significant part of the experience of the stoke. I will argue that Booth's(2013) idea of affect is related to these possible risks. The thought

and experience of desired risk creates a possibility of surfing turning into an affective experience, e.g. stoke, if positive. It is an embodied feeling and stoke is a positive affect of surfing (Booth, 2013) and the somatic form of the 'relational sensibility' (Anderson, 2013).

4.4.3 Surfing space

Even though surfing is an individual activity and it is argued that the feeling of relational sensibility (termed as stoke earlier) is an individual feeling, not felt in a group, desires of reaching this relational sensibility can still be shared in a group. This can be explained through the concept of surfing space. Preston-Whyte examined surfing space in South Africa and found, that surfers cluster in surfing spaces. While relational sensibility is an individual feeling, surfing spaces are socially constructed on the basis of shared knowledge of local wave conditions and shared values and ethics. "The path of space construction is shown to link images of the perfect
wave, with sensory-derived knowledge of local wave conditions and
socially informed attitudes and values" (Preston-Whyte, 2002, p. 311). In other words, surfing space is constructed between surfers with the idea of the perfect wave being present, building on knowledge of local conditions, but at the same time, surfing space might also differ between the different surfers. "While constructions of space are likely to differ between individuals, general agreement over the identification of spaces suggests that there is sufficient congruence to provide common ground for their effective definition and partitioning" (Preston-Whyte, 2002, p. 309). It could be suggested to be a narrative constructed in cooperation with other surfers, building on shared knowledge and dreams.

It needs to be highlighted however, that the difference between surfing space and a surfing zone is, that a surfing zone is a mobile, but physical place (although a place for mental escape) where surfing takes place. A surfing space is a socially constructed phenomenon, even though concerned with what happens in the surf zone, is still a state of mind. "For all surfers, surfing space is constructed around the idea of a surf break and the material environment must be included in an understanding of surfing" (Lazarow et.al. 2007, p.451)

4.5 Distribution of waves

As explained in the introduction of this thesis, overcrowding in surfing is becoming a serious issue, as numbers of surfers rise and the number of surf-able waves remain constant. This has led some to suggest, that waves become a limited resource (Comley, 2011). Nazer (2004) stresses that norms to deal specifically with overcrowding should be made "Obviously, there is some upper limit to how many surfers can surf a break safely.25 If thousands of surfers tried to surf at a single break there simply wouldn't be room to move around. Thus, surfers may need to develop norms dealing specifically with overcrowding" (Nazer, 2004, p. 661).

Taking the approach that waves are a limited resource, becoming more limited as the number of users increases. and norms should be made of how to deal with overcrowding, it makes sense to look into how this resource is distributed between the different users of the surf, that be local surfers, surf tourists, expert surfers, intermediate surfers, beginners or surf schools. All these actors share an interest in the waves, even though there might be different interests behind, the resource of interest remains the same. In Australia, the ocean and beach is free for all to use (Australia.gov.au, 2016) and waves should thus in theory be 'un-claimable'. Alemann (2015) argue that "as long as waves break on the moving, open sea, they can hardly be claimed someone's property" (p.6). It should be noted however, that just because a wave can 'hardly be claimed to be someone's property' does not mean that the act of claiming beach breaks and surf spots as belonging to somebody does not take place. In the following, I examine some of the known ways in which waves are being distributed by the users themselves. The following part builds on the fact that surfing is an un-regulated activity, with no official rules of who is allowed to surf where. If the number of tennis players is rising, it can be helped by building new tennis lanes. Rising numbers in surfing cannot be fixed by simply building more surfable waves. Thus, it is necessary to highlight two main attributes of surfing:

- Surfing has no official rules
- Surfing has no official sanction-body that will sanction surfers for not sticking to the rules

4.5.1 'Right of waves'

According to Alemannn (2015), crowd management and distribution of waves can be sorted two ways of distribution: Formal priority rules and informal priority rules. Two formal rules exist; *doing-turns* and *closest-to-the-peak*. (p.3). In the prior, all surfers are equally entitled to a wave, in the latter, the right of wave accrues the surfer closest to where the wave is breaking. In Australia, either one of these two formal rules is encouraged to surfers, usually closest to the peak (Surfthecoast.com.au, 2016). These formal rules do not favor any group of surfers, why they might be perceived as the most fair way of distribution. One of the issues with rules in an unregulated activity is the question that must be brought up: How and who enforces these rules and what happens if nobody does? It is important to mention, that while these rules or this 'code of conduct' might have been made to ensure the safety and fair distribution of waves for all surfers, it is naïve to believe that just because these rules are there, all surfers will play by the rules.

Alemannn defines the informal priority rules as the three 'doctrines' of wave distribution (Alemann, 2015, p. 3). *Localism, performance* and *seniority*. In his text *The Distributive Justice of Waves for Surfing*, he discusses the pros and cons of the different methods to manage overcrowding. These three methods proposed are all bound in self-management and rely on three aspects; *Localism, Performance* and *Seniority*. Below is outlined the three doctrines and the main points of these according to Von Alemannn. The three doctrines will be used in the analysis as a tool to discuss the different opinions of the respondents in relation to the problem formulation.

4.5.2 Localism

Localism builds on the idea, that local surfers 'own' or have the rights to a specific surf spot. "In short, the localism (b)order is defined by the following phrase: 'if you don't live here, don't surf here" (Anderson, 2013, p. 963). Nazer (2004) divides localism into 3 different levels; *Mild Localism*, *Moderate Localism* and *Heavy Localism.* Mild localism simply means, that a non-local surfer should acknowledge that they are not a local surfer and thus take extra care to follow the code of conduct (p.681). Moderate localism refers to local surfers trying to discourage non-locals from surfing by dropping in on them or intimidate non-locals with threats of violence. Moderate localism will accept some non-locals, as long as they follow the rules closely. These surf spots are often very competitive (p. 682). Heavy localism refers to completely cutting other surfers off, no matter who they are and what their skill level might be.

Violence and threats are used to keep locals from surfing a specific spot (p.683). Localism is here explained to be a physical phenomenon.

Anderson (2013) argues, that because surfing is closely related to a spiritual feeling, localism is not just about excluding others from a specific beach or surf spot, but also excluding others from the spirituality of surfing and denying others access to the special feeling of the surfed waves. Further localism is in Anderson's perspective about making sure that the special feeling (as we have come to know as 'the stoke') can be reached as much as possible from the side of the surfers practicing localism. "Surfers don't hoard things or territory so much as access to an ephemeral endorphin high. Each wave offers the opportunity for one surfer to sense this experience, yet this opportunity is lost if waves are overpopulated" (Anderson, 2013, p. 966). Seen from this perspective localism might actually make sense, as insane as the violence might seem. The point here must be that the more available waves, the better the chance, why excluding others might make sense. Especially if it is, as explained earlier, a part of the surfing space created that the surfing breaks need to be protected. Having intruders on one's personal and spiritual area might cause an anger reaction, because a surfer might feel like external (or tourist) surfers steal the before mentioned feeling of the surfed wave and from them and lowers the chance of the surfer to get this spiritual feeling (ibid). In other words, the non-local steals that feeling away, just by being present. As stressed, surfing is becoming more crowded. Thus, the possible link between localism and overcrowding is interesting.

4.5.2.1 Overcrowding and localism

Booth(2013) "attributes the overcrowding of surf breaks to the twin forces of the commercialization of surfing culture and the codification of the sport"(P.5) and suggests localism as a "social response to overcrowding" (Booth, 2013, p. 5). Lanagan (2003) makes a similar point, that localism in many ways is connected to the commodification of surfing and surf wear. He argues that, because surf-wear (as mentioned earlier) has become accessible to everyone it is now hard to identify other surfers by their mode of dress, thus surfers have had to find another way to identify each other. A way to do this, Lanagan suggests, is by identifying other surfers and creating a link through an ongoing link with a particular beach. In this way "location becomes connection …[by linking]… space and sociality" (Lanagan 2003, p. 287, citing Maffesoli 1996, p. 131). It should be noted then that if surfers have to identify each other by knowing each other as surfers, there must be a higher chance of localism developing, because they

have to recognize the local surfers. Thus, commodification must also be considered in relation to localism. The possibility of a link between commodification of surfing, overcrowding and localism should not be rejected.

4.5.3 Performance

The doctrine of performance builds on the idea that the best surfer has the right to the most waves because they have worked harder on their surf skills, they provide more enjoyment to the onlookers, and because skilled surfers do not waste the same amount of waves. Here, wasting waves is taken to mean failing attempts to ride a wave. "If a surfer paddles for a wave, he should have a sufficient ability level to complete his ride. The minimally required abilities include a safe take-off and being able to ride along the sections with the speed demanded by the wave (Alemann, 2015, p. 19). This view is interesting to put in relation to the prior part about surfing zones, as it seems that according to this view, it does not matter much who rides a wave, as long as it is not wasted, because if the wave is wasted, the chance of relational sensibility is wasted. This is interesting and must be put in relation to the creation of surfing space. This doctrine might be dependent on the mindset of a surfing space as discussed above. Further it is partly clashing with moderate and heavy localism as described above (Nazer, 2004, p. 680), where some local surfers will go to extensive lengths and rather cut other surfers off and thereby let a wave be wasted, than allow non-locals on 'their' waves. This suggests, that localism seems to be the strongest of the forces. "Localism injects status into the mix" (Nazer, 2004, p. 679).

4.5.4 Seniority

The idea of distribution according to seniority refers to the period of time a surfer has surfed a particular spot. It comes to show through the thinking behind this claim can be expressed in the claim: "I have been surfing this wave for decades. I was here *first* and therefore I have priority over you" (Alemann, 2015, p. 156). As such, this claim does not make any sense, that just because somebody is older, they should have more rights to surf. However, considering the possibility that this has been the way to distribute waves for a long time, surfers who are finally 'on top' could be argued to now have earned their rights to surfing, and thus it would not be fair if they did not get what they earned. This scenario is stressed by Daskalos who studied older surfers:

The old school surfers […] were saddened and angered by this turn of events, which they saw as detrimental to their way of life. They had "come up" in surfing within a social context that minimized conflict, valued skill and seniority[…] For these men, surfing was the central theme in their lives, and that theme was now being threatened. (Daskalos, 2007, p. 161)

Following this logic, mixed with the impact of commodification of surfing, it might make sense why some surfers feel that seniority is simply about showing respect. A pattern in all these doctrines is, that surfers should follow some rules, but it can be hard to know which rules, as they can change according to the surf break. A fourth way of distributing waves that is worth mentioning in relation to this is what Nazer(2004) describes as *abstract norms*. The abstract norms builds on the notion of respect, in particular the phrase *Give Respect to Gain Respect* (Nazer, 2004, p. 672). There are 5 respect norms: 1) Respect Elders, 2) Respect travelers, 3) Respect Learners and beginners, 4) Respect Locals, 5) Respect the vibe in the line-up

They abstract norms are conflicting however, not only with themselves but also in relation to the doctrines painted out by Alemann. They do not give a clear guidance about how to behave because they are reliable on the surfer to figure out what respect is in a given situation.

Not playing by the same rules can be dangerous in an unregulated activity. In the next part, I will examine the risk that can occur in relation to both overcrowding, and know following the same rules in surfing.

4.5.5 Safety issues and consequences of overcrowding in surfing

The question of safety in surfing is one that is necessary to discuss for several reasons: First because surfing contains a natural element of danger as an adventure tourism activity. Second, because it has been suggested that overcrowding affects the safety of surfing "Overcrowding, combined with a disrespect for, or ignorance of, well-known surf customs designed to promote safety and order in the water are two possible explanations for collision accidents" (Caprara, 2008, p. 557). If taking the point that some surfers would like to limit access to certain surfing spots because of the potential risk of damages, collisions and threat of danger to the individuals, limiting access might make sense. Nazer (2004) states, that there must naturally be an upper limit on how many people can be let into the water in order to maintain safety, even if all norms are adhered to. "Severe overcrowding can lead to inefficiencies […] because surfers who are

simply paddling around can still get in the way of the surfer actually riding a wave and ruin the ride or cause a dangerous collision." (p.661).

Earlier I suggested the term *desired risk* drawing on Anderson's(2013) ideas about surf zones. In contradiction to desired risk is what I will term as undesired risk. Undesired risk is the risk that is not sought and carries no possible gain for surfers. The potential risk underlying the notion undesired risk, I will argue is in this term mostly man-made. Undesired risk could show as being hit by somebody else's surfboard, collide with another surfer or being beat up by other surfers. Further, it also covers the potential risk of getting one's surfing equipment damaged. Even if no harm is done, the presence of possible undesired risk, I will argue, will still only worsen the experience for the surfer. The risk of meeting a shark without it actually happening, might be a thrill for some. The worry of getting your board damaged by other people is never a thrill, even if it does not happen. These examples are largely related to the concept of overcrowding in surfing, which has also been linked to safety issues as stated above. It is fair to assume that undesired risk can only every result in anger and annoyance, especially if looking at overcrowding as being the root of undesired risk. More people in the water also means less waves pr. Person which, as earlier mentioned, decreases the chance of feeling 'the stoke'. This is the most important difference between desired risk and undesired risk. The surfer does not gain anything by this type of risk being present. These two notions are rather simplified and are not argued to be fully comprehensive of the large and at times complicated concept that is surfing, but rather to frame an understanding of some of the most central concepts for this study.

4.6 Findings

Surfing and surf schools are classified as adventure tourism. Adventure tourism participants expect risk and excitement. In order for the experience to be successful, there must be a balance between the tourist's skill level and risk level. Adventure tourists do not necessarily have any prior skills or knowledge about the activity they choose to participate in. Commodification of surfing has opened for everyone to get access to surfing culture. Surf schools is a commodified form of surfing, that takes place in the water. They might be an opening for everyone to also get access to the non-commodified type of surfing as they

are situated in the middle of the commodified form of surfing taking place on land, through clothing, music and popular culture and the actual act of surfing on a surfboard.

The surfing zone is a physical, but mobile place where the actual act of surfing takes place. Further it is a mental escape and the place where one experiences *relational sensibility* which is a mental state of mind where there is only joy. This feeling has also been termed as 'stoke'. Surfing space is a socially constructed place. It is not a physical place, although it relates to a physical place. Surfing space is constructed amongst surfers and builds on shared knowledge and narratives.

Surfing is an unregulated activity with no official rules. Instead there are a number of priority rules, official and un-official. As the number of surfers are rising, a way to distribute waves is necessary. Localism, performance and seniority are three doctrines used as distribution tool and to limit access to waves for others. In localism, locals claim rights to a surf spot simply because they live at a certain spot. In performance, rights are distributed according to skill level. Seniority claims that surfers who have surfed the longest have more right to surf because they earned their place on top of the order.

5.0 Analysis

5.1 Analysis introduction

This analysis consists of four major parts divided into smaller subsections, discussing different, yet connected aspects of surf schools, the surfing experience and the connection to overcrowding in surfing, using findings from the theory explained above.

I start the analysis by outlining and discuss the perception and concerns of overcrowding from the collected data. I will discuss how the view of overcrowding might be influencing the surfing experience in Australia and how overcrowding may be created.

The second part concerns the idea of gaining access to surfing. In this part ideas about the creation of surfing space by other surfers and points about what information surfers must understand and their skill level will be examined. It will be put in relation to findings of what surf schools teach students and surf schools' assessment of students' further intentions of surfing. Additionally, the experience of surf schools

will be put in relation to the creation of surfing space (Preston-Whyte, 2002) and their placement in the surfing zone (Anderson, 2013) will be examined in order to estimate the influence of their presence on overcrowding. Another question that will be discussed here is, whether the aspect of commodification plays a role in the inclusion/exclusion taking place in surfing seen in the light of surf schools being a commodified type of surfing.

The third part discusses the concepts of adventure, risk and dangers connected to surfing and examines how different perceptions of adventure, risk and danger might influence the experience of surfing and surf schools for both surf school students and other surfers and how the attitudes towards risk and danger might clash. This will also be put in relation to the ideas of risk and excitement from the theory.

The fourth part concerns the question of what impact surf schools have on overcrowding in Australia, how they might be able to influence overcrowding and what others might expect them to do.

The four parts should be understood in relation to each other, although discussed separately and it is the intention that these four parts in relation should create an overall view and understanding of the issues that may be connected to overcrowding and what part surf schools play in this.

5.2 The creation of Overcrowding

A poll conducted on the Gold Coast Bulletin's website showed, that 93,6 percent of the readers voted yes to the question 'are overcrowded surf breaks ruining the surf?' (Gold Coast Bulletin, 2015). Amongst the local surfers represented in the data, there was a general perception amongst the surfers on the East Coast that overcrowding is an issue in surfing, with 11 out of 13 surfers answering yes to the question of whether surfing felt overcrowded. One answered that he did not really feel it, but emphasized that he usually surfed during the week, at times where people are normally at work. Only one person on the West Coast was worried about overcrowding and that was mostly build on the fact that he was about to move to the East Coast. "Gold Coast is so busy, like recently there has been a lot of swells there and 500 people in the water or something ridiculous. It is just so many people so I was thinking about trying to get like a helmet with lights or something, so I could be surfing at nighttime. Get away from crowds" (L4, 02:15).

Crowds seemed to be somewhat of negative when discussing the surfing experience and most of the surfers interviewed imagined the perfect surf scenario for them to be only them or maybe them and a few

mates out surfing. This makes sense in relation to Anderson(2013) and his idea that surfers estimate their chance for reaching relational sensibility higher, the smaller the number of other surfers as explained in the previous part.

A number of the instructors also stated that they prefer no crowds and will rather move somewhere else personally and surf worse waves, than trying to compete with a high number of other surfers for the best waves.

When asking the surf school owners and instructors whether they found overcrowding to be a problem they mostly all, but some also added, that overcrowding is 'just a part of surfing' (O1, 05:32), 'always have, always will [happen]' (O7, 04:53) and 'a result of more people' (I3, 04:26).

5.2.1 Social creation of overcrowding

From the data obtained from the interviews, a pattern of an attitude showed that overcrowding in surfing is not only decided by numbers, but also by behavior. This seemed to be agreed upon between both local surfers, instructors and owners. In the theory framework for this thesis, it was argued that overcrowding leads to rage, anger, localism and other negatives that might all have an impact on the surfing experiences. "If localism is understood as being, at least in part, a reaction to overcrowding, then we might postulate that more crowding will lead to more severe localism" (Nazer, 2004, p. 681). The scenario has not been turned around however and seen in the light that overcrowding can be a consequence of these negatives of surfing. I will argue based on findings from the conducted interviews, that the term overcrowding, apart from referring to a physical number of surfers exceeding the limits, is a term that also should be understood as referring to a negative vibe in the water. As one local surfer put it "you could have 20 guys and you could have 2 assholes and it can feel really crowded or you can have 30 guys and people sharing and it is okay" (L7, 00:27). Another surfer agreed and added that overcrowding stems from peoples' lack of understanding of etiquette: "[it is] not so much overcrowding, it is just more that people don't understand the etiquette and the rules"(L11, 00:23)

Another interviewee outlined the difference between numbers and the feeling of overcrowding: "There is a difference. Even if you have four people out and there is one person with bad etiquette, that will ruin a surf. Whereas, if you have got 20 people out and everyone is… Like this morning I was surfing with 15 people and we were all having a great time."(I1, 12:15).

Thus, it can be suggested, that overcrowding in surfing happens because there is a discrepancy about rules and rights of wave as outlined in the theory part above. Following this argument, it could be said that there might have been a discrepancy in what respect was, referring to Nazer's ideas about respect as an abstract norm in deciding who has the right of wave (p.672).

The fact that overcrowding is also about numbers should however not be completely neglected. I will argue that physical overcrowding is indeed about numbers. If only one person wanted to surf, obviously no rules, etiquette etc. would be necessary. This means that there is a physical side of overcrowding based on too many surfers for the amount of waves, and some surfers expressed worries about this "It's not like we can just open a new area to cope with the numbers" (NS24).

Thus, overcrowding, can be seen both as a consequence of too many surfers, but also to be the behavior which makes a surf spot *feel* overcrowded. Drawing on Preston-Whyte (2002) and his idea of a surf space as a social construction, the common values and dreams in a surfing space might make a difference in deciding whether a surfing zone is overcrowded. Hence, the idea of what happens if there is not a shared surfing space also needs to be looked into here. In the cases described by the surfers above where overcrowding depends on other surfers attitude and behavior, it could be suggested, that there might have been a discrepancy in the surfing space constructed by different surfers. Outsiders of a specific surfing space might seem like a thread, because they might have another perception of what rules to follow. "The presence of the Outsider surfer in surfing culture represents a very specific challenge in an everyday practical sense as the number of suitable breaks, waves and importantly spaces on those waves are finite, whereas the number of potential outsiders is unlimited" (Beaumont & Brown, 2016, p. 282). Due to this, overcrowding is also related to the threat of 'outsiders'. Thus it can be suggested that the way to find out whether surf schools can fairly be said to be a catalyst of overcrowding should be found in the way that surf schools might influence surfing space, apart from simply numbers.

5.2.2 Surf schools and creation overcrowding

In the netnographic samples, it was expressed by some users on Swellnet.com that surf schools are to blame for overcrowding: "You think it's crowded now. Let's see what happens in 5 years… MAYHEM is on the horizon. We need to stop all of the surf schools […] We are doomed to MEGA CROWDS" (NS1). I

The presence of multiple surf schools might also influence the experience of the waters as overcrowded. "In many islands, growth in commercial surf tourism quickly tests the limits of recreational capacity, in the particular sense that crowding between commercial clients reduces the value of the experience for the tourists, and hence the potential price available to operators" (Buckley, 2002, p. 405). This was also the perception of some of the interviewees: "*Currumbin is easily crowded. There's three surf schools there in a very small location. And it is also probably the most popular beach on the coast for learners. On a weekend you might have a hundred learners out there, just random [R: at the same time?] Yeah as well as three surf schools trying to operate*"(O7, 08:06). Something interesting in relation to overcrowding is that none of the interviewed surf school students necessarily saw overcrowding as something bad. Some of them actually saw crowding as a good thing, as they thought they would feel more safe with more people around them as they expected the presence of other surfers to be a sign of being a good place to surf and also made them feel safer as there would be other people in case something dangerous happened. "*I will choose a place where there is a lot of other people, just because I am a little bit scared of the wind*" (S2, 02:11)

There are official regulations of how many surf schools are allowed in a certain area and further all surf schools have to stick to a certain area where they have their permit (Learn to Surf Coaching Policy, 2015, p. 2). This also means that surf schools are mostly only allowed to surf in one area at one beach. These regulations limit where surf schools can operate and thus limits their mobility in relation to crowding of waters. Hence, it needs to be taken into consideration, that surf schools are not mobile in contrast to other surfers. It can then be suggested that surf schools might crowd waters, but according to the limitations they are given, most of them cannot move somewhere else. This gives other surfers a chance to choose to surf somewhere a surf school is not operating. This difference in opportunities is important to consider, especially following the suggestion earlier, that the creations and attitudes in surfing space is what makes the biggest difference in overcrowding. It needs to be questioned however, if it is fair that because a surf school is operating in one place, others should move over, especially if the best place to surf on a given day is where the surf school have their license to operate. "Do surfers who claim the break for themselves leave enough waves for others? Indeed, there are certainly several hundred kilometres of ridable beach breaks […] But there is simply no *adequate* wave around in terms of quality." (Alemann, 2015, p. 7)

It does need to be mentioned, that surf schools do not have priority over any other user according to the guidelines, meaning that everybody is in theory allowed in the area where a surf school is operating. It could be questioned though if everyone *feel* allowed in the area and this relates to the idea of overcrowding as explained above. This might also relate to the ideas of localism presented in the last chapter. Not because surf schools necessarily intentionally try to exclude others, but because others might feel intimidated if a large number of surf school students suddenly show up, having to surf somewhere specific because their permit dictates it.

There was one day where it was like, maybe 1-foot and he had a group of twenty and there was a guy surfing on his own. Probably wasn't the best place to take twenty people because he was having a nice time to himself and yeah… He basically just blew up and said 'are you fucking kidding? Why did you come here to this spot?' you know, but it was the only spot on the beach where we could go. We are proceeded where we have to stick in place-wise. (O4, 06:54)

This might not be a deliberate claim of waves, but can be seen as what Alemann refers to of special rights claims. Instead of rights, it will thus refer to this claim as a *Restriction* claim. Claiming an area, on the grounds of being constricted. "Surfers claim special rights to waves on behalf of their local affiliation to a spot, their better skills or their longer experience" (Alemann, 2015, p. 2).
I will therefore argue, that with the increasing significance (Buckley 2003) and number of surf schools, the factor of some users of the surf-zone being subject to specific rules that others are not, in an unregulated activity, needs to be considered in the distribution of waves as a resource. "*Surf schools are here to stay. There is no way around it. It is a tourist business now. Every beach around the world where they surf now, there is a surf school*" (O7, 07:01). For that reason, it is also relevant to look into whether surf schools can be considered as creators of surfing space, claiming on their own accord. Especially adding the statement that tourists coming to surf schools are not serious about surfing, and thus, etiquette and rules outside of the surf school area where they are constricted to are not as important because surf school students are never going to stuff again.

When asked about whether surf schools create more surfers there was a general perception that surf school students are not signing up for classes to become expert surfers. They sign up to have a fun day but do not go surfing again, hence, not physically increasing numbers.

"*From a tourist attraction point of view, the people who come do it once, just to try it, just to feel it, just to get that feeling of riding a wave."* (O2, 03:54)

"*The majority of the people you teach are only looking for a one-time experience*" (I4, 06:41).

"*I will say […] that it is probably something like 1 percent who will continue surfing. I would say that the majority of people who come to surf schools are having a one-off try. They might do three lessons. Even three or four, but still, that is effectively a one-off try*" (O6, 16:14).

Despite the claims made by surf school owners and instructors that very few students continue surfing, all the interviewees expect for one who was unsure, all claimed that they would like to continue surfing or at least try it again (S1, S2, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9). For the surf school students, the financial price of participating in lessons was for some the biggest concern:

"It depends on the price because it is kind of expensive" (S1, 00:43).

"I think I will try maybe another two times or something like that, but actually it is really expensive here" (S2, 01:24)

Some instructors and owners agreed that surf schools might increase the number of surfers, but that 1) Why should someone not be allowed in the water? 2) Not even people who might continue surfing after doing lessons will be out surfing every day and 3) What surf school students do when they are not with a surf school is not the responsibility of surf schools.

"Saying that surfing schools are… Attract a lot people to surfing and it is going to explode, well yeah, but who am I to say that you shouldn't be out there and do I own it more than you?"(O3, 11:25)

"We are definitely creating more surfers for sure [but] not everyone is going to surf every single day after they go get a surf lesson" (O4, 08:31)

“What people do after that is their choice. We can’t control them when they are not here. They go and do whatever they want so…”(I5, 03:03)

These are all reasonable claims. It should however be questioned whether surf schools who can fairly be said to be an introduction to surfing for people who have their ideas about surfing from the commodified type of surfing, can be completely without a responsibility for what people are going to do afterwards when they learned what to do from surf schools. Thus, it is interesting to look into how a surfer is created, how a surfer gets access to a surfing space and whether it is possible for surf schools to act as a gateway for this. In the next part, I will therefore discuss the attitude towards which rules and norms are expected that surfers follow in the Australian context used for this study. I will do this by drawing on Alemann’s (2015) doctrines on wave distribution.

5.3 Gaining access to the surfing zone

Surf schools have a zone, technically are in the zone according to Anderson’s (2013) idea about what a surf zone is and where surfing takes place (p.956). First, I will thus discuss the presence of surf schools in the physical/geographical understanding of a surf zone and sharing this zone. All of the owners pointed out, that surf schools do not disturb anyone because they keep in the ‘white wash’, in this context meaning the outskirts of the littoral zone (ibid).

“We are operating in shallow waters, we are not bothering the surfers out the back. We are all in the beginner area.”(O7, 11:23)

Even though many surf school owners and instructors claims that they are not bothering any surfers, they are still in the surfing zone, although on the outskirts. This was also the case in the surf lesson that the researcher participated in. In the rather small area where surfing took place at The Spit, other surfers had to move through the area where we the lesson was taking place. “All the while, due to the rather small area where the surf lesson is taking place, other surfers walk through the area where we are surfing. None of them really seem angry with us, although there is one guy who seems a bit annoyed when Laurie pushes one of the students in his direction.” (XI).

Surf instructor Kris explained that: “We have a certain zone that we surf in” (I2, 02:36). Even though surf schools might be on the edge of the littoral zone, they are still operating in it, assigning them responsibility for acting in a responsible manner. When surf schools then further create their own zone

but putting out flags, it may be a cause for conflicts. "Surfers see the surf spot as more than a public domain and feel it is a personal space" (Comley, 2011, p. 18). This so called 'claiming' of a surf spot seems to be what triggers anger for some surfers in relation to surf schools. "Even the whole idea that some two bit surf club can put up a flag and claim exclusive rights to a beach needs to be addressed"(NS7).

"*One guy […] was like 'you don't own the beach!' and I was like, 'I didn't say I own the beach mate. I am just taking my students to the safest spot on the beach, same as what you have done*" (O1, 07:16)

Further, most of the owners argued that people who are complaining about surf schools must be beginners themselves if they get disturbed by the presence of surf schools:

"If there is a surfer that says 'oh you are in the way' then I would be saying well look, you are just a beginner too, otherwise you wouldn't be here."(O6, 07:54)

"At times you will get your odd, cranky dickhead who can't surf anyway, who is surfing where the learners should surf. We only go where it is small and where it is fun for learners so if you are doing surfing in that section you are a kook anyway"(O4, 06:22)

Thus, it can be suggested that the type of surfers that have the most clashing interests with surf schools, are other beginners. These beginners must thus be argued to have similar interests as the surf schools. Nice and easy waves. Because surf school students have paid for their experience, it makes sense to look into how (and if) payment in surfing might have an impact on the experience.

5.3.1 Payment in surfing

An important point throughout this study has so far been that the ocean is free for everyone and that the ocean belongs to no one, a point also stressed in a number of the interviewees. This claim is taking further by Alemann (2015) and his argument, that no matter what you invest in the ocean, you still do not own any part of the ocean " If you own a can of tomato juice and you pour it into the ocean, you don't come to acquire the ocean as the molecules mingle" (Alemann, 2015, p. 6). An entrance ticket to the ocean does not need to be purchased in surfing. According to Nemani (2015) "the form of capital that is most highly respected is physical capital. In this case it relates to displaying high levels of ability and, in some circumstances, putting oneself at risk" (Nemani, 2015, p. 90). It is interesting that it argued, that the most highly respected type of capital, which could be termed as surfers' capital is quite different from what

was termed as *surfing capital* by Lanagan (2002), which is a commodified way of buying into surfing. As discussed earlier, surf schools can be seen as a commodified form of actually doing surfing, as it is selling the chance to do the actual act of surfing. "Surfing was previously regarded as somewhat of a subculture, a subculture that may come to the fore again. Certainly commercialization and all that it entails has diluted the traditional concept of surfing and the cultural manifestations that underpin it" (Arthur, 2003, p. 164). As mentioned in the theory part, Henderson (2001) claims that commodification of surfing estranged the surfers from surfing, and this meant that surfers had to find other ways of identifying each other. Surf schools identify students by making them wear a specific colored rash-shirt. Thus I will argue, that commodification of surfing, in the surfing space constructed by surf schools is the actual signifier. Apart from being a safety precaution, it also identifies the other members of the current surfing space. It is interesting to note, that this way to identify the students might make the beginners in an area as discussed above, feel even more excluded. Preston-Whyte (2002) argue that surfing spaces cannot be seen (p.308). Here I will argue, that surf schools' surfing space can indeed be seen, why I will argue, that the creation of surf school space as suggested above, builds on the commodified form of surfing and thus, the concept of commodification can to a certain extend be seen as an excluding factor. Both for other beginner surfers but also for surf school students if they intend to keep surfing. "*It is quite obvious that there is a surf school because everyone is wearing the same shirts and you are all in together*"(O7, 06:42). Whereas surfers' capital is gained by skill level (Nemani, 2015), surfing capital is bought. Thus, students pay their way into surfing space (even though what they basically do is just pay for an experience) which can be seen as a commodified way of buying into surfing, but they do not gain surfers capital. "It takes years of nurturing and experiences shared, to raise a true surfer" (NS27). This leads me to suggest, following the idea that one has to gain their spot in surfing, that some surfers might feel like this is cheating. Even though the students might not be aware of it and it is also fair to say that for students who are only surfing once for the experience (as mentioned above), it does not matter what type of surfing they buy into, as long as they get a ride on a board. Thus, it can be questioned if this relationship/clash and different ways of turning surfing into a commodity and in the same time 'invading' the surfing zone can be seen as a trigger for anger for some surfers who feel like they 'earned' their right to surfing more than others. "If you learn in a school […]. It gives you that head start."(I1, 04:27).

5.3.2 Attitudes of distribution

5.3.2.1 Seniority

This working your way up might be connected to seniority as explained by Alemann (2015) and Daskalos (2007), which also seemed to be present to a certain extend in who blame surf schools for overcrowding.

There might be an attitude that surfing is too easy now. Hypothetically, if imagining that some surfers are convinced of this order, they might feel that going through a surf school is cheating. "A lot of people in the water, not much respect. Where I grew up on Kauai, you respect everybody in the water, especially your elders. Don't step out of line." (Kala Alexander in Higgins, 2009)

"When I learned to surf, the older surfers regulated it, you know? We were grommets as you call it and you know, you weren't allowed to get waves basically at my local spot. I'd just get dropped in on, you know, we were last in the food chain until you sort of, I guess you could say proved yourself" (I4, 05:32).

According to one interviewee, the people they have experienced mostly blame surf schools for overcrowding are older surfers. When asked one of the interviewees stated the surfers who usually get upset with surf schools are "*usually probably older surfers. They forget what it is like to be a learner. So they get frustrated and they probably have people who get more waves than them, so they get angry, so they take it out on surf schools*"(O7, 10:02)

That might explain why some surfers have a perception that surf schools are to blame for overcrowding. By teaching students how to surf, instead of having to figure it out themselves, some might feel that they are getting an unfair advantage compared to how they themselves started surfing, at the bottom of the hierarchy.

"What about teaching them the subtleties of surfing, like […] respect for oldies" (NS7)

It is interesting to take this statement into consideration, especially in relation to Nazer(2004) and his definition of abstract norms whereof respect the elders is one of them (p.672). Possibly the surfer expressing this opinion has had to work their way up as suggested, why he or she might feel that it is only fair that other surfers, even if paying for surfing, do the same. "Most of the important things about surfing are learnt through experience, slow enduring experiences with real surfers"(NS7)

Thus, *fairness* can be derived as another important term in relation to whether surf schools create overcrowding, seeing as there might be a perception that you must wait your turn. This shows yet another

paradox in surfing, because not even the 'official' code of conduct used in most instances in Australia relies on waiting your turn fully, but rather about being closest to peak as earlier mentioned. Thus is can be suggested, that even though most surfers interviewed did not express overly negative feelings towards surf schools, a hint of seniority does still exist.

5.3.2.2 Performance

There seemed to be an agreement between many of the surfers that it was of annoyance that beginners in their view 'wasted' the waves.

The most annoying thing about here is the people who are learning to surf and they surf out at the point where they shouldn't be surfing […] and they get in the way of everyone. They kind of get in the way of the good waves, they don't really use them, they just waste them. (L5)

This might relate to Anderson's idea of performance that states that the best surfers should get the best waves, mostly because the best surfers getting the best waves will result in a better usage of the resources.

Following this idea, it could also be perceived that surfers actually care more about the waves being used in 'the right way' than only worrying about getting waves themselves. Being able to fully make use of the resources, enhances one's chance for being 'accepted as a surfer'. "A successful ride on a formidable wave is not only a demonstration of expertise and courage, it also signals the rite of passage into a sport that is companionable, competitive and exclusive" (Preston-Whyte, 2002, p. 309). Seeing this in relation to the idea of not wasting waves, it could also be suggested, from the data, that in order to be fully accepted in surfing, one must have a certain skill level, why it might be argued, that surf school students will always be in the way, due to their lack of skill in surfing. Following the ideas presented earlier that adventure tourists do not necessarily have any prior skills, and further that all the surf school students interviewed for this study all had their first or second lesson the day I spoke to them, it is fair to assume that their knowledge of surfing is rather limited. Especially if surfing is just 'on everyone's bucket list' of things to do In Australia (O5, 06:02). Thus, it could be suggested, that surfing with surf schools is not even considered to be surfing, but rather just buying into an hour of fun, getting a taste of 'Australia' and thus the experience is treated as that, which again connects back to the idea that surf schools create their own surfing space, claiming 'restriction' rights.

Seen in this way, it can be suggested to be a good thing that surf schools stick to a certain areas, where they are out of the way of where the 'real' surfers are. It should be mentioned however, that this separation might have consequences if surf school students in fact do decide to continue surfing. For that reason, what is being taught should be looked into in the light that overcrowding is considered worse when people do not know their limits and do not know etiquette.

An interesting finding in the interviews was, that surf school do not always see the need to provide information about etiquette and right of wave to students, because they are there mostly to give the students a good experience. This might be another sign that surf schools should be considered as an entity separated from the 'real' world of surfing. This is interesting in relation to the ideas about the commodification of surfing, where it is highlighted that the commodification of surfing does not necessarily fully reflect the actual act of surfing.

"It is not a massive part of the lesson, I won't lie. It is not a massive part of the lesson, but it is part of the lesson[…] Give them a brief outline you know?" (I5, 13:09)

This finding is backed up by the researchers own experience with taking part in a surf lesson. Here etiquette was not taught either and the way we were shown how to stand up on a board was not efficient for anyone who actually wanted to learn how to surf.

Hence, it should also be considered that nobody is going to be an expert surfer because they have done five surf lessons. "Surfing takes a long time to pick up, it is not really something you can do on a week holiday and then have it mastered. It takes a lot longer" (L17, 01:33). Therefore, there might not even be much point in teaching surf schools about etiquette which again highlights the point that other rules and regulations are present in a surf school's surfing space, than the 'normal ones'. It seems however that the general perception with surfers is that surf schools in Australia try to work this into their operation, which will be seen in the next part.

5.2.3 Sharing surfing space

As earlier discussed, surfing is an individual activity, where the general opinion seems to be, the fewer people in the water, the better. According to theory, the fewer people in the water, the higher the chance to obtain relational sensibility. Thus it can seem a bit problematic and like a fight one can only lose when discussing how to manage a rising number of participants in an activity that seems to have the ideal that

'the less, the better' (Nazer 2004, Alemann 2015). This also seemed to be the general opinion with the local surfers. When asked what their perfect surf scenario looked like:

"Uncrowded" (L16, 01:43)

"Just myself and my friends out. Without the rest of the crowd" (L5, 00:37).

"There is no one in the water. Apart from maybe my friends"(L6, 00:26).

An interesting finding from the analysis was, that most of the local surfers actually all seemed to not mind surf schools. In fact, many of the surfers found surf schools to be a good thing. At the same time however, they also stated that beginners in the line-ups was a big issue and of annoyance that they wasted the waves. Most however also pointed out, that surf schools stayed out of the way where they themselves were surfing.

"I like them. Let them have a go. They don't come out here. They can't."(L1, 02:44)

"I quite enjoy them when they are in the water. It is nice seeing people catching a wave"(L15).

"Generally they are in a the shore, but sometimes they come out and get in the way and people get angry with them"(L17, 01:04)

"The guys who run the surf schools are surf smart, they know not to go in the way" (L10, 01:39).

This could be understood as a perception that everyone should surf, as long as they do not disturb the individuals' chances to get their own share of the waves. This leads me to suggest that reasonably skilled surfers are in general alright with surf schools creating their own space, possibly also with surf schools claiming a rights because of restriction privilege, as long as it does not interfere with the skilled surfers own creation of surfing space. As long as the surf schools do not decrease the surfers own chance of catching waves, other surfers were usually alright with surf schools.

It was however stated, that in the few instances where surf schools did interfere with other surfers, the opinion of surf schools was not as positive.

"I thought possibly the guy got angry because he felt that the surf school might endanger […] Other surfers' safety"(L3, 01:01)

“They get in the way[…] Sometimes they come out and get in the way and people get angry with them”(L17, 01:04)

This gives rise to the suggesting the scenario, that as long as surf schools stick to creating their own space and do not disturb other surfers, surf schools are in general appreciated. Another aspect that leads me to suggest this is, that most of the surfers found beginners in the line-ups to be bothering. Thus, they might feel like surf schools can somehow control the skill level of people, and more important, keep the beginners out of the way of the ‘real’ surfers. “It get dangerous. You have some spots where it is really easy for people to get out. So you have a mix of people who can surf and who can’t surf all in the one spot so you’ve got boards and people and it’s flying everywhere”(L8, 00:40)

According to Lazarow et.al. (2007, p.458) the eco-physiological conditions surrounding surfing is two-fold. On one side exists mentoring, sharing, physical activity, joy and laughter, and on the other side is rage, aggressiveness, vandalism etc. Seeing this only in relation to surf schools, it could be argued that as long as surf schools do not act in a way that decreases the skilled surfers’ chance of catching waves, surf schools stay on “the good side”.

As discussed in the theory part of this study, surfers search to regulate access to surfing through preventing others from getting access to surfing space, meaning preventing others from getting the feeling of stoke (Anderson 2013). I argued that desired risk was a part of this experience. The idea of risk is also present in adventure tourism and also a part of making the experience exciting. Surf schools have clear guidelines in relation to safety. As seen know, the safety aspect and wasting waves are what worries other surfers most. The possible clashing ideas of risk and danger and what protection of surfing space means, will be discussed in the next part.

5.3 Risk and Dangers

Surfing can be dangerous and it can be argued, that the higher the number of surfers, the higher chance of getting hurt by other surfers (Nazer 2004, Caprera 2008, Alemann 2015).

The data collection showed a general perception that other surfers form the biggest safety issue in surfing. Along with that, it seems that there was a view that people who did not know what they were doing were

the biggest hazard and point of annoyance for other surfers: “They shouldn’t be surfing where the good waves are […] They are making it dangerous there.” (L5, 06:44)

As stressed in the theory part, risk, thrill and danger are all concepts which are present in both surfing, and adventure tourism. I coined the two notions *desired risk* and *undesired* risk from the theory reviews. Desired risk can be argued to be what Buckley defines as rush:“Rush is addictive and never guaranteed” (Buckley 2012, p.961). Desired risk was argued to be natural dangers, that might be present, that add to the experience and were seen in relation to the view that surfers are ‘dancing/controlling the elements’. “The chase for dangerous waves and challenging situations, for power, pushing the limits . . . the risk factor; it’s very important. You feel stoked when you have nearly been killed” (Stranger 2010 citing surfer, p. 1119). Additionally, risks are to a certain extent something that surfers are willing to take in order to be able to reach relational sensibility.

“The board speared me in the head, had to get stitched up, but once you stand up and ride a wave, you are hooked.” (I1, 05:28).

As stressed in the theory part, risk is however also something that can decrease a surfers chances of gaining ‘the stoke’. I termed this risk undesired risk. Nobody gains anything from creating undesired risk. “If one is very stoked, they experience a fully embodied feeling of satisfaction. You will tingle from your head to your toes. But if a surfer takes my wave, it is likely that I will not be stoked, and my face will flush and temples will throb in anger.” (Evers, 2006, p. 230). This could be interpreted as losing your stoke because of other surfers not following (or not knowing) the rules.

“I am always getting my board damaged and so is everyone else because they get in the way[…]it is annoying when they wreck your waves or they damage your board” (L5, 06:44)

While the level and gain of desired risk can vary immensely from person to person according to their skill level (Stranger, 1999), undesired risk will never do anyone anything good. “Note that not only the frustrated crowd, but also the wiped-out surfer himself would have enjoyed more, had he picked another wave suited to his ability level” (Alemann, 2015, p. 19). This follows the idea of social construction of overcrowding as suggested earlier, rather well. It can be interpreted that other surfers create a risk in two ways; a physical risk of being injured, getting your equipment damaged or a risk of getting the experience

ruined by somebody 'wasting' waves, by not having the adequate skills or knowledge to surf a particular spot.

The less skilled the surfer, the higher degree of undesired risk. Thus, if un-skilled surfers create an undesired risk, thus making surfing feel crowded, there might be a reasonable argument in saying that unskilled surfers are better kept in 'closed areas'.

Something that should also be discussed is whether surfers' own priorities of what risk is desirable, what risk is undesirable and most importantly, how much risk is worth going surfing somewhere specific. In the theory part it was abstracted, that surfers will look for risk, as long as it is risk that will enhance the experience. Further, the higher a skill level, the bigger a risk. Thus it might also be suggested that surfers priorities according to risk changes with skill level.

5.3.1 Encountering the sharks – priorities and perceptions of risk in surfing

A good example of a priority of surfers', that might seem insane to non-surfers, is the 25-year-old American surfer, Colin Cook, who was attacked by a tiger shark in October 2015 while out for a surf at Oahu, Hawaii. He lost his left leg in the incident and since then, his main priority has been to get back into surfing again. "Surfing is my life. I have so much passion for it […] I'm really looking forward to […] surfing again." (Colin Cook in Sufermag.com, 2016) While Colin might be what has in theory been termed as a 'soul surfer' (e.g. Taylor 2007, Booth 2013) whose priorities seem completely out of reach of the mind-span of normal people, the presence and acceptance of natural danger in surfing is still interesting. It relates to what I referred to as desired risk, but it might also evoke respect and surfing capital, from other surfers following the idea suggested by Nemani(2015), that taking risks in surfing will gain one surfing capital. It needs to be stressed however, that only playing with desired risk will gain one surfing capital (p.89). "The search for thrills is important in surfers' orientation toward risk-taking. Although 'risk-taking' and 'thrill-seeking' are not synonymous, the link between the two in surfing is clear […] Typically, surfers do not consciously strive to increase the level of risk — it is simply a by-product of chasing the most intense thrills " (Stranger, 1999, p. 267).

There seems to be a big difference between the perception of risk between surfers as described in theory, partly surfers interviewed for this thesis and surf school students. The surf school students mainly worried most about what can be termed as natural dangers such as wind. This is an interesting find considering natural risks to be what fuels surfers.

"I am a little bit scared of the wind" (S2, 02:11),

Especially interesting was it that what other surfers saw as negatives in surfing, other surfers and what they saw as positive, risky waves, was the opposite order for one of the surf school students:

"I don't like to do many outdoor activities by myself when it involves a risky situation like the waves" (S3, 01:32),

According to two of the instructors, tourists participating in surf lessons see sharks as the most frightening aspect of the lessons:

"Same thing with everyone, everyone always worry about sharks, every day you get the shark questions"(I3,11:49)

"The main one they always think about is sharks. Whenever you ask 'so what dangers are here at this beach?' Sharks usually comes up first." (I1,06:28)

As discussed in theory, tourists participating in adventure tourism expect a certain level of risk, but also expect a cushioned adventure. As shown here, what surf school students expect of risk and what other surfers expect of risks are sometimes reversed.

Thus, it is relevant to discuss how this need is and can be catered to in a way that satisfies everyone who is sharing the surf zone. Especially considering a high number of users, do increase risk of aggravating the experience for every user, if there is not a consensus on how to tackle issues and who is entitled to surf where. "The only way that surfers will be able to ensure that they retain the freedom of the sport, the freedom of the waves and the beach, is by being willing to share it" (Fitzgerald & Clarke, 2001, p. 231).

5.3.2 Safety and surf schools

The surf school owners and instructors shared the view that the human factor is of bigger danger than the natural elements, however also saw the other surfers as an aspect of possible danger to the surf school students: "The most dangerous things are the surfers."(I3, 11:49), "Other surfers are definitely a hazard.

Their boards can, you know, cause a lot of damage and our boards really can't, cause we are on surf boards, but yeah I just say, you know, if they are coming through, stay out of their way" (I1, 05:56).

The amount of danger can possibly be a deciding factor in order to assess whether the experience will be an enjoyable one for everyone. Cater stresses about the amount of risk in adventure tourism that "If the activity moves towards a condition of risk being greater than competence to deal with that risk, there is the potential for misadventure, and at levels of complete imbalance devastation and disaster may occur" (Cater, 2006, p. 319). Considering this argument, surf schools can be seen in two ways. If surf schools are too 'safe' the experience might be boring. Something that might require attention in this context are the rather limited set of requirements that people who sign up for surf lessons have to fulfill, because it is a cushioned adventure. According to the interviews, the only real requirement that surf school students had to fulfil was that they need to be able to swim, but the surf schools do not check (O2, O4, O6). For two of the surf schools it was not a big problem if the students could not swim, because they operate in shallow waters (O5, O7). Not being able to swim and being in the ocean however could be potentially dangerous. That leads me to suggest, that if it is not even a requirement to be able to swim, the risk surf schools offer students as an adventure product, a surf school can be seen as very cushioned adventure. If surfing with a surf schools is too risky it might scare off students and create a bad experience for them, thus surf schools surfing space should optimally have a shared understanding, that risk should be controlled in order for the students to feel safe, but at the same time feel excitement. Surf schools have a legal responsibility to create a safe environment for the students in the form of instructor ratio, knowledge of sea and beach conditions and public safety (Learn to Surf Coaching Policy, 2015, p. 2).

Earlier I suggested a *restriction* claim in relation to surf schools' placement in a surfing zone, suggesting that even though surf schools do not hold rights over any other user, they might still have an advantage. In relation to the idea of risk related to adventure tourism (ibid) I will in addition to the restriction claim suggest a *Safety Claim.* As surf schools have a legal responsibility for the safety of their students, they have to go somewhere safe on the beach (within the limits of their permit).

"People would drift through it [our zone] there is quite a lot of current going on and it becomes a problem as soon as they start having fiberglass or other hardboards that just smashed through the students. Then it becomes as problem because this is when I have to step in and try to protect the students"(I2, 02:36).

“It is our duty and care to put our people into the safest spot […] sometimes you will get the odd idiot who will just ride through the class, but that doesn’t really happen a lot” (O5, 19:06)

By this claim, surf schools can argue to keep other surfers out of their own spot, even though they might not intentionally do it. There is a high focus on safety, which also means that it must be a priority and it is a question of ethics, because legally surf schools cannot have priority over any other user. Thus, because surfing is an unregulated activity, and no one legally can claim rights over any other surfers, the safety claim needs to be accepted by other users in order to work and if it is not, the safety claim might be fuel to the fire, because the safety claim is present no matter if other surfers respect it or not. This way of claiming can be seen in relation to Nazer’s (2004) idea of mild localism. “[mild] Localism is mostly compatible with the healthy norms of surfing. Essentially, 'mild localism' means showing extra deference to local surfers. Observing these norms demonstrates deference to the locals and helps mitigate the effects of crowding for the locals.”(p.681).

This should not be understood in the way that surf schools conduct localism, but rather that mild localism is a way to regulate a surf spot through showing a certain amount of respect. In this way, mild localism should be seen as a form of regulation, ensuring safety for all if. Assuming that surf schools operate in a way that will have the least amount of impact on the rest of the surf zone, and further keeping ‘un-safe’ surfers away from the rest of the surfers, it seems fair that other surfers should also respect this. Here, Nazer’s (2004) idea about abstract norms and the norm of ‘give respect to gain respect’ could be applied (p.672).

Thus it can be suggested that it seems plausible that because (and if) surf schools keep unsafe surfers out of other surfers way, their claim should be respected because by keeping surf school students out of the way of other surfers, limiting the amount of undesired risk, the chance for other surfers to ‘get stoked’ will be higher.

Therefore, surfing as an adventure tourism product can be suggested as a tool against overcrowding, drawing on the idea that overcrowding is a feeling as much as it is a physical concept, because they can help to keep control of the undesired risks for other surfers, however, only surfers with a certain skill level. Therefore, beginner surfers might be seen to be the user of surfing who gains the least from the

presence of surf schools. In the next part, I will discuss what the outcome and influence of surfing as a tourist attraction may be and what responsibilities they might have.

5.4 Outcome and influence

5.4.1 Responsibility

Since surf schools have not been discussed in theory before, it is necessary to look into what perception of responsibility surf schools have and what other surfers might perceive their responsibilities to be.

As is stressed by Buckley (2003) and Hritz & Reynold (2012), adventure tourism is about creating excitement for the tourist and that statement paired with the statements from surf school owners and instructors when asked whether tourists continue surfing, might indicate that surfing as a tourist attraction for most tourists, is simply that, a tourist attraction and not necessarily a search for a lifelong hobby. Hence, it might not feel worth spending too much time on educating people, and the surf school might rather focus on giving the tourist an experience and the excitement that they as adventure tourists seek.

Thus, I will argue that the definition of surf school students as adventure tourists following the definition given by Hritz & Reynolds (2012) that adventure tourists do not necessarily have any prior skills, rather than 'surfers', may contribute to not seeing etiquette of surfing as an important thing to teach tourists, as this might not be the most exciting part of the experience. Further, if all surf schools work as the surf school where the researcher did a lesson, there is only two hours to give a tourist as much value for their money as possible. If a surf school then also estimates that a tourist is not going to continue surfing, it might make sense for the surf school to only focus on 'fun parts', hence, for the tourist to spend as much time as possible on a surf board, since they are only there for the afternoon anyway. In this way, it might be fair to argue that commodification of surfing has brought tourists to the surf schools "everyone today wants to be a surfer"(Anderson 2016, p. 212).

"There are people who just want the picture, give me the picture, I just want to have a picture with a board and send me off" (I3, 08:14)

"I have come to Australia, I can't NOT try surfing" (O1, 03:51)

“It’s just one of those things you have to do […] they can’t **not** go surfing in Australia kind of thing” (O4, 01:14)

“The people who come to a surf school are not the people who are going to go out there and have a go themselves.”(O6, 16:14)

This ‘bucket list’ view on surfing also came to show in the reasoning for why the interviewed surf school students chose to participate in a surf lesson e.g. surf school student Rachel:

“I wanted to say that I surfed in Australia” (S4, 00:12)

In the researcher’s participation in a surf class, the lesson was also ended with the instructor asking us all to pose for a picture in front of the surf school van. “Laurie congratulates us all for doing a great job out in the water, and asks us to pose for a picture for the surf school’s Instagram account and Facebook page” (XI). This can be seen as another sign, that what we, as the students bought into, was a commodified experience of surfing with a physical prove of the experience.

One instructor even stated that in some instances, he would not even consider teaching even the most basics of surfing:

“I recall that we had a class that was, I think 21 young Chinese people. Some kids, some could not swim. So obviously you would not even think of teaching them surfing.” (I2, 10:42)

This statement is quite interesting in relation to what was mentioned in the last part, that tourists do not even necessarily need to be able to swim in order to participate in a surf lesson. This might be another sign that surf schools (at least a part of them) is a commodity exclusively providing the tourist with the opportunity of saying ‘I surfed in Australia’. A finding from the netnography was however, that there is a perception that surf schools do not teach enough etiquette e.g. user *50young* :“They do not teach surf etiquette” (NS14)

When asked if surf schools can help solving issues of overcrowding, there were different opinions on this question:

“In a way yes. If it was in a broader spectrum sort of taught to the coaches or it was coming through, that it was a part of the criteria” (I4, 06:41).

"Overcrowding will always take place I suppose […] Maybe it won't help with the overcrowding, but it will help to avoid conflict"

The overall perception was however, that surf schools are not surfing where other surfers are and thus cannot really do anything about overcrowding as their students are just tourists. It should not totally be rejected however, that just because the intention behind signing up for a surf lesson was just to say 'I did it', surfing cannot turn into a lifelong passion.

5.4.2 Regulating the unruly

As prior mentioned, findings from theory showed, that surfers are in general not fond of the possible scenario of regulation of surfing.

"*What surfers do not want is […] to see someone decide that surfers should be regulated in the surf, that surfers should have a code set out in such a fashion that it should be enforced, as it was suggested in California, by surf police on jet skis and the horrible thought that you might have to stand on the beach, along side one of those machines they have in the delicatessen, and take a ticket with a number on and wait until your number comes up to be able to enter the water*" (Fitzgerald & Clarke, 2001, p. 233).

This possible resistance against regulation is interesting compared to the many statements about how regulated surf schools are as explained previously, and expressed by most of the interviewed surf school owners and instructors e.g. Owner 4:

"In Australia, [surf schools] are so regulated. All our instructors have to have heaps of qualifications, we can only take x amount, of people and we have to report all those numbers so it is super regulated here" (O4, 10:15)

Even though surf schools might only work to regulate themselves, other surfers might possibly feel that they are being regulated by the presence of surf schools as well, because surf schools are a regulated and regulating entity in relation to how they conduct and are forced to conduct their work. "Unfortunately recreational surfers are an unruly mob by nature, not fitting with the government style of doing things"(NS11).

Another way this resistance against regulation comes to show is e.g. through the way Nazer (2004) stresses that rules of surfing should rather be known as norms and not regulations. As shown in theory, norms do however include sanctions, but not necessarily legal sanctions such as being fined or jailed, but rather an exclusion of surfing space. "A norm is more than a regulative because the violation of a norm generates a negative effect among those who know about the norm and this may be accompanied by sanctions" (Nazer, 2004, p. 662).

In this way, it can be discussed whether surf schools and regulation might actually be a benefit in relation to the vibe of overcrowding, since everyone will know the rules, especially if surf schools teach and *enforce* rules/code of conduct. Especially following the argument stressed by Nazer (ibid), that those who know about norms will sanction, even if the violator does not know that they broke the norms. Following this logic, surf schools and the fact that surf schools are a regulated entity can possibly help in ensuring that everyone know (and follow) the code of conduct, in the unregulated activity of surfing. It does again however rely on:

1) Whether surf schools are considered 'real surfing'.
2) Whether surf schools see themselves as 'real surfing'

As shown in the last part, the surf school students' perception of risk was pretty much entirely opposite of the perception of the surfers, why there might be a long way to go before the surf school students will be considered as 'real surfers'.

5.4.2 Future influences of surf schools

In the second question of whether surf schools see themselves as real surfing, it leads back to Anderson's(2013) ideas about surfing zones and where surf schools place themselves in the water, but also that surf schools do not necessarily see themselves as 'real surfing' (as shown below) and therefore they do not believe that they in any way can affect overcrowding in surfing, good or bad. This might also relate to commodification of surfing, because surf schools might believe that they are in the end, just an interest point for tourists because surfing is 'cool'.

"You know, surf schools are really just a look-after-tourists thing." (O7, 16:03)

"We just provide a safe opportunity for [tourists] to have a bit of fun really" (O6, 19:35).

One thing that does need to be discussed however is, whether surf schools need to acknowledge a responsibility in relation to this. By responsibility, I will refer to the statements made earlier that surf schools to a certain extend can (and sometimes do) claim a *special rules* privilege and a *safety* privilege drawing on Alemann (2015). I argued that other surfers, although only on a certain skill level, might grant surf schools these privileges because they see surf schools as a way to keep beginners out of the line-up. As highlighted in earlier parts, surf schools claiming a spot can be justified partly, because skilled surfers appreciate the beginners being out of the way and thus eliminating risk elsewhere.

"Even after people have done 3, 4, 5 lessons at a surf school, very few are good enough to be able to go out and surf by themselves" (O6, 16:14).

Thus, it needs to be discussed if surf schools have a responsibility for making sure, that if there is even the slightest chance that these students will go surfing again, that they inform them of the code of conduct. This can be seen as an expanded version of the 'give respect to gain respect' norm as explained by Nazer (2004), that surfers give room for surf schools to operate, but in return they expect surf schools to teach students an adequate level of etiquette and 'know your own limits'. "Essentially, the number of waves available is independent of how the resource is managed" (Nazer, 2004, p. 659)

Thus, it could be argued that surf schools have a responsibility to inform everyone of code of conduct, even if they do not immediately express a desire to keep surfing. It should however be taken into consideration that surf schools also function as a tourist attraction when people purchase their products and therefore also have a responsibility to provide a tourist with the desired product. As stated earlier the biggest clash seems to be between surf schools and beginner surfers, because they have a shared interest in the same geographical area and the same resource. Again, here the 'give respect to gain respect' rule could be suggested. Even though surfers might not be a part of a surf school, if a surf school gets respect from other surfers they need to make sure that they respect every surfer. Therefore, instead of physically talking about excluding anyone, the earlier idea of surf schools as creators of surfing space, drawing on Preston-Whyte(2002) should be mentioned. The shared ideas of a surfing space that a surf school create for their students. It could be argued that whereas it seems like good sense to make claim of a safety privilege, in the interest of everyone, they should not necessarily always draw on what I termed as restriction privilege. This is also where surf schools might have the chance to influence students in terms of behavior and thus, if no safety is being compromised, it makes sense to do an effort to share their zone

with surfers who are not with a surf school as long as it does not compromise safety for anyone. I will make this postulate on the basis of the ideas explained earlier of social construction of overcrowding. If surf schools really can make a difference, then they should be showing that surf zones are for all to share. "Just share [the] stoke"(I3, 00:15).

6.0 Conclusion

Surfing is an unregulated activity without any official rules. Surfing takes place in a surf zone. A surf zone is a geographically defined, but mobile area. It is at the same time a place of mental escape. It is also in the surf zone that a surfer has a chance to experience relational sensibility which is in surf jargon referred to as 'Stoke'. This is a feeling of pure joy created between the surfer and the physical surroundings such as board, wax etc. and natural elements. Joy is an addictive feeling. The natural elements, especially the waves and the risk that these represent is an important and for some, mandatory part of reaching the stoke. Stoke is essentially what surfers strive for and the possibility of reaching relational sensibility and for many surfers, surfing is not just a hobby but also a passion and a lifestyle. Related to surfing zones is the idea of surfing space. A surfing space is a social construction or narrative between a number of surfers, building on knowledge about surf conditions and narratives about dream waves. Due to a lack of official rules or regulations in surfing, some surfers create their own rules and ideas about who is allowed to surf which surf breaks shown through localism giving special privileges to locals, performance giving special privileges to the best surfers and seniority giving privileges to older surfers or the surfers who have spent the most time at a certain surf break. A surf zone is a place that everyone have to share. With an increasing number of surfers and a steady number of surfing breaks, surfing is becoming overcrowded and waves are seen as a limited resource in many places, sometimes increasing localism.

Commodification of surfing means that everyone now have access to surfing. Commodification of surfing is expressed in the form of surf-wear and other surf related merchandise. Commodification of surfing takes place mostly on land. Surf schools can be seen as being somewhere between a commodified form of surfing, and the actual act of surfing as surf schools are selling a chance to try the 'real' surfing, mostly to tourists.

Surf schools have been defined as adventure tourism. Surf school students have many of the characteristics of adventure tourists, mainly that they do not have any prior experience in the activity and that they are looking for something exciting. The surf school students interviewed for this research all more or less fit this description. Most of them did however express a desire to try surfing again.

Surf schools have, because they sell surf lessons been blamed for overcrowding by some surfers. Results from this study shows that overcrowding is not only about numbers but also about attitude, and a lack of etiquette and knowledge about the informal rules in surfing. Thus overcrowding also has a social side to it.

Risk is an important factor in both surfing and adventure tourism, however the perception of risk and desire for risk is completely different. Adventure tourists desire a cushioned adventure with a risk level matching their competences, with someone else in the end being responsible for the safety. Surfers see risk as an element of rush in surfing, but only if it is the risk that leads to reaching stoke. There was a perception with the surfers interviewed for this study, that beginners in the line-ups were a cause of annoyance and danger, and that they had a tendency to 'waste' waves. This led me to coin the terms desired risk referring to the natural risks, which led to a rush when 'defeating' them, and undesired risk referring to the manmade risks, which were both dangerous and nobody gained anything from them.

Between the local surfers interviewed for this study, there was a general perception that surf schools were not to blame for overcrowding, but at the same time many of them pointed out that they surfed other places and that they preferred to surf alone. This led me to suggest, that surfers on a certain skill level appreciate surf schools because they have an impression that surf schools can 'contain' the un-skilled surfers and are alright with a surf school 'claiming' a break for their students. If surf schools do however get in the way of the skilled surfers somehow, the attitude towards surf schools changes rapidly.

Surf schools operate in restricted areas and are heavily regulated. The fact that they have to stick to certain areas, even if other surfers are in these areas led me to suggest that surf schools have a 'restriction privilege', meaning that even though they do not necessarily have bad intend with this, but it can possibly make other beginner surfers who are not with any surf school feel intimidated. Besides, from being restricted surf schools also have what I termed as a 'Safety Privilege', which relates to the other claim

but instead, because of being regulated, have a legal requirement to follow of operating their classes in the safest conditions possible.

It was also argued that surf schools, like other surfers, create surfing space, but theirs is visible due to the flags they put out and the fact that their students and instructors by law must wear a certain color rash shirt. It was argued, that because most surf school students do not continue surfing, surf schools cannot directly be blamed for overcrowding in the form of numbers, but they have a responsibility in showing students etiquette and a way to do this was suggested to be by projecting an attitude of sharing.

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