

# **ABSTRACT**

## **THE INCREASED FEMINIZATION OF THE SURFING ECONOMY. AN EXPLORATION OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE SURFERS IN MUIZENBERG, SOUTH AFRICA.**

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This thesis is a phenomenological exploration of female surfers' lived experiences in the surfing culture and economy of Muizenberg, South Africa. The research design includes a review of literature, participant observation and semi-structured in-depth interviews. The approach was qualitative so as to gain deep insights into women's lived experiences participating in a predominantly male sporting culture and economy. Thereby, the everyday experiences, feelings, victories and constraints of female surfers were central to the investigation. Even though some athletes showed active resistance to gendered identities and contest stereotypical femininities, this research demonstrates that females still feel marginalized in what they see as the continued male-dominant sport of surfing. The results reveal that identity creation of female surfers is influenced by the media representation of women as well as the masculinity of the sport. The female surfers of the study face structural, interpersonal as well as intrapersonal constraints in their surfing lives. It is striking that most of the interpersonal constraints refer to attitudes of male surfers towards women. Furthermore, it has been revealed that female surfers are active participants in and drivers of the surfing economy. However, women often are socially and economically devalued and continue to be a minority in the surfing community. There is little to suggest that female surfers' constraints and gendered identity creation at Muizenberg will change significantly as long as there is no combined effort of media, professional surfing organizations and men in positions of influence to work towards an improvement of support for female surfers from beginner to professional. In order to move towards advancing female surfing, gender equality has to be addressed across multidimensional structures.

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**Masters Dissertation in Applied Management (BUS5053W)**

**The increased feminization of the surfing economy.**

**An exploration of the lived experiences of female surfers in  
Muizenberg, South Africa.**

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“Waves treat everyone equally though, and never enquire your sex  
before wiping you out.”

- Lorna Currie in *Down The Line*, 1977, p. 16) -

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

“No single group has had a greater struggle for respect and acceptance than female pro competitors, whose course since the mid 1970s has been undermined by pitfalls: gender bias, industry apathy, indifferent media coverage [and] outright hostility from the male pros...”

(Surfer Magazine, 2010, as cited in Roy & Caudwell, 2014, p. 235)

### 1.1 Background and Relevance

In recent decades female participation rates in sports have increased significantly (Comer, 2010; Roy Morgan, 2015; Thorpe, 2006). Nevertheless, historically sport has been an area dominated by men where women have experienced exclusion. Culturally speaking, sport is often still understood as a male domain where women face discrimination in many sporting codes. Depending on the sport this can be due to body shape, habit or history and tradition within the industry (Cunningham, 2008; Roberts & MacLean, 2012). According to Coakley and Donnelly (2004), sport is simply assumed to be a male prerogative unless an exception is noted. The need of professional women’s sport associations to be specifically gendered meanwhile the men’s associations remain unremarked is no rarity but rather the norm (e.g., Women’s National Basketball Association vs. National Basketball Association) (Coakley & Donnelly, 2004).

One field of sports which has experienced a significant rise in popularity among women within the past few years are sports collectively known as board sports such as skateboarding, snowboarding and surfing which are also historically typified by the dominant role that men have played (Bäckström, 2013; Kruger & Saayman, 2017). Especially surfing stands out from these as being not just a sport that people participate in but a lifestyle<sup>1</sup> (Gilje, 2018), a way of living and being practiced by males, females, young and old people alike. The surfing community is large and its economic impact substantial. The global surfing population is estimated

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<sup>1</sup> Lifestyle describes the way in which people live and organise their lives around a certain activity (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). Lifestyle sports are often referred to as being predominantly masculine due to their risk taking nature (Bush, 2016).

at more than 30 million active surfers (The Economist, 2012), and when recorded in 2012 it was shown to be growing 12% - 16% every year (Buckley, 2002). There is no reason to suggest that the growth and popularity has changed since then.

From 1999 to 2003, within only four years, the participation rate of female surfers had grown by 280% (Thorpe, 2006). A result of this expanded interest has been increased economic impact. Thereby, it is estimated that recreational surfing alone boosts local economies ranging from \$1 to \$35 million ( $\approx$  ZAR 500 million) a year (Gilje, 2018). Brands make significant profits by selling clothes and surf related accessories not only to surfers but also to fans – with women playing an ever more active part in this economic activity (Booth, 2001; Buckley, 2002; Moutinho, Dionísio, & Leal, 2007). Especially in lifestyle sports such as surfing female consumers have become one of the most valuable marketing targets. According to Franklin (2012), it must be assumed that the female contribution to the surfing economy significantly supports the men's competitions. Nevertheless, in the recent past, events for female surfers were cancelled because of not finding sponsorship (Franklin, 2012).

Additionally, despite the women's events of the Championship Tour often being held at the same surf break<sup>2</sup> as the men's, women used to get significantly less prize money than their male counterparts. At the Beaufort Open in 1984 for example, men competed for an overall prize money of A\$95.000 ( $\approx$  ZAR1 million) while women competed for a total of A\$5000 ( $\approx$  ZAR 53.000). And this is only one of many examples (Booth, 2001). Only as recently as 2018, after a picture of a surf competition in South Africa showing both the male and female winners with their respective prize money cheques (ZAR8000 for the male vs. ZAR4000 for the female surfer) went viral on social media (Purtill, 2018), the World Surf League (WSL) introduced equal prize money for both sexes starting in 2019 (World Surf League, 2018).

However, despite this gendered reality, surfing has and continues to be a space in which female participants have found opportunities to resist, contest, and

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<sup>2</sup> A surf break generally describes the place where a wave breaks which can be surfed. There are three different kinds of surf breaks: Beach breaks, point breaks and reef breaks. Beach breaks describe waves which break over a sand bottom meanwhile point breaks refer to waves which are caused by land formations sticking out into the sea creating a long wave peeling along the shoreline. Lastly, reef breaks are characterized by waves breaking over coral/reef which means that the bottom doesn't change much unlike beach breaks (SurfGirl Magazine, 2017).

sometimes to construct their own identities (e.g., Preston-Whyte, 2001; Thorpe, 2007). Given the growing numbers of female recreational and competitive surfers, the introduction of equal prize money and the increasing role that female surfers play in the surfing economy, there is a need to better understand the lived experience of female surfers. Both, the equal prize money as well as an increasing feminization of the sport, might lead to a shift of the surfing community in general as well as to a change of the lived experiences of female surfers in particular.

## **1.2 Problem Discussion**

The participation rate of females in surfing has increased significantly over the past decades (Mendez-Villanueva & Bishop, 2005; Thorpe, 2006). Since the 1970s there has been a strong movement towards progressing female surfing in terms of participation, competition and inclusion in the broader culture and lifestyle of surfing. However, women still remain a minority in a competitive, mainly male-dominated hierarchical system and struggle to gain acceptance and respect for their performance (Bush, 2016; Roy & Caudwell, 2014; Usher & Gómez, 2018; Waitt, 2008).

Speaking of surfing in general, a “lack of freedom and lack of choice make it difficult for women to achieve a quality leisure experience and even more so the benefits associated with that experience” (Nourbakhsh, 2008, p. 63). Surfing offers its participants a range of potential experiences whereby female surfers may not have the same experiences as male surfers. While some females find surfing with males oppressive, there is evidence that it can also be a site of empowerment (Knijnik, Horton, & Cruz, 2010; Olive, McCuaig, & Phillips, 2015), a paradox worthy pursuing this study.

The realization of women often still facing gender injustice in sports, meaning being “denied participatory parity by being culturally devalued and economically marginalized” (Travers, 2008, p. 79), has led to an increased interest in gender studies in the field of sports throughout the past decades. A multitude of studies focusing on sport and gender has been conducted (e.g., Aitchison, 2007; Birrell, 1988; Fink, LaVoi, & Newhall, 2016) leading to the establishment of a new academic field on its own (Hedenborg & Pfister, 2012). However, despite the growing academic interest in board sports in general (e.g., Heino, 2000; Thorpe,

2006; Wheaton, 2004), there remain large unexplored research areas. So far research has largely excluded women (Hedenborg & Pfister, 2012). Taking into account that surfing as it is known today is still a relatively new sport, only little has been published especially focusing on the female gender in surfing (e.g., Bush, 2016; Corner, 2008; Nourbakhsh, 2008; Olive et al., 2015). Since women are not a homogenous group and have different needs and desires (Hall, 1996; Hargreaves, 2002) their sets of experiences in the water differ from individual to individual. Especially with regards to South Africa, to date only little research has been dedicated to surfing and gender (e.g., Kruger & Saayman, 2017; Thompson, 2015, 2018). Even though Kruger and Saayman (2017) investigated the South African surf spot Muizenberg which is relevant for this study, none of both researches particularly focuses on females in the surfing industry. This research project is the first one specifically focusing on female surfers in South Africa. Thus, more research in this field is necessary.

### **1.3 Research Aim and Questions**

In the surfing culture gender and sexuality has become a central point in the struggles over surfing styles and identities within the last five decades (Roy & Caudwell, 2014). As the analysis of the literature shows those struggles are predominantly present in the United States (especially California and East coast) as well as in Australia (Comer, 2010; Stedman, 1997). This is reflected in most of existing research mainly focusing on surf destinations in the United States, Australia or the United Kingdom (e.g., Bush, 2016; Evers, 2009; Franklin, 2012; Wheaton, 2004). Furthermore, as mentioned above, women have largely been excluded by research. Therefore, this study is the first one set out to in some way begin filling this gap in knowledge by exploring what it means to surf as a woman in Muizenberg, South Africa, given the increasing feminization of the sport.

Hence, the underlying research questions are the following:

**Primary Research Question:**

What are the lived experiences of female surfers in Muizenberg, South Africa, given the increased feminization of the surfing economy?

**Sub-questions:**

1. *How do female surfers feel in the water participating in a traditionally male sport?*
2. *What are female surfers' thoughts and constraints when they go surfing?*
3. *How do female surfers perceive their position within the surfing economy?*

## **1.4 Research Expectations**

For this study, as a result of personal perceptions and casual observations as a regular surfer in South Africa and Muizenberg specifically, it was assumed that females present a significant percentage if not the majority of all surfers in Muizenberg, South Africa. Furthermore, with regards to Franklin (2012), it was expected that female surfers contribute significantly to the surfing culture and economy in Muizenberg. Lastly, it was expected that even though women might find access to surfing easy as well as they might have a sense of ownership in the water they still face challenges in and around the water due to their gender. Furthermore, back in 2010, Reed (2010) suggested that the introduction of equal prize money will not only benefit female surfers but the whole sport of surfing facilitating media coverage and promotions as well as addressing the issue of using sex to sell the sport. The subsequent study will now follow up on this suggestion since equal prize money was introduced in 2019.

While studies have been conducted on the African continent, none have focussed on female surfers in South Africa in specific. Hence, this study contributes to lifestyle sport research with new empirical findings extending existing academic knowledge. It further adds to the literature about the advancement of females within this sporting code as well as it shall provide useful implications for businesses and

sporting organizations in the surfing industry on how to successfully address female surfers in future.

## **1.5 Outline**

Following the introduction, in Chapter 2 the dissertation continues with relevant theoretical fundamentals giving a basic introduction to sex and gender. Further, the concept of feminism and barriers to gender equality in sports will be explored. The following Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will focus on a review of the relevant literature on surfing including the gender order in surfing, the surfing economy and females' lived experiences respectively. Concluding the review of the literature, research expectations will be presented in Chapter 6. Subsequently, in Chapter 7, the methodology addressing the overarching research question will be presented followed by a presentation of the empirical findings in Chapter 8. Thereby, the main focus will lie on the feelings, constraints and lived experiences of female surfers. Completing the investigation by a discussion, the key findings will be summarized and concluded in Chapter 9. Lastly, to finalize, managerial implications will be given as well as limitations and suggestions for future research will be exposed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **2 SEX, GENDER AND THE PURSUIT OF SPORTING EQUALITY**

Historically women have faced and still continue to face social injustice due to their sex and gender (Allen, 2018; Fraser, 2007; Schwalbe, 2015). Up until today females all around the world are confronted with physical, psychological and institutional barriers leading to inequality not only with regards to sports but in many aspects of society (Reed, 2010). This chapter seeks to better define, understand and operationalize the concepts of sex, gender and power as they build the foundation for the subsequent qualitative study.

## **2.1 Sex, Gender and Gender Identity**

The term sex refers to biologically-based distinctions and is used to differentiate between the sexes male and female taking physical aspects such as chromosomes or internal and external genitalia into account. The dominant practice is to categorize sex as either male or female (Stoller, 2020) <sup>3</sup>. Whereas sex refers to biological distinctions, gender describes the socially learned and culturally expected behavior associated with the two sexes respectively (Lips, 2020). However, while the definition of sex is relatively easy, there is a multitude of definitions of gender (Gherardi & Poggio, 2001; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

West and Zimmerman (1987) describe gender as “activity of managing situated conduct, in the light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one’s sex category. Gender activities emerge from and bolster claims to membership in a sex category” (p. 127).

According to Gherardi and Poggio (2001) who investigate organizational gender asymmetries, gender is defined as a “set of social practices which define the relations between men and women and [...] are based on a dichotomous and hierarchical symbolic order” (p. 245). Social practices are used by individuals to position themselves within society “aligning themselves to the positioning of others

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<sup>3</sup> There is also a term called intersex which used to refer to people who struggle to identify with either gender but don’t have any genetic defects. However, nowadays it is mostly used to describe people with biological defects (Stoller, 2020). In general terms and with regards to sports, male and female are the two dominant categories.



within situated discourses” (p. 247). Regarding male and female as dichotomous categories might lead to believe that belonging to one category suggests non-belonging to the other.

Lastly, a very recent definition of gender which is used for this thesis is given by Stoller (2020). According to the author, gender refers to psychological and cultural connotations rather than to physical and biological aspects. Analogical to sex which is differentiated into male and female, gender can be described by the terms ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. Gender is the amount of masculinity or femininity in a person with a normal female person predominantly being feminine and vice versa. However, different compositions of both exist whereby masculine and feminine does not necessarily depend on biological sex (Stoller, 2020).

As a consequence of comparing one’s own behavior with activities of others, gender identity is constructed through difference, meaning belonging to one sex or the other (male or female) (Gherardi & Poggio, 2001; Stoller, 2020). Gender identity is one of the most central identities and already acquired early in life. It is socially constructed and reflected by reproductions of people’s actions (K. Henderson, 1994). However, even though individuals are born into and growing up in a society that is already structured, gender can be changed and contested as it is a continuous process depending on how we define ourselves and others. Hence, individuals can hold a variety of identities over a lifetime (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; K. Henderson, 1994; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stoller, 2020).

Not only is male gender identity usually linked to physical strength but also females often are excluded from male spaces that focus on physical strength as being important (Wearing, 1991). Since this research project explores the experiences of females in the traditionally male space of surfing (Bush, 2016; Usher & Gómez, 2018) it is followed up on the former argument about the exclusion of women.

## **2.2 Power Articulation and Gender**

According to Michel Foucault, society is organized around relationships of power, whereby power “is always already there” (Foucault, 1980, p. 141). Hence, power exists in multiple forms in different social settings. With respect to power and gender the word ‘power’ often immediately is associated with masculinity and males (Hartsock, 1990). This association supports Wallach Scott’s argument that “gender is

a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated” (Wallach Scott, 1988, p. 45). Understanding the concept of power and its connection with gender, sexuality and race is crucial for feminist theories (Allen, 2018).<sup>4</sup> That is why this chapter gives an overview of gender domination in society and the concept of hegemonic masculinity.

### *2.2.1 Gender Domination in Society*

Theories of power and domination commonly are attributed to Karl Marx and Michel Foucault (Lovett, 2010; Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1996). Domination “entails the ability of an actor or set of actors to constrain the choices of another actor or set of actors in a nontrivial way, and in a way that works to the others’ disadvantage” (Allen, 2018, p. 125).

Gender dominance theory which is important for the underlying study, implies that women tend to subordinate their own needs and that the female sex is often regarded as the weaker one in society (Allen, 2018; K. Henderson, 1994; Schwalbe, 2015). Critical gender theory “sees women and men as categories that are defined into existence as unequal from the start, with the category ‘men’ reserved for males who signify masculine selves and strive for dominance over others” (Schwalbe, 2015, p. 13). In this context it is also spoken of gender injustice (Fraser, 2007; Travers, 2008) which describes women “being denied participatory parity by being culturally devalued and economically marginalized” (Travers, 2008, p. 79). Hence, for society to be democratic, women must be able to take part in social interaction on equal terms (Fraser, 2008). Schwalbe (2015) states that the basis of gender is “the attachment of different meanings to male and female bodies and the concomitant imagining that these body types reflect essential internal differences” (p. 13). By using these alleged internal differences to distribute rights unequally, legitimate hierarchical exploitation and hence create status differences, the construction of gender is enhanced (Schwalbe, 2015).

In the early 1990s the authors Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto introduced a theory indicating that all human societies show tendencies to be hierarchically structured: Social Dominance Theory (SDT) (Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). Thereby, this hierarchical social structure typically is reflected by a

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<sup>4</sup> A more detailed explanation of feminism and feminist theories follows in Chapter 2.3.

dominant group at the top, possessing a disproportionately large proportion of positive social value and a subordinate group at the bottom which is generally associated with possessing a “negative social value, including such things as low power and social status” (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001, p. 32). The focus of SDT lies on looking at intra- and interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional mechanisms influencing the establishment and continuity of group-based social hierarchy. However, even though the group at the bottom typically has lower social status and less power and hence is disadvantaged, “group-based social hierarchies are characterized by a high degree of hierarchical consensuality” (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001, p. 52). This means that there is a large proportion of accordance within society with regards to which set of actors is dominant and which is subordinate leading to social inequality.

An important component of SDT and therefore contributing to the establishment of group-based hierarchies is Social Dominance Orientation (SDO). It implies that individuals do not only favor their own in-group but also desire dominance over out-groups. However, individuals do not necessarily personally want to dominate other people but still favor their own in-group to be dominant to other groups leading to hierarchical relationships. Furthermore, SDO is related to one’s gender. Males often occupy dominant roles and typically show higher levels of SDO than females (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994). According to Connell (2013), the western gender order is characterized by a “global dominance of men over women” (p. 183).

### *2.2.2 Hegemonic Masculinity*

Even though society has been constructed in an unbalanced manner as shown in the previous section, it was only in the 1980s when academic research increased a focus on masculinity (Thorpe, 2007). An important concept influencing gender studies, namely ‘hegemonic masculinity’, has been established by sociologist R. W. Connell (Connell, 1995, 2001; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Thorpe, 2007). The author’s concept seeks to explain the factors and dynamics contributing to an establishment and a legitimization of male dominance in society (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1987; Connell, 1995, 2001, 2013).

Hegemony itself is a concept traced back to Gramsci (1971) which refers to cultural dynamics contributing to the domination and control of one class over another. Typically it involves the fact that the greater part of a population is convinced to comply with their respective subordination. Thus, practices which seem to be contrary to the interests of the subordinate group become generally accepted or commonsense (Donaldson, 1993; Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity describes the power relationships between and within genders (Demetriou, 2001). It is defined as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy<sup>5</sup>, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 1995, p. 77). However, hegemonic masculinity does not only refer to dominance by men or a group of men over women (external hegemony) but also over subordinate masculinities (internal hegemony) (Demetriou, 2001).

In the context of sport, several authors even speak of hypermasculinity which is a postmodern form of masculinity (Bush, 2016; M. Henderson, 2001; Heywood, 2008) that is “an exaggerated version of the traditional hegemonic model” (Stedman, 1997, p. 81). Although hegemonic masculinity is omnipresent in society, as “power is constantly at play” (Messner, 1992, p. 13), it is not a fixed state but can be contested and allows for change (Connell, 1995; Messner & Sabo, 1990).

## **2.3 Feminism – Antithesis to Patriarchy**

As mentioned previously, power relations can be contested and changed. According to Michel Foucault, precisely the existence of power relations always leaves open the possibility for resistance and with resistance “power relations are obliged to change” (Foucault, 1997, p. 167).

With regards to hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, the concept of thesis and antithesis should shortly be introduced before giving an in-depth explanation of feminism. The juxtaposition of two propositions creates a thesis (beginning idea) and an antithesis, which is the negation of the position held in the thesis. Through a productive cognitive process the two originally opposing ideas will be brought onto a

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<sup>5</sup> Patriarchy is described as a system within which males possess more social and political power comparatively to females (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001; Sidanius et al., 1994; Witz, 2013).

new level leading to the formulation of a new proposition (synthesis) (Schnitker & Emmons, 2013).

In this case feminism can be seen as the antithesis to patriarchy as it challenges power relations and hegemonic positions (Stetter & Nabo, 2020). Feminism describes a system based on the belief that the female sex should be socially, politically and economically equal to their male counterparts (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010). Its basis is the question of the meaning of being female. Holding the position that women often are treated unfairly within society and dominated by men, feminism is understood as social and political movement (Gamble, 2004; Ritzer & Ryan, 2010) which originated in the “desire to escape the experienced inequality due to being female” (Gordon, 1986, as cited in K. Henderson, 1994, p. 2). As a consequence, feminism often was used synonymously with equality. However, feminist theory is the intellectual foundation of the modern women’s movement that seeks to analyze and change the existing gender order and its discriminatory practices against women (Birrell, 2000). The main emphasis of such feminist theories are “accounts of gender differences and accounts of gender inequality and oppression” (Waters, 2000, p. 13).

According to feminist theory there are different conceptions of power, namely power as resource, power as domination and power as empowerment (Allen, 2018). This means that firstly power can be seen as a positive social good which is currently unequally distributed between men and women. In this case the goal of feminism thus is a redistribution of this resource to have equal power between men and women. Secondly, power can be understood as relation of (male) domination and (female) subordination. The feminist approach here would be to completely dissolve the system of power. Lastly, power can have positive connotations and can be understood as empowerment or transformation meaning that “women’s power becomes the basis for a wholesale revision of the masculinist conceptions of social and political life” (Allen, 2018, p. 7).

However, the increasing awareness of the subordination of women has subsequently led to the establishment of gender studies as an academic field of research on its own. Especially within the last decades feminism has become a widely researched topic which has put forth a variety of concepts which is why today there are many different ‘feminisms’. Besides equality and difference, feminism can

also be looked at from a liberal or radical perspective as well as from a personal or political point of view (K. Henderson, 1994; Ritzer & Ryan, 2010).

### *2.3.1 First and Second Wave Feminism*

Having recognized the breadth and depth of the topic, many scholars look at feminism dividing it into different concepts, whereby for historical convenience a common approach distinguishes between first, second and third wave feminism (Caudwell, 2011; K. Henderson, 1994; Heywood, 2008; Taylor, 1989).

Meanwhile first wave feminism roughly describes the time period between 1792 and 1920, second wave feminism comprises the time between 1960 and 2008 followed by the third wave (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010; see also Thornham, 2000; Thorpe, 2007) which “refers to ideas and actions of feminists who predominantly spend their lives in the twenty-first century” (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010, p. 223).

Each wave is characterized by a period of mass mobilization when women of different backgrounds united on common issues, followed by periods of fragmentation, when women searched for ways to acknowledge their differences and to work on a variety of issues, including those pertaining to race/ethnicity, class, and sexual identity. (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010, p. 224)

First wave feminism did not only originate in the dissatisfaction with the women’s lack of power but also in the anti-slavery movement of the 1800s whereby women heavily influenced the Abolition Movement.<sup>6</sup> Changing the laws towards generally increasing rights for women as well as establishing voting rights for women was the main focus of the movement (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010). Thereby women’s suffrage was put into centre of the movement (DuBois, 1999).

Second wave feminism built on first wave movements such as the Civil Rights Movement and mostly relates to patriarchy, oppression as well as with regards to sports the objectification of female athletes (Caudwell, 2011; Ritzer & Ryan, 2010). The critique of femininity, gender roles and heterosexuality played a central role in this period. Furthermore, the introduction of Title IX in 1972 by the U.S Department of Education directed at ending sex discrimination significantly characterized second wave feminism (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010). Title IX states that:

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<sup>6</sup> The Abolition Movement describes the efforts made towards the abolition of slavery in the United States in the early 1800s (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010).

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (U.S. Department of Education, 2020)

Subsequently, this gender-equity law implies that within publicly funded educational programs and activities no discriminatory manners are accepted (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2020). The legislation of Title IX in the U.S. reflects the expansion of feminist movements into the field of sports (Brake, 2012) paving the way for the emergence of sport feminism, demanding equal sporting opportunities and resources for both, men and women (Hall, 1996; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Thorpe, 2007). The introduction of Title IX successfully got more women involved not only in sports in general but also in action sports which were commonly referred to be a male domain (Franklin, 2012). The strategies of second wave feminism were more radical than those of first or third wave feminism (Thornham, 2000; Thorpe, 2007).<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, in the 1990s, it was a widespread belief that feminists wanted to reach female superiority rather than equality and fairness (Faludi, 2006).

### *2.3.2 Third Wave and Sport Feminism*

Meanwhile both first and second wave feminism emerged in rather historical periods with specific ideas and movements, third wave feminism is seen as an “evolution of feminism building on previous generations” (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004, p. 63; Ritzer & Ryan, 2010). This wave emerged in the 1990s and, in contrast to first and second, third wave feminists are rather self-oriented and individually focused often pursuing feminist beliefs without labeling them as such (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994; Morgan, 1995; Percy & Kremer, 1995; Renzetti, 1987; Stacey, 1987). Third wave feminism specifically supports the movement towards gender justice by promoting active resistance to gender norms (Travers, 2008).

One field in which women can resist gender norms and create their identities is the field of sports. It has been shown that leisure and physical exercise can influence identity creation in a way that females resist male definitions and gender identity to find their own way to experience leisure (Wearing, 1991). According to Messner and Sabo (1990), sports historically have been a field where masculine

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<sup>7</sup> Since the third wave is still ongoing, it is important to mention that strategies of third wave feminists are still constantly developing (Thorpe, 2007).

identities can be created and reaffirmed while at the same time excluding women (see also Wheaton, 2004). In sports traditional gender binaries such as masculine/feminine, active/passive, strong/weak or competitive/co-operative can be challenged (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Thorpe, 2007). Especially the introduction of Title IX empowering female athletes has led to threatening these traditional gender conventions.

Third wave feminism concentrates on “the role of the sport nexus in constructing women's identities and the potential of elite women athletes to resist and trouble stereotypical gender norms” (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003, as cited in Travers, 2008, p. 88). Third wave feminism recognizes the existence of a multitude of female identities as well as it is characterized by the belief that there is no dream women can't pursue simply because of being a woman (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Reger, 2014). This coincides with seeing power as empowerment and the sentiment of ‘girl power’ which came up towards the end of second wave feminism and which still is present in the third wave.

Supported by the introduction of Title IX in 1972 (see above), sport feminism emerged in the 1970s demanding “equal sporting opportunities among men and women” (Thorpe, 2007, p. 149). Historically sports show a clear male domination with men using sports as an opportunity to prove their masculinity. Not only have sport sciences mostly only focused on men until the second half of the nineteenth century but as Pfister (2012) states “sport was invented by men and for men; women were latecomers and – with regard to performance – the second sex” (Pfister, 2012, as cited in Hedenborg & Pfister, 2012, p. 283). It was often argued that females entering physical activity might not only damage their bodies but also their morality (Forman-Brunell, 2001; Kane, 1996).

Furthermore, it was a widespread belief that sport could not only make women unable to fulfil their traditional roles as housewives and mothers due to losing their reproductive capacity but also could turn them into lesbians the more masculine the sport practiced (Kane, 1996). Especially high risk and action sports (such as surfing or skateboarding) are often labelled as masculine or unfeminine and characterized by aggression, strength and masculinity which can discourage women from participation (Franklin, 2012; Kusz, 2004; Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008). However, sport feminism deviates from seeing competition as a male preserve



(Travers, 2008). Instead of speaking of sport feminism, Heywood and Dworkin (2003) introduced the term ‘stealth feminism’ which celebrates the role of women athletes in actively resisting and refusing the ideology of the two sex system in particular and binary based epistemologies in general (Travers, 2008). The term *stealth* is used because according to Heywood and Dworkin (2003) younger women wanted to dissociate from the bad image feminism had in the 1990s (Gillis, Howie & Munford, 2004; Harris, 2001; Heywood, 2003; Walters, 2005) and tried to advance key issues related to femininity without being labelled as ‘feminists’ (Franklin, 2012; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003).

## **2.4 Barriers to Gender Equality in Sport**

### *2.4.1 Institutional Barriers*

Even though there is a movement towards change, women are still facing not only physical but also institutional barriers to equality in sports (Reed, 2010; Shaw, 1994). The need of professional women’s sport associations to be specifically gendered meanwhile the men’s associations remain unremarked is no rarity but rather the norm (e.g., Women’s National Basketball Association vs. National Basketball Association) (Coakley & Donnelly, 2004). Connell (1995) even argues that “the institutional organisation of sport embeds definite social relations: competition and hierarchy among men, exclusion or domination of women” (p. 54).

It has been argued that the sport nexus influences the identity construction of female athletes (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Travers, 2008). Especially before 1972 and the advent of Title IX, the lack of institutional support for female athletes in many sporting codes was a crucial factor contributing to a male domination over women in the sporting culture (Bush, 2016; Comer, 2010; Reed, 2010). In her article *The Sport Nexus and Gender Injustice*, Travers (2008), for example explores the powerful role of sport institutions in maintaining and contributing to gender injustice in sports by “celebrating hegemonic masculinity and normalizing the two sex system” (p. 81). Seeing the two sex system and institutional sex segregation in sports as natural contributes to the establishment of gender differences and the marginalization of females (Travers, 2008).

However, it is of significant importance that women participating in sport related studies realize the gendered context and understand their identity “as

constructed and related to men's perspectives and behaviours" (Olive et al., 2015, p. 269).

#### *2.4.2 Gendered Representation of Sports in Media*

Gender inequalities in sports are obvious in many ways. Besides physical and institutional barriers, the existing gender order of sports within which there is a certain legitimization of power of men over women can be a barrier to full participation for female athletes. An important factor contributing to that gender order certainly is the role media plays in representing female athletes (Brookes, 2002; Franklin, 2012). Historically sports in media have been and still continue to be presented in a way that reinforces or upholds dominant ideologies and power structures, reflecting a certain social order (Clarke & Clarke, 1982; Kane, 1996).

Kane (1996) investigated the media coverage of the post Title IX female athlete and revealed enormous differences in the coverage given to female and male athletes. Firstly, even though participation numbers have increased towards the 1980s, women continued to be significantly underrepresented in terms of overall coverage. Secondly, their representation was rather linked to sexuality and limited physical capacity, meanwhile coverage of men focused on physical strength. This can be seen for example in females often being portrayed off the court, the field of action or out of uniform. These patterns of exclusion subsequently lead to a denial of power for female athletes enhanced by media representation. Interestingly, the author's study revealed that females associated with 'sex-appropriate sports' as well as individual sports such as gymnastics or tennis are given significantly more coverage than other female athletes participating in rather 'sex-inappropriate' and team sports such as basketball (Kane, 1996).

With regards to female representation in media, additionally, it was found that often a certain language, both oral and written, is used to sexualize female athletes which shows that the language used is highly gendered. According to Kane (1996) "language both reflects and contributes to unequal power relations" (p.111) "[helping to maintain] the secondary status of women" (Eitzen & Zinn, 1989, as cited in Kane, 1996, p. 111) in the sporting culture.

As demonstrated, gender marking cannot only be found in the language used by media but also in the fact of women's athletic events still specifically being

referred to as ‘women’s athletics events’ (see above). It is suggested that the combination of the prior mentioned facts about language and institutional support lead to marking women “as the ‘other’, while men are assumed to be the definitive standard and the universal reference point” (Kane, 1996, p. 111). This contributes to maintaining ideological beliefs and practices as well as a certain male supremacy not only in society but in sports in general which subsequently can enhance the exclusion of females from certain sporting spaces (Kane, 1996).

#### *2.4.3 Prize Money and Sponsorship*

Institutional barriers including the absence of access to sporting facilities for women as well as the media representation of female athletes post Title IX are only some factors contributing to a male dominance over women in sports. Significant differences between male and female athletes concerning prize money and sponsorships further influence the creation and upholding of gender inequalities in sports (Reed, 2010; Travers, 2008). With regards to sponsorships and prize money, this gender inequality is for example reflected in the earnings of Tiger Woods and Maria Sharapova in 2006 - both being the top paid athletes in their respective gender category. Meanwhile Woods earned \$87 million ( $\approx$  ZAR 1.2 billion), Sharapova only made an estimate of \$23 ( $\approx$  ZAR 327 million) in total (Travers, 2008). More than ten years later, in 2019, still not that much changed. The highest paid male athlete, tennis player Roger Federer, made a total of \$106.3 million ( $\approx$  ZAR 1.5 billion) including prize money, salaries, endorsement and other royalties. Meanwhile, his female counterpart Naomi Osaka, the best paid female athlete in history, ‘only’ made \$37.4 million ( $\approx$  ZAR 527 million). Compared to Federer, Osaka did not even make as much as half of his earnings (Bengel, 2020).

With regards to sponsorships of female athletes and at the same time following up on the example of Sharapova, it additionally has to be pointed out that not only are there enormous differences between the genders but also within. Because of her physical appearance Sharapova made more money through endorsements deals than for example the black Williams sisters<sup>8</sup> or the rather muscled Amelie Mauresmo who did not conform to the common beauty standards at that time (Crissey & Honea, 2006; Douglas, 2005; Stead, 2003).

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<sup>8</sup> It is referred to Serena and Venus Williams.

As this chapter has shown, hegemonic masculinity, and hence gender injustice, does not only exist in normal day-to-day live but in many aspects of society as for example in sports. Up until today access to and enjoyment of leisure such as sports often is limited for women by a patriarchal society. The following Chapter will draw attention to the development and status quo of surfing in specific as one sporting code which is still dominated by masculinity and where women still struggle to be treated equally as men (Franklin, 2012; Knijnik et al., 2010; Olive et al., 2015).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3 THE GENDER ORDER IN SURFING**

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the field of sports historically is dominated by men giving them opportunities to prove their masculinity. One sporting code in which women are still fighting for equality is surfing which for a long time was considered as inappropriate or unsuitable for women (Franklin, 2012). The association of female surfers as being masculine or unfeminine has not been unusual in the past (Choi, 2005; Franklin, 2012; Thorpe, 2010). Even though there has been a massive movement towards progressing female surfing since the 1970s, women still struggle to gain acceptance and respect for their performance not only with regards to professional surfing (Roy & Caudwell, 2014). Some authors even specifically speak of a gender order of surfing (Ford & Brown, 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity, institutional barriers and media coverage are only some of the factors contributing to the establishment of a certain gender order in surfing (Roy & Caudwell, 2014). Before going into detail with regards to the gender order, to facilitate the comprehension of subsequent parts of this thesis, the historical background of surfing and its institutionalization will be outlined before. Subsequently, circumstances enhancing the creation of the present gender order as well as current trends in female surfing moving towards gender equality will be discussed.

#### **3.1 Surfing – Background and Development**

Today surfing is known for being a lifestyle and a famous oceanic leisure activity all around the world. According to the International Surfing Association (ISA) surfing is defined as

Shortboard, Longboard & Bodyboarding, StandUp Paddle (SUP) Racing and Surfing, Para-Surfing, Bodysurfing, Wakesurfing, and all other wave riding activities on any type of waves, and on flat water using wave riding equipment. (International Surfing Association, 2021)

##### *3.1.1 Historical Background*

The history of surfing goes a long way back into ancient Hawaii (Booth, 2001; Fendt & Wilson, 2012). More than one thousand years ago at around 2000 BC surfing originated in some Pacific cultures predominantly including Polynesia (B. R.

Finney & Houston, 1966) and Peru (Kampion, 2003; Nelsen, Cummins, & Tagholm, 2013; Warshaw, 2011) where the first ‘surfers’ were fishermen who used the power of waves to move their canoes across the water (Moutinho et al., 2007; Warshaw, 2011; N. Young, McGregor, & Holmes, 2008).<sup>9</sup> Surfing then did not only become what has been referred to as an ‘oceanic spiritual activity’ where people were singing to create waves (Fendt & Wilson, 2012; Southerden, 2005) but it also evolved into a leisure activity attracting many Polynesian people, men and women from all social levels alike (Gabbard, 2000; Kampion, 2003; N. Young et al., 2008).

There are different points of views of where to believe surfing originated. Meanwhile in Peru the desert, surfing used to be the sport of fishermen, in Hawaii the tropics, it historically used to be the sport of the kings, exclusively practiced by royalty (Mendez-Villanueva & Bishop, 2005; Warshaw, 2011; N. Young et al., 2008). It is reported that in the late 1800s Hawaiian princes used to already ride waves on wooden planks (Nelsen et al., 2013; N. Young, McGregor, & Holmes, 1994). Whereas surfing in Peru was a by-product of work in Hawaii it was a recreational activity right from its beginning (Warshaw, 2011). With the arrival of protestant missionaries in the 19th century who set up strict rules for the sport surfing nearly wiped out. However, thanks to some white people and tourists who loved surfing, the sport was able to survive into the 20th century (Booth, 2012; Lazarow, Miller, & Blackwell, 2007; Warshaw, 2011; N. Young et al., 2008).

Before becoming popular in the United States, surfing was first brought to Australia in the end of 1914 introduced by the Hawaiian surfer and Olympic swimmer Duke Kahanamoku (Mendez-Villanueva & Bishop, 2005; Nelsen et al., 2013; N. Young et al., 1994). Six years earlier Kahanamoku had cofounded the Hui Nalu surfing and canoe club (Hui Nalu, 2020). From then on surfing gradually became more famous. Surf communities developed in Southern California and Santa Cruz and at the same time people started to surf in England across the Atlantic Ocean (Nelsen et al., 2013, N. Young et al., 2008). Only in the 1950s surfing developed into a fully-fledged sport (Booth, 2001) and gained popularity around the world (N. Young et al., 2008).

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<sup>9</sup> In fact this means surfing is one of the oldest sports in history. Team sports as well as tennis, golfing or skiing all just became popular a long time later. Only surfing in its form today is still a recent sport (Warshaw, 2011).

Important factors contributing to the rise in popularity of the sport were not only the invention of wetsuits which made surfing in winter as well as in cold water attractive (Coffman & Burnett, 2009) but also better material as well as surf destinations becoming more accessible through cheaper cars, building roads, et cetera (Lazarow et al., 2007). Additionally, surf movies such as *Gidget* or *Endless Summer* and music such as for example of the *Beach Boys* heavily supported this development in the 1960s (Lazarow et al., 2007; Warshaw, 2011). Only in 1964 the first world championships of surfing were held in Australia (International Surfing Association, 2021; Mendez-Villanueva & Bishop, 2005). Today surfing counts as one of the most popular ocean sports worldwide (Coffman & Burnett, 2009; Nelsen, Lazarow, Bernal, Murphy, & Pijoan, 2008) and is practiced at every coastline of the five continents (Mendez-Villanueva & Bishop, 2005).

Thanks to technological progress and efficient wetsuits, nowadays surfers have a significant amount of options of where and when they want to surf. Besides often being able to ‘check the waves’ online, seeing real life pictures of cameras installed at surf spots to decide whether there are good conditions to surf, surfers can ride waves in either warm water, in cold water with wetsuits or even in freezing water wearing gloves, hats and boots keeping them warm (Carrasco, 2008). Additionally, airlines offer cheap flights to surf destinations allowing athletes to travel to remote places at the same time making it accessible to ‘landlocked’ surfers, too. In addition to that, surfing on rivers as well as in artificial wave pools has become popular within the past few years.

Currently the global surfing population is estimated at more than 25 million (The Economist, 2012), growing 12% to 16% every year (Bicudo & Horta, 2009; Buckley, 2002; Bush, 2016; Coffman & Burnett, 2009). Only within 2001 and 2011 the number of surfers increased more than 30% globally (The Economist, 2012). These numbers support the findings of Bicudo and Horta (2009) who suggest that for the past decades the growth rate of people who surf on a regular basis (weekly) in Portugal lies at about 25% to 30%. However, due to the nature of surfing being a lifestyle-oriented sport and the constant rise in popularity it is difficult to get concrete numbers. Increased media attention at recreational as well as competitive level also played a major role in growing the sport’s popularity and participant numbers over the past decades (Booth, 2001). According to Wagner, Nelsen, and Walker (2011), the average surfer in the United States is male (90%), between 16 and 37 years old

and mostly has higher education. This background is in so far interesting to this study that existing structures in sports are constantly challenged and contested over time. As the study of Wagner et al. (2011) already dates back nine years, it is important for academic research to note how the dynamics of those participating is changing over time.

### *3.1.2 Surfing South Africa – History, Apartheid and its Impact on Surfing*

As the following study focuses on South African surfers, it is indispensable to have a glance at the historical and sociological context of surfing within the country.

It is thought that surfing was brought to Africa more than hundred years later than it had started in the United States, namely in 1938 by an African swimming coach returning from Australia (Kruger & Saayman, 2017; N. Young et al., 1994). From then on the popularity of surfing gradually increased in South Africa, originating in Durban. In the beginning the sport was mostly restricted to lifeguards, but after World War II surfing started to flourish amongst the broader public. In 1951 the first official surfing club in South Africa, the South Beach Surf Board Club was established in Durban and surfing slowly made its way to Cape Town in the Western Cape (Finney & Houston, 1996; Pike, 2008). In 1965 the South African Surfriders Association was formed and only one year later the first official South African Surfing Championships were held in Durban (Pike, 2008; Thompson, 2011a).

Even though historically surfing played a central role in Polynesian people's lives (Wheaton, 2013), men's and women's alike, surfing unfortunately "evolved among racial lines, one black and one white" (Pike, 2008, p. 22) which was the result of the colonisation by Europeans and Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Booth, 1999; Wheaton, 2013). In the 1920s segregation was legally imposed in the USA, mostly opening beaches to whites only (Wheaton, 2013). Analogue, surfing in South Africa historically has also been a sport dominated by whites and males (Thompson, 2011a). Especially the emergence of apartheid in 1948 (Preston-Whyte, 2001) systematically entrenched and furthered inequalities between black and white people (Cleophas, 2018) including black surfers being chased from whites-only beaches (Pike, 2008). Under the apartheid regime South African citizens were divided into four racial groups: African, Coloured, Asian or Indian, and White (Booth, 1998). Black inferiority and white superiority was promoted through law



(Cleophas, 2018) and had profound effects on all aspects of daily lives including sports such as surfing. In 1960 beach apartheid was formalized limiting blacks' and coloureds' access to beaches creating an exclusive user space for whites. If at all, black designated beaches often were the most dangerous swimming beaches as well as the ones the furthest away (Thompson, 2014, 2015). It is clear that this development was crucial in contributing to racially segregating surfing. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s institutionalised surfing kept on holding up racial exclusivity in South Africa (Thompson, 2011a, 2014). Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that the segregationist policy which preceded apartheid also significantly contributed to the difficulties black persons had or continue to have taking up surfing (Thompson, 2011b).

Interestingly, while apartheid in the beginning predominantly affected black surfers, it eventually also affected white South African athletes as obtaining visas to travel became harder and international sanctions as well as unpleasant cross-examinations overseas were no longer rarity (Pike, 2008; Thompson, 2011a). In the late 1960s more and more countries started to boycott South African sporting teams in competitions as their teams "were not representative of the South African population" (Thompson, 2011a, p. 36), resulting in an international sports boycott.

As this made surfing professionally almost impossible, some of South Africa's successful white surfers emigrated to countries such as Australia or the USA which resulted not only in South Africa losing some of their professional surfers to other countries but also in only very few South Africans competing in the World Surf Tour in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Pike, 2008; Thompson, 2011a). In 2003 only one South African, Heather Clark, qualified for the tour (Pike, 2008).

Only in late 1989 formal beach apartheid in KwaZulu-Natal ended, with the following summer holiday period being the first time giving access to all beaches for black persons (Thompson, 2014). Subsequently the popularity of surfing among blacks increased (Wheaton, 2013). However, due to a lack of resources and public transportation possibilities from the townships to the beaches it proved difficult to find many black surfers. A lack of ability to swim as well as access to municipal swimming pools and coaches further contributed to this slow progress (Durrheim & Dixon, 2001; Thompson, 2014). The presence of blacks on the beaches remained rare

upholding the whiteness in the water and on the beaches (Bruniquel, 1996; Thompson, 2014).

As surfing South Africa had been exposed to the Californication of the surfing culture, the idea of surfing as white sport was taken along into the post-apartheid era (Thompson, 2014). As a result black surfers often had to face racism when surfing. As Glen Thompson (2011) found out, the white owned South African surfing magazine *Zigzag* also contributed to promoting surfing as a white pastime largely ignoring black surfing. However, this was not only the case for *Zigzag* but many surf publications up until the 1990s (Thompson, 2001, 2011a, 2011b). According to Thompson (2011a) “black surfers were effectively written out of the ‘surfing archive’” (p.35) but it must not be forgotten that “surfing has a much longer and fascinating history as pre-colonial black body culture” (Wheaton, 2013, p. 121). In fact, Thompson’s research also demonstrates that even though mostly neglected, some black and coloured surfers existed throughout apartheid regulations (Thompson, 2001).

In 1992 the unification of both, the white South African Surfing Association (SASA) and the non-racial South African Surfing Union (SASU) into a new structure, the United Surfing Council of South Africa (USCS), was supposed to develop and progress black surfing. Finally, black surfers were recognized, at least officially (Pike, 2008). Today Surfing South Africa is the recognized governing body for the sport working in cooperation with the World Surf League (WSL) (Surfing South Africa, 2021). However, still in post-apartheid South Africa the beaches remain a “a place of potential race trouble [...] [reflecting] an aspect of the everyday in South Africa” (Thompson, 2011b).

With regards to black surfers, whether male or female, scholarly work has largely ignored the black surfer’s body up until the past decade (Wheaton, 2013). Glen Thompson (2011a, 2011b, 2014) and Wheaton (2013) are among the few authors who conducted significant research specifically making black surfers subject of discussion. In his article “Otelu burning and Zulu surfing histories” Thompson (2014) investigated the history of black male surfers in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, which gives insight into how black surfing identities were socially constructed. Also investigating KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, Thompson (2014) further looked at “how black surfing identities were socially constructed” (p. 326).

In addition to that, in 2017 Kruger & Saayman conducted research in Muizenberg, the Western Cape, and segmented surfers into different types of surfers ('the beginners', 'the weekenders', 'the amateurs' and 'the professionals'). Thereby the authors also looked at the surfers' socio-demographic characteristics, their surfing behaviour and motives.

However, the focus of this research lies on female surfers in specific which is why the following Chapter will give a detailed overview on the emergence of female surfers in the history of surfing.

### *3.1.3 The Emergence of Female Surfers*

Before the middle of the twentieth century men and women were peers with respective acceptance surfing side by side. Even though initially women competed against men often carrying high honours, with the arrival of missionaries and their ideals, surfing could no longer hold the status of a gender integrated sport as women were seen as of a lower class than men (Reed, 2010). However, in fact, when surfing was brought to Australia in 1915, the first Australian to ever surf was a woman, named Isobel Letham (Booth, 2001; Gabbard, 2000; Wu, 2009).

Even though the first Australian surfer was a woman, the history of surfing entails a near complete exclusion of female surfers from the 1920s up until the 1990s. The exclusion of females from surfing has not been a unique phenomenon in surfing but many other sports such as swimming or dancing started to show gender imbalances (Reed, 2010). In the case of surfing several different reasons led to the almost extinction of surfing amongst females during that time. Not only did female surfers struggle to gain social acceptance but also the shapes and weights of surfboards did not cater to women. Further, swim gear and wetsuits were made for men only. Additionally, a lack of opportunities for young females to learn as well as professional surfing neglecting women as equal athletes worthy of big prize money has led to this observed gap of female presence in the development of surfing (Reed, 2010). Hence, with regards to the emergence of female surfers, it has to be looked at the history of surfing dividing it into two periods, one focusing on the females' involvement prior to the 1990s and one on their involvement after the 1990s up until today (Booth, 2001).

### *Women's involvement prior to the 1990s*

According to several authors (e.g., Heywood, 2008; Marcus, 2009; Oberg, 1988; Reed, 2010; Thompson, 2015), with the surfer-girl movie *Gidget* released in 1958 telling the story of a teenage girl's introduction to the Californian surf culture, not only did surfing in general become more popular and attracted international attention but also its popularity amongst women increased. In fact, Comer (2004) even speaks of *Gidget* as having feminized surfing or rather as being the start of the feminization of surfing. The invention of foam boards (Malibu boards) which were easier to navigate further contributed to this development (Oberg, 1988).

Due to this rather new movement of more women starting to surf, initially both sexes were competing against each other in various events. From the 1960s to the 1980s surfers like Margo Oberg, Jodie Cooper or Wendy Botha (originally South African) were only some of the females regularly surfing and winning against men (Booth, 2001; Nourbakhsh, 2008; Thompson, 2015). As the popularity of the sport amongst females kept on growing not only on recreational but competitive level the first female only heats and competitions as well as surf clubs were introduced (Booth, 2001, 2012; Oberg, 1988). From then on women's professional surfing gradually developed. The institutionalization of surfing led to a more competitive culture leaving behind the former free spirit surf vibe (Booth, 2004). The introduction of Title IX in 1972, the new legislation preventing "sex discrimination in education including funding for girl's sports" (see Chapter 2.3.1) further contributed to the rise in popularity of female surfing (Bush, 2016, p. 292). However, due to differences in commercial and administrative support women's professional surfing did not develop evenly around the world (Booth, 2001). As mentioned above, in the year of foundation, in 1976, the IPS only crowned a male World Champion. Women had to fight for the establishment of their own event series and for increasing support and media coverage for female surfers (Franklin, 2012; Gabbard, 2000; Reed, 2010).

Ironically, even though the popularity of the sport amongst women increased, surfing became more male dominated in the 1960s and 1970s as men started to establish an extreme masculine and anti-materialistic surf culture (Booth, 2001; Comley, 2016; Franklin, 2012). Scholars argue that the film *Gidget* did not only popularize surfing amongst females but ironically at the same time "drove the culture

to be hypermasculine” (Bush, 2016, p. 292). Men started to prefer women or their girlfriends sitting on the beach and watching them rather than sharing the waves with them (Booth, 2001; Comer, 2004; Ford & Brown, 2005). Female surfers were harassed regularly meanwhile in fact “women helped men define their masculinity” (Booth, 2001, p. 7). All the developments mentioned under this section contributed to establishing patterns of gender inequality consequently leading to a certain gender order in surfing (Ford & Brown, 2005).

### *Women’s involvement from the 1990s onwards*

Even though the surfer-girl movie has brought some attention onto women’s surfing, the main focus of surfing continued to lie on men up until the 1990s including fashion and technological advancements (Fendt & Wilson, 2012; Southerden, 2005; N. Young et al., 2008). However, in the mid 1990s the first surf magazines (e.g., Surfing, Surfing Girl, Shred Betty) exclusively dedicated to women were published (Booth, 2001) and surfing slowly became more popular amongst females. By the end of the 1990s women’s surfing was high in trend and the number of female board riders - not only surfers but snowboarders and skateboarders alike - escalated (Fendt & Wilson, 2012; Southerden, 2005; Thorpe, 2006; N. Young et al., 2008). It is argued that only between 1999 and 2003 the number of women who regularly surf has more than doubled, meaning that fifteen years ago females already made up about one third (33%) of the surfing population (Darrow, 2006 in Thorpe, 2006). Three major factors have been argued to be responsible for this development:

Firstly, one major factor contributing to this sudden increase of female surfers was the “inclusion of females in globally televised events, including the X-Games and Olympics, and blockbuster movies focusing on female surfers such as Blue Crush (2002)” (Thorpe, 2006, p. 219). As a result visibility and legitimization of female board riders improved. Within only four years (1999 – 2003) the participation rate of female surfers has grown by 280% (Booth, 2001; Comer, 2010; Stranger, 2017; Thorpe, 2006).<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, as the popularity of the sport increased amongst women in the 1990s and 2000s the surfing industry started to increasingly target female athletes. The realization of the significant market potential of female athletes in the 1990s led

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<sup>10</sup> In the late 1990s and the early 2000s also the number of female snowboarders doubled and women already made up more than a third of the total number of snowboarders (Thorpe, 2006).

to an explosion of surfing products such as special clothing lines and women-only surf camps providing a safe space for them to learn to surf (Booth, 2001; Bush, 2016; Comer, 2010; Stranger, 2017). Today surf shops, surf camps, surf magazines and surf adventures for women-only have become normal (Chase, 2008; Fendt & Wilson, 2012; Wu, 2009) which shows the importance of women to the surfing economy.

Lastly, in order to win contests and gain respect and acceptance in the water it was not rare that female athletes were “encouraged to surf ‘like men’ (aggressively), which forces them to deny their own unique feminine style” (Usher & Gómez, 2018, p. 153). More radical manoeuvres and a more aggressive approach led to a new style and hence to an advancement of female surfing (Booth, 2001; Bush, 2016). Lisa Andersen and her wins of four consecutive world titles in the mid 1990s marked the start of a new generation of female surfers (Booth, 2012).

Even though at this time women’s surfing grew faster than men’s surfing there were big gaps in prize money and sponsorship support (Gabbard, 2000; Kampion & Brown, 2003) especially due to a “lack of media support and backing by the men’s surfing association” (Franklin, 2012, p. 78). In 2000 the organization International Women’s Surfing (IWS) was established by five of the world’s best female surfers at that time in order to create stand-alone events for female surfers and to enhance sponsorship. Pressure by the IWS on the ASP led to an increase of stand-alone events for women as well as a doubling of prize money from US\$30.000 to US\$60.000 ( $\approx$  ZAR 427.000 to ZAR 854.000) (Booth, 2001; Franklin, 2012).

According to Barkham, in 2006 women comprised more than half of the surfers taking surf lessons in Britain and the overall percentage of female surfers was estimated at around 20% (Barkham, 2006). Ten years ago the participation rate of female surfers in the surfing nation Australia as well as in the United States was already estimated at around 33% (Booth, 2001; Bush, 2016; Higgins, 2007; Usher & Gómez, 2018).

However, even though numbers are estimated to keep on increasing by 25% per year (Booth, 2005) women still remain a minority in a competitive and mainly male-dominated hierarchical system (Usher & Gómez, 2018; Waitt, 2008). Nevertheless the formerly mentioned studies date back some years which is why this statement has to be looked at with caution. Due to the nature of surfing being a

lifestyle-oriented sport and the constant rise in popularity it has proved difficult to get concrete and up to date numbers.

#### *3.1.4 The Dawn of Professionalism and Hegemonic Masculinity in Surfing*

From the time surfing became organised professionally, tendencies of a male domination of the sport became clear. Towards the end of the 1980s male surfers developed a certain hostility and aggressiveness towards female surfers and an image of masculinity in opposite to women was created (Comer, 2004; Stedman, 1997). This subsequently lead to the surfing culture being characterized by patriarchy and gender hierarchy (Corner, 2008; Ford & Brown, 2005; Wheaton, 2004), devaluing female athletes in order to allow men to define their masculinities (Thorpe, 2010).

The fact of surfing traditionally being male-dominated is mirrored by most research into surfing being interested in men (Sotomayor & Barbieri, 2016; Waitt & Warren, 2008). Up until today only few articles include or focus on female surfers (Comer, 2004; Corner, 2008; Knijnik et al., 2010; Nourbakhsh, 2008; Olive et al., 2015; Reed, 2010; Rinehart, 2005; Thompson, 2015; Waitt, 2008).<sup>11</sup> However, there are some studies on female skate- and snowboarders which show certain similarities to surfing. Both sports show a clear presence of masculine hegemony and domination by male athletes (Anderson, 1999; Bäckström, 2013; Sisjord, 2009; Thorpe, 2006, 2007, 2010). Drawing on Connell's (1995) concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (see Chapter 2.2.2), this means that there is a certain social relationship of domination which is for example visible in females having a more passive attitude or being outnumbered and dominated by males (Bush, 2016; M. Henderson, 2001; Sisjord, 2009; Stedman, 1997; Waitt & Warren, 2008). This domination is justified through "access to social, performance and cultural capital" (Corner, 2008, p. 58). However, before the 1980s women certainly had their place within the surfing subculture (Stedman, 1997).

### **3.2 Barriers to Gender Equality in Surfing**

The reasons which contributed to the establishment of gender inequalities within the surfing culture are numerous. The following section covers significant barriers to gender equality in surfing. The most prominent barriers thereby include a

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<sup>11</sup> A table of literature specifically focusing on females in board sports such surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding can be found in Appendix 1.

lack of institutional support of female surfers, the historical absence of equal prize money, the frequent sexualization of female athletes as well as the lack of sponsorship opportunities.

### *3.2.1 Institutionalization of Surfing*

Compared to more traditional sports such as tennis, surfing is characterized by only having been institutionalized properly through contests within the past decades (Booth, 2004; Gillmeister, 1998; Lake, 2014; Wheaton, 2004). For example, in contrast to tennis which was already institutionalised in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Lake, 2014; Noel & Clark, 1924), surfing only started to get more organised towards the end of the 1960s due to the uneven development of the sport around the world (Booth, 2001, 2004).

In 1964 surfing first became organized under the International Surfing Federation (ISF), the same year in which the first World Championships of surfing took place in Australia. Eight years later, in 1972, the ISF collapsed and evolved into the International Surfing Association (ISA), an umbrella organization dedicated at running the World Surfing Championships. However, as a consequence of the collapse, there were no World Championships held the following years (Warshaw, 2005, 2011). Today the ISA is recognized by the International Olympic Committee as the World Governing Authority for Surfing (International Surfing Association, 2021).

Especially the time before the advent of Title IX in the United States in 1972 is characterized by a lack of institutional support for female surfers which was a crucial factor contributing to a male domination over women in the surfing culture (Bush, 2016; Comer, 2010; Reed, 2010). Connell (1995) even argues that “the institutional organisation of sport embeds definite social relations: competition and hierarchy among men, exclusion or domination of women” (p. 54). In 1975, as a response to little options of competition and to address gender inequities, a friends group around Jericho Poppler founded the Women’s International Surfing Association (WISA) aiming at building a professional circuit and increasing public’s awareness of women surfing. Subsequently, the first contest to offer prize money for women was organized – the Hang Ten All Women’s Pro at Malibu (Booth, 2001; Franklin, 2012; History of Women's Surfing, 2021; Reed, 2010; Warshaw, 2005).



Shortly thereafter, in 1976, the Hawaiian surfers Randy Rarick and Fred Hemmings developed an international ranking system and introduced their organization International Professional Surfers (IPS, 1976 – 1982), the original governing body of professional surfing. By organizing several surfing events around the world for professional surfers Rarick and Hemmings laid the foundation for an institutionalisation of professional surfing eventually leading into the first World Championship Tour (WCT) (World Surf League, 2020a). For the first year the IPS completely excluded women. However, one year later, in 1977, the way was paved for five professional events for female surfers leading into the crowning of the first official female World Champion of Surfing sanctioned under the IPS (Franklin, 2012).<sup>12</sup>

In 1979 Jericho Poppler and some friends then formed Women's Professional Surfing (WPS) in Hawaii.<sup>13</sup> Major objective of the organization was to secure sponsorships, prize money and media coverage for female surfers (Booth, 2001; Franklin, 2012; Gabbard, 2000; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2007; Reed, 2010).

By 1983, both men's and women's professional surfing, the IPS and WPS, had evolved into the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP, 1983 - 2014) following the principle of "world's best surfers, world's best waves" (World Surf League, 2020a). Different from the IPS, the ASP provides joint ownership and control of surfing to organizers as well as to surfers on tour. Additionally, in 1992 the ASP introduced a two-tiered competition system which included the World Championship Tour (WCT) as well as the World Qualifying Series (WQS) with the Qualifying Series being the feeder system for the World Championship Tour (WCT) (Hough-Snee & Eastman, 2017; World Surf League, 2020a, 2020c).<sup>14</sup>

In 2014 the World Surf League (WSL) took over the ASP and now organizes and runs the annual tour of professional surf competitions (Mendez-Villanueva & Bishop, 2005). These competitions do not only include the World Championship Tour (short boarding) but also the Qualifying Series (WQS), the Longboard

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<sup>12</sup> Margo Oberg won the first official title as female World Champion of Surfing in 1977.

<sup>13</sup> Booth (2001) considers 1976 as year of foundation of WPS whereas Reed (2010) and Franklin (2012) refer to 1979. However, regardless of the year of foundation, the objectives of the Organisation stay the same.

<sup>14</sup> The World Championship Tour (WCT) comprises the top 36 male and the top 18 female surfers who compete throughout the season meanwhile the World Qualifying Series is the feeder system for the WCT (World Surf League, 2018). Simplified this means that the last ranked surfers fall out of the WCT and in the following year are replaced by the top surfers of the WQS (16 for the men and 6 for the women respectively) (Mendez-Villanueva & Bishop, 2005; World Surf League, 2020c).

Championships, Junior Championships as well as the Big Wave Tour and the XXL Big Wave Awards (World Surf League, 2020a). Today surfing governing bodies include not only the World Surf League (WSL) but also the International Surfing Association (ISA) as well as each country's own surfing federation/association and surfing industry companies.

The figure below shows the timeline of the institutionalization of surfing beginning with the establishment of the ISF in 1962. It ends with the WSL taking over the ASP in 2014, now being the leading organization of professional surfing.

Time Period	Name of Organization	Description
1964 – 1972	<b>International Surfing Federation (ISF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Predecessor of ISA</li> <li>➤ Overseeing administrative body for the World Surfing Championships</li> </ul>
1976 – present	 <b>International Surfing Association (ISA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ World Governing Authority of Surfing</li> <li>➤ Recognized by the Olympic Committee</li> <li>➤ Still exists today</li> </ul>
1975 – 1993	<b>Women International Surfing Association (WISA)</b>	Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Addressing gender inequities in surfing</li> <li>➤ Building a professional circuit</li> <li>➤ Increasing public awareness of women's surfing</li> </ul>
1976 – 1982	<b>International Professional Surfers (IPS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Original Governing Body of Professional Surfing</li> <li>➤ Organizing the first World Championship Tour (WCT)</li> <li>➤ Excluding women for the first year</li> <li>➤ Organizing the first women's professional tour one year later, in 1977</li> </ul>

Time Period	Name of Organization	Description
1979	<b>Women's Professional Surfing</b> (WPS)	Aims: ➤ Assisting women on the professional tour ➤ Increasing prize money and media coverage
1983 – 2014	<b>Association of Surfing Professionals</b> (ASP)	➤ IPS & WPS ➡ ASP ➤ Taking over both men's and women's events ➤ Introducing a two-tiered competition system (WCT+WQS)
2014 – present	<b>World Surf League</b> (WSL)	➤ Taking over the ASP ➤ Organizing the annual tour of professional surfing

*Figure 1:* Timeline of the Institutionalization of Surfing.

As the figure above illustrates, the institutionalization of surfing was a long process which is still ongoing, supporting the fact that sporting spaces are facing constant changes over time.

Surfing contests are based on elimination heats. The normal contest format consists of 20- to 40-minute heats, in which two, three or four surfers are given scores by a group of judges. Thereby, the judges have to analyze and score waves ridden by the surfers taking into account commitment and degree of difficulty, the variety and innovativeness of maneuvers as well as speed, power and flow. However those criteria are subject to change depending on the wave conditions. The surfers then may progress from Round 1 up to Round 4 followed by Quarter Finals, Semi Finals and the Final Round.<sup>15</sup> At the end of the whole World Championship Tour, meaning all the individual events, the surfer with the highest overall score is crowned World Champion (World Surf League, 2020c).

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<sup>15</sup> The two winners of a heat immediately progress from Round 1 to Round 3 while the 3rd place has to surf again in Round 2. Again the top two of Round 2 then eventually advance into Round 3 as well. In Round 3 only two surfers surf against each other with the winners progressing into Round 4 (World Surf League, 2020c).

The current World Champions of 2019 are Carissa Moore (Hawaii) and Italo Ferreira (Brazil). South Africa currently has two male surfers on the WCT meanwhile there is no female surfer representing South Africa in 2020. In general, numbers show that competitive surfing seems to be more developed in Australia, the United States, Hawaii and Brazil (World Surf League, 2020b) which might be attributed to the historical development of the sport as well as accessibility of waves.

In 2020 there were 750 men but only 261 women listed on the World Qualifying Series (WQS) (World Surf League, 2020b). This means the number of men competing was almost three times as high then the number of women. This fact further supports the argument of a lack of institutional support for professional female surfers and hence can be seen as a barrier to gender equality in professional surfing.

The lack of institutional support for female surfers especially before the advent of Title IX was a crucial factor contributing to a male domination over women in the surfing culture (Bush, 2016; Comer, 2010; Reed, 2010). However, the current generation of professional surfers grew up with the benefits of Title IX and hence are important role models to future generations actively resisting to stereotypical notions of gender, race and class (Franklin, 2012). Subsequently, it is now the time for academic research to focus on gendered experiences of female surfers belonging to Generation Y and Generation Z.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.2.2 *Prize Money*

As illustrated above, the historical exclusion of women, the lack of adequate institutional support for women and the long absence of possibilities to get instructed have resulted in a significant barrier to gender equality in surfing (Booth, 2001; Hargreaves, 2002; Reed, 2010). However, another important aspect enhancing a hierarchical gender order in surfing was the absence of equal (and big) prize money for female athletes (Reed, 2010) until recently (2018).

Up until two years ago, namely 2018, competitive female surfers earned significantly less prize money than their male counter parts (Kampion, 2003) which is in stark contrast to other sporting codes with this level of female participation.

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<sup>16</sup> Generation Y roughly is comprised by women born between the 1980s and 2000 and Generation Z refers to women born after 1995. The birth years of the generations vary slightly in existing research (cf. Dolot, 2018; Four Hooks, 2015).

Tennis for example has started to move towards equal prize money decades before, eventually introducing it in 2007 at Wimbledon, the last of the four major events (Edmond, 2017). However, in surfing these inequalities persisted even if women's events of the Championship Tour were held at the same surf break as the men's events. At the Beurepaire Open in 1984 for example men competed for an overall prize money of A\$95.000 ( $\approx$  ZAR 1 million) while women competed for a total of A\$5.000 ( $\approx$  ZAR 54.000). And this is only one of many examples (Booth, 2001):

In 2009, more than 20 years later, still none of the 18 female surfers on the World Tour made more than minimum wage<sup>17</sup> meanwhile all the men did. Stephanie Gilmore, world's number one female surfer at that time made US\$12.000 ( $\approx$  ZAR 171.000), less than five percent of Mick Fanning, the men's top ranked surfer made who made a total of US\$241,000 ( $\approx$  ZAR 3.4 million) (Reed, 2010). In April 2016, almost 20 years later, Tyler Wright won the Margaret River Pro and received AUS\$60.000 ( $\approx$  ZAR 644.000). At the same contest, the male winner got AUS\$100.000 ( $\approx$  ZAR 1 million) which means that Wright did not even get two thirds of the prize money of the men's winner (Atkins & Burns, 2016).

However, over the past decade the status of female surfers started to change. Not only did female surfers gain the respect of male peers but also the number of recreational female surfers kept on growing significantly. Pushed by women's activism, women in leadership within the WSL but also by male allies and changes of international sport policy (Wheaton & Thorpe, 2018b), the WSL started to work towards improving gender equality in surfing. Already in 2016 the women's overall purse was significantly increased improving the status quo for female competitive surfers a little (Carroll, 2016, cited in Wheaton & Thorpe, 2018a). Two years later, finally in 2018, after a picture showing both the male and female winners of a surf competition in South Africa with their respective prize money cheques (ZAR8.000 for the male vs. ZAR4.000 for the female surfer) went viral on social media negatively attracting global attention (Purtill, 2018), the WSL introduced equal prize money for both sexes starting from 2019 (World Surf League, 2018).

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<sup>17</sup> It has to be assumed that the author refers to minimum wage at that given time, 2009.

### 3.2.3 Commercialization and Sexual Objectification of Female Surfers

Barriers to gender equality were influenced by the fact of surfing traditionally being male dominated, the lack of institutional support as well as persisting differences in prize money. Nevertheless, Hough-Snee and Eastman (2017) also stress the central role of media in shaping the history and development of surfing and hence contributing to the establishment of the underlying gender order in surfing.

As mentioned in Chapter 3.1, towards the 1990s the sentiment of ‘girl power’ became popular and third wave feminism promoted active resistance to gender norms empowering females to create their own success (Bush, 2016; Thorpe, 2006; Travers, 2008). However, in the 1970s and 1980s the media representation of female surfers experienced a drastic shift (Booth, 2001). Brands started to sell a “commercially constructed ‘surfer girl’ image” (Bush, 2016, p. 293) to both surfers as well as non-surfers alike (Bush, 2016; Thorpe, 2006). Thereby, the sexualisation of women by media was no rarity, representing females as passive objects of male desire mostly not even surfing (M. Henderson, 2001; Reed, 2010; Wheaton & Thorpe, 2018a). Beachwear being linked to commercialization and sexualisation of female surfers further damaged the females’ position in surfing. With the increased objectification of female surfers women lost their place within the surfing subculture by “being denied access to the symbolic community of surfers as a basis for their own identities” (Stedman, 1997, p. 83).

Both Stedman (1997) and M. Henderson (2001) analysed surfing magazines, particularly focusing on *Tracks* (Australian surfer magazine). M. Henderson (2001) who looked at every single issue of *Tracks* from 1970 until 2000 distinguishes five phases with regards to female representation.

The following figure shows the five phases of female representation within *Tracks* Magazine based on Henderson (2001). Meanwhile the left side indicates the phase and time period of each phase, the right side describes the events characteristics respectively.

Phase	Events
<b>Country Soul</b> 1970 – 1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A period of counter culture.</li> <li>➤ Country Soul refers to <i>Soul Surfers</i>, people who chose an alternative lifestyle refraining from the city's competitiveness and living to surf.</li> <li>➤ Lots of articles on nature, drugs and music. More text than photography.</li> <li>➤ The soul surfer was represented as a long haired, bearded and heterosexual male.</li> </ul>
<b>Changing Currents</b> 1973 – 1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ "Tracks' first overt engagement with the Woman problem"</li> <li>➤ Less space was allocated to countercultural articles, first advertisements of Coca-Cola, travel companies or clothing appeared in the magazine.</li> <li>➤ Competitive surfing comes back on centre stage – core values of soul surfing are undermined.</li> <li>➤ Masculinity in surfing becomes a main focus.</li> <li>➤ Presence of women increases but so does sexism.</li> <li>➤ A hegemonic masculinity makes its way into a subculture that is becoming more commercial.</li> <li>➤ Women are visually represented but as passive and decorative objects of desire, rarely surfing and often fetishized.</li> <li>➤ A resonance with soft-core pornography becomes obvious. Only rarely articles on women find their way into the magazine.</li> </ul>
<b>Pro Surfing's King Tide</b> 1977 – 1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The number of competition reports increases and the language and tone used changes.</li> <li>➤ The decorative role of women remained even though the organization of women's surfing improved slightly.</li> <li>➤ Women were positioned as "spoils for the victor" and according to the author clearly told their place.</li> </ul>

Phase	Events
<b>Post Modern Surfing Takes Shape</b> 1981 – 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Surfing has become fully professional and developed into a completely masculine and fashion-lifestyle industry.</li> <li>➤ The amount of advertisements increased drastically going hand in hand with the commercialization of surfing. Thereby, most of the adverts were extremely sexist.</li> <li>➤ Surfing becoming a lifestyle in this phase led to a broader population of non-surfers buying into that lifestyle.</li> <li>➤ The role of the pro surfer moves towards being a fashion model and a serious and paid full-time athlete.</li> <li>➤ The number of articles supporting women increased and a differentiation between women who surf and women as object of desire is made. However words such as ‘chick’ or ‘birds’ were still used frequently.</li> <li>➤ A fear amongst men of women becoming extremely good at surfing became obvious.</li> </ul>
<b>Hardcore Men and Wild Boys</b> 1994 – 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ During this last phase the quality of women surfing has increased a lot and women surf better than ever before.</li> <li>➤ Even though female surfers regularly get a page in the magazine, the fascination with the female body is still the major focus. Phrases like “show us your tits and win a surfboard competition” are no rarity.</li> </ul>

*Figure 2:* Five Phases of Tracks Surfing Magazine  
(own representation based on Henderson (2001)).

The five phases outlined above show that women’s presence in surfing and in *Tracks* evolved from almost being invisible to an immensely improved presence until the early 2000s. However, this transition includes a shift towards an extreme sexual objectification of females (Henderson, 2001) which supports the establishment of a gender order in surfing and hence presents as a barrier for female surfers. The author even argues that *Tracks* specifically made use of the resonance of female surfers with soft core pornography in order to increase its readership. This is a strong argument indicating that the surf industry played a major role in damaging the image of female surfers (Wheaton & Thorpe, 2018a). Even in the following two decades after Henderson’s examination of *Tracks* up until today the hypermasculine hegemony is still present in surfing (Bush, 2016; Hough-Snee & Eastman, 2017).



Nevertheless, as a consequence of the boom of surfing amongst females in the late 1990s, the female surfer became a key niche market. Only 32 years after the introduction of the first men's board short the first board short for women was introduced by Roxy in 1991. Boarding companies that originally entered the industry to cater to male boarders broadened their product lines to tap into the female market and started to produce female-specific equipment such as surf-, skate- or snowboards, wetsuits and general clothing and accessories (Reed, 2010). Explaining the record revenue of female surf products, back in 2007 Randy Hild, former senior vice president of Roxy, a leading women's surf apparel brand, claimed men were focusing more on performance while women simply bought into a surfing lifestyle (Higgins, 2007). Still in 2013 Roxy promoted a women's surfing competition with a video which was received as soft pornography and hence lead to massive criticism (Dicker, 2013).

That sexual objectification in fact does not target females who surf on a more regular basis is one aspect that surf brands seem to have neglected for a long time. In 2008 some female surfers even specifically stated that they tend to not purchase surf magazines due to a lack of identification referring to the extensive sexual objectification and non stimulating representation of females (Nourbakhsh, 2008). Females not feeling stimulated or encouraged by media can be seen as another barrier preventing women from surfing. Now, more than 10 years later and due to the advancements of female surfing, it has to be assumed that not only Roxy's but also other surf brands' approach to target female surfers in fact contributed to the establishment of a gender order in surfing.

Additionally supporting the continuous presence of sexual objectification is the study of Wheaton and Thorpe (2018a) assessing the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) claims to advance female sports at the Olympic Games 2020 in Tokyo<sup>18</sup> drawing on interviews with leaders in surfing. Thereby, one male interviewee states that 'the woman's line is a by-product of men, and you look at the way they're marketed. [...] Rip Curl is a wetsuit company and they hire some chick with a g-string to be their female model' (Wheaton & Thorpe, 2018a, p. 327).

The examples mentioned above are only some of many demonstrating that female surfers are still often objectified in media and advertisements. There is still

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<sup>18</sup> Due to COVID-19 the Olympic Games have been postponed by one year (International Olympic Committee, 2020).

work to be done until equity in the sport of surfing could be argued as being evident (Booth, 2001; Bush, 2016; Comer, 2010). However, many competitive female surfers have started to self-sexualize and adapted to the inequality and gender biases of professional surfing in order to get enough money from sponsorships (Schumacher, 2017). During the 1990s some famous professional surfers such as Wendy Botha even stated that “athleticism is insufficient on its own to sell female surfing and that women must manage their bodies to entice sponsors” (Booth, 2012, p. 140) using sexuality to sell their sport as it increases visibility and subsequently sponsorship (Booth, 2012). Today Laura Enever or Sally Fitzgibbons, to give some examples, are just some of the professionals who took off their clothes completely at a very young age to secure some money (Isemonger, 2017).

#### *3.2.4 Sponsorship*

Commercialization, Sexualisation and Sponsorship of female surfers are deeply connected. That beauty and marketability of a surfer are directly linked in the female surfing industry is obvious (Smith, 2016). Franklin (2012) who investigates the impact of lifestyle marketing on sponsored female surfers, points out the decisive role media plays in shaping this underlying gender order in surfing. According to the author, the gendered position of female surfers is heavily influenced by spectators, the media and brands.

Ford & Brown (2005) further argue that the gender inequality in surfing is especially visible in the ‘three-way coalition between (professional) sponsorship, advertising and media’ (Ford and Brown, 2005, as cited in Bush, 2016, p. 294). This coalition is clearly evident in the case of Rebecca Woods, a former professional surfer, who was dropped by Billabong in 2010. After funding herself for three years, she retired at age 29. She also officially claimed that “sponsors were ignoring surf talent in favour of model looks” as well as having “felt pressured to wear a bikini on the pro tour to retain sponsorship and continue surfing professionally” (Woods, n.d., as cited in Atkins & Burns, 2016). She also stated that in fact surfing in a bikini is really challenging as you tend to lose them and as a result show nudity which makes her feel uncomfortable. However, according to her, female surfers who surf in ‘g-strings’ often get good sponsorship deals even if they lose a contest in a very early stage (Atkins & Burns, 2016).

The strong interconnection of sponsorship and sexualization is further reflected in the more recent example of Silvana Lima, a Brazilian surfer ranked number 12 on the World Championship Tour 2019 (World Surf League, 2019). Her story shows that female athletes often still struggle to find commercial and administrative support (Booth, 2001; Comley, 2016; Franklin, 2012; Higgins, 2007; Hough-Snee & Eastman, 2017). After being dropped by her former sponsor Billabong in 2012, she saw herself forced to start a crowd funding initiative in order to be able to start at the qualifying series (QS) (Hough-Snee & Eastman, 2017). At the same time surfers like Alana Blanchard, ranking number 26 in 2019 (World Surf League, 2019) and looking like a fashion model (Smith, 2016), had a huge amount of sponsors (Isemonger, 2017). Lima herself claims that she got dropped because of not having a model like appearance desired by the industry, a thing that in her opinion would not happen to men (Lima in Smith, 2016). Franklin (2012) comments that female surfers have the choice of being submissive and accepting the surf company's and media's preference for a feminine appearance or challenge hegemonic standards by demonstrating their strength and surfing ability. The attributes of strength and ability could be viewed as masculine and unappealing to prospective sponsors (p. 91).

The examples of both, Rebecca Woods and Silvana Lima, support Franklin's (2012) statement and show that not only there is a sexual objectification of female surfers but that in fact sponsors and media often indirectly demand female athletes to correspond to the ideal image of women in order to successfully get sponsored (Isemonger, 2017).

### **3.3 Recent Trends and Developments in the Pursuit of Equality in Surfing**

Despite the masculine domination in surfing being highly visible, female surfing has made some serious advancement within the recent past. As mentioned above, nowadays surf shops, surf schools and camps as well as surfing media offer a wide range of possibilities for women to get involved in surfing. Although long lasting gender inequalities remain and will still take a while to be overcome, female surfers nowadays actively "challenge the institutional, social, physical, emotional and monetary barriers that try to restrict their roles as female athletes" (Reed, 2010,

p. 1). As the move towards change is constantly on-going, research into this area is overtly important. Professional surfers such as current World Champion Carissa Moore or former World Champion Stephanie Gilmore are only some of the women massively influencing this movement within the last decade (Southerden, 2005).

Another positive development of the recent past is that surf brands such as Roxy, Billabong, Ripcurl or Volcom Girls are progressively starting to take female surfers more seriously and try to target them by often explicitly using language that connotes 'girl power' sentiments of independence and autonomy (Thorpe, 2006). Especially in lifestyle sports such as surfing female consumers have become one of the most valuable marketing targets (Franklin, 2012; Thorpe, 2007).

Already back in 2007 Hild, Roxy's senior vice president, assumed that women's retail sales will at some point surpass men's, a belief which has been supported by Chris Mauro, former editor of Surfer Magazine saying that "[women have] been a savior to the industry" and "if not for the women's boom, the industry would only be half the size" (Higgins, 2007, p. 1). In fact, more than ten years ago, in 2006, the sales of Roxy already were at \$650 million ( $\approx$  ZAR 9.3 billion), only \$100 million ( $\approx$  ZAR 1247 million) less than its equivalent Quiksilver, the men's surf apparel maker (Higgins, 2007) which gives reason to assume that by today women's sales might already surpass men's categories by far. Unfortunately, industry numbers were not publicly accessible at the point of writing this thesis. However, even though it is assumed that the female contribution to the surfing economy heavily supports the men's competitions in the past, events for female surfers have been cancelled because of not finding sponsorship (Franklin, 2012).<sup>19</sup> One of the most prominent examples therefore was the cancellation of the Gidget Pro in Maui which was scheduled for November 2010. This event was supposed to be the final event of the Women's World Tour 2010 and at the same time part of the Triple Crown, a separate surf series held in Hawaii to crown the world's best big-wave surfers. Not only did the cancellation of the event lead to a reduction from a triple to a 'double crown' for female athletes but also to a reduction of prize money and exposure (Franklin, 2012).

However, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, at the moment many female competitive surfers put effort into advancing female surfing and moving towards gender equality. One of the most significant recent developments helping to

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<sup>19</sup> In Australia a variety of events got cancelled due to the promoters refusing to pay a fee of AUD\$5000 to the ASP in order to host the event (Franklin, 2012).

push female surfing is the introduction of equal prize money in 2018 (World Surf League, 2018). With regards to the movement of gender integration, Reed (2010) even speaks of “a return to the balance of the past” (p. 2) as men and women historically used to surf along each other.

Additionally, recently also the attention on coloured and black surfers has increased. More and more surf clubs and media pages are actively promoting surfing amongst black and coloured women (e.g., <http://blackgirlssurf.com/>, <https://www.texturedwaves.com/>).

Last but not least, many professional surfers nowadays also use their status to get involved in projects aiming at environmental and global health. Besides encouraging their fans to keep the oceans and beaches clean, they often fight for women’s well being as well as against poverty (Comer, 2010).

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4 THE SURFING ECONOMY**

As this thesis' title speaks about the term "surfing economy" it seems important to shortly give an overview as to what "surfing economy" itself means in this case.

The surfing economy encompasses all activity related to surfing, including "manufacturing and retail of both soft and hard goods (clothing and equipment), media publications, rentals and instruction, camps, contests, and surf-parks" (Murphy & Bernal, 2008, p. 22). Hence the surfing economy describes every person actively participating and economically contributing to the industry – whether it is as athlete, corporation (e.g. Ripcurl) or the government itself. The surfing economy is not only governed by its own culture and lifestyle as well as by its own history but also can be political (Booth, 2005) as the previous Chapter has shown. Furthermore, in this study the term "surfing economy" is also used to frame socio-psychological factors influencing female surfers' participation in the sport. It is assumed that so far the surfing economy was predominantly driven by and for males but today women are important consumers producing economic value through consumption. Especially in lifestyle sports such as surfing female consumers have become one of the most valuable marketing targets. Brands make significant profits by selling clothes and surf related accessories not only to surfers but also to fans – a lot of them female (Booth, 2001; Buckley, 2002; Moutinho et al., 2007). Hence "the increased feminization of the surfing economy" as set out in the study's title refers to the steady increase of female participation in surfing over the past years.

#### **4.1 The Economic Impact and Economic Value of Surfing**

It is no surprise that over the past decades academic interest in surfing and its economic as well as social value has increased (Coffman & Burnett, 2009; Lazarow et al., 2007; Silva & Ferreira, 2014). Within 2001 and 2011 globally the number of surfers increased more than 30% (The Economist, 2012). With a global surfing population of more than 20 million and this ongoing rise of popularity (Bicudo & Horta, 2009) the massive value of surfing to the global economy should not be underestimated. Whereas surfing is a multi-billion dollar industry (Carroll, 2004;

Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003) it is estimated that only recreational surfing boosts local economies ranging from \$1 to \$35 million ( $\approx$  ZAR 500 million) a year (Gilje, 2018). In Costa Rica for example, it is estimated that in 2006 surfing-related activities made up about 25% of the economy (Hritz & Franzidis, 2018; Lazarow, Miller, & Blackwell, 2008).

However, even though the terms economic impact as well as economic value are interlinked it is important to distinguish between them. Whereas economic impact “describes the flow of money through an economy and the associated jobs, wages, salaries and taxes associated with these flows [...] economic value, in contrast, “is the net value added to society that the resource provides. From the perspective of the coastal user, economic value often is referred to as a “non-market” value or the consumer surplus associated with a resource” (Nelsen, Pendleton, & Vaughn, 2007, p. 35) .

So far several studies have looked at the economics of surfing in general (Coffman & Burnett, 2009; Murphy & Bernal, 2008; Silva & Ferreira, 2014). Just recently it was proven that economic growth is faster next to a good surf spot (McGregor & Wills, 2016).

Murphy and Bernal (2008) for example investigate the economic impact of the Spanish surf break Mundaka on the local community by looking at tourism revenue. Results show that the existence of the surf break can impact the economy of the small Spanish village up to four million dollars. However, according to Murphy and Bernal (2008) measuring the actual value of surfing is only possible if the participant’s value of the activity is combined with the economic impact of surfing.

Furthermore, Nelsen et al. (2007) focus on the economic impact of the surf break in Trestles, California. In their study the surfers differ from average beach goers by using the beach already very early in the morning as well as late in the evenings and hence extending the local business hours adding to expenditures to the local economy. Since the quality of a surfing location heavily depends on environmental conditions, a change in quality of the surf break may lead to an immense loss of daily expenditures (negative economic impact).

Whilst the studies discussed above focus on the economic impact of the industry on local economies, in recent years the number of studies looking at the economic value has increased.

Taking this differentiation into account, Lazarow et al. (2007) look at the total economic value of surfing to society. Thereby, the authors do not only include market values but also non-market values such as option, bequest, existence and vicarious values. These values do not directly impact the market but include individuals who for example do not surf themselves but may see a benefit to others as well as to future generations.

Also including the welfare surfing provides to the athletes and its observers, Coffman and Burnett (2009) investigate the economic value of a wave by analyzing the Mavericks region in California. The approximate economic value brought to the region is assessed by using an Individual Travel Cost Method (ITCM) taking tourism as well as commercial activities related to surfing into account. Their findings show that people who come to Mavericks specifically for its surfing possibilities will visit the area five times more often than non surfers. Hence, surfers benefit more from the area over the year. Furthermore, females visit Mavericks on average 84% more often than males (Coffman & Burnett, 2009). This fact supports the suggestion of female surfers significantly contributing to the surfing economy and hence is relevant for the following study.

Even though literature with regards to surfing and its economic value and economic impact is still scarce, research on surf breaks has increased over the last few years. Next to Mundaka (Spain), Costa de Caparica (Portugal), Mavericks and Trestles (United States), also spots in Australia (South Stadbroken) or Mexico (Ensenada) have already been focus of investigation (Lazarow, 2007; Nelsen et al., 2008). To this point no study has been conducted in South Africa specifically focusing on either the economic impact or value of surfing.

## **4.2 The Social and Environmental Impact of Surfing**

Beaches and coastal recreation areas are known for their high socio-economic value (Cooke, Jones, Goodwin, & Bishop, 2012). That surfing is an important contributor to a country's economy has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. However, surfing can also be influential on the society and the environment.

In a recent study Silva and Ferreira (2014) do not only explore the economic but also the social value of a wave investigating Costa de Caparica, Portugal. The results show that a loss of waves would negatively impact about 93% of the surfers



and even 72% of the bathers. About 60% of the 432 people surveyed indicated that they benefited directly or indirectly by the waves.

That surfing can have positive impacts on society can further be seen in the increasing number of projects aiming at educating children and giving safe spaces to young people living in unstable and high crime areas. Especially in South Africa surf-led initiatives (e.g., Surf Outreach, Waves for Change) and other sport-led programmes are an important aspect contributing to the efforts of rebuilding post-apartheid.

In addition to that, investigating the Mavericks surf area, Durham and Driscoll (2009; in Coffman & Burnett, 2009), focus on the value of surfing from the perspective of ecotourism research. The authors show that the surf break clearly contributes to giving identity to the respective communities and that most surfers consider surfing itself as environmentally friendly (Burnett, 2001; Gemmell, 2007; Thompson, 2014).

The economic growth of surfing is accompanied by a constant increase of surf tourism over the past decade. Hence, not only the social impact of surfing but also the environmental impact of surfing has become topic of research more frequently. Due to the generally increasing environmental awareness, the number of studies focusing on the impacts of surfing and surf tourism on the environment has increased immensely within the past few years (Buckley, 2002; O'Brien & Ponting, 2013; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, & Mead, 2009). Surf tourism in this case includes people traveling not only domestically but also internationally to surf some waves around the world (and hence contributes to the economy) (Fendt & Wilson, 2012; Fluker, 2003; Ponting, 2009).

In 2019 Jacobs and du Plessis (2019) investigated surf tourism in South Africa giving primary attention to factors motivating individuals to surf. Their results show that over 70% of the surfers are motivated by spending time with like-minded people and interacting with others which reflects the importance of surfing to an individual's social life. In the authors' study 74% of the participants were male (Jacobs & du Plessis, 2019). However, with the increasing offers of women-only surf camps and programs especially catering towards female surfers, it becomes clear that surf tourism is becoming more popular amongst females (Fendt & Wilson, 2012) making them important contributors to the surfing economy.

This Chapter proves that the existence of a wave does not only impact local economies but also local identities (Coffman & Burnett, 2009). Firstly, as women also spend money in the surfing industry, it is assumed that for this study, too, women also play an important economic role in Muizenberg. Secondly, as surfers are often bonded by a collective identity (Preston-Whyte, 2001) it must be assumed that female surfers in Muizenberg are not only socially impacted by the existence of the wave itself but also by surfing with other like-minded people.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5 LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE SURFERS**

Even though board sports are a predominantly male domain some women resist exclusion and negotiate their spaces to experience leisure (Thorpe, 2007). Research has shown that the field of sports also presents an opportunity to challenge traditional gender binaries such as masculine/feminine or strong/weak (see Chapter 2.3.2) (K. Henderson, 1994; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Thorpe, 2007). Only little research has focused on lived experiences of females in surfing (Bush, 2016; Corner, 2008; Nourbakhsh, 2008) or related board sports so far (Bäckström, 2013; Sisjord, 2009; Thorpe, 2006, 2007). Existing literature gives special attention to identity creation through the sport, distinction of several types of femininity as well as to negotiating space and constraints to participation.

#### **5.1 Identity Creation**

Often surfers are bonded by a collective identity (Preston-Whyte, 2001) and express their individual personalities through their surfing and beach-related behaviour and language. According to Bryan (2000), individuals develop a distinctive identity the more specialized they become in a leisure activity, thereby making use of reference groups. In the context of surfing these reference groups refer to surfing friends and family members or to other surfers, the majority of them male. Not only with regards to male dominated action sports but in the most part women shape their identities related to the presence of masculinity, meaning men's perspectives and behaviours (Olive et al., 2015). However, it has been demonstrated that sometimes female athletes find their own way to experience leisure creating feminine identities (Thorpe, 2007; Wearing, 1991; Wheaton & Tomlinson, 1998). In fact surfing offers an opportunity for females to resist male definitions and gender identity and create their own spaces (Bäckström, 2013; Preston-Whyte, 2001).

Waitt (2008) for example demonstrates that sometimes women create their own surf spaces which are more relaxed than the male surf spaces. Often female surfers feel intimidated being the only girl in the water and face the paradox of being a 'surfer chick' and an 'aggressive surfer', assuming masculine and feminine traits at the same time (Waitt, 2008). With regards to creating spaces and identity building,

Bush (2016) examines how female surfers negotiate their identities in the male dominated space as well as how they strengthen their identities through social interaction with other women in the line-up.

That fashion and clothing style in board sports highly supports identity creation further becomes clear in a skateboarders statement saying that “skaters have a completely different culture from the norms of the world’s society. We dress differently, have our own language, use our own slang, and live by our own rules” (Maeda, 1991, as cited in Beal, 1995, p. 256). Additionally, American surfer Isabelle Tihanyi states that not only skill but also clothes and looks contribute to a woman identifying as a surfer (Booth, 2012).

As the experiences of female athletes who surf, skate- or snowboard vary, there is no homogenous category of women. Instead, divisions between “committed female boarders and recreational boarders, and those whose participation is based on fashion, social status, and heterosexual pursuits” (Thorpe, 2007, p. 377) have become visible. Each division reflects the respective struggles of females within the boarding subculture. Some boarders consciously adopt 2.3.2 traits and cultivate the creation of a new female identity meanwhile some women celebrate traditional femininity (Thorpe, 2007). However, identities of female boarders are multidimensional and constantly evolving and changing (Corner, 2008; Thorpe, 2007) “over space, time, and context, and are rooted in the cultural and social moment” (Whitehead, 2002, as cited in Thorpe, 2007, p. 209).

## **5.2 ‘The Visibles’ vs. ‘The Invisibles’: Predominant Femininities in Surfing**

Making use of a quantitative approach, in 2016 Kruger and Saayman (2017) were the first authors to profile South African surfers. Investigating Muizenberg, a surf break in the south of Cape Town, they categorized South African’s surfers into ‘the beginners’, ‘the weekenders’, ‘the amateurs’ and ‘the professionals’. Only 39% of the respondents were female which supports the argument of surfing being male dominated. Findings of the study show that surfers differ according to socio-demographics as well as surfing motivation and behavior (Kruger & Saayman, 2017). However, whereas in existing literature about gender relations in surfing a

variety of masculinities or more general typologies have been discovered<sup>20</sup>, so far less information is available on different types of female surfers.

Because of certain similarities to surfing, also Backström's study in which the author explores the hegemonic gender structure of Swedish skateboarding is of relevance (Bäckström, 2013). The author investigates the lived experiences of the female participants and discusses gender manoeuvring as well as several types of femininities giving special attention to 'the tomboy', 'the bitch' and 'the lesbian'. It is argued that both skateboarding as well as snowboarding show a hierarchical gender order which seems to be similar to surfing. An implication therefore shows Wendy Botha's example, former South African World Champion of surfing who speaks of having been regarded as a "tomboy" when growing up (Botha, 2013, as cited in Thompson, 2015) because of surfing aggressively and living up to male standards.

Similarly, Sisjord (2009) distinguishes between 'fast girls', 'babes' and 'invisible girls' in the context of snowboarding. Thereby, the 'fast girls' seem to be the equivalent to 'the tomboys' in Backström's study (2013). They snowboard a lot and engage intensively with the sport. To a certain extent this femininity seems to be respected by male boarders. Meanwhile the 'fast girls' and the 'invisible girls' are activity driven, the 'babes' refer to girls who mostly only pretend to snowboard and hang around rather than snowboard. Sisjord's (2009) results also indicate that 'the babes' are attracted to snowboarding by male athletes. The author states that the majority of female snowboarders is comprised of 'invisible girls' who stay invisible with regards to position taking.

Also in the context of snowboarding Thorpe (2007) categorizes women athletes into 'weekend-warriors', 'fashion-seekers', 'poseurs' and 'pro-hos' (females who want to conquer male snowboarders). These categories are often less committed to the actual sport itself using their equipment as fashion statements. Another distinction of "legitimate forms of snowboarding femininity" (Thorpe, 2009, p. 498)

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<sup>20</sup> In the analysis of Tracks for example, M. Henderson (2001) and Stedman (1997) find masculinities described as 'yobbo', 'rebel' and 'athlete'. (Farmer, 1992) distinguishes between five types of surfers: The 'rowdy bunch', 'the school boys', 'the weekend warriors', 'the hard core surfers' and 'the beach bums'. Including travel behavior and personal surf preferences Dolnicar and Fluker (2003) further identified five segments of surfers in Australia – 'the radical adventurers', 'the luxury surfers', 'the price-conscious safety seekers', 'the price-conscious adventurers' and 'the ambivalents'. However, since general types of surfers and masculinities are not focus of this research further categories will be neglected at this point.

by the author distinguishes between the ‘core’ boarders, ‘novices’, ‘girlies’ and ‘pro-hos’. As this categorization shows once more, identities are shaped around the masculine. Not unimportantly, Thorpe (2009) argues that the athletes experience gender differently depending on their skill and position within the snowboarding community.

Due to transferability between two similar contexts (Guba, 1981) it can be assumed that there are certain overlaps or similarities between surfing and formerly mentioned board sports and youth cultures. Hence, as the literature review shows a distinction of different femininities and masculinities may also be possible in the case of female surfers. Nevertheless, context is of extreme importance with regards to identity creation and their respective changes (Thorpe, 2006, 2007). Overlaps have to be treated with caution as each sport or cultural field has its distinctive history and development as well as equipment and physical requirements (Thorpe, 2006, 2009, 2010).

As the review of literature revealed, certain femininities have become predominant in traditionally male dominated board sports such as skateboarding, snowboarding or surfing. However, broadly speaking it seems like there are two main categories which can be distinguished, namely ‘the visibles’ and ‘the invisibles’. Thereby, the category of ‘the visibles’ refers to women who are visible either through being a ‘tomboy’ and having an aggressive style within the respective sport or who are visible through being beautiful according to society’s standards, showing off a sexuality disconnected to the sport itself. The ‘invisibles’ on the other hand comprise female athletes who are either beginners or amateurs or who feel intimidated by the male space.

### **5.3 Constraints to Participation**

Besides external barriers to gender equality in surfing such as institutional barriers, research has shown that women generally face certain constraints with regards to leisure participation such as sports that men don’t. Nevertheless, so far only little research focuses on lived experiences of female surfers in specific (e.g., Bush, 2016; Corner, 2008; Nourbakhsh, 2008; Olive et al., 2015).

With regards to negotiating space in surfing in particular, Nourbakhsh (2008) explores the phenomenological meanings and behaviours amongst female surfers

conducting interviews with nine female athletes from California.<sup>21</sup> Next to reasons for initial participation and enduring involvement the study reveals the multitude and complexity of constraints to participation female surfers are facing. Popular categories of leisure constraints are structural, interpersonal as well as intrapersonal constraints (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991).

Thereby, structural constraints are described by factors influencing the actual leisure activity to take place (e.g., weather, logistics or other obligations) (Crawford et al., 1991; Fendt & Wilson, 2012; K. A. Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996; Walker, Jackson, & Deng, 2007). Usher and Gómez (2018) who investigate the effects of regulations of recreation spaces on surfers at Virginia Beach (U.S.) further demonstrate that high levels of bacteria in the water, a lack of parking facilities and the presence of many surf school participants present additional constraints for surfers, men and women alike. However, major structural constraints are institutional barriers such as the absence or lack of facilities and programs for leisure (K. A. Henderson et al., 1996).

The second category, interpersonal constraints, includes social factors influencing leisure preferences such as relationships with others, the lack of leisure companions (K. A. Henderson et al., 1996; Nourbakhsh, 2008) or time availability (Usher & Gómez, 2018). In Nourbakhsh's study most of the women of the sample described a variety of interpersonal constraints preventing them from surfing (2008). A frequent constraint for female surfers is a crowded line-up. This means that the more people are in the water wanting to catch a wave, the more the women feel discouraged to surf themselves. Furthermore, the results showed that attitudes of other surfers especially those of men towards women as well as the absence of the idea of sharing prevents female athletes from surfing. In addition to this, Nourbakhsh (2008) discovered family obligations such as having children to take care of as influencing interpersonal factor with regards to the women's surfing lives.

Lastly, intrapersonal constraints refer to individual psychological qualities affecting leisure preferences such as stress or perceived competence. Intrapersonal constraints especially typical for women are lack of confidence and "the idea that an activity is considered socially inappropriate or unsuitable which contributes

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<sup>21</sup> In contrast thereto, Waitt and Warren (2008) focus on the lived experiences of young male surfers concluding that surfing masculinities are subject to change depending on a multitude of factors such as the surf break, time of day as well as wave conditions, age, surfboard, ethnicity and gender.

significantly to diminished activity participation” (Henderson et al., 1996 & Little, 2002, as cited in Nourbakhsh, 2008, p. 22). Research has shown that women are especially concerned with intrapersonal constraints (Fendt & Wilson, 2012). Nourbakhsh (2008) found out that entitlement as well as perceived competence is the most predominant intrapersonal constraint female surfers have. Thereby, entitlement refers to feeling guilty or selfish when going surfing because of knowing that meanwhile having fun in the water friends or partners have other obligations. Secondly, perceived competence, a feeling of low self-confidence or a lack of skill, is described as intrapersonal constraint. Both, entitlement as well as perceived competence, discourage the women from surfing (Nourbakhsh, 2008).

In addition, Corner (2008) explores gender experiences and gender relations in a New Zealand surf culture by investigating the lived experiences of both male and female surfers. It becomes clear that gender is negotiated through discourse and practice in the line-up due to the masculine nature of the space and influences identity construction. This negotiation strategy of female surfers shows a clear similarity to skate- and snowboarding (see Chapter 5.2) making other board sport research relevant for this thesis. With regards to female interviewees, in her study Corner (2008) distinguishes between the two categories ‘beach babes’ and the ‘point wahines’. Thereby, the ‘beach babes’ only surf the beach whereas the latter category also surfs point breaks. The study shows that meanwhile beginners are often concerned with their perception by others more advanced surfers are more worried about their performance in the water and being judged by males (Ford & Brown, 2005). The results also shed light on the importance of relationships among female surfers, especially the novices. Those relationships are decisive in creating identities and negotiating space and allow for building social capital in the surfing community (Corner, 2008). These findings also coincide with Bush (2016) who explores how women negotiate their identities in the surfing culture at the U.S. East Coast and demonstrates that relationships with other female surfers are important with regards to identity creation and negotiating space. However, the relationships with other male surfers and the social capital gained thereof is rather related to skill and performance which is why the ‘point wahines’ possess more social capital with men than the ‘beach babes’. These differences in symbolic, performance and cultural capital leads to the more advanced surfers negotiating their space and the line-up very differently to the beginners (Corner, 2008).



Furthermore, the lived experiences of female surfers are central to the study of Olive et al. (2015). Conducting interviews with eleven female surfers, the authors focus on “how women understand and experience the male dominated culture of surfing, with an aim to examine women’s understandings and experiences on their own terms, rather than in relation to men’s” (Olive et al., 2015, p. 263). Instead of focusing on negative aspects such as the feeling of being marginalized, the interviews concentrate on positive aspects of surfing with local men. Findings show that female surfers are still devalued which coincides with Reed (2010) who looked at whether or not women have gained gender equality in the sport of surfing. However, being a woman in the water can also bring greater tolerance and support by male surfers. A certain sense of community has been highlighted by the women interviewed (Olive et al., 2015).

In the context of female skateboarders, A. Young and Dallaire (2008) demonstrate that women are constrained by injuries. Further, Laurendeau and Sharara (2008) draw their attention to the construction of gender and the negotiation of space by women in snowboarding and skydiving. According to the authors, female snowboarders use two strategies to create space for themselves: avoidance and downplaying gender. Avoidance in this case refers to avoiding particular spaces because of big crowds rather due to gender. The second strategy employed describes when women blend in, meaning that they for example in snowboarding wear clothes that don’t focus on gendered bodies. Both of these strategies seem to fit into the femininity of ‘the invisibles’.

Nevertheless, despite constraints women find ways to negotiate their spaces and identities in sports including male-dominated activities such snowboarding, surfing or skateboarding (Fendt & Wilson, 2012; Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008; Spowart, Hughson, & Shaw, 2008; A. Young & Dallaire, 2008). However, it has to be pointed out that also men who are novices in surfing can be subject to “ridicule from more skilled, advanced male surfers” (Usher & Gómez, 2018, p. 154).

## CHAPTER 6

### 6 CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

In summary, the previous chapters detail research regarding the gender order in sport and society as well as lived experiences of female surfers and athletes of related board sports.

In the surfing culture gender and sexuality have become a central point in the struggles over surfing styles and identities within the last five decades (Roy & Caudwell, 2014). It has been demonstrated that sometimes female athletes find their own way to experience leisure creating feminine identities (Thorpe, 2007; Wearing, 1991; Wheaton & Tomlinson, 1998). Furthermore, surfing offers an opportunity for females to resist male definitions and gender identity and create their own spaces (Bäckström, 2013; Preston-Whyte, 2001). Additionally, ten years ago it was suggested by Reed (2010) that the introduction of equal prize money will not only benefit female surfers but the whole sport of surfing facilitating media coverage and promotions as well as addressing the issue of using sex to sell the sport (Reed, 2010). Since equal prize money was introduced in 2019, this study is a beginning of what will likely be a series of assessments of that prediction.

As the analysis of the literature shows, existing literature mainly focuses on surf spots in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom (see Appendix 1). So far only one academic research project specifically gives attention to gender in surfing in South Africa (Thompson, 2015). Hence, the subsequent study is set up to fill this void by investigating the lived experiences of female surfers in Muizenberg, South Africa. Besides Kruger and Saayman (2017) and Thompson (2015, 2018) who include gender in their research, this research project is the first one specifically focusing on female surfers in South Africa and hence contributes to lifestyle sport research with new empirical findings extending existing academic knowledge.

As a result of informal observations as a regular surfer, it was assumed that females do not only present a significant percentage if not the majority of all surfers in Muizenberg, South Africa, but also significantly contribute to the respective surfing economy. Nevertheless, even though women might find access to surfing easy as well as they might have a sense of ownership in the water they still face challenges in and around the water due to their gender. Following the review of the

literature it was expected that despite significantly contributing to the surfing economy female surfers might still feel like holding a marginalized position within the surfing community. Analogous to other board sports, it was expected that certain types of surfing femininities such as ‘the visibles’ and ‘the invisibles’ are revealed through this study.

Findings are expected to help industry professionals and surfing organizations to learn from the women’s experiences and to acknowledge female surfers as meaningful members of and contributors to the surfing economy, addressing gender equality in surfing across multidimensional structures.

The next chapter will discuss the methods used to answer the underlying research questions through a qualitative approach. As outlined before, the research questions to be addressed are the following:

**Primary Research Question:**

What are the lived experiences of female surfers in Muizenberg, South Africa, given the increased feminization of the surfing economy?

**Sub-questions:**

1. *How do female surfers feel in the water participating in a traditionally male sport?*
2. *What are female surfers’ thoughts and constraints when they go surfing?*
3. *How do female surfers perceive their position within the surfing economy?*

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **7 METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in this study. Methodology looks at the tools, methods and the research plan to be used during the research (Babbie, 2015). The first section argues why a qualitative approach was utilized and defends the design adopted followed by a description of the location of the study. Thereafter, data collection methods will be presented and the procedure of the content analysis conducted will be explained. The chapter concludes with a discussion of criteria of trustworthiness implemented within the study as well as demonstrating methodological limitations and ethical considerations.

#### **7.1 Qualitative Research Approach and Location of Study**

In order to answer the underlying research questions a qualitative research method was used in this study as it aims at a holistic understanding of the issue studied making it possible to gain a high volume of information. This is especially beneficial when literature on the topic is scarce and the research question shows a high explorative character (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Qualitative research looks at building new theories from the data collected and offers deep insight into the field of study (Mayring, 2002; Silverman, 2006).

In this study it was assumed that female surfers at Muizenberg have a shared set of experiences and therefore a phenomenological approach would be beneficial. All this requires time and depth in terms of the questions asked as well as it allows for time and freedom in their answering both suiting a qualitative study. However, because of its complexity this study consists of two individual components, namely observations and a data set derived from a series of in-depth interviews.

The study was conducted at Muizenberg beach, a surf spot in the South of Cape Town, South Africa. Muizenberg is a beach break and one of the top ten learn-to-surf beaches worldwide which is busy all year round and attracts surfers from all specialization levels (Drughi, 2020). Especially in South African winter Muizenberg beach is known for providing relatively consistent waves.

For this research a public setting was chosen which means access is freely available for any surfer or visitor. The surf spot can be reached by train, car or walking if living close by. With many shops including surf and coffee shops alike, the whole beach front offers a variety of spending opportunities not only for female surfers. In total there are nine shops especially focusing on surfing by offering surf lessons, surf rentals or selling general surf gear and accessories. In addition, there are numerous restaurants and backpackers right at the beachfront inviting surfers and beach goers to meet up for food or drinks. All the shops and restaurants are within walking distance to the beach making Muizenberg not only attractive as a surf break itself where people have access to coaching and renting equipment but as a social point of interest allowing for a surf community to build.

## **7.2 Data Collection Method**

This study makes use of both primary as well as secondary data. Thereby, the secondary data stems from the literature review (Hox & Boeijs, 2005) based on which an interview guideline was created. Due to the scarce literature specifically focusing on the underlying problem, primary data was collected making use of observations of the surf break first, followed by ten in-depth interviews with female surfers.

### *7.2.1 Observations and Field Notes*

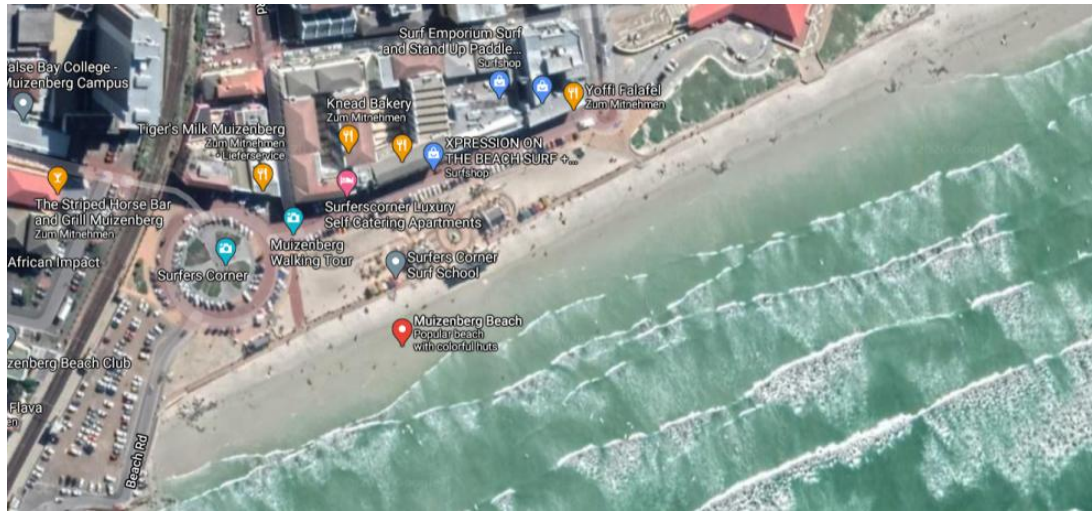
It is argued that being an active surfer is important to understand the complexity of the sport and the experiences of surfers (Doyle & Sorensen, 1992; Wheaton, 2002). Through being an avid surfer myself, I, as the researcher, had the chance to meet and exchange experiences with many other female surfers. Several stays in surf camps in Morocco, Nicaragua and South Africa as active participant, joining the competitive surf team of the University of Cape Town as well as several Facebook groups for surfers and surfing the river wave in Munich helped the researcher to understand and connect with female surfers. Additionally, I did not only regularly surf Muizenberg beach for almost two years prior to data collection – on average three times a week (February 2018 – February 2020) but also worked as a surf coach myself at Surf Emporium, a popular surf shop at the beachfront of Muizenberg. As it was fundamental for this study to understand the surfing habits and routines of female surfers, the fact of me being a passionate (female) surfer

myself benefitted the research and might have influenced the creation of the interview guide.

Nevertheless, following the literature review, an additional observational design was utilized aiming at further informing the creation of an adequate interview guideline. Observational studies are often fundamental to qualitative research (Silverman, 2006) as they support other types of data collection. In order to adequately address the primary research question it was planned to make use of two separate observational designs:

Firstly, to get an idea of the relative percentage of surfers of Muizenberg comprised by females, a counting strategy was applied whereby all surfers coming out of the water in Muizenberg were counted and gendered (see Appendix 5). A direct observation seemed to be beneficial as it allows the researcher to explicitly count “the frequency and/or intensity of specific behaviors or events or mapping the social composition and action of a particular scene”(Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013, p. 78).

Hence, between the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 and the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, the beach was observed six times for a total of 207 minutes. Thereby, it was taken note of how many of the counted athletes were male and how many were female respectively. To observe a variety of surfers the observations varied not only in duration but also in time of day. Each time I observed I chose to sit right in front of the best conditions to make sure to have the majority of surfers in sight. Having the wave forecast in mind, only days with good surfing conditions were chosen for observations. One day the observation had to be stopped due to changing weather conditions.



*Figure 3:* Map of Muizenberg Beach.  
(Google, 2021)

The map above shows the beachfront of Muizenberg beach with all the surf and coffee shops. For the observations I sat right in front of the waves. Thereby, I always sat at different places depending on the wave conditions (see Appendix 5B) in order to make sure to count all or as many surfers as possible. It must be noted that it might be possible that errors have been made with regards to the surfers' genders. However, overall I am confident that I was correct for the trends to be accurate as I was sitting very close having good sight. Furthermore, the importance of participation in surfing and gaining access to the culture for conducting research into the surfing culture has been highlighted before (Evers, 2006; Leonard, 2007; Olive & Thorpe, 2011). Hence, each time I did observations sitting at the beach I also went for a surf session myself just before or after observing to get a feeling for the situation in the line-up.

Secondly, in addition to the counting strategy, it was planned to make use of a second observational design. To be able to find out about female surfers' economic contribution to the surfing economy, it was aimed to collaborate with as many surf related shops in Muizenberg as possible. Initially this collaboration was planned in form of the shops taking note of the purchases of each customer during the day, meaning gender of the customer, number of items purchased and money spent in total. It was not intended to ask for any potentially harmful or identifiable personal information. A sheet for staff members to complete in was created (Appendix 6). Using the information gathered, it was planned to inform the assumption of female surfers significantly contributing to the surfing economy of Muizenberg. However,

as speaking to several shop managers showed, unfortunately it was not possible to conduct this observation. Besides a general lack of interest in cooperating with me, the argument was the impracticality of the observation design as the shops have a lot of daily changing staff members who to instruct would consume too much time. Furthermore, as summer in Muizenberg is high season which means that shops normally are very busy, all staff was needed for other work. As incorrectly completed sheets would lead to significant deviations of the study's outcome, this observation could not be conducted as planned.

In addition to this, the outbreak of COVID-19<sup>22</sup> in the beginning of the year (2020) and the subsequent strict lockdown rules in South Africa restricting access to the beaches for surfers has lead to changes of both observational designs. Besides shops closing completely not allowing for adjustments of practicability as well as surfing generally being prohibited, it was not possible to conduct both observations as initially planned. As a consequence of these restrictions additional time constraints came into play. Nevertheless, the review of the literature, the structured observations which already had been conducted before lockdown as well as some informal observations were used to inform the creation of an interview guideline on the basis of which in-depth interviews were conducted with female surfers at Muizenberg beach. The interview guideline also included questions aiming to find out about the female surfers' economic contribution.

### *7.2.2 In-depth Interviews*

To shed light on the lived experiences of female surfers in the context of an increasing feminization of the surfing economy, the primary research question was addressed by means of semi-structured in-depth interviews with women who surf the break at Muizenberg beach.

Interviewing is appropriate for capturing the meaning of an experience as the respondents get the chance to freely give their answers to open-ended questions and give personal insights which are close to their lived experiences. Hence, in this case an authentic understanding of the women's experiences could be achieved and primary data could be collected (Levy, 2002; Mayring, 2002; Silverman, 2006). To

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<sup>22</sup> COVID-19 is an infectious disease which is caused by a newly discovered coronavirus and was responsible for lot of restrictions for people all around the world in 2020. This included / still includes restrictions with regards to work, social gatherings and travelling nationally as well as internationally.



facilitate the data analysis the interviews were conducted by means of an interview guideline (see Appendix 3), as suggested by Mayring (2002). The semi-standardisation of the latter offers a high degree of flexibility for the interviewee to answer but still focuses on the main issue leaving space to later compare different interviews.

As it is the aim of phenomenological qualitative research to gain personal insights and include the participant's perspective in the research process, an increased relationship of trust and understanding between the researcher and the participants is demanded and important (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Mayring, 2002). As a consequence it can be assumed, "that the empirical findings will be more representative of their social worlds" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 57). The interviews were conducted either face-to-face by approaching female surfers in Muizenberg in person or where not possible via Skype. Nine of the ten interviews which lasted between 21 and 37 minutes were conducted in English, one in German as the interviewee preferred to answer in her native language. At the beginning of each interview data protection provisions as well as general information about the procedure have been given to create a pleasant atmosphere. The participants were asked for their permission in form of signing a consent form (Appendix 2). Additionally, in agreement with the interviewees, all interviews were recorded to allow for a subsequent transcription and effective analysis of the data gathered. Recording allows for paying attention to possible deviances in tone or voice which might get lost using handwritten notes only (Jamshed, 2014). Following some opening questions and the participant demographics, the participants were asked about their surfing histories. Subsequently key questions were asked aiming at getting insights into three different categories. First, the women were asked about the surf spot and economy of Muizenberg, followed by questions on their lived experiences. The interview guideline ended off by asking the athletes about prize money and sponsorship.

### *7.2.3 Unit of Analysis and Method of Sampling*

In order to conduct the interviews and answer the overarching research question a non-probability purposive sampling method which allows to select individuals who are well suited for the topic studied was chosen (Bryman & Bell, 2014). Hence, the unit of analysis consisted of female athletes who regularly surf in

Muizenberg. With regards to regularity, the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) defines a ‘casual’ surfer as “anyone who surfed at least once during the year,” while a ‘core’ surfer is defined as “those who surfed more than eight times during the year” (SFIA, as cited in Stab Magazine, 2016). Drawing on my personal experience and on my active involvement in the surf community choosing eight times per year did not seem appropriate which is why in this case it was aimed to interview women who surf twice a week or eight times a month over the year on average.

Since qualitative research is inductive and concerned with the in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, the sample size is rather small compared to quantitative research methods (Dworkin, 2012). This study followed the concept of saturation, meaning that it was aimed to interview as many females surfers until further data collection does no longer produce new information (Mason, 2010).

In this case, similarly to Nourbakhsh (2008) who investigated the experiences of nine female surfers from the California Central Coast, as a unit of analysis interviews with ten female surfers have been conducted. Thereby, the respondents were chosen from the accessible population of female surfers in Muizenberg, South Africa. The figure on the following page presents the selection of women interviewed. To protect the participants’ confidentiality, Pseudonyms (P1 – P10) have been used.

Participant	Age	City of Origin	Profession	Surf Board Type	Favorite Wave Size in Foot	Favorite Break	Experience in Years	Average Duration / Session	Sessions / Week	Sponsorship Experience	Competition Experience
1	20	Durban	Student	Short board	3	Point	11	75	2	/	X
2	52	Cologne	Surf Camp Owner	Long board	3	Beach	10	90	2	/	/
3	39	Durban	Surf Therapist	Short board	4 - 5	Point	27	45	>3	X	X (professional)
4	22	Durban	Student	Long Board	3 - 4	Point	13	90	>2	/	X
5	19	Cape Town	Student	Long board	2 - 3	Beach	9	90	0.5	/	/
6	20	Cape Town/ Eastern Cape	Student	Long board	2 - 3	Point	9	90	>2	/	X
7	24	Cape Town	Accountant	Short board	2 - 3	Point	19	90	<1	X	X
8	55	Pieter Maritzberg	Journalist	Minimal	2 - 3	Beach	6	60	2	/	/
9	27	Cape Town	Surfer/ Accountant	Short board	3 - 4	Point	21	90	>3	X	X (professional)
10	28	Cape Town	Employee	Long board	1 - 2	Beach	17	60 - 90	>2	/	/

*Figure 4:* Participant Details.

The figure above shows that in total ten female surfers aged between 19 and 55 years were interviewed. Five of them originally are from Cape Town (Western Cape), four from the Eastern Cape and one is from Cologne, Germany. As the focus lied on their general experiences in the water, no restrictions to their age and profession have been made. On average the women have an experience of surfing for 14.2 years. Their surf sessions on average last around 80 minutes, about the amount of time before participants state to get cold or energy levels decrease. Five of the ten women surf longboards, one primarily surfs a Minimal surfboard and three categorize themselves as shortboard riders.<sup>23</sup>

#### *7.2.4 Data Analysis Approach*

To pave the way for an adequate interpretation, a qualitative content analysis was chosen for this thesis.

At the very core of a content analysis is a step-by-step analysis of the collected data and a theory driven generation of a category scheme (see Appendix 7). This means that firstly the interviews are transcribed followed by open coding which is going through the material line-by-line (Blair, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Subsequently a category scheme is created which can be divided into main categories as well as subcategories whereby the main categories are derived deductively on the basis of the interview guide and the subcategories are compiled inductively in accordance with the material (Mayring, 2002). Hereafter it is aimed at analysing the relationships between the categories established (Charmaz, 1990).

In this case the creation of a category scheme allowed for an analysis of the lived experiences of female surfers in a space where they have been historically marginalised. After an intense passage of five interviews the basis of the category scheme was already generated. However, some new categories could still be found during the analysis of the following interviews due to different age and experience levels of the interviewees as well as surf board types used.

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<sup>23</sup> Shortboards are usually surfboards shorter than 7 feet (San Diego Surf School, 2019).

### 7.2.5 Trustworthiness

At the end of each qualitative research it is important to evaluate the results based on criteria of trustworthiness which should be adequate for the respective method (Mayring, 2002).

According to Guba (1981), in qualitative research four major concerns exist to which criteria of trustworthiness must correspond and which are extremely important to be met. Namely those are truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

Figure 3 presents those four aspects and the related criteria of trustworthiness more detailed. Additionally, it shows in how far these criteria have been implemented within this study.

Aspect	Scientific Term	Naturalistic Term	Implementation in this Study
<b>Truth Value</b>	<b>Internal Validity</b>	<b>Credibility</b>  Degree of credibility / truth of the findings.	Adequate material collection through ➤ Persistent observation ➤ Recording of interviews ➤ Transcription of interviews ➤ Checking with interviewees if facing uncertainties during transcription
<b>Applicability</b>	<b>External Validity</b>  / <b>Generalizability</b>	<b>Transferability</b>  Degree to which it is possible to transfer findings between two contexts.	➤ Purposive Sampling to maximize the range of information. ➤ Limited transferability to other settings and populations due to the limited size of the sample and the qualitative nature of the study. ➤ Limited generalizability to the general population of female surfers due to investigating Muizenberg beach, South Africa only.

Aspect	Scientific Term	Naturalistic Term	Implementation in this Study
<b>Consistency</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Dependability</b> Degree to which the instruments used produce stable results at replication of study.	➤ Attachment of interview guide (Appendix 3) to allow for a replication of the study.
<b>Neutrality</b>	<b>Objectivity</b>	<b>Confirmability</b> Degree to which data produced is confirmable.	➤ Using a semi-standardized interview guide with open ended questions. ➤ Explanation of the analysis approach to avoid investigator biases.

*Figure 5: Criteria of Trustworthiness*  
(own representation based on (Guba, 1981).

The right column of the figure above shows the steps followed to implement the criteria of trustworthiness as best as possible in this study. As can be seen, all four aspects were addressed to a certain extent allowing for following academic research to build on results.

#### 7.2.6 Methodological Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The previous chapter gave an overview of the most important criteria of trustworthiness and the implementation thereof within this study. Nevertheless, it must not be disregarded that there are certain methodological limitations, too.

Firstly, meanwhile it might be beneficial to actively include participants in the process of data collection (through e.g., interviews) to get more representative empirical findings, it is possible that the investigator's involvement during the interviews might negatively influence the participant leading to distortions of the results. This can be for example through the investigator's speech or even through his/her presence as well as the audio recording which subsequently could lead to the interviewee not answering honestly due to social expectations or for other reasons (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2018; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). To keep problems evolving out of these interconnections as low as possible and aiming at avoiding the

social desirability effect (Bell et al., 2018),<sup>24</sup> the relationship with participants has been reflected as suggested by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008). Through my personal introduction an atmosphere was created in which respondents were encouraged to openly share their experiences using their own words.

Furthermore, especially when collecting primary data it is of extreme importance to be aware of ethical considerations. Ethics concern all aspects of our lives and researchers also should follow ethical guidelines (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Hence, for this study it has been followed ethical principles by making sure that the underlying study was only conducted once ethics clearance had been granted from the University of Cape Town. Further, participation was on a voluntary basis and the participants were granted anonymity with regards to their responses. Before starting the interviews the participants had to sign a consent form (Appendix 2) and were informed about their rights to stop the interview at any time without naming any reasons. For the data analysis their names have been substituted by pseudonyms to make sure to keep their anonymity. Personal information is kept confidential. No information was given to outside parties. It was aimed at making it impossible to trace back information and data provided by the participants (Crow & Wiles, 2008).

Lastly, as mentioned above, it was intended to conduct two individual observations collaborating with surf shops in Muizenberg and counting surfers. Not only could the collaboration with the shops not be realized but also the amount of time in which surfers were observed and counted is relatively low.<sup>25</sup> However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the beginning of the year (2020) and the subsequent strict lockdown rules in South Africa restricting access to the beaches for surfers it was not possible to conduct the participant observations as initially planned.

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<sup>24</sup> The social desirability effect can lead to respondents providing answers to put them into positive light (Bell et al., 2018).

<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the direct observations conducted give a rough idea of the relative percentage of surfers in Muizenberg who are female.

## CHAPTER 8

### 8 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative exploration of the lived experiences of female surfers.

#### 8.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 7, this study entails an observational design as well as a qualitative exploration of female surfers' lived experiences making use of interviews. Hence, before going into detail with regards to the analysis of interviews, it seems to be beneficial to have a look at the observations made.

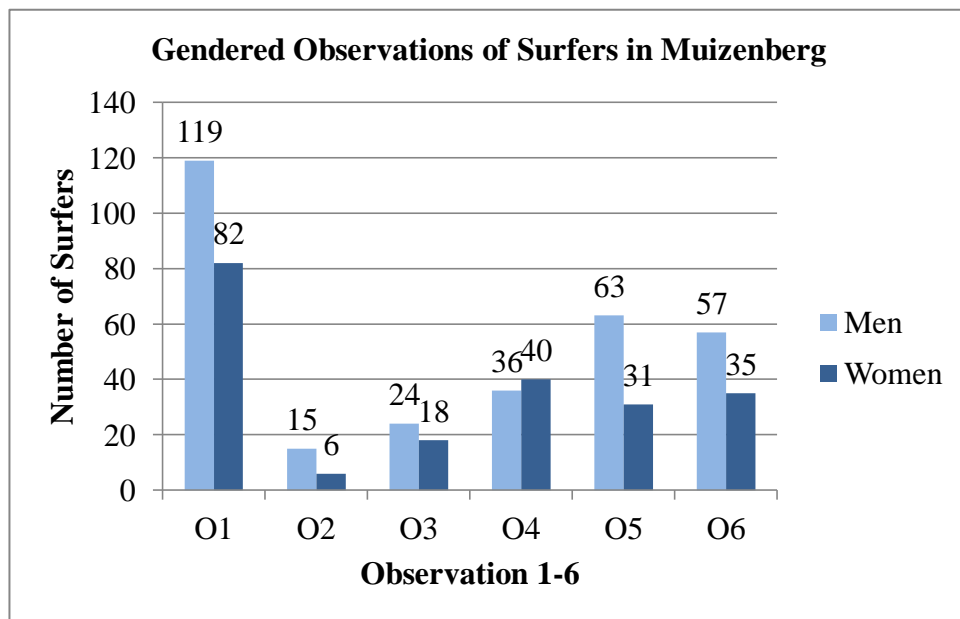
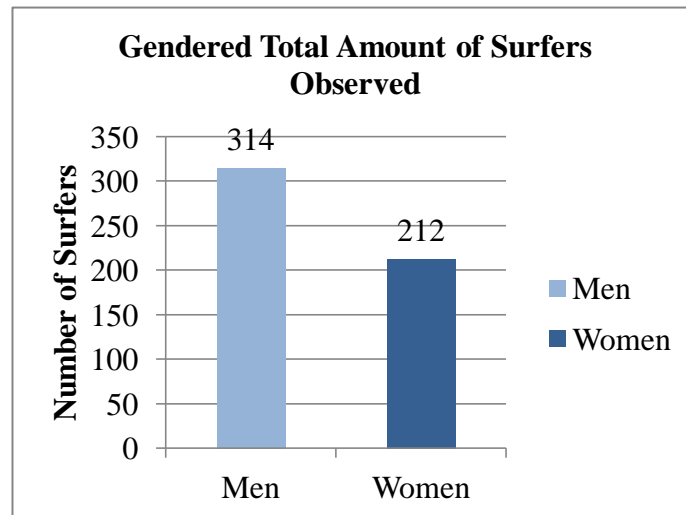


Figure 6: Gendered Observations of Surfers in Muizenberg.

As the diagram above shows, the surf spot Muizenberg beach was observed six times at different times of days (Appendix 5). Five of the six observations show that the number of male surfers who came out of the water during the observation period exceeds the number of female surfers exiting the ocean. On one occasion, Observation 4, it was possible to count more females than males. The following diagram shows the overall results of all the observations combined.





*Figure 7:* Gendered Total Amount of Surfers Observed.

As can be seen above, all observations combined showed 314 male surfers leaving the water in contrast to only 212 female athletes. This means that the number of male surfers observed was around 48% higher than the total number of female surfers. This aligns with existing literature stating that surfing still is a male dominated sport. Nevertheless, as Observation 4 shows, sometimes it is possible to count more women in the water than men. Further, it has to be acknowledged that these observations are only snapshots of situations at the beach in Muizenberg, South Africa. Unfortunately, due to the Corona pandemic in 2020 it was not possible to conduct all the observations initially planned for this study which is why no concrete statements can be made at this point. In this case the observations made are only used as visual aids supporting existing literature.

However, the focus of this study lied on a qualitative exploration of female surfers' lived experiences conducting interviews with ten female surfers. As outlined in Chapter 7, the analysis of the data gathered is based on a category scheme (Appendix 7) which is interpreted fully related to the research questions. To enable a reasonable interpretation the categorization of text passages is quantitatively evaluated, which means that it is looked at how often individual categories are coded. As the individuals should be understood according to interpretivism and constructionism (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008), throughout the whole analysis main attention is given to the investigation of the lived experiences of female surfers and to factors influencing their surfing identity and positioning within the surfing economy.

Deductively, based on the interview guideline, four main categories could be generated. These are: Surf History and Background of Participants, Muizenberg Beach – Surf Spot and Economy, Surfing Media and Lived Experiences. Each main category then was further divided into subcategories of first and second level which were compiled inductively based on the transcription material.

The following sub-chapters 8.2 – 8.6 present the main themes discovered by creation of the category scheme.

## **8.2 Participants' Surf History and Background**

To begin with, to gain full insight into female surfers' lived experiences and feelings it is important to look at the participants' surf background and behaviour.

### *8.2.1 Participants' Perceptions of a Typical Surfer as Male*

Before depicting reasons for the participants' initial attraction to surfing, their enduring involvement and factors influencing their participation levels,<sup>26</sup> the women were asked to describe their perception of a typical surfer in order to investigate if the sport of surfing is still perceived as gendered. However, questions were not designed to indicate for the interviewee that I was interested in the gender identity of the so-called typical surfer. Below is a table that represents the coded results of responses.

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<sup>26</sup> Information concerning the participant details is given in Figure 4 (see Chapter 7.2.3).

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Surf History and Background			
Subcategory I	Description of a Typical Surfer			
Subcategory II	Gender			
	male (more guys than girls)	P3: "A typic	8	2
	female	P4: "Well w	3	7
Subcategory II	Look			
	Wetsuit tan	P10: "Norm	6	4
	Blonde	P5: "I mean	5	5
	Well built	P6: "I mean	3	7
	Billabong Board shorts	P2: "Blonde	1	9
	Sunscreen in the face	P2: "Sunscr	1	9
	Barefoot	P4: "What's	1	9
Subcategory II	Character			
	Care free/ laidback / friendly	P5: "Most cl	5	5
	Environmentally conscious / love of the sea / passionate	P1: "A typic	4	6
	Living a healthy life	P1: "A typic	2	8
	Selfish	P1: "Surfers	2	8
	Liking the power struggle in the water	P3: "A typic	1	9
	Pretentious	P2: "I tell m	1	9

Figure 8: Participants' Perceptions of a Typical Surfer.

When describing a typical surfer, three interviewees think of female surfers and eight generally **refer to a male athlete**.

*P3: "A typical surfer is male. I grew up in the 80s. A typical surfer is in my mind somebody who doesn't want to share the waves and kind of like this power struggle out in the water but this is changing."*

Further, with regards to a typical surfer's look, the majority of the women named a **wetsuit tan and blonde hair** as characteristics. Even though not specifically mentioned, the last two characteristics, especially the blonde hair might implicitly be interpreted as surfers being white. Interestingly, further mentioned features were **being well-built** and **wearing Billabong board-shorts** which implicitly refers to male athletes as well.<sup>27</sup> Besides that, according to the women interviewed, **walking around barefoot and having sunscreen in the face** often is an indicator for a surfer.

Referring to a surfer's character, the attributes mentioned most often were namely **laidback, friendly** and **environmentally conscious**. However, even though friendly is one characteristic, as P1 states, due to surfing being an individual sport,

<sup>27</sup> This does not mean that women cannot wear Billabong board-shorts or cannot have a muscular body. Since eight women describe a typical surfer as male it is just reasonable to suppose that with regards to this question it is referred to male characteristics.

surfers are often quite **selfish**. Thereby, she explicitly refers to male surfers (guys) as her answer shows:

*P1: "Surfers are probably quite selfish in terms of it's an individual sport and the most surfer guys are quite selfish."*

Lastly, **being pretentious** as well as **liking the power struggle in the water** and **living a healthy life** has been mentioned each once respectively with regards to characteristics of a typical surfer.

### 8.2.2 Participants' Initial Attraction to Surfing

This section shows that through the creation of the category scheme four main motivations to start surfing were found.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Surf History and Background			
Subcategory I	Initial Attraction			
Subcategory II	Family member / friends as teacher /surfs as well	P4: "My sist	7	3
Subcategory II	Living close to the beach	P6: "I was b	6	4
Subcategory II	Attractive setting	P2: "When l	2	8
Subcategory II	Lifesaving	P1: "I did lif	1	9

Figure 9: Reasons for Initial Attraction.

The motive mentioned most often (seven times) was the fact of **family members or friends already being active surfers** supported by the majority of **participants living close by the beach**.

*P6: "I was brought up by the beach, in the ocean, by water. My friends surfed around me. My brother, my dad skateboarded and rollerbladed. It was just a very active childhood and I guess my surroundings brought me closer to the ocean and surfing and I guess my friends were quite a big influence and my family is of surfers."*

Besides the reasons mentioned above, two participants were initially attracted to surfing coming across an **attractive setting** - in this case an organized school event and a cheap beginners class while travelling respectively. However, those two interviewees also live close by the ocean. Lastly, in addition to having family

members who surf, one participant (P1) argued that being an **active lifesaver** spending a lot of time in the water influenced her motivation to take up surfing.

In summary, it seems like having friends and family members who have been active surfers before as well as a certain proximity to the beach are most salient with regards to bringing the women to pick up surfing as a hobby.

### 8.2.3 Participants' Enduring Involvement in Surfing

After having had a closer look at the factors initially attracting the women to start surfing, attention was given to reasons as to why the women keep on surfing as well as to the role of surfing in their lives. Five subcategories were found which contribute to the interviewees' enduring involvement in surfing.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
<b>Main Category</b>	<b>Surf History and Background</b>			
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Enduring Involvement</b>			
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>Attraction</b>			
	Love of the water / Feels like Home	P5: "I love t	9	1
	Fun hobby / Enjoyment	P7: " I just e	8	2
	Traveling	P3: "Surfing	1	9
	Blonde Hair / Sun tan	P1: "I think	1	9
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>Social Aspect</b>			
	Making friends / Connecting with people or family	P7: "Surfing	9	1
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>Sensory Enjoyment</b>			
	Relaxation/ Escape	P8: " You p	7	3
	Happiness	P6: "Probab	6	4
	Being in Nature	P2: "A beau	5	5
	Feeling like Home	P6: "Like, y	1	9
	Feeling of Sun	P1: "I think	1	9
	Feeling of a Wetsuit	P1: "I think	1	9
	Sense of Freedom	P3: "It's a se	1	9
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>Hard to Define Values</b>			
	Feeling of Stoke	P2: "It just k	5	5
	Surfing as Center of Life	P3: "Surfing	2	8
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>Achievement</b>			
	Competitive Surfing	P9: "I starte	4	6
	Personal Challenge	P10: "I like	2	8
	Superior Feeling to Non-Surfers	P1: It's obvi	1	9

Figure 10: Reasons for Enduring Involvement in Surfing.

As the category scheme shows, the enduring involvement of the women interviewed is influenced by several aspects including surfing's **general attraction**, its **social aspect**, **sensory enjoyment** as well as certain **hard to define values** and **achievement related to surfing**.

### *Attraction and Social Aspect*

With regards to the subcategory attraction, the love of water and the enjoyment of surfing as a fun hobby is what attract the surfers the most.

*P5: "I love the water. It's my favourite place to just be and then sit. So surfing is just another way that I can go and have fun in the water."*

In addition, one participant further mentioned to love getting tanned and blonde hair through surfing. Furthermore, P3 who used to surf competitively said that surfing has allowed her to travel around the world which affects her endurance in the sport.

However, going hand in hand with the major reason to start surfing in the first place (family members and friends who surf), the social aspect of surfing is a key driver of the women's enduring involvement. For nine of the ten women interviewed connecting with family or making and meeting friends is among the most important motives to keep on surfing. P7 also describes being in the ocean to surf as making her feel like home. Besides P3 and P9 (both former competitive surfers) who prefer to surf alone, all the other women stated that they enjoy surfing with friends or family members. Only if no one else is available some of them would also surf alone.

*P7: "Surfing is like an escape. A way for me to spend time in the ocean like in nature and also it's a nice way to bond with my family because my dad surfs and my brother, so we go surf together."*

### *Sensory Enjoyment*

Besides former mentioned aspects, the participants also named several reasons which belong to the category of sensory enjoyment. Being able to "escape" and leave worries behind at the beach has been named in a number of ways and even more often than feeling happy which has been named six times.

*P9: "Otherwise surfing is like an absolute escape, you know, when you're in the water you don't think about anything else. It's literally just you and yes that's it."*

With regards to leaving worries at the shore, P3 also speaks of a sense of freedom and the healing properties of the ocean. Surfing offers a space to the women to clear their minds and to not think about anything else. Thereby, spending time in

nature is important to half of the women. However, as the quote of P6 below shows, multiple reasons are interconnected:

*P6: "Probably where I am most happiest is in the water to be honest and if I am surrounded by friends, then even better. I guess it's kind of just to cleanslate what's going on upstairs. To release I guess."*

Lastly, P1 who also is attracted to surfing because of its effects on her blonde hair also enjoys the feeling of the sun and a wetsuit.

### *Hard to Define Values*

The fourth subcategory influencing the women to continue to surf are hard-to-define values which can't be described in words as P3 says, "you can't describe it. You got to go try it. Like they always say, only a surfer knows the feeling but it's exhilarating, it's energizing." This aligns with five of the women speaking of a **feeling of stoke** which refers to the feeling in the moment of riding a wave and the immediate feeling thereafter.

*P2: "It just kicked me. Then I stood up for the first time on a wave, a feeling I really didn't want to miss anymore."*

With regards to stoke, P8 speaks of "one of the most fantastic feelings" which shows her passion for surfing. The two former competitive and sponsored surfers (P3 and P9) even specifically stated that surfing means the world or rather the life to them as it saved their lives not only physically but mentally by for example pulling P9 out of poverty and providing a safe space.

*P9: "Surfing is my whole life basically. It got me out of some heavy situations, times in my life. I used to live in a heavy poverty ridden area and surfing actually pulled me out of it, I came to Muizenberg and lived here all my life and just surfed all the time which kept me away from all the bad stuff."*

P9's argument aligns with surfing giving an opportunity to the majority of the women interviewed to relax and escape their worries and problems. Also P8 explicitly states that "you paddle out and it is like you are leaving your problems on the shore."

## *Achievement*

Lastly, the women's involvement is affected by a feeling of achievement. As mentioned in the previous chapter, six women of the sample have experiences in competitive surfing. Hence, it is not surprising that four interviewees also stated that surfing competitively is or rather was an important reason for them to continue to surf.

*P9: "I started surfing but the reason why I kept surfing is because I became really good at it and I started beating guys and girls and I just kept doing it because I actually enjoyed like beating people. That's probably the wrong reason to do it."*

In addition, two women enjoy the feeling of being challenged when surfing and one interviewee even speaks of being driven by a certain feeling of superiority over people who don't know how to surf.

As this section shows, the factors influencing the female surfers' involvement are manifold and often interconnected. Summarizing, looking at the factors which have been mentioned by at least half of the women of the sample, it becomes clear that the love of the water, making friends, surfing as a fun hobby, relaxation, happiness, being in nature and the feeling of stoke are amongst the most significant ones affecting the surfers involvement.

### *8.2.4 Surf Behaviour and Factors Influencing their Participation Level*

As the previous section revealed, the reasons for initial attraction and enduring involvement in surfing are numerous. However, several aspects influence the women's actual participation in surfing.



	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
<b>Main Category</b>	<b>Surf History and Background</b>			
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Surf Behavior</b>			
Subcategory II	Surfing other spots besides Muizenberg	P3: "Yes – t	9	1
Subcategory II	Surfing with friends	P8: "... most	8	2
Subcategory II	Surfing with family member/s	P4: "I actual	6	4
Subcategory II	Surfing alone	P7: "I mostl	6	4
Subcategory II	Surfing twice a week or more	P4: "Depenc	6	4
Subcategory II	Surfing once a week or less	P5: "I was s	2	8
Subcategory II	Surfing three times a week or more	P3: "No I try	2	8
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Factors influencing the Surf Behaviour</b>			
Subcategory II	Conditions /wind / swell / tide	P2: "I am ch	9	1
Subcategory II	Webcam / Lifestyle surf report / Wavescape	P2: "I am ch	9	1
Subcategory II	Time	P1: "Probab	7	3
Subcategory II	Going in if already there	P3: "I don't	7	3
Subcategory II	Situation in the line-up / Crowds	P2: "If it's tc	5	5
Subcategory II	Money	P7: "It got q	2	8
Subcategory II	Weather	P1: "Probab	2	8
Subcategory II	Relying on friends' forecast	P1: "Kind o	2	8
Subcategory II	Lack of Inspiration/ Motivation	P1: "You go	1	9
Subcategory II	Feeling tired	P1: "If I kn	1	9
Subcategory II	Blue Bottles	P8: "I think	1	9

*Figure 11:* Participants' Surf Behaviour and Factors Influencing their Participation Level.

Looking at the interviewees' general surf behaviour, as per creation of the category scheme, eight of the interviewees **surf twice a week or more preferably with family members or friends**. Even though especially interviewed with regards to the surf break Muizenberg beach, almost all women (nine in total) **surf other spots besides Muizenberg**. This aligns with six of the women stating to preferably surf point breaks which is in so far interesting that all interviewees were interviewed with regards to surfing the beach break in Muizenberg. However, the majority of the women interviewed favour waves sized three feet or smaller, four surfers (all competitively experienced) prefer waves bigger than three feet. Furthermore, six interviewees (four shortboarders and two longboarders) stated to have experience on a competitive level with three of them (all shortboarders) having been sponsored before. P3 for example surfed competitively for 27 years, including representing South Africa at some stage.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> For more information please see Figure 4 – Participant Details in Chapter 7.2.3.

### *Factors Influencing the Surf Behaviour*

As the figure above demonstrates, focusing on factors which influence the participation levels of the athletes revealed some clear tendencies. Most predominantly, nine of ten women indicate that they plan their surf around the **conditions** such as wind, swell and tide. **Good weather** also seems to be important to two women as they only enjoy surfing if the sun is out. To support their decision making process of when to go to ride waves, nine of the athletes **make use of webcams** which show real life pictures or videos of the waves online or **rely on the information of friends**.

*P2: "I am checking the webcam and also knowing a bit what the wind does and just what the condition is like."*

Even though the surfers try to surf at good conditions, seven of the women say that if they already have made the effort to come to the beach, they would **go into the water in any case**, even if the conditions might have changed meanwhile. P4 for example states that she would never arrive at the beach and then not go into the water. Nevertheless, conditions aren't the only aspect constraining the women. In fact, another constraint also faced by seven women is time. The results show that the majority of the women have **time constraints** when it comes to surfing as they have other obligations including work or family.

*P6: "I surf sunrise most mornings because I start work from half past nine so my work definitely is an influence on when I surf."*

Interestingly, P3 and P9, two formerly competitive surfers, both state to prioritize surfing and plan their work around favourable surf conditions.

*P3: "It all depends on what the wind is doing and what the swell is doing and I work my work around that."*

Further, results show that the majority of the women are concerned with **crowds**. Meanwhile six women state that they do not enjoy surfing the break when it is crowded or they even avoid surfing when there is a lot of people in the water, four say that crowds frustrate them but more so at other breaks than Muizenberg. Interestingly, in this section a male dominated setting did not specifically arise as being a part of the decision of surf.

Not less importantly, P1 explains that she really needs to **feel inspired or motivated** to go surfing beforehand. This can be for example by seeing other surfers ride good waves or getting changed into their wetsuits. As paddling on the surfboard can be exhausting, **feeling tired** also sometimes prevents P1 from going into the water. Lastly, P8 mentions to have stayed out of the water several times due to **Blue Bottles**, animals which belong to the group of jellyfish and whose stings can be extremely painful.

With basic knowledge of the participants' characteristics and their surf behaviour and background, the foundation for the subsequent analysis of the category scheme has been laid. The following sub-chapters should now provide answers to the overarching research question.

### 8.3 Muizenberg Beach – Surf Spot and Economy

As this study is only focusing on the surf break Muizenberg beach, it was aimed at finding out what makes the location attractive to female surfers. In total the interviewees named fourteen different characteristics to describe the surf spot. While most of these characteristic were seen as positive, two of them had a negative connotation. The setting characteristics can be divided into characteristics referring to the surf break and the waves as well as into characteristics referring to the environment and the social aspect of Muizenberg itself.

#### 8.3.1 Setting Characteristics: Surf Break

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
<b>Main Category</b>	<b>Muizenberg Beach - Surf Spot and Economy</b>			
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Setting Characteristics</b>			
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>Surf Break</b>			
	Shape and Size of Wave	P2: "Becaus	8	2
	Userfriendliness	P1: "Becaus	7	3
	Crowds ( - )	P3: "I really	6	4
	Convenient Distance	P7: "It's cor	5	5
	Consistency of waves	P1: "Becaus	3	7
	Water Temperature	P6: "It's a lc	2	8
	Absence of Adequate Control ( - )	P3: "It is vei	2	8
	High Wave Count	P1: "So whe	1	9

Figure 12: Surf Break Characteristics of Muizenberg Beach.

The prime characteristic which makes Muizenberg attractive to almost all female surfers interviewed was the **shape and the size of the wave**. This goes hand in hand with the description of the spot as **user friendly** which refers to a low difficulty of the paddle-out into the line-up. Especially for longer surfboards Muizenberg is a great place to surf as well as for learners in general as “the wave is not incredibly steep or hollow” (P2). In combination with shape and size of the wave, also **consistency of the waves** in Muizenberg is valued by the study participants and influences their decision to surf there. Especially during South African winter times the beach in the South of Cape Town is known for providing relatively consistent waves. Further related to shape and size as well as to userfriendliness is the possibility to have a **high wave count**, meaning to catch and ride a lot of waves during one session. Lastly, the **water temperature** mostly is higher than at other surf breaks around Cape Town. Both of the last two arguments were given twice respectively. No matter what the individuals’ motives are to surf Muizenberg beach, half of the sample indicates to live in a **convenient distance to the beach** which can be considered as further making Muizenberg attractive with regards to surfing and possible time constraints. As P4’s statement shows, it is several different aspects which make Muizenberg attractive to the participants.

*P4: "It's pretty consistent, in terms of it's really close to where I live in Kalk Bay, it's really close, consistent and because I longboard it's the perfect place to surf."*

However, the results show that there are also some negative aspects characterizing the surf break in Muizenberg. Six of the women say that they **often perceive the line-up as crowded** which prevents them from enjoying the sport or going into the water at all. With regards to crowds and safety for surfers and swimmers alike, two of the interviewees also mention the **absence of adequate control of the beach** which is seen as a negative characteristic.

*P3: "It is very crowded. I do think that there should be more control on the beach with a beach manager but Muizenberg is an ideal wave for the average surfer to have fun, learn a new skill and have an experience."*

P10 further states that in her opinion surf schools should make sure that everybody renting equipment is instructed to the surfer etiquette as otherwise it can be “an absolute nightmare”. P3 suggests that in order to improve the safety not only

for surfers but swimmers alike there should be a dedicated bathing area which possibly leads to fewer accidents between surfers and swimmers. Additionally, she sees an urgent need for permanent life guards all year round.

### 8.3.2 Setting Characteristics: Environment

Besides former mentioned aspects which make the surf break attractive to the women, also environmental circumstances contribute to making surfing in the South of Cape Town attractive for the women interviewed.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Muizenberg Beach - Surf Spot and Economy			
Subcategory I	Setting Characteristics			
Subcategory II	Environment			
	Community Feeling	P4: "It's alw	6	4
	Inclusivity of all Levels	P10: "I find	4	6
	Social Aspect	P10: ". But i	4	6
	Safety	P1: "Becaus	3	7
	Business Aspect	P3: "I come	2	8

Figure 13: Environmental Characteristics making Muizenberg Attractive to Participants.

Another important aspect which is valued by 60% of the female surfers is the **community feeling in Muizenberg**. As the major activity in Muizenberg happens around the beach a strong community has evolved. Six of the women acknowledge feeling like being part or belonging to that community which makes them feel welcome and hence enjoy their surf more than at other surf breaks. As P6 points out, not only is there a general surf community but also a longboard community in particular due to the shape of the wave.

*P6: "I feel more local when I am at home in that sense of being part of a community it's quite a longboarding community and I know a lot of people in Muizenberg so I feel more welcoming and open than Llandudno and Kommetjes in accordance to obviously what I surf which is a longboard. "*

Four of the women specifically refer to the **social aspect** and the environment which goes along with community feeling and hence contributes to making Muizenberg attractive. The interconnection of several findings can further be seen in

the fact that four women specifically mention the positive effect of **inclusivity of all levels** at the surf break.

*P10: "I find it really inclusive and I was living in Muizenberg so there is a convenience aspect as well. But it feels more accepting, I think. It's one of those waves where I feel like anybody can go and surf there and you can be like really, really shit and nobody is going to judge you."*

As the quote above shows, the women enjoy not being judged by anyone and also feel like there "is no pressure like you have to perform brilliantly" (P5) in Muizenberg which might be different at other surf breaks. However, it has not been mentioned a single time that Muizenberg in specific is more welcoming of female surfers than other surf breaks around Cape Town.

As this study was conducted in South Africa which is known for a high crime rate, it is not surprising that three of the women interviewed also name **safety** as an important factor influencing their decision to surf in Muizenberg. During the day Muizenberg does not only have shark spotters trying to keep surfers safe from shark attacks but also car guards and a lot of open shops looking after surfers' car keys and belongings. P9 who originally comes from a poverty ridden area with a high crime rate area but also P1 and P10 especially value safety.

*P9: "It's safe. I've got places to leave my car keys. I know the car guards. They always take care of me. I've known them since I was small so they always watch out for me. I know I am safe here basically yes."*

Lastly, two surfers (P2 and P3) indicate that they also come to Muizenberg because of their **businesses** which are both related to surfing. Thereby P2 owns a surf camp offering surf lessons to foreign travellers and P3 is a surf therapist working with disabled surfers, both using the advantage of Muizenberg's waves being user-friendly.

### *8.3.3 Economic Contribution and Perceived Role in the Surfing Industry*

The interviews revealed that two of the women do not only come to Muizenberg on a regular basis to surf themselves but because of their businesses. This fact supports the assumption of female surfers significantly contributing to the Surfing Economy. Hence, this sub-chapter looks at the contribution the interviewees

make towards the Surfing Economy as well as how they perceive their own role in the surfing industry.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Muizenberg Beach - Surf Spot and Economy			
Subcategory I	Muizenberg Economy			
Subcategory II	Routine in Muizenberg			
	Having Food / Drinks afterwards	P1: "No, I c	8	2
	Meeting up with someone	P10: "Like I	6	4
	Stretching / Warm up	P1: "So I wc	5	4
	Looking for a Place to Sit in the Line-Up	P4: "Then w	4	5
	Depending on the Job	P3: "It depe	1	9
Subcategory II	Way of Transport			
	Car	P3: "With r	9	1
	Walking	P2: "Walkin	2	8
	Train	P5: "With th	1	9
Subcategory II	Ø Money spent per Visit in ZAR		ZAR54 / Ø	
	Coffee / Hot Drink / Smoothie	P1: "Maxim	6	4
	Food	P1: "Maxim	6	4
	Petrol	P5: "I don't	9	1
	Car Guard	P3: " And th	5	5

Figure 14: Participants' Economic Contribution to the Surfing Economy of Muizenberg.

Before looking at the women's economic contribution, the study also revealed that except for P2 all women interviewed have a personal routine when they come to Muizenberg. This can include a **warm-up and stretch sequence** at the beach as well as **looking for a good place to sit in the line-up**. P3 who works as a surf therapist says that her routine depends on the person she coaches that day. Additionally, the majority of the women asked **combine surfing with doing other things in Muizenberg**. Six of the women for example state that they normally **meet up with other people** in Muizenberg. This number corresponds with the majority of the sample preferring to surf with either friends or family members (see above). Furthermore, eight women use to **go for drinks or food** after their surf session. This is in so far interesting that exactly this sort of routine sheds light on female surfers' spending behaviour and contribution to the surfing economy.

*P5: "Afterwards we always get like either a hot chocolate or chips. I guess we have a routine."*

Looking at the monetary contribution of the female surfers, it is also of importance to mention that nine of the ten women use their **car as a way of**

**transport** to get to Muizenberg beach. Only two women sometimes walk to the beach and one occasionally takes the train. However, ninety percent of the women normally taking their cars to get to the surf spot, implies that not only they spend money on petrol in general but also pay the car guards for watching after their cars while surfing. Five women even specifically state to do so.

*P3: "And then you're paying the car guard. I'd say ZAR200 easily for a mission to Muizenberg."*<sup>29</sup>

The results of the study show that besides P2, who walks to the beach and does not go for food or drinks in Muizenberg, all women spend money in order to surf. However, P2 states that when she used to drive to Muizenberg before she moved there, she also spent money on petrol, food and drinks. With regards to economic contribution and the women's **spending behaviour**, it becomes obvious that on average each female surfer interviewed spends **ZAR54 per surf session**. Taking two sessions per week as proximate average per woman, this leads to cumulated expenses of around ZAR5600 a year.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, in fact the results reveal that the economic contribution in form of spending money in the surfing industry is higher than the average ZAR54 spent per surf session. As P1 indicates, a lot more money is involved in order to go surfing such as paying for equipment and gear. Hence, she plays quite a big role in the surf industry.

*P1: "I contribute that aspect to the surfing environment, make it more equal in terms of gender and I'd say obviously I contribute a lot to the economy of surfing like buying a wetsuit, wax and leash. I spend quite a lot of money in the surfing industry as well."*

To find out more about how the women feel in the surf community and industry, they were asked about the perception of their own role in the surfing industry.

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<sup>29</sup> This amount of money refers to the total amount spent on one surf session in Muizenberg.

<sup>30</sup>  $\text{ZAR}54 \times 2 \text{ (sessions/week)} = \text{ZAR}108 \text{ per week};$   
 $\text{ZAR}108 \times 52 \text{ (weeks/year)} = \text{ZAR}5616/\text{year}.$



	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Muizenberg Beach - Surf Spot and Economy			
Main Category	Perceived Role in Surf Industry			
Subcategory II	High Involvement	P3: "I am ve	6	4
Subcategory II	Inspiration for Other Surfers / Uplifting Women	P7: "...and I	6	4
Subcategory II	Contribution to the Economy	P1: "I contri	4	6
Subcategory II	Contribution to Gender Equality	P1: "I contri	3	7
Subcategory II	Giving Back to the Earth and Environment	P6: "I think	1	9

Figure 15: Participants' Perceived Role in the Surfing Industry.

When specifically asked about their roles in the surfing industry, almost all (9) women see themselves as not only **contributing to the economy** but **very involved** even. Six women specifically mention to try to **inspire other surfers and uplift women surfing**.

*P3: "I am very involved with surfing in South Africa. I've sat as the first woman on the board of directors for Surfing South Africa and first female coach selected for a national surf team. So I really tried to push, uplift and promote women surfing where I can over the years and I just stuck with it."*

Simply due to being female three interviewees also acknowledge the **enhancement of gender equality in surfing**. However, some women see themselves as contributing to the economy but do not speak of personally being very involved in the industry (P1, P5 and P6). Nevertheless, this result shows that women are aware of a certain gender inequality in surfing. The category 'barriers to gender equality in surfing' (Chapter 8.5) reveals the interviewees' perceived reasons for the existing imbalances.

## 8.4 Lived Experiences of Female Surfers

The focus of this study's primary research question lies on the lived experiences of female surfers in the traditionally male dominated sport of surfing. Previous results demonstrate that the interviewees mostly are aware of existing gender inequalities in surfing.

#### 8.4.1 Female Surfers' Feelings Participating in a Male Dominated Sport

The women's perceived barriers to gender equality in surfing are based on their feelings and lived experiences of surfing. Hence, before going into detail about those barriers, the results of the investigation of the women's feelings and lived experiences are depicted in the following.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Lived Experiences			
Subcategory I	Feelings and Constraints Participating in Surfing			
Subcategory II	Feeling Before Surfing			
	Excitement / Motivation	P3: "Do I ge	7	3
	Good Feeling / Mood Booster	P2: "Genera	4	6
	Annoyed by Sunscreen	P2: "The on	1	9
Subcategory II	Feeling after a Surf Session			
	Feeling Good	P4: "Most o	10	0
	Feeling a Sense of Stoke	P1: "Salty (I	5	5
	Feeling Refreshed	P3: "Youngx	4	6
	Feeling Exhausted / Tired	P2: "Can't b	3	7
	Feeling Salty	P1: "Salty (I	2	8
	Feeling Calm / Clear Headed	P1: "Salty (I	2	8
	Feeling Energized	P1: "And alx	2	8
	Feeling Frustrated	P7: "Someti	1	9
Subcategory II	Feelings / Constraints when Surfing Another Spot			
	Feeling Concerned with Spot / Wave Characteristics	P1: "Surfing	7	3
	Feeling Nervous	P1: "So Kon	6	4
	Feeling Unwelcome e.g. by Locals	P1: "So Kon	6	4
	Feeling Concerned with Crowds	P4: "Muizen	6	4
	Feeling Inconfident because of Perceived Lack of Skill	P4: "Travell	5	5
	Feeling Uncomfortable because of Male Surfers	P1: "I don't	4	6
	Feeling Pressured to Perform	P5: "Comple	4	6
	Feeling as Being Treated Differently	P4: "So I thi	3	7
	Feeling Frustrated about Absence of Surf Etiquette	P4: "Muizen	3	7
	Wild Life Concerns	P1: "Surfing	2	8
	Selfish People	P1: "It's mo	2	8

Figure 16: Participants' Feelings and Constraints Participating in Surfing.

#### Feeling Before Surfing

The majority of the women interviewed **feel excited and motivated before going surfing** or upon arrival at the surf break. Four women state to **generally feel good** when arriving at the surf spot. However, one interviewee (P2) admits that she does get **annoyed by putting on sunscreen**.

*P3: "Yes I am always excited to go surfing so when its cooking you know that you've time it right and you gotta take advantage. The tide is always changing, the wind is always changing, the swell is always changing. You really got to take the opportunity while you have it."*

### *Feeling During and After Surfing*

In addition to four women feeling good at arrival at the break, ten women say that they generally **feel good and happy** not only after but also while being in the water. Five women further speak about a certain **sense of stoke**. P4 even says that her body “needs the stoke”. **Feeling refreshed**, another sensory enjoyment, is a characteristic also mentioned by several of the female surfers. Again, that a combination of several different feelings is possible can be seen in P7’s response:

*P7: "But like most of the times I get out and I am a little tired but you feel good, feel refreshed."*

Further, **feeling calm and clear headed** as well as **energized** is a feeling two of the women often experience after their surfing practice. P1 for example does not only feel energized but also like she could overcome anything. Knowing that not everybody knows how to surf makes her feel superior to other people, especially to non-surfers.

*P1: "And also I feel like you can pretty much overcome anything after a good surf and it's also cool to know that not a lot of people can do it."*

Since surfing takes place in salty sea water, it is no surprise that two women also specifically mention to **feel salty** after being in the waves. As surfing is an extremely demanding not only physical but mental exercise, it is further no wonder that some of the women **feel exhausted and tired afterwards**

*P2: "You are so exhausted but somehow being exhausted is part of the experience and this feeling of happiness when you are sitting down again and being able to say, wow I have done something good for me today, not only for the body but mentally as well."*

Nevertheless, not all feelings are positive only. P7 for example admits that she sometimes **feels frustrated** depending on the quality of the waves she rode or depending on the crowds meaning depending on the amount and behavior of other surfers in the water.

*P7: "Sometimes I am frustrated or sometimes I had a bad surf or Muizenberg can often be really crowded so you get out of the water and you are like oh that was such a waste of time because it was so crowded."*

This negative feeling has been mentioned by P7 only. However, this does not mean that all the other women do not have bad feelings sometimes or negative experiences with regards to surfing which can be seen in the next chapter.

#### *Feeling when Surfing Some Other Wave*

To find out about women's feelings in the water surrounded by predominantly male surfers, it was further asked about their feelings when surfing another break which might not be as beginner friendly as Muizenberg. The results reveal eleven different feelings and emotions which come up for the women interviewed. Interestingly, all of these feelings regarding other surf spots were answered in language that described their experiences in the negative.

The most predominant concern for seven of the female surfers is related to the spot condition and the wave itself. This includes being **scared of rocks in the water** or sandbanks as well as the speed and **shape of the wave**. Being concerned about the surf spot as the wave might not be as gentle as in Muizenberg goes hand in hand with the majority of the women **feeling more nervous and curious** when surfing somewhere else.

Six women and hence still the majority of the sample **feel intimidated and unwelcome** when surfing somewhere else. This intimidation and feeling of not being welcome is mostly related to **high degrees of localism**. P7 even goes as far as speaking of locals hating other people surfing 'their' break with hate being a very strong word. As the study was conducted in Muizenberg most of the women refer to Long Beach, Kommetje, when speaking about other more difficult surf breaks with a rather high level of localism.

*P5: "Like the locals, the people who live in Kommetjes, who have been surfing there forever. They hate other people surfing there. So when you go they like are very derogatory, kind of I don't want to say like mean just like okey cool you haven't been here the whole time so what are you doing here?"*

As locals might not be as friendly and welcoming as in Muizenberg **crowds** are also of a higher concern for the women. Whereas some women state that in Muizenberg they manage to handle crowds it is more difficult at other breaks. P5 even says that if there are crowds in Long Beach for example she would rather stay

out of the water than going in even though potentially being able to surf the wave itself.

*P5: "Muizenberg I am fine. Muizenberg I'll just avoid as many people as I can but if it's somewhere like Kommetjes I won't go in."*

Certainly this decision is not only influenced by the fact of a lot of surfers already being in the water but also by the feeling of not being welcome and hence uncomfortable at the surf spot itself. Four of the interviewees admit that they feel uncomfortable or even anxious because of guys whereby guys specifically refers to male surfers.

*P1: "I don't feel too comfortable in the water. I feel a little bit anxious with a lot of the guys who surf there all the time. They don't make us feel at home in the water."*

Align with feeling unwelcome by guys three interviewees also say that when surfing at other more difficult spots they feel like they are **treated differently because of being a woman**. Again, this has a very negative connotation as often male surfers steal the women's waves simply because of attributing a lack of skill to females in general.

*P4: "So I think that's perceptions of oh you're a woman you can't surf so I am dropping in on you."*

Further, three women are unhappy with the **absence of surf etiquette** which is especially important at surf breaks such as Point Breaks or Reefs. Rotation is important to allow for all the surfers to catch waves. The three interviewees here (P1, P4 and P9) are all shortboarders and experienced on a competitive level. The two formerly mentioned points, being treated differently because of being female as well as the absence of surf etiquette, undermine the argument of P1 and P4 speaking of most of the **surfers being very selfish**. This stands in complete opposite to Muizenberg whose community and inclusivity has been highlighted positively by most of the women interviewed.

*P4: "[...] there is no sort of camaraderie it's just everyone for themselves. That's kind of frustrating because of course they clustered women in surfing."*

In addition, Muizenberg is known for being a rather gentle and more beginner and longboard friendly wave. When it comes to surfing other waves, five of the

women **feel unconfident due to a presumed lack of skill**. Feeling unconfident is sometimes also combined with **feeling pressured by other people watching and by high levels of competition**. Lastly, two of the female surfers are **concerned with the wildlife** when surfing other spots bearing in mind that South Africa has a certain population of great white sharks and no shark spotters at other spots besides Muizenberg.

#### 8.4.2 Lived Experiences of Female Surfers

With regards to the interviewees' lived experiences, the category scheme allowed for a division into several subcategories. These are: General, positive as well as negative experiences. Thereby, the two latter subcategories could be further divided into gendered positive or negative experiences.

##### *General and Positive Lived Experiences*

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Lived Experiences			
Subcategory I	Surf Related Experiences			
Subcategory II	General Experiences			
	Only Girl in the Line-Up	P2: "Yes, but	7	3
	Feeling Hardcore / Special	P9: "To be l	3	7
Subcategory II	Positive Experiences in General			
	Fun in the Water	P2: "It does	9	1
	Healing Power of the Ocean / Fear Reduction	P3: "The oc	6	4
	Connecting / Surfing with Friends	P10: "And b	6	4
	Relaxing / Calming / Stimulating / Coming down to Your Senses	P5: "It's cal	5	5
	Energizing / Mood Booster / Happiness	P3: "You ca	5	5
	Good / Long Waves	P4: "When l	4	6
	Sense of Freedom	P1: "It gives	2	8
	Naturally Learning of Life Skills	P3: "The oc	1	9
	Beautiful Nature (Rainbow, Sunset, etc.)	P10: "When	1	9

Figure 17: Participants' General and Positive Lived Experiences of Surfing.

When it comes to general surfing experiences, seven of the women interviewed for this study state to **regularly be the only woman in the water amongst a group of male surfers**. As P2's statement shows the fact of possibly being the only female in the water is not necessarily seen as a constraint to go surfing.

*P2: "Yes, but I don't care if it is 20 guys in the line-up, or 20 girls or mixed. I don't care. I am going in anyways."*

In fact, some of the interviewees even enjoy being in the water as the only woman and three of the athletes actually speak of **feeling hardcore** meaning special

*P9: "To be honest I feel hard core, you know. Like sit out there and I am looking at the guys, like 'yoh what's up, I am here by the way'."*

However, looking at positive experiences in specific, nine subcategories could be generated. Almost all women say they generally have **fun in the water** and have made **good experiences when surfing with friends** or people they know. Furthermore, catching waves and being in the water is not only **energizing** but also a **mood booster** for five of the women. P3 even says that this experience or feeling of catching a wave can't be described in words. It has to be tried because "only a surfer knows the feeling." This feeling is even more intense if the **waves caught are good or long ones**. That all those formerly mentioned factors are somehow related with each other shows P4's statement:

*P4: "When I'm getting good waves, getting the waves that I wanted to get. I am with people that I know and yes conditions are good. And it's warm."*

Furthermore, six women of the sample mention to experience a certain **healing power of the ocean** which also helps them to reduce their fears. P3 also says that she has **learnt life skills** by surfing which has a positive connotation for her.

*P3: "The ocean really has healing properties and what I've learned working with kids, because surf changes every day, you learn to adapt and you get taught that skill naturally. [...] You're learning these life skills."*

Fifty percent of the women also **calm down and relax** when they surf. Surfing allows them to leave worries and struggles of their personal lives back at the beach and to solely focus on themselves and the ocean as it needs awareness to catch and ride a wave and to not get pushed under the water by breaking waves.

*P5: "It's calming like you wouldn't think it. Like you go out and there literally is nothing to worry about except yourself and your board which is so cool."*

That you leave any concerns behind on land is also support by two women (including one of the five above) speaking of experiencing a **sense of freedom** when surfing. At the same time, as P1 states, there is a certain realization that the power of the ocean is bigger than oneself which also contributes to leaving worries behind and focusing on the waves. As the category scheme revealed, there are certain overlaps

between several categories. A frequent overlap can be seen looking at positive experiences as well as reasons for enduring involvement. Lastly, P10 regularly makes **great experiences in nature** due to being a surfer. It makes her happy “when nature plays its part and you get a rainbow, some rain, an unusual ray of sunshine, an amazing glassy set out of nowhere”.

### *Gendered Positive Surfing Experiences*

The transcription of the interviews and the creation of the category scheme made obvious that the women’s lived experiences vary significantly with regards to the gender of the other surfers the women are in the water with.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Lived Experiences			
Subcategory I	Surf Related Experiences			
Subcategory II	Positive Experience with Male Surfers			
	Respect and Acknowledgment due to Surfing Heavy Spots	P3: "Yes, of	2	8
Subcategory II	Positive Experiences with Female Surfers			
	Connecting / Making Friends / Cheering	P2: "Actuall	9	1
	Supportive Atmosphere	P4: "No, no,	5	5
	Feeling more Comfortable / Less Pressure	P1: "...we cı	2	8

*Figure 18:* Participants’ Gendered Positive Experiences of Surfing.

Only two of the ten women specifically made positive experiences when surfing with males. P3 and P9, both former competitive short boarders, state that they sometimes **experience acknowledgement and respect from male surfers** due to surfing difficult surf breaks and waves.

*P3: "Yes, often. I actually feel quite lucky because usually in those surf spots that I am at. They’re quite extreme and the boys respect me for being out there so I do keep quite lucky in that regard."*

The more difficult to surf at a specific surf break, the more likely it is for female surfers to be the only female in the line-up. As mentioned before, P9 for example feels hardcore surfing alongside men as the only female athlete. Looking at P3’s answer, it can be assumed that the more difficult a wave to surf, the more likely it is to be respected by men.

Interestingly, meanwhile there is only one category attributed to making positive experiences with regards to surfing with males, three categories concerning



pleasant experiences with other female surfers could be generated. Nearly all interviewee specifically state to **try to connect with other women in the line-up**. P3 says that in the past she often was ignored by fellow female surfers when going into the water. As she didn't like that feeling, she now actively tries to uplift women surfing.

*P3: "I've been so proactive and trying to uplift women surfing...I know what it was like 20 years ago, paddling out into an line-up with an older woman and her totally ignoring me. It wasn't cool, it didn't make me feel good, so why must do it to anybody. So really, if I see a female face I'm gonna say 'Howz'it' and introduce myself and if I see her battling I'll definitely give her one wave."*

P3 saying that she would give another woman one wave also shows that often women support each other. Five of the interviewees feel some sort of **support amongst female surfers** in general, a feeling that doesn't show up for them with regards to male surfers. As P4 who is a long boarder says the longboard community in Muizenberg is quite strong and women are happy to help and support each other. She further states that it is always men who drop in on her, never fellow female surfers.

*P4: "No, no, no. It will always be men. Women are the only people, there is like old women in Muizenberg they just want to surf. No malicious intent sort of ways because a lot of women in surfing would not do that for the most part. Especially the women long boarding community is really strong and we'll always be happy to help each other which is really nice."*

Subsequently, the fact of P4 stating that women are supportive of each other and that it is always male surfers who steal her wave means that the absence of support by males can be seen as negative experience. Furthermore, the feeling of support amongst female surfers goes hand in hand with two interviewees **feeling more comfortable and less pressured** when surfing with women. Those two interviewees have not mentioned the bigger amount of support amongst female athletes. This subsequently means that in total seven of the ten women feel more comfortable or supported.

## Negative Lived Experiences

Even though all the women have a certain love for the sport of surfing and the ocean, all of them have made negative experiences in their surfing life before. Interestingly, the amount of negative experiences exceeds the number of positive experiences by far.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Lived Experiences			
Subcategory I	Surf Related Experiences			
Subcategory II	Negative Experiences in General			
	Pressure if Crowded	P1: "That's	10	0
	Injuries of Own Board / Self caused / Spot	P2: "Injuries	7	3
	Absece of Surf Etiquette	P4: "Muizen	7	3
	Pressure from Self	P3: "No I ha	6	4
	Injury / Dings because of someone else	P6: "I didn't	6	4
	Spot Characteristics / Conditions	P1: "There's	5	5
	Being Assaulted / Shouted at	P1: "Definit	4	6
	Pressure from Family Members / Friends / Camera	P2: "Mostly	3	7
	Shark Alarm	P10: "A sha	2	8
	Low Wave Count	P1: "Definit	2	8
	Racism	P4: "It's kin	2	8
	Pressure from Coaches	P3: "No I ha	1	9
	Dirty Water	P10: "Or if t	1	9

Figure 19: Participants' Negative Lived Experiences of Surfing in General.

The whole sample has had **bad experiences with crowds**. The women interviewed **feel pressured** to catch waves and perform or they worry about getting injured and surf accidents.

*P6: "It's quite frustrating to surf when it's crowded especially when there's people who don't know what they're doing but then again like it's not my ocean an it's not yours so we've got to share it but I guess it's frustrating and worrying because you're constantly stressed that you're board is going to get dinged or someone is going to surf into you."*

With regards to pressure, six women do not only feel pressured by crowds but also **pressured by themselves**. Amongst those are the five surfers who have made competitive experiences. With regards to competing, P3 additionally says that she has felt **pressured by her coaches** before. Lastly, three interviewees also have experienced **pressure from family members or friends** or the presence of a camera in the water. No matter what, as P6's statement above demonstrates the ocean is a

public good and does not belong to anybody. Regardless of a person's gender, waves have to be shared amongst surfers, swimmers or any other ocean sport.

Seven women also specifically stated to have had bad experiences at surfing due to **injuries only involving themselves** or their own surf boards and six women have experienced **injuries caused by other surfers** due their unawareness or their lack of skill.

*P6: "I didn't want his board to hit me and this 5 foot wave was about to break, right in front of us. He ended up ditching his board and it went back into my face and hit my chin and I had a whole under my chin so I had to go in and get stitches."*

The presence of crowds and some surfers' actions resulting in injuries is often related to the **absence of surf etiquette** which has been experienced by seven interviewees.

*P2: "Thinking of other surfers and people, then yes, those surfers who think they have to catch every single wave and don't have etiquette. Horrible."*

As the following example shows, most of the interviews have had several bad experiences with regards to surfing. P4 who is a woman of colour does also include **racism** into her answer. Racism has been mentioned by two surfers (P4 and P9), both coloured. On the other hand, none of the other interviewees, all of white skin colour, have encountered racism so far.

*P4: "Sure, I mean so lots of dings, people riding into you. I once had to protect a kid by throwing up a board someone was coming straight into it. It's kind of crazy stuff but I think most things in the surfing community is racism most probably. Not so much in Muizenberg's community but Durban there is so much racism."*

In terms of bad experiences when surfing in Muizenberg, two of the athletes also name **shark alarms**. Shark alarms lead to the surfers not only having to end their surf session abruptly but also being concerned about their safety. Lastly, five women interviewed have had bad experiences with **rocks at the surf spot** or the general characteristics of a surf break. One interviewee (P10) further mentions that for her negative experiences include **surfing in dirty water**. However, as the argument of rocks at a surf break shows, it becomes clear that even though all the

women were interviewed specifically focusing on Muizenberg beach, the interviewees' answers were given referring to their general lived experiences including experiences made elsewhere.

### *Gendered Negative Surfing Experiences*

With regards to negative experiences of surfing, the creation of the category scheme brought forward seven experiences related to surfing with men. In stark contrast thereto, only one bad experience of surfing with other women has been found.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Lived Experiences			
Subcategory I	Surf Related Experiences			
Subcategory II	Negative Experiences with Male Surfers			
	Pressure to Perform in Order to be Respected as Surfer	P1: "...the lc	8	2
	Being Disrespected as a Surfer	P1: "No. I th	4	6
	Being Dropped in / Stealing Waves	P4: "...a lot	4	6
	Discussions at the Beach or in the Water	P3: "Yes. I l	2	8
	Other Males also Having a Hard Time	P1: "Even if	1	9
Subcategory II	Negative Experiences with Female Surfers			
	Jealousy / Competition	P7: "Someti	4	6

*Figure 20:* Participants' Gendered Negative Lived Experiences of Surfing.

The negative aspect of surfing with males which has been mentioned most often is the feeling of **pressure to perform as a woman in order to be respected** in the line-up. This aligns with some of the interviewees wanting to make a good impression or to not look stupid in the line-up as if they had to prove something to male surfers. Going hand in hand with feeling pressured to perform to gain respect, four of the women feel like being **disrespected as surfers simply because of being female**.

*P1: "I think if you're a woman there is a level of disrespect immediately in the water.*

P4 for example thinks that you only are respected as a female surfer amongst men if your surf level is quite high. If it is not, according to her, men would drop-in on you and not treat you nicely.

*P4: "So if you're surfing like super top nudge then suddenly you get fully respect otherwise you get dropped in on."*

Supporting this statement, according to P5 “they will do whatever they can to get a wave”. In this case with ‘they’ P5 refers to male surfers. **Being dropped-in on by male surfers** has been experienced and specifically mentioned by four women of the sample. Dropping-in on some other surfer is a disregard of surf etiquette which has been mentioned in the previous chapter as a general negative experience of surfing. In terms of pressure and respect, P1 further more specifically refers to locals who live close by the surf break and regularly surf there. Interestingly, as her answer makes clear, this feeling of pressure is caused by male surfers who she generalizes as ‘guys’.

*P1: "[....] the locals who surf there often, whether it'd be a little guy or a way older guy, they can get annoyed by you especially if you get into their way. So I feel pressured from that side as well." [...] And it also depends on the age group of the guys. Guys from 20 or like actually like 18 to 30, good surfers, that age group those are the ones who will be really aggressive."*

As the quote above shows, the interviewee refers to male surfers in general. However, she admits that the behaviour of male surfers and how they treat women in the water depends on their age. Especially surfers younger than thirty years seem to be really aggressive in her opinion. Nevertheless, P1 also makes clear that **also male athletes of a lower level can have a hard time** if they catch a wave and then are not able to surf it until the end or make turns on the wave which seems to be important to be respected as a good surfer. In addition, P3 who is a very good surfer also points out that she often had **discussions with men** in the water or on land about her being a female surfer or surfing at difficult male dominated surf breaks. However, as she is confident it does not personally affect her too much but this might not be the case with every female surfer

*P3: "Yes. I have had multiple. Both in the water and on land and most of the time it's come down to hurting some boy's ego. It's actually not my problem."*

Investigating the experiences of female surfers in the line-up, the content analysis only revealed one negative experience four of the women have experienced surfing with athletes of the same gender. This category refers to **jealousy and competition** amongst women. The more female surfers are in the line-up, the higher the level of competition amongst them. As the statement of P7 below illustrates, if the women feel like they surf better than the other girls in the water, it makes them

feel better about themselves, especially if they don't personally know the other athletes.

*P7: "Personally I will be like 'I wonder how this girl surfs', if I don't know them. There is kind of competitiveness coming out a little bit, like 'Oh I surf better than them' or they surf better than me then I just watch to see how they surf and then I guess if I surf better than them I guess I feel a little better about myself maybe."*

As this chapter reveals, all ten women have made negative experiences with male surfers before, whereby the interviewees often refer to male athletes using the descriptions 'they' or 'the guys'. It becomes clear that female surfers often struggle in the water due to their gender and that negative experiences made with male surfers significantly exceed the number of negative experiences made with female athletes.

## 8.5 Perceived Barriers to Gender Equality in Surfing

Previous chapters have shown that not only are women aware of the existence of a certain gender inequality in surfing but also of several factors enhancing the upholding thereof. Hence, the subsequent chapter focuses on the women's perceived barriers to gender equality in surfing. These include general and structural reasons for gender inequality, commercialization and sexual objectification of female athletes by media as well as gender related differences in prize money and sponsorship.

### *General Reasons*

As the figure below demonstrates the general and structural reasons contributing to gender inequality in surfing are manifold.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
<b>Main Category</b>	<b>Lived Experiences</b>			
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Perceived Barriers to Gender Equality in Surfing</b>			
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>General and Structural Reasons</b>			
	Lack of Institutional Support	P4: "So also	6	4
	Cultural Background / Racism	P3: "Numbe	4	6
	Sexist Industry	P8: "They re	3	7
	Money Involved	P9: "From a	1	9
	Lack of Interest	P3: "Numbe	1	9

*Figure 21:* General and Structural Reasons for Gender Inequality in Surfing.

As figure 21 shows, several general reasons enhance barriers to gender equality in surfing. The most basic but very relevant reason is revealed by P3. She thinks that there generally is a certain **lack of interest of many girls** to get involved in surfing as it is maybe too competitive for them.

*P3: "Number one, the cultural background of Xhosa and Zulu women. It's really hard to get women into the water and then from a white perspective it's almost too competitive for a lot of girls where they prefer to be in bikinis and on the beach."*

If P3's argument holds true, this reason is a significant factor explaining the uneven ratio of female and male surfers. However, as the quote above shows, another important aspect keeping women of colour out of the water is related to South Africa's historical development including **cultural background and racism**. Both of these two reasons affect the numbers of female participants in surfing. In addition to that, the fact of generally **a lot of money being involved** in surfing further negatively influences the participation rate of females of colour as P9's quote shows.

*P9: "From a competitive perspective it is really difficult because surfing is a rich sport. You got to have money which is already our biggest downfall."*

Due to the historical development white people in South Africa are often wealthier than black people or people of colour. P9 who is coloured has experienced racism in surfing due to her skin colour which eventually resulted in a lack of monetary support through insufficient sponsorship and subsequently missed competition opportunities. Meanwhile P9 was not able to participate in several competitions due to the absence of sufficient money, it must be said that six of the interviewees see the **lack of institutional support** for female surfers as a massive reason for gender inequalities in surfing.

*P8: "And in South Africa not nearly enough has been done to expand the girls and women surfers [...]. But to me there is a huge structural problem in South Africa. I think Surfing SA is run by the same old guy who has run it for years and years and years. He's got the same old bias. The judges are mostly male even in the women's competitions and when they talk about transformation it seems purely as racial transformation they are not particularly interested in gender transformation. There are very few contests for women and girls and you just see once girls get to a certain age there is nothing for them and all sort of fades away. Surfing SA is disgracefully run in my opinion."*

In support of P8's statement, P4 also said that there was an error in the system. According to her, there are hardly any women contests and women can't get better if they aren't encouraged to surf. The fifth general reason identified was the **industry being characterized as sexist**. This reason is standing out since it is not only referred to one special part of being a female surfer but the industry as a whole which is why this argument was categorized as a general reason.

*P8: "They really haven't and the officials are still male. It is very male dominated [...]. And the males make a lot of sexist comments about girls, very horrible comments."*

As P8 says, the majority of the people responsible are male which is reflected in the lower number of female surfers in South Africa. Sexist comments of officials in charge do not encourage women to surf. The sexist character of the whole industry goes hand in hand with the commercialization and sexualization of female surfers as being identified as an important factor contributing to gender imbalances in surfing.

#### *Commercialization and Sexualization of Female Surfers*

Speaking about the surfing industry in general, half of the sample feels that women are sexualized in media (adverts, posts etc.) in particular. This is an important aspect enhancing the creation of barriers to gender equality within the sport.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Lived Experiences			
Subcategory I	Perceived Barriers to Gender Equality in Surfing			
Subcategory II	Commercialization and Sexual Objectification			
	Wrong Targeting by Brands and Media	P10: No. To	7	3
	Lack of Functional Clothes	P3: "So I an	7	3
	Media Representation of Female Surfers	P8: "The wa	5	5

*Figure 22:* Commercialization and Sexual Objectification of Women as Barrier to Gender Equality in Surfing.

**The media representation of female athletes** is a decisive point contributing to the male dominance in surfing. Not only existing media often is sexist but P5 for example also points out that in her opinion the majority of adverts are dedicated to male surfers, not giving enough space for female athletes to be seen and acknowledged.



P5: "I mean females are always treated lesser and the prize money is always less and the attention is always less. Even when I am reading a ZigZag magazine, every single huge sponsoring thing is always just some guy who is surfing."

Furthermore, also related to the role of media is the **inadequate targeting of females by brand and media** which has effects on girls' and women's interest. Seven of the women interviewed don't feel targeted by existing surfing media and seven women complain about the **absence of functional clothes for women** respectively

P10: "I feel like all the women that they use in all of those adverts, like half of them don't even surf. They've got these perfect bodies and like long hair with an ombre<sup>31</sup> and it's like cool. You can be in a catalogue or whatever but I don't think it's realistic. The way they're wearing their wetsuits is not the way I am going to wear my wetsuit you know."

With regards to the way models present surf gear and equipment in the media, P3 also states that surfing in a g-string bikini is not functional as one loses it whilst being in the water. However, a lot of surfing media show female surfers in this presumed surf gear.

### Prize Money and Sponsorship

The third main reason identified as contributing to gender imbalances in surfing are differences in prize money and sponsorship opportunities for women.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
Main Category	Lived Experiences			
Subcategory I	Perceived Barriers to Gender Equality in Surfing			
Subcategory II	Prize Money and Sponsorship			
	Unequal Prize Money	P2: "I think	7	3
	Advancement of Female Surfers through Equal Prize Mor	P3: "Surfing	7	2
	Different Prize Money is Fair	P1: "I think	3	7
	Lack of Sponsorship Opportunities	P8: "The wc	3	7

Figure 23: Prize Money and Sponsorship Inequalities as Barriers to Gender Equality in Surfing.

<sup>31</sup> Ombre is a French expression and is used to refer to a certain hairstyle (darker roots which are shaded getting lighter towards the edges). Surfers often have blonder edges because of spending a lot of time in the sun and salt water.

Until 2019 female surfers did not get the same prize money as male surfers at WSL organized contests. Seven women see **unequal prize money** based on gender as influencing gender imbalances in surfing. They think that “for every sporting field, [...] everyone should get the same prize money” (P2). Also P8 who is a mother of two girls states the problem:

*P8: “I am not going to tell my kids to surf when she’s getting 4000 while the boys get 8000. What am I supposed to tell her?”*

Nevertheless, three women admit that in their eyes the different prize money cheques at the contest in South Africa which subsequently led to the introduction of equal prize money thereafter was fair.

*P9: “Honestly, I am fine with it. I have a weird perspective on it. I believe that, so the men’s competitive side is really, really different to the women’s competitive side. If we look at the levels of surfing, they are completely different. And yes it might be physical limitations or whatever it is. I mean I believe that the girls can ask for equal pay if they can surf equally as well, you know. Or actually compete in the men’s division and actually beat them, then I would fully go for it.”*

P4 and P6 both feel like the amount of females surfing is almost equal to the amount of men. According to them, there have always been many female surfers who simply haven’t been or still aren’t noticed. However, the majority of interviewees feel like the **introduction of equal prize money will advance females’ surfing**.

*P6: “I think there is a lot of female surfers who are kind of waiting to be noticed because there is definitely a whole female community that hasn’t really been noticed for what it is. So I think it is pretty equal and it is up to everyone else to see that now, or men. Well I don’t want to say that, just up to everyone.”*

As the category scheme reveals, not only does unequal prize money affect the participation rate of female surfers especially on a competitive level but so do **sponsorship opportunities**. Thereby, sponsorship again is connected with skin colour and general looks, so cultural background and the sexualized ideal of female surfers by the industry. P8 who played an active role within the South African surf industry for a while stated that there is a certain bias

*“towards women who fit the conventional blonde, curvy, nice looking in a bikini kind of person whereas other women who are better surfers would not get*

*sponsored by the brands because they weren't seen as fitting in with their idea of what a beautiful surfer should look like whereas with the men doesn't matter what they look like, their abilities would count."*

Looking at the women's perceived barriers to gender equality in surfing, the arguments mentioned most often by the majority of the women are a lack of institutional support and the cultural background in South Africa accompanied by to a large extent wrong marketing not adequately addressing female surfers. Lastly, the women also see the unequal prize money in professional surfing until recently as a significant contributor enhancing gender inequalities in surfing.

## **8.6 Female Surfers and the Role of Media**

It has become clear that media contribute to the creation of barriers to gender inequalities within surfing, at least to a certain extent. It is obvious that commercialization and sexualisation of women by media as well as prize money in surfing are deeply connected to each other. Nevertheless, at this point of this thesis it seemed beneficial to give a closer look at the role media plays in female surfers' lives. The figure below depicts the women's consumption behaviour and stimulation of surfing media as well as their buying behaviour with regards to surfing brands.

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0
	code 1 for yes, 0 for no			
<b>Main Category</b>	<b>Surfing Media</b>			
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Consumption of Surfing Media</b>			
Subcategory II	Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, Apps)	P1: "I like w	9	1
Subcategory II	Webcam / Lifestyle Surf report / Wavescape	P4: "So I'd l	8	2
Subcategory II	Surfing Magazines (ZigZag, Surfing Mag, Lowkey)	P1: "Yes I s	5	5
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Stimulation of Surfing Media</b>			
Subcategory II	Feeling Inspired (Big Waves, Adaptive surfing, Photograp	P1: "Yes. It'	5	5
Subcategory II	Disliking the Skinny Model look	P1: ".. I don	5	5
Subcategory II	Enjoying Current Marketing Strategies (ZigZag and WSL)	P1: "Yes, so	5	5
Subcategory II	Preferring more Focus on Skill Rather than Looks	P7: "It's a b	5	7
Subcategory II	Feeling a Sexualization of Women in Adverts, posts etc.	P8: "The wa	5	5
Subcategory II	Preferring Surftravel and Adventure Marketing	P2: "There a	3	7
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Surf Brands: Facts and Buying Behaviour</b>			
Subcategory II	Perception of Branded Clothes as Non-Functional	P6: "Yes. M	6	4
Subcategory II	Perception of Lifestyle Brands as too Expensive	P2: "It both	6	4
Subcategory II	Buying the Cheapest / Second-Hand	P5: "Also I a	4	6
Subcategory II	Buying Local Brands	P3: "I actual	3	7
Subcategory II	Buying According to Quality	P8: "I am nc	3	7
Subcategory II	Burying Roxy	P4: "Brands	2	8
Subcategory II	Buying Ripcurl	P1: "I like R	1	9
Subcategory II	Buying Reef	P5: "I norm	1	9
Subcategory II	Buying Hurley	P3: "I actual	1	9
Subcategory II	Buying Xcel	P2: "Speakin	1	9

Figure 24: Participants' Relationship with Surfing Media.

Except for one interviewee (P2), all women of the sample consume surfing media in form of **social media** such as instagram or facebook or subscribing to **surfing magazines** such as ZigZag or SurfingMag. Additionally, eight of the surfers also rely on **webcams** showing real live images of the surf break online which they use to decide whether to go surfing or not (depending on conditions)

Looking at the effects of media on female surfers, the results clearly show that half of the women interviewed **feel inspired by surfing media** especially when it comes to Big Wave Surfing, Adaptive Surfing or Surf Travelling. Further, five women also **enjoy the current marketing** but mostly only with regards to WSL and ZigZag, meaning adverts showing professional surfers and reporting about competitions etc. Nevertheless, it is evident that 50% of the sample is **unhappy with the portrayal of female surfers**, often showing skinny models who in fact do not even surf themselves.

*P1: "I don't appreciate that, looking at that kind of thing because they don't ever post [...]. It's more models that are surfing. They look like surf models but they*

*are in fact complete useless surfers or don't surf at all. I don't really enjoy seeing the surf brands post the model photos."*

With regards to media representation, half of the sample feels like there is a certain **sexualisation of female athletes** (e.g., P7) in advertisements and the surf industry in general.

*P8: "The way that they depict male surfers is athletes, the way they depict women surfers is as clothes hangers for bikinis and you often don't see action shots of them. You see them wearing things and it would irritate me because I know a lot about the insides part of the surfing and who would get sponsorships and stuff. The women surfers that would be very biased towards women who fit the conventional blonde, curvy, nice looking in a bikini kind of person whereas other women who are better surfers would not get sponsored by the brands because they weren't seen as fitting in with their idea of what a beautiful surfer should look like whereas with the men doesn't matter what they look like, their abilities would count."*

As can be seen above, P8 is unhappy with the fact that males are portrayed as athletes whereas female athletes are rather depicted as models and non-athletes who get sponsorship deals rather due to looks than skills compared to the men's section. P9 also admits that today there is an extreme sexualisation of female surfers. However, as her following statement shows, it has not always been like that in the past but rather changed within the past two centuries:

*P9: "Ah, I am sorry, the Billabong posters are horrible, so bad, like especially for chicks surfing it's literally only become ass and you know like literally [...]. Me, my generation of surfers, the majority were lesbian because they were hardcore you know. Now you look at what's portrayed as a female surfer is the complete opposite. It really is and that's how it is. Even in heats now, chicks are going out in like G-strings. In a heat!! You know, that's crazy, so it has changed a lot."*

Interestingly, P9 who is 27 years old speaks about the majority of her generation born in the nineties were lesbian and as she says hardcore surfers. According to her, the portrayal of female athletes has changed over time whereby now the focus lies more on physical appearance of the surfers rather than on their skills. Align with media focusing on the looks of female surfers, P9 also feels like competitive surfers are often surfing in clothes which are not functional such as G-

strings. With regards to functionality of equipment for women and the portrayal of female surfers, P3 also says that brands are “losing out in sales because they’re not catering for everyone.” 60% of the interviewees speak of a lack of functionality of surf gear for women. Not only often **branded clothes** are **non functional** but in addition, the majority of the interviewees complain that they are **too expensive**, too. As P6’s quote above shows, those two factors often are correlated.

*P6: "Most of their bikinis for surfing they just come flying completely off your body like most bikinis I have from them. [...]. It's extremely expensive for really bad quality material and just mass production of clothes that I...well I just don't support the industry in general."*

The fact of clothes and gear being perceived as too expensive corresponds with four women stating that they mostly try to **buy second hand** clothes/equipment rather than new and branded gear. **Buying according to quality** or **local brands** is important to three women respectively. If the women buy branded surf related products brands such as **Roxy, Hurley, Xcel, Ripcurl** and **Reef** have been mentioned. Especially for wetsuits Xcel and Hurley have proven to be of good quality. However, the two women tending to buy Roxy products admit to buy that brand due to having been sponsored by the brand before and hence feel a certain loyalty towards it.

## 8.7 Summary of Results

Chapter 8 illustrated the findings of the qualitative exploration of the lived experiences of ten female surfers in Muizenberg, South Africa. Following the transcription of interviews and the creation of a category scheme, the findings were presented in an order which facilitates answering the overarching research question of what are lived experiences of female surfers given the increased feminization of the surfing industry.

The findings demonstrate that the female surfers I spoke to generally seemed to enjoy surfing as a hobby or profession. Furthermore, they enjoy surfing in Muizenberg for the shape and consistency of the waves and the inclusivity in and out of the waves. However, while the women seem to enjoy their sport as well as the surfing culture at Muizenberg, my data indicates that based on their experiences some of the women feel a certain gender inequality within the sport of surfing. The

study reveals several key areas where the women struggle not only with male surfers but the surf industry itself. On the one hand, some of the women feel pressured to perform on a high level in order to be respected and welcome in the line-up by male surfers. Some interviewees even feel a need to become more invisible in order to navigate their space freely (such as staying away from crowds or not going into the water). On the other hand, some of the study participants also state that they feel hardcore when surfing at difficult spots alongside men as the only woman in the water. Furthermore, it has become clear that some of the interviewees actively try to uplift women surfing and highly get involved in the surfing industry / community.

In the following chapter the findings of the data collected are discussed and analyzed. Thereby, it will be looked at parallels and differences to the literature review which laid the groundwork for this study.

## CHAPTER 9

### 9 DISCUSSION

Chapter 9 is an attempt to explain the findings in the context of the research problem, the review of literature and the research questions presented. Each of the ten female surfers participated in an in-depth interview process, answering questions about their surf background and behaviour, the surf break Muizenberg beach, their lived experiences as well as questions about prize money and sponsorship.

#### 9.1 Significance of Key Findings

By addressing the overarching research question of what are the lived experiences of female surfers given the increased feminization of the surfing economy, this chapter specifically draws attention to the feelings, thoughts and constraints women have participating in a traditionally male sport. Attention was further given to how they perceive their position within the surfing economy. The key findings of the study are presented below.

##### *9.1.1 Family, Friends and Infrastructure as Key Drivers of Involvement and Experience Level*

The investigation of the participants' characteristics and their surf background reveals several interesting findings. According to Comer (2004), girls or women do not just happen to start surfing but rather are raised close by a surf break, have family members or friends who surf or participate in related board sports such as skateboarding or snowboarding. Align with this, as the findings of the study show, except for two interviewees all women name those reasons for starting surfing, too.

When examining the women's surf background, it further becomes clear that the interviewees' main motivations to surf are not health or fitness related but rather being attracted to surfing by enjoyment, its social aspect, the feeling of achievement and the value surfing has in their lives. Key drivers identified for the women's enduring involvement are: the love of the water, having fun, the social aspect of connecting with people and the sensory enjoyment of relaxation and escaping worries. These results align with existing findings of Bush (2016) in whose study women also speak about surfing as personal challenge or as healing. Due to the main



focus not being reasons for participation this category will not be further discussed at this point.

As demonstrated, the years of experience ranged from six to 27 years. Furthermore, nine of the women also surf other spots besides the beach break in Muizenberg with six of them even preferring to surf point breaks which are usually a bit more difficult to surf. Additionally, the six women who prefer point breaks over beach breaks all have participated in surf competitions before. These findings show that none of the interviewees can be categorized as beginner but rather as advanced, intermediate or professional surfer.

With regards to the participants' participation frequency, the results show that except for P3 and P9, the women's participation levels vary throughout the year with some periods focusing more on surfing and some less, depending not only on wave conditions but also on certain other factors and constraints which will be discussed in Chapter 9.1.4. P6, for example, explained that in winter she surfs about five times a week but in summer this frequency decreases. This most likely coincides with Muizenberg presenting relatively consistent waves throughout South African winter. A large variation of participation levels has also been found in Nourbakhsh's study, interviewing nine women from San Louis Obispo. The author demonstrated that setting preferences such as wind and swell size affect the athletes' frequency of surfing (Nourbakhsh, 2008).

Furthermore, the participant's frequency of surfing depends on their proximity to the surf break as well as their fitness level. P10 for example says that when she used to live in Muizenberg she surfed two or three times a week but now, after being injured and having moved to town, her participation level has decreased.

It could be assumed that participation levels generally decrease over time because of stopping to surf competitively or focusing on other things in life. However, as the results show, the women's involvement rather varies over time, sometimes more and sometimes less depending on different stages of life, wave conditions and location. These findings further confirm Nourbakhsh's findings (2008).

Lastly, it is interesting to see that all of the women who used to surf competitively have stopped participating in surfing competitions. P4 also states that "there are very few contests for women and girls and you just see once girls get to a

certain age there is nothing for them and all sort of fades away.” This fact supports Reed’s findings speaking of a certain absence of institutional support for female surfing athletes of all levels and age groups (Reed, 2010).

This chapter showed that the social aspect such as family members or friends who are active surfers influence women’s involvement in surfing as well as it is directly related to the women’s experience level. However, it has also become clear that the surfing infrastructure is not at a level where it is adequately catering to women yet. Especially a lack of institutional support for female surfers negatively affects the women’s involvement and surfing behaviour.

### *9.1.2 Media as Contributor to Gender Inequalities within Surfing*

Consistent with Nourbakhsh (2008), the interviewees’ surf behaviour itself is not heavily influenced by surfing media. Even though all participants except for P2 state to consume surfing media in some form (online subscriptions, print magazines, facebook or instagram pages), all of them are unhappy with the media representation of female surfers. In fact, most of the women even claim to not feel targeted by existing media and surfing brands at all. P10 for example says “I look at it and don’t want to buy that stuff”. The women express their dissatisfaction with the media representation of female surfers. They feel that female athletes often are objectified and sexualized using model-type women who look like they would not even know how to surf. In her work Franklin (2012) also revealed that making use of sexualized images of sponsored female athletes in order to increase sales and profits is still common in the surfing industry. The media still focuses on a devaluation of females’ performances in the water (Franklin, 2012) which shows the power media wields over female athletes in this male dominated sport.

The level of dissatisfaction with surfing media and industry professionals can be seen in P8’s statement:

*P8: “The way that they depict male surfers is athletes; the way they depict women surfers is as clothes hangers for bikinis and you often don’t see action shots of them. You see them wearing things and it would irritate me because I know a lot about the insides part of surfing and who would get sponsorships and stuff. The women surfers that would be very biased towards women who fit the conventional blonde, curvy, nice looking in a bikini kind of person whereas other women who are*

*better surfers would not get sponsored by the brands because they weren't seen as fitting in with their idea of what a beautiful surfer should look like whereas with the men doesn't matter what they look like, their abilities would count."*

According to Reed (2010), "women's events lose sponsorship to male events, which are considered more important by title men in charge" (p.80). P8's argument of the men in charge of Surfing South Africa not being interested in gender transformation and most of the judges being male suggests that Reed's findings still hold true.

Wheaton and Thorpe (2018a) suggested that the surf industry plays a major role in creating the image of female surfers. Beginner surfers build new identities as surfers (Corner, 2008). However, if they are confronted with existing media they might not know the differences between the surfer-girl image created by media and the reality of surfing women. Therefore, it must be assumed that media indeed plays an important role in how female surfers perceive their position within the surfing industry as well as how they identify themselves as surfers.

Nevertheless, five women of the sample stated to enjoy current marketing whereby they mostly refer to media of professional surf organizations or magazines such as of WSL or ZigZag rather than to media of surfing and clothing brands.

Either way, results show that not feeling targeted by surfing media does not affect the women's surfing participation level in general. Their enduring involvement is not primarily related to the media representation of female athletes but rather to attraction through the love of water, the enjoyment of surfing as well as to its social aspect.<sup>32</sup>

However, media does play a significant role when it comes to sponsorship of female athletes. Media and managers of surfing brands are responsible for the distribution of their money available for sponsorships. Reed (2010) already demonstrated that in the past many female surfers experienced "discriminatory treatment from the judges, sponsors and supporters" (p.75) - a reason for some athletes to stop surfing competitively (Reed, 2010). As P8's statement above showed as well as P9 arguing that she struggled to get enough money from sponsorship to take part in competitions, media in fact does significantly affect the enduring involvement of women, at least with regards to competitive and professional surfing.

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<sup>32</sup> For more details about enduring involvement see Chapter 8.2.3.

Concluding on the influence of surfing media on the ten women, it must be said that on the one hand (bad) media marketing does not actively keep women from going surfing. However, on the other hand, it significantly influences their identity creation as surfers as well as it contributes to gender inequalities within the sporting code as women often are devalued and sexualized. Thereby, the surfing media as well as industry professionals are made responsible for further creating disadvantages with regards to sponsorship and prize money.

### *9.1.3 Female Surfers as Significant Contributors to the Surfing Economy*

Drawing on the literature review as well as on the interviews, it becomes clear that not only are female surfers' performances but also female surfers themselves continuously devalued. A lack of sponsorship for women has not been a rarity in the past. This continuous devaluation is in so far interesting and difficult to justify as all women interviewed for this study make significant contributions not only to the economy in general but to the surfing economy in specific.

Firstly, all of the women interviewed possess at least some sort of surf equipment (e.g., wetsuit, board, wax, leash). Thus, the athletes generally support the surfing economy by buying gear and accessories.

Secondly, the women significantly boost the local economy of Muizenberg by having a routine which most often includes spending money in local shops and restaurants every single time they surf. These results align with findings of Lazarow (2007) and Lazarow (2009) demonstrating that at least locally surfers are important economic drivers. As the analysis showed, the women spend ZAR54 on average on the local economy each visit of the beach. Taking two sessions a week as average, this adds to a cumulated amount of ZAR 5.600 a year, spent on the car guard and food or drinks only. Moreover, considering spending money on petrol and beverages, the indicated amount of around ZAR30 some women think they spend each time seems to be as set too low. Furthermore, in the interview guideline women were just asked about their spending behaviour in Muizenberg, neglecting expenses for clothing and equipment throughout the year. As P1 also stated, a lot more money is involved in order to go surfing such as paying for equipment and gear. This is especially interesting looking at the study of Kruger and Saayman (2017) who found that surfers of Muizenberg annually spend an average of ZAR 7.184 on surfing. As

this number only includes money spent on surfing itself, disregarding money spent on the local economy of Muizenberg which is not surf related (e.g., food), it can be seen that the actual economic contribution of the interviewees must be significantly higher than ZAR 5.600. The numbers given by the women have to be treated with caution. In fact, it must be assumed that there are certain deviations with the actual amount of money spent being higher. However, the results of this research show that spending behaviour depends on the proximity of living to the surf break. Walking to the beach normally implies leaving the house fully dressed in a wetsuit without taking money and can lead to two women not spending money on the local economy of Muizenberg.

Last but not least, the fact that women make significant contributions to local economies as well as to the surfing industry alike demonstrates the importance of accepting female surfers as meaningful members of the surfing community. According to Franklin (2012), women play a significant role in the surfing economy and must be acknowledged by not only by marketers but by surfing organizations at every level alike. Further, as Coffman and Burnett (2009) imply, with regards to Maverick's, a surf break in the U.S., females visit the area around 80% more often than males. If this holds true for other surf breaks, too, and women (whether surfers or not) generally visit a surf area more often than men, assuming their spending behaviour stays the same at each visit, it can be concluded that women do make significant contributions not only to the local economies but to the surfing industry in general. In the case of Muizenberg as mentioned before, a lot of surf shops are located at the beach front. These shops do not only offer lessons and renting equipment to every surf enthusiast as well as clothes but they also organise birthday parties and lessons for children. In many families traditionally the fathers work during the week. This leads to the assumption that women are also visiting Muizenberg beach more often than males as they bring their children to surf lessons or the surf break in general during the week. It can be suggested that at these occasions the women spend money, too. However, if their contributions exceed the men's however cannot be concluded at this point. Unfortunately no male spending habits were recorded for this study.

Summarizing, the involvement of the interviewees in the surfing industry varies from being very little to being highly involved. Meanwhile some of the women actively push and promote female surfing others seem to not have given

thoughts to what role they play in the surfing industry and economy. However, as the examination of the women's spending behaviour revealed, it is certain to say that all of the women interviewed not only support the South African economy in general but the surfing economy of Muizenberg in specific.

#### *9.1.4 Female Surfers' Feelings and Constraints Participating in a Male-Dominated Sport*

The focus of this thesis is on the lived experiences of female surfers and their feelings participating in a predominantly male sport. As not only this study but also existing literature (e.g., Hall, 1996; Hargreaves, 2002) shows, women, hence also female surfers, do not present a homogenous group and have different needs and desires. Subsequently, the amount of experiences and the feelings they have when surfing is huge.

When specifically asked about their feelings, numerous sensory enjoyments are named by the interviewees (Chapter 8.2.3). Thereby, all of the feelings have a positive connotation except for one, namely frustration which is mentioned by one participant. Most interestingly, this frustration usually is not related to the quality and amount of waves caught but rather to the perception of crowding in the water. However, as a closer look at the category scheme reveals, crowds are mentioned as negatively affecting the women's surf behavior by several interviewees at other points. This shows the complexity of lived experiences of female surfers and explains certain overlaps of several categories. Hence, at this point all the constraints women are facing in their surfing lives are discussed,

The analysis of the interviews shows that the whole sample faces a multitude of constraints derived from the different categories of the category scheme. Based on the relevant review of literature, the figure below presents these constraints organized into the three categories of structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints.

<b>Intrapersonal Constraints</b>	<b>Structural Constraints</b>	<b>Interpersonal Constraints</b>
<b>Perceived Lack of Skill</b>	<b>Conditions</b> (wind, swell, tide)	<b>Attitudes of Male Surfers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Feeling Intimidated</li> <li>➤ Feeling Unwelcome</li> <li>➤ Localism</li> <li>➤ Being treated differently because of being female</li> </ul>
<b>Feeling unconfident</b>	<b>Spot Characteristics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ shape and size of the wave</li> <li>➤ Rocks</li> <li>➤ Sandbank etc.</li> </ul>	<b>Feeling pressured to perform to be respected</b>
<b>Feeling Pressured from oneself</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Crowded Line-up</b>
	<b>Environmental Concerns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sharks / Shark Alarm</li> <li>➤ Blue Bottles</li> <li>➤ Safety</li> <li>➤ Dirty Water</li> </ul>	<b>Absence of Surf Etiquette</b>
<b>Lack of Motivation / Fatigue</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Racism</b>
<b>Fear of Injuries</b>	<b>Money / Sponsorship</b>	<b>Time</b>
	<b>Lack of Institutional Support</b>	

*Figure 25:* Constraints faced by Participants.

The figure above clearly shows that the amount of constraints women face in their every day surfing lives is numerous. It seems like the constraints they face significantly affects their surf behavior. The findings are not only consistent with but more detailed than Nourbakhsh's findings which also revealed some of the constraints presented here (cf. Nourbakhsh, 2008). However, the author speaks of one constraint, namely entitlement, which has not showed up for the women of this study. Entitlement refers to feeling guilty about surfing while friends or partners are at work or because of neglecting other personal duties (Nourbakhsh, 2008).

In this research structural constraints predominantly include conditions, spot characteristics, time and environmental concerns. Most interestingly the two former professional surfers P3 and P9 did not name time constraints. Both of them were the only women of the sample usually surfing more than three times a week. As P3 even

said, she plans her work around favourable wind and wave conditions to be able to go surfing. This reflects the women's prioritization of surfing to other personal obligations and the centrality of surfing to their lives. They seem to experience structural constraints to a significant lesser extent compared to the other interviewees. However, for P9 and P7 money used to be a major constraint with regards to competitive surfing. P9 who is coloured and comes from a poverty driven area struggled to find sponsorship and make enough money to take part in competitions even though her surf level would have allowed it. Due to the location of the study and the participants' characteristics it is no surprise that besides money as a structural constraint also racism as an interpersonal constraint was found. In this case a lack of institutional support refers to both, a general lack of sponsorship and competition opportunities for female surfers as well as a lack of institutional and monetary support for women of colour (racist institutions). The fact that cultural background and lack of money and material can restrict access to surfing for black people and people living in Townships has also been demonstrated by Thompson (2015).

In addition, the empirical analysis revealed that different categories of constraints are often interlinked with each other. Consistent with the findings of A. Young and Dallaire (2008) in the context of female skateboarders, sometimes the surfers struggle with a certain intrapersonal fear of injuries. Thereby, this fear which is not only related to a perceived lack of skill but also to structural constraints such as spot characteristics. Another frequent combination of constraints women experience is related to interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints. In multiple occasions a perceived lack of own skill (intrapersonal) is for example combined with feeling pressured by other people (interpersonal).

However, a major interpersonal constraint for the women is the perception of the line-up as crowded. A crowded line-up presents a constraint for the women preventing them from surfing. The more surfers are in the water the higher the level of competition. This finding affirms P3's statement that surfing is "almost too competitive for a lot of girls". Negotiating space through avoiding particular spaces mostly because of crowds is a strategy which has also been found by Laurendeau and Sharara (2008) in the context of female snowboarders. However, the results show that the inter- and inter-personal constraints are especially strong when surfing at other surf breaks which are perceived as more difficult to surf than Muizenberg



beach. Speaking of Muizenberg, the majority of the interviewees described to feel a sense of community which they enjoy. This finding aligns with Olive et al. (2015) who investigated women recreational surfers in an Australian community.

Especially important, besides avoiding going into the water because of crowds, some women of the sample have stated that they often feel intimidated by male athletes, which affects their participation in surfing. Perceptions of attitudes of male surfers towards women present a major interpersonal constraint and at the same time are deeply interlinked with intrapersonal constraints as for example feeling unconfident. Seven of the interviewees feel pressured to perform to be respected as surfer which confirms the findings of Bush (2016) who also found that female surfers feel like they have to fight for waves or surf like men in order to gain their respect (Bush, 2016). However, two women also mention to have made positive gendered experiences in the line-up. Both women who used to surf competitively said they often are accepted and respected by men immediately because of surfing heavy waves. Hence, their performance and social capital seems to be relatively high compared to other surfers. The fact of surfing heavy waves gaining them acceptance amongst males makes clear that the women obviously are accepted through their skill and prowess and not merely for existing.

In contrast thereto, four of the participants stated to immediately feel like being treated differently when surfing with men simply because of being a woman. This different treatment is reflected in male surfers 'stealing' their waves because of the assumption that females generally are less skilled than men. This behavior is in stark contrast to gendered experiences with other female surfers. Half of the surfers of the sample speak of a feeling of support among women and almost all say that they would actively connect with women in the water by friendly greeting or starting a conversation. Nevertheless, as P1 explains, not only female but also male surfers whose skill level is not high can have a hard time in the water due to unfriendly attitudes of other male surfers. This suggests that men get respect until they show they are unskilled or novices in the eyes of more advanced male surfers in the water. In fact, this proves that the surfing culture is not only characterized by external hegemonic masculinity which refers to dominance by men over women but also by internal hegemony which subordinates some men to other men (Demetriou, 2001; Evers, 2009; Ford & Brown, 2005).

Both interpersonal constraints discussed above, staying out of the water because of crowds and attitudes of male surfers, can be seen as a strategy of avoidance, supporting the findings of Laurendeau and Sharara (2008).

Last but not least, the analysis showed that four athletes of the sample have made negative experiences with other women in the line-up. These experiences mostly refer to jealousy and competition amongst the women. As P7 stated, she feels better about herself if she realizes that she surfs better than the other girls in the line-up. This statement heavily supports the argument that surfing is based on a male valuation system and that identities are created around the masculine. Not only does P7 want to look and surf better in the water than the other girls but her statement makes it obvious, that if she does, she feels better about herself in front of the male surfers around.

As the investigation of the feelings and constraints of the women interviewed demonstrates quite clearly, hegemonic masculinity still exists in the sport of surfing. Even though women have made significant advancements with regards to their position in the surfing industry, the sport is still characterized by a hierarchical gender order subordinating women to men. This corresponds to previous findings of Nourbakhsh (2008), Bäckström (2013), Sisjord (2009) and Thorpe (2009). Connell's notion of gender power relations helps to understand this ongoing presence of male domination in the surfing culture. The fact of women wanting to surf really well to be respected by men or sometimes even staying out of the water if there are a lot of male surfers in the line-up shows the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.

Seven of the women have had experiences of being the only female surfer in the line-up which supports the assumption of female surfers still forming the minority in this sporting code. In sum, looking at the women's lived experiences it is obvious that female surfers have positive as well as negative experiences with surfers of both genders, male and female alike. However, it is striking that the number of negative gendered experiences made with male surfers significantly exceeds those made with female surfers. This aligns with most of the inter- and intra-personal constraints being related to the high degree of masculinity within the sport as well as to the attitudes of male surfers.

#### 9.1.5 *Surfing Femininities: 'Hardcore Surfers' vs. 'The Invisibles'*

As the investigation of the feelings and constraints of the women interviewed demonstrated, the women face numerous constraints in their surfing lives. Most importantly, their negotiation strategy of avoidance illustrates how the women construct their identities in relation to men. Existing literature made clear that surfing is based on a male valuation system whereby women construct their identities in relation to men (e.g., Booth, 2001; Corner, 2008). According to Bryan (2000), individuals develop a distinctive identity the more specialized they become in a leisure activity, thereby making use of reference groups. In the context of surfing these reference groups refer to surfing friends and family members or to other surfers, the majority of them male. Similarities have been demonstrated before in the context of skateboarding and snowboarding (Bäckström, 2013; Thorpe, 2007).

Through enacting certain types of femininities, the surfers in this study negotiate their space. According to Ford and Brown (2005), surfers are more concerned with their performances in the line-up the more experienced they are themselves. This aligns with none of the women of this research being a beginner surfer and seven of them feeling pressured to perform in front of men to be respected as surfer. Once more this shows how the women studied construct their identities around existing masculinity. The empirical analysis of the interviews revealed two broad but clear typologies of female surfers, namely the 'hard-core surfers' versus 'the invisibles'.

As P9 specifically stated, she feels 'hardcore' being the only woman in the water alongside with lot of male surfers. Thereby, hardcore does not necessarily imply that their participation frequency is very high but rather refers to their feelings and position taking in the line-up. Seven women of the sample show attitudes characterizing them as 'hardcore surfers'. These women enjoy being the only female in the water or still go into the water no matter how many male surfers are present. Thus they actively negotiate their space in the line-up and resist to stereotypical notions of gender. The 'hardcore surfers' of this study seem to be the equivalent to the 'fast girls' in the context of snowboarding (Sisjord, 2009). Slight similarities can further be seen with regards to 'the tomboys' in the context of skateboarding (Bäckström, 2013). These femininities intensively engage with the sport and feel less constrained by attitudes of male athletes than 'the invisibles'.

Furthermore, this femininity corresponds with the 'point wahines' in Corner's study (Corner, 2008). These women prefer to surf point breaks which usually are more difficult to surf predominantly because of being more competitive. The fact that the women of this sample also feel a need to perform to be respected shows that some of them gain performance and social capital based on their skills in the water (Corner, 2008). In addition to this, the category of hardcore surfers is connected with 'the lesbian', a typology Bäckström (2013) revealed investigating female skateboarders. P9 stated that the majority of her generation of surfers were lesbian because they were hardcore, using an aggressive approach. As Schippers (2007) explained, lesbians are often referred to as showing aggressive surf behaviour which is a threat to existing gender hierarchies as it refuses "to complement hegemonic masculinity in a subordinate relationship" (Schippers, 2007, as cited in Bäckström, 2013, p. 42).

Besides the 'hardcore surfers', a second type of surfers seems to exist within at Muizenberg, namely the 'invisible girls'. This femininity is attributed to those women who avoid going into the water rather than dealing with certain attitudes of male surfers and resisting to stereotypical notions of femininity. The 'invisible girls' mostly prefer to surf the beach and are show more interpersonal constraints than the 'hardcore surfers'. Even though the sample size of this study is rather small it is suggested the analogue to snowboarding (Sisjord, 2009), the majority of female surfers is comprised of 'invisible girls' who stay invisible with regards to position taking.

The femininities of 'the babes' (Sisjord, 2009) and 'pro-hos' (Thorpe, 2007) which were found in the context of snowboarding did not show up in this study. None of the participants stated to be attracted to the sport just to hang out with or conquer male surfers which is a main motivation of these femininities. All the women of the sample are activity driven which corresponds to the 'fast girls' and 'invisible girls' of the author's study. The fact of 'the babes' and the 'pro-hos' not showing up for this sample can be seen as evidence of perhaps a progression in the case of female surfers as they might not feel inhibited in the ways 'the babes' or the 'pro-hos' do.

The demonstrated differences of attitudes and position taking in the line-up supports Thorpe's argument that the athletes experience gender differently depending

on their skill and position within the respective community (2009). Identities of female boarders are multidimensional and constantly evolving and changing (Corner, 2008; Whitehead, 2002) “over space, time, and context, and are rooted in the cultural and social movement” (Thorpe, 2007, p. 207) and shaped around the masculine.

Waitt (2008) for example demonstrates that sometimes women create their own surf spaces which are more relaxed than the male surf spaces. Often female surfers feel intimidated being the only girl in the water and face the paradox of being a ‘surfer chick’ and an ‘aggressive surfer’. With regards to creating spaces and identity building, Bush (2016) examines how female surfers negotiate their identities in the male dominated space as well as how they strengthen their identities through social interaction with other women in the line-up.

## **9.2 Practical Implications**

Numbers show that surfing amongst women has experienced a significant growth rate over the past decades. The image of female surfers is slowly changing and female athletes demand for more recognition. Hence, the approach to involve women in surfing and empower female athletes may have to be adjusted. This study’s results have brought forward a number of implications for marketing managers, industry professionals and surfing organizations.

As demonstrated above, media plays an important role in how female surfers perceive their position within the surfing industry as well as how they identify themselves as surfers. Understanding female surfers’ experiences and perceptions helps media professionals to address women according to their desires and needs which consequently would result in a higher percentage of women subscribing and following the respective media channels. The increased number of media subscribers again may lead to a growth rate of novice female surfers. In fact, the adjustment of media plays a significant role for women as well as the surfing industry itself, not only by increasing the female participation rate but also by boosting the surfing economy and hence maybe even sponsorship opportunities. The on-going increase of female surfer specific media should be central to media managers as it allows women to relate and connect to each other. Female surfer specific media could raise self-confidence, self-esteem and a feeling of community among women.

Further also related to surfing media, not only is there a general need to attribute women more recognition in surfing but also there is a demand for more functionality of equipment and surf gear. As one interviewee even stated, to not lose out on sales with regards to retail, industry professionals must move away from the sexualized surfer girl image and meet the demands and desires of a diversity of women, including bodies of any type. Costumes that fit and will stay on during a surf session should be central with regards to functionality.

Just as important, there is a need of more institutional support not only but especially within Surfing South Africa. Programs aiming at supporting female athletes according to their involvement phase in surfing should be offered. This includes coaching possibilities for beginners up to professional surfers. The number of events catering to competitive surfers wanting to become professional has to be increased in order to maybe give South African female surfers an objective to work to as well as the possibility to be recognized on international stage.

Lastly, the surf industry may have already started to make efforts towards offering programs or activities aiming at women in specific. However, industry professionals should continue to actively seek an understanding of female surfers. Understanding the feelings and experiences of female surfers is indispensable to make women feel more comfortable and eventually equally as acknowledged as surfers as men. The results of this research can help recreation programmers to adjust their existing programs according to the identified struggles women are facing in their surfing lives. This might lead to an increase of the number of women taking up surfing initially as well as subsequently continuing to do so as they feel more comfortable and supported. This increased participation rate could also result in more women participating in related board sports which are also still predominantly male. With regards to recreation programs, also surf travel providers may make use of the results of this study as it can help them to understand women's constraints and subsequently to incorporate certain aspects which make female surfers feel supported and comfortable. Surf camps can either cater to men only, to a mixed clientele or to women only. In any case, camp owners and managers should be aware of women's needs in and out of the water and should make efforts towards empowerment of female surfers.

### 9.3 Limitations

As the analysis above shows, the results of the study are extensive and allow for answers to the overarching research question as well as the sub-questions thereof. However, the results have to be treated with caution since there do not only exist methodological limitations as discussed in Chapter 7.2.6 but also conceptual limitations.

Firstly, this study included women of all ages and the area of study was geographically restricted to Muizenberg, South Africa. Hence, the findings cannot be generalized to the general population of female surfers. Deviances are not only possible when conducting the study at other surf breaks in South Africa which might be perceived as more difficult to surf but also when applying the research to another country as the status-quo of female surfers might be different there. Moreover, as surfing is multifaceted and most interviewees surf other surf breaks besides Muizenberg, the interviewees' answers sometimes were given referring to other surf breaks as well.

Secondly, as explained before the use of a qualitative research approach was necessary to gain deep insights into female surfers' experiences in surfing. However, although it was possible to generate insights into female surfers' experiences it has to be pointed out that to make more profound and reliable statements about the diverse consumer groups the sample should be enlarged. The limited sample size reduces generalizability as well as transferability (see Chapter 7.2.5). Furthermore, it is possible that the results would show different outcomes if interviewing short boarders or longboarders only. However, this study aimed at targeting the average surfer and hence included surfers of all levels, age groups and boards ridden.

Thirdly, coincidentally eight of ten interviewees were white which means that the results might vary if repeated with a larger sample of women of colour as it can be assumed that their lived experiences differ from those of white women. At least for South Africa concerning the country's history and development variances have to be expected.

Furthermore, the interview guideline neglected expenses for equipment and gear throughout the year and only asked the women about their spending behaviour in the local economy of Muizenberg. As a consequence thereof it proved difficult to

make a reliable statement about the females' economic contribution to the surfing industry.

Lastly, it was originally intended to count surfers on ten different days for about two hours. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19<sup>33</sup> in early 2020 and the subsequent strict lockdown rules in South Africa restricting access to the beaches for surfers, it was not possible for the researcher to conduct more participant observations. Thus the research expectation of female surfers presenting the majority of all active surfers in Muizenberg could not be confirmed.

In sum, with regards to the underlying conceptual limitations of this thesis, further research on female surfers should be conducted to fully understand how women experience surfing in a predominantly male domain and how they try to move towards gender equality.

## **9.4 Future Research Suggestions**

Even though this research has shed light on the lived experiences of female surfers, there is a continuing need to understand the complex relationship of media, sporting organizations and men and their effects on female surfers.

Not only should the sample size be enlarged but also may be divided into different age groups as well as board types ridden. A differentiation of certain age groups could be useful as younger girls might be effected differently participating in a male dominated sport than mid-age or older women. Additionally, a differentiation of the type of board ridden might seem useful as it is assumed that the longboard community in general is stronger than the short board community amongst women, if existing at all. Furthermore, it is suggested to repeat this study specifically focusing on either recreational or competitive surfers as the experiences may vary across these dimensions. Either ways, further research should consider addressing social class as well as skin color more in specific as these aspects may correlate with gendered experiences in surfing.

Due to a strong sense of community and inclusivity, Muizenberg seems to be a rather safe space for women and girl surfers. Hence, to understand the complexity

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<sup>33</sup> COVID-19 is an infectious disease which is caused by a newly discovered corona virus and was responsible for lot of restrictions for people all around the world in 2020. This included /still includes restrictions with regards to work, social gatherings and travelling nationally as well as internationally.



of female surfers' lived experiences and to get full insights into how they negotiate space in this male dominated sport, future research should include investigating women from other surf spots in South Africa as well as worldwide.

Furthermore, equal prize money has only been introduced recently with the World Championship Tour 2020 being cancelled due to Corona virus. Therefore, a longitudinal study design seems useful in order to see changes over time in how women feel in the line-up and how they perceive their position within the surfing economy. This allows for a deeper understanding of the individuals' lived experiences.

Lastly, a qualitative research comparing male surfers' experiences and perceptions with those of females might be beneficial to put the results into perspective and explore differences thereof. A subsequent conduction of a quantitative study to follow up should be considered.

## **9.5 Conclusions**

The theoretical investigation of this study revealed a lack of research into female surfers' lived experiences, especially in the context of South Africa. As the first two sub-questions have previously been addressed at least partially by several authors (e.g., Corner, 2008; Nourbakhsh, 2008; Reed, 2010), the third sub-question gives new insights into how female surfers perceive their position within the surfing economy. Based on the findings it is possible to answer the overarching research question regarding the lived experiences of female surfers. The underlying research expectations are fulfilled to the researcher's satisfaction. With help of this study industry professionals may be able to better understand female surfers' needs and constraints in order to enhance equality within this sporting code.

As the review of literature shows, the history of women's involvement in surfing is complex and still on-going. Female surfers' position developed from originally surfing alongside men as equals to holding a marginalized position experiencing inequalities caused by a lack of institutional support, the gendered media representation of women as well as by the hierarchical gender order of the sport.

Already back in 1996 Kane stated, "as women gain recognition and status in sport they will threaten the established order of male dominance" (Kane, 1996, p.

127). As this study demonstrates, some women resist to stereotypical notions of femininity by for example surfing at certain surf breaks which are male dominated. However, the investigation of lived experiences of female surfers shows that females still feel marginalized in the male-dominated sport of surfing. Supporting numerous scientific findings such as of M. Henderson (2001), Reed (2010) or Wheaton and Thorpe (2018a), the study's findings reveal that the majority of surfing media keep on reinforcing existing stereotypes by sexualizing female surfers and portraying them as rather passive athletes. According to the interviewees, the surfing industry lacks diversity and catering to women of all body types and images. Furthermore, this study generated insights into the power media have over women, not only with regards to the creation of their identities as surfers but also with regards to their enduring involvement at least concerning surfing competitively. As some athletes pointed out, while male surfers keep on being financially supported, sponsorship for female surfers and women's events are cut. As long as there is no combined effort of media, professional surfing organizations and powerful men in charge to work towards an improvement of support of female surfers, from beginner to professional, women will keep on getting second-class treatment.

Another factor which contributed to the overarching issue of inequality is the long history of pay disparity. Due to the only recent introduction of equal prize money in surfing, the amount of time may be too short to make a statement about its effects on female surfers in general. However, looking at volleyball, not only were women finally recognized for their efforts but also did the fan base grow after the introduction of equal prize money advancing the sport. As the example of volleyball revealed, the chain of events initiated by the introduction of equal pay is long (Reed, 2010). In the case of surfing, women's heats are equally as important as men's and media now has to push and promote women's events more than ever. As Reed (2010) states, "as long as women make dramatically less as professionals and amateurs, they will be seen as a dramatically less important part of the sport. With equality of pay, the possibilities are endless" (p. 86).

With regards to the industry being perceived as sexist (e.g., Atkins & Burns, 2016; Olive et al., 2015; Thorpe, Toffoletti, & Bruce, 2017), changes have to be made to move towards gender equality in surfing. Meanwhile surf brands need to focus more on functionality of gear sponsors must focus on skill rather than looks. Furthermore, the media branch has to adjust their representation of female athletes

catering to ‘real’ surfers, dissociating from the sexualization of women. As Brennan (2016) argues, as long as the market is in control of the funding stream to athletes, it is more than likely that competitive femininity will further be promoted based on looks and fashion. As a consequence thereof, the sexualized surfer-girl image will stay predominant and sponsorships of women who fit the required image as mandated will remain the norm – all supporting gender imbalances in surfing.

In addition, the fact that women make significant contributions to local economies as well as to the surfing industry alike demonstrates the importance of accepting female surfers as meaningful members of the surfing community. Women play a significant role in the surfing economy and must be acknowledged not only by marketers but by surfing organizations at every level alike (Franklin, 2012). Further, with regards to Maverick’s, a surf break in the U.S., Coffman and Burnett (2009) imply that females visit the surf area around 80% more often than males. If this holds true for other surf breaks, too, and women (whether surfers or not) generally visit a surf area more often than men, assuming their spending behaviour stays the same each visit, for this study it can be concluded that at least in Muizenberg women do make significant contributions not only to the local economy but to the surfing industry in general.

While media and surf organizations may have a certain impact on how surfers perceive their position and role within the surfing economy, this research has demonstrated that the everyday experiences and feelings women have in the water are the most powerful in how female athletes experience surfing and its culture (Bäckström, 2013; Schippers, 2007). Besides structural constraints such as spot and wave characteristics, female surfers face certain interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints preventing them from surfing. It is striking that most of the inter- and intra-personal constraints are related to the high degree of masculinity within the sport and to attitudes of other surfers, those of men in particular.

Even though the participation rate of females increased over the past decades and there might be equality within some years with regards to participation in numbers, it has to be taken into account that a simple increase of females’ participation does not necessarily lead to an improvement for all women with regards to how they feel in the water (Hargreaves, 2002). This doesn’t mean that it shouldn’t happen but problems and negative experiences female surfers have when surfing

with men cannot “be dealt with in numerical form” (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 28). Male surfers of all age groups and levels have to do their part as well in order to make females feel welcome and comfortable in this sport in future. Furthermore, men in powerful positions can influence the movement towards gender equality by challenging gender stereotypes in the sport itself as well as in related sporting organizations (Adriaanse & Claringbould, 2016; Wheaton & Thorpe, 2018a). In addition to that, female professional surfers should act as role models to the next generations to empower women and hence further advance female surfing.

As the study demonstrated, there are multiple factors contributing to an overall lack of support of women’s surfing. No single reason can be held responsible for the existing gender imbalances within this sport. However, this study makes clear that in order to move towards advancing female surfing, gender equality has to be addressed across multidimensional structures. Access to adequate equipment and coaching has to be provided and equal opportunities should be given to male and female surfers regardless of the individual’s background including economic arrangements. Lastly, and most importantly, a massive increase of institutional support from local surf clubs to international organizations is indispensable to improve female surfers’ position within the surfing industry.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: Table of Literature on Gender in Board Sports

Year	Author	Title	Source	Focus of Investigation	Central Results	Method	Country of Study	Themes mentioned by the author(s)					
								Sexualization of female athletes	Media influence	Specific typologies of masculinity /femininity	Pay Gap / Prize Money	Hegemonic masculinity / Gender order	Identity Creation
1997	Stedman	From Gidget to Gonad Man: surfers, feminists and postmodernisation	The Australian and New Zealand journal of sociology	The study focuses on the changing status of women within postmodernization in the Australian context.	The surfing subculture of Australia shows the existence of gender oppression. Women	Multimethod approach; Analysis of surfing magazines, films and books,	AUS	X	X	/	/	X	X
2000	Gabbard	Girl in the curl: A century of women in surfing	Book	Illustrated history of women surfers.	/	Colored photos and anecdotes of surf culture.	/	X	X	/	X	/	/
2001	Booth	From Bikinis to Boardshorts: "Wahines" and the Paradoxes of Surfing Culture	Journal of Sport History	The article specifically looks at the involvement of women in surfing and	The fraternal structure of surfing is deeply rooted in the sport. Structural change is	Article is based on literature	/	X	X	/	X	X	/
2001	Booth	Australian beach cultures: the history of sun, sand, and surf, Sport in the global society	Book	The book analyses the history of the beach culture and the beach body in Australia.	Detailed research on the beach as integral part of the Australian culture.	The book is based on literature research influenced by the authors personal life	AUS	X	X	/	/	X	X
2001	Henderson, M.	A shifting line up: Men, women, and Tracks surfing magazine	Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies	Focus of study lies on the surfing media's role in constructing the surfing subculture	5 phases of Tracks are identified, looking at format, style and discourse:	Investigation of Tracks (Australian surfing magazine) over 30 years taking	AUS	X	X	/	/	X	/
2002	Wheaton	Babes on the beach, women in the surf: researching gender, power and difference in the	Power games: A critical sociology of sport	Ethnographic research conducted on windsurfers in the South of England.	Interviews with female windsurfers looking at lived experiences and gender relations in the	Interviews with female windsurfers looking at lived experiences and gender relations in the	UK	/	X	X	/	X	/
2004	Comer, K.	Wanting to be Lisa: Generational Rifts, Girl Power and the Globalization of Surf	American Youth Cultures	Analysis of the surfergirl culture linking it to the girl power movement and	Title IX, Lisa Andersen and the movie Gidget have seriously influenced	Study of mythologies of female athleticism in surf culture looking at	U.S.	X	X	/	/	X	/
2004	Wheaton	'New lads'?: Competing masculinities in the windsurfing culture	Understanding Lifestyle Sport, Routledge (Book)	Exploration of windsurfing as a cultural space to re-negotiate and re-	Existence of different masculinities which are less exclusive of women and 'other	Essay based on ethnographic research conducted on windsurfers in the	UK	X	X	/	/	X	X
2005	Rinehart	"Babes" & boards: Opportunities in new millennium sport?	Journal of Sport and Social Issues	The focus of the article lies on the gendered nature of advertising in skating	Women and girls are objectified and sexualized. Creation of misogynist views	Examination of print skating niche market magazines looking at attitudes towards	U.S.	X	X	/	X	X	/

Year	Author	Title	Source	Focus of Investigation	Central Results	Method	Country of Study	Themes mentioned by the author(s)					
								Sexualization of female athletes	Media influence	Specific typologies of masculinity /femininity	Pay Gap / Prize Money	Hegemonic masculinity / Gender order	Identity Creation
2005	Ford & Brown	Surfing and social theory: Experience, embodiment and narrative of the dream glide	Book	Exploration of surfing and its theory based on social sciences and experiences of	Chapter 5: Gender hierarchy is historically and socioculturally	In 8 chapters the book draws on existing literature on surfing and provides a basis	/	/	X	/	/	X	X
2006	Thorpe	Beyond “decorative sociology”: Contextualizing female surf, skate, and snow	Sociology of Sport Journal	Conceptualization of the female boarder (surfer, skater or snowboarder)	Context is important but does not equal causation. In existing research analytical	The article draws on existing literature.	/	X	X	/	/	X	X
2007	Thorpe	Boarders, babes and badasses: Theories of a female physical youth culture	University of Waikato	Analysis of female snowboarders as example of popular youth culture.	Each theory has its shortfalls as well as benefits and offer different insight.	Multimethod approach. 37 informal interviews, participant observation over 5	int.	X	X	X	X	X	/
2008	Waitt	'Killing waves': surfing, space and gender	Social and Cultural Geography	Investigation of surfing, space and gender	The paper shows that there is a variety of masculinities and femininities.	Qualitative research with young people in New South Wales, Australia. Exploration	AUS	X	X	/	/	X	X
2008	Waitt & Warren	'Talking Shit over a Brew after a Good Session with your Mates': surfing, space and masculinity	Australian Geographer	Investigation of young male short board riders and their surfing masculinities at a surf	Surfing masculinities vary from at different breaks and conditions and are influenced by	Multimethod approach over six months, examining the lived experiences of a group	AUS	X	/	/	/	X	X
2008	Corner	An ethnographic exploration of gender experiences of a New Zealand surf culture	University of Waikato; Master Thesis	Exploration of gender experiences and gender relations in a New Zealand surf	Surf culture gives opportunity to contest and resist to gendered identities in Western	Participant observations, semi-structured interviews and focus groups of	NZ	/	X	X	/	X	X
2008	Nourbakhsh	A qualitative exploration of female surfers: Recreation specialization, motivations, and	California Polytechnic University; Thesis	The study focuses on recreation specialization and leisure motivation of	Involvement styles vary between participants. Factors constraining	In-depth, semi-structured interviews with nine female surfers in California.	U.S.	X	X	/	/	X	X
2008	Heywood	Third-wave feminism, the global economy, and women's surfing: Sport as stealth feminism in girls'	Next wave cultures: Feminism, subcultures, activism; Book chapter.	Focus lies on the extent to which female surfers are utilized as a sign of positive	The female athlete is an important factor of the global economy driven by self-	Literature Review	/	X	X	/	/	X	X
2008	Laurendeau & Sharara	"Women Could Be Every Bit As Good As Guys" Reproductive and Resistant Agency in Two	Journal of Sport and Social Issues	The article explores gender construction and participation constrains of female	Sexism and marginalization within the two sports still exists. By avoidance,	37 in-depth and 5 formal interviews with skydivers, 130 skydive jumps by author one	CAN	X	X	X	/	X	X

Year	Author	Title	Source	Focus of Investigation	Central Results	Method	Country of Study	Themes mentioned by the author(s)					
								Sexualization of female athletes	Media influence	Specific typologies of masculinity /femininity	Pay Gap / Prize Money	Hegemonic masculinity / Gender order	Identity Creation
2009	Sisjord	Fast-girls, babes and the invisible girls. Gender relations in snowboarding	Sport in Society	The study focuses on gender relations in snowboarding	Different typologies of femininity were identified: Babes, Fast-girls and Invisible girls	Participant observation at a snowboard workshop and 6 personal interviews	NOR	/	X	X	/	X	X
2009	Thorpe	Bourdieu, feminism and female physical culture: Gender reflexivity and the habitus-field complex	Sociology of Sport Journal	The paper examines gender and embodiment in the snowboarding culture.	Gender identity in snowboarding is constantly evolving and Bourdieu's habitus-field complex	This paper makes use of the author's insider knowledge, ethnographic visits to snowboarders and snowboard shops	int.	X	X	X	/	X	X
2009	Evers	'The Point': surfing, geography and a sensual life of men and masculinity on the Gold Coast, Australia	Social & Cultural Geography	Exploration of the relationship between body, space and gender of surfing men.	Feelings, space and bodies influence the creation of masculinities.	Self-reflexive analysis of a lived experience of masculinity	AUS	/	X	/	/	X	/
2010	Knijnik, Horton & Cruz	Rhizomatic bodies, gendered waves: Transitional femininities in Brazilian surf	Sport in Society	Exploration of Brazilian female surfers	The female surfer's body is a contested terrain especially in the economic context of Brazil	Qualitative approach; Semi-structured interviews with female Brazilian surfers.	BRA	X	X	X	/	X	Brazil
2010	Reed	Women on waves: Surfing toward Gender equality	California State University, Master Thesis..	The question of women having reached gender equality is central to the study	Even though having been excluded for a long time, women keep on surfing and making a name for themselves	Multi-method approach: The thesis draws on existing literature and analyzes interviews with female surfers	/	X	X	/	X	X	/
2010	Comer	Surfer girls in the new world order	Book	Exploration of the role of "surfer girls" in the surf culture.	Literature Review	Transdisciplinary approach. The book also draws on existing research carried out by the author	int.	X	X	/	/	X	/
2012	Franklin	Making waves: Contesting the lifestyle marketing and sponsorship of female surfers	Griffith University Queensland, Australia; PhD Thesis.	The focus of the study lies on the impact of lifestyle marketing by Billabony, Ripcurl, and Quiksilver	Lifestyle marketing gives opportunity to a limited number of female surfers to become famous	Multi-method approach; Data collection over 4 years - 15 interviews, 10 focus groups, 10 participant observations	AUS	X	X	/	X	X	X
2012	Fendt & Wilson	'I just push through the barriers because I live for surfing': how women negotiate their constraints as female surfers	Annals of Leisure Research	Exploration of constraints female surf tourists are facing in participating in surfing	Personal, socio-cultural and practical constraints limit women in surfing and make it a challenging activity	Qualitative approach making use of 20 semi-structured interviews with female surfers	AUS	X	/	/	X	X	/
2013	Backström	Gender Manoeuvring in Swedish Skateboarding: Negotiations of Femininities and the Masculine Gender Order	Young	Investigation of gender manoeuvring in Swedish skateboarding.	The 3 most apparent femininities discovered are 'the tomboy', 'the bitch' and 'the skater'	Multi-method ethnographic approach; observations over two years; 16 semi-structured interviews	SWE	X	X	X	/	X	X

Year	Author	Title	Source	Focus of Investigation	Central Results	Method	Country of Study	Themes mentioned by the author(s)					
								Sexualization of female athletes	Media influence	Specific typologies of masculinity /femininity	Pay Gap / Prize Money	Hegemonic masculinity / Gender order	Identity Creation
2014	Roy & Caudwell	Women and Surfing Spaces in Newquay, UK.	Book Section; Routledge Handbook of Sport, Gender and Sexuality.	Focus on gendered and sexualized subjectivities by female surfers in the UK.	Newquay is a gendered and sexualized surfspot	Qualitative approach; Field work and 7 in-depth interviews with female surfers.	UK.	X	/	/	/	X	X
2014	Olive	Imagining surfer girls: The production of Australian surfing histories	Girl Museum	Cultural studies approach investigating Australian surfing history from a feminist perspective	Media heavily influence not only the present but also the future perception of female surfers	Cultural studies approach investigating Australian surfing history from a feminist perspective	AUS	/	X	/	/	X	/
2015	Olive et al.	Women's recreational surfing: a patronising experience	Sport, Education & Society	Exploration of the lived experiences of 11 female recreational surfers in Wavetown.	Female recreational surfers negotiate their spaces based on media influence but mostly based on their own experiences	Interviews with 11 women, participation and blogging.	AUS	X	X	/	/	X	/
2015	Thompson	Surfing, gender and politics: Identity and society in the history of South African surfing	Stellenbosch University, PhD Thesis.	Socio-cultural history of the sport of surfing in South Africa from 1959 to the 2000s.	South African's surfing history is raced and gendered. Representations of surfing in South Africa	Multi-method approach; Author's participation in competitive surfing. Researching South Africa	SA	X	X	X	X	X	/
2016	Brennan	Surfing like a Girl: A Critique of Feminine Embodied Movement in Surfing	Hypatia	Exploration of the position of women in the sport of surfing.	Surfing is still a masculine domain, however, promoting big wave surfing and female surfers	The article draws on existing literature referring mostly to Iris Marion Young.	/	X	X	/	/	X	/
2016	Bush	Creating Our Own Lineup: Identities and Shared Cultural Norms of Surfing Women in a U.S. Beach Community	Journal of Contemporary Ethnography	Making use of CTI (Communication Theory of Identity) this study explores how women surfers negotiate their identities	Female surfers develop and negotiate their identities as surfers and add a more complex representation of surfing	Qualitative approach - participant observation and interviews	U.S	X	X	/	/	X	X
2016	Comley	"We have to establish our territory": how women surfers 'carve out' gendered spaces	Sport in Society	Exploration of female recreational surfers and their ways to create spaces in a male-dominated sport	Women surfers contest their marginalized status and report different experiences	Qualitative approach; Observations and 25 in-depth interviews with 15 females and 10 males	U.S.	/	X	/	/	X	X
2017	Kruger & Saayman	Sand, Sea and Surf: Segmenting South African Surfers	South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation	Profiling surfers in South Africa	4 Segments of surfers: beginner, weekender, amateur and professional.	Destination based survey at Muizenberg beach making use of a questionnaire.	SA	/	/	X	/	/	X
2018	Wheaton & Thorpe	Action Sports, the Olympic Games, and the Opportunities and Challenges for Gender Equality	Journal of Sport and Social Issues	Assessment of opportunities of female surfers and skateboarder due to Olympic inclusion	The inclusion of both sports addresses how gender equality is addressed at the Olympic level	Qualitative approach; Semi-structured interviews with 25 key figures in the action sports industry	/	X	X	/	X	X	/
2018	Usher & Gómez	Female Surfers' Perceptions of Regulatory Constraints and Negotiation Strategies	Journal of Park & Recreation Administration	Exploration of lived experiences of female surfers and their constraints to surfing	There are no significant differences in how surfers of both genders and all skill levels negotiate	Quantitative approach; 407 questionnaires making use of purposive sampling	U.S	X	/	/	/	X	/

## Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form



### **The Increased Feminization of the Surfing Economy. An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Female Surfers in Muizenberg, South Africa.**

You have been invited to participate in this research project as a volunteer. This consent form has been formulated to assist you in making a decision about whether you would like to participate in this research project on a voluntary basis being interviewed about your surfing life.

This research project seeks to explore what female surfers experience, feel and think when they are going for a surf session, choosing their surf spot and their routines related to their surfing life.

Beforehand, a research proposal, coupled with an ethics application was submitted to the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee. That application was subsequently approved.

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary, and respondents can choose to withdraw from the research process at any time, without having to explain why.

The data collection method used is interviews. Because new information can come up during the course of conversation, it is unclear how long each interview will last. However, I do not expect interviews to last longer than 45 minutes.

The interview will be audio recorded in order to make the transcribing process easier and more accurate for the researcher. The material will be safely stored and kept by the researcher and immediately deleted after its transcription. No copies will be made.

The information that will be published as part of this research project will not include identifiable information of the participants. All information supplied by the participants will be treated confidentially and will be used solely for this research project.

If you have any queries please contact the researcher:

Leonie Stroehlein [+27 664052217]

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 3: Interview Guideline**

Hello,

Thank you very much again for participating in my study.

As I already told you, my name is Leonie and I am currently doing my Masters at UCT.

My research focuses on female surfers and I hope that by interviewing women who surf in Muizenberg I can contribute and add to the existing literature about surfing.

Depending on how deep we are going into the conversation I expect the interview to take something between 15 and 30 minutes. Please feel free to talk and say everything that comes to your mind and also ask me if you should have any questions.

I will be recording our conversation, just to make it easier afterwards to transcribe and analyse all the information. But please, don't worry - everything will be kept confidentially and anonymously. If parts of what you mentioned are used in my thesis, your name won't be shown.

If you at any point should not feel comfortable to continue with the interview, of course just let me know so we can stop as this study is voluntary.

#### **General Information (to be written down):**

1. How old are you?
2. Where are you from?
3. What is your profession?
4. What is your favorite wave size?
5. What sort of board are you riding (the most)? (long vs. short board)
6. Do you practice any other board sports such as skate boarding or snowboarding?  
If so, which one(s)?
7. Are you practicing any other sports? If so, which one(s)?

#### **Surfing History:**

Just out of interest... How would you describe the typical surfer?

Cues: Typical male or female, profession, looks, etc.?

1. When did you start surfing?
2. What does surfing mean to you?
3. Who do you surf with?
4. How long does your average surf session last?
5. Why did you start surfing? What was the reason?
6. Why do you keep on surfing?
7. How often do you surf per week? (on average)
8. Which are your favorite surf spots?

### **Muizenberg: Surf Spot and Economy:**

1. What makes Muizenberg attractive for you? / Why do you surf in Muizenberg?
2. How do you normally get to Muizenberg?
3. When are you going for a surf? What influences your decision?
4. Do you just surf in Muizenberg or do you combine it with other things?  
Cues: Meeting friends, shopping etc.
5. Do you have a routine surfing in Muizenberg? If so what does it look like?  
Cues: Warm up, always going for coffee before or after, buying wax, etc.
6. If you had to tell, how much money do you think you spend in Muizenberg each visit on average?
7. Do you subscribe to surfing media?  
Cues: online/ magazines, instagram, facebook
8. Do you feel stimulated by the surfing media?
9. How would you describe your role in the surfing industry?

### **Lived Experiences**

1. How would you describe the experience of surfing?
2. How and what do you feel when you come to Muizenberg and get ready to surf?
3. How do you feel after a surf?
4. What makes a surf a bad one?
5. What makes a surf a good one?
6. How do you decide if you actually go into the water or not?
7. Do you surf other spots next to Muizenberg?
  - a. If not, why not?
  - b. If yes, do you feel any different about surfing there? (and how?)
8. How and what do you feel when you come to other surf spots e.g., point breaks or reefs?
9. Did you have any negative experiences so far with regards to surfing?
10. Does it happen to you that you come to surf and you are the only girl in the line-up?  
If yes, what do you feel then and what do you do about it and your surf?
11. What are you doing / How do you feel when you are the only girl in the water and you see another girl paddling out?

### **Prize Money and Sponsorship**

1. Last year at a surf competition in South Africa the male winner got ZAR 8000 and the female ZAR 4000. What do you think about that?
2. How do you feel about equal prize money?
3. Do you feel changes in the line-up since the introduction of equal prize money?
4. Also, have you ever surfed a competition? If so how many, when and where?
5. Are you currently sponsored or have you been sponsored for surfing before?
6. If you are buying...which surf brands are you buying the most?  
Why these exactly?
7. If you know of any or follow up on it, who is your favorite male and who is your favorite female surfer?



## **Appendix 4: Sample Transcript of P7**

Hello,

Thank you very much again for participating in my study.

As I already told you, my name is Leonie and I am currently doing my Masters at UCT.

My research focuses on female surfers and I hope that by interviewing women who surf in Muizenberg I can contribute and add to the existing literature about surfing.

Depending on how deep we are going into the conversation I expect the interview to take something between 15 and 30 minutes. Please feel free to talk and say everything that comes to your mind and also ask me if you should have any questions.

I will be recording our conversation, just to make it easier afterwards to transcribe and analyse all the information. But please, don't worry - everything will be kept confidentially and anonymously. If parts of what you mentioned are used in my thesis, your name won't be shown.

If you at any point should not feel comfortable to continue with the interview, of course just let me know so we can stop as this study is voluntary.

### **General Information:**

**How old are you?**

24

**Where are you from?**

Cape Town, South Africa

**What is your profession?**

Trainee accountant. Doing my articles at an audit firm to become a chartered accountant.

**What is your favorite wave size?**

Depends on where I am surfing but probably like 3 foot.

**What sort of board are you riding (the most)? (long vs. short board)**

I surf a short board, quite a standard short board like a 5'7 around there with a rounded tail. But I am short, so ...

**Do you practice any other board sports such as skate boarding or snowboarding? If so, which one(s)?**

I've done snowboarding but only on the rare occasions like once every 2 years and I have only done it twice.

**Are you practicing any other sports? If so, which one(s)?**

No I sometimes gym but not religiously and if I go I run or I go to a class that does cardio and like weights and that sort of things.

## **Surfing History:**

**Just out of interest... How would you describe the typical surfer?**

Like a guy or girl?

**What is the typical surfer for you? Female or male?**

I think of like a guy with long blonde hair, very tanned like quite like that howz'it kind of guy.

**When did you start surfing?**

So my dad first took me when I was about probably 5 or 6 years old and then I hated it and didn't like it at all and then I got properly into it when I was probably about 11 years old and I've been surfing since then.

**What does surfing mean to you?**

Surfing is like an escape. A way for me to spend time in the ocean like in nature and also it's a nice way to bond with my family because my dad surfs and my brother, so we go surf together. So it's also a way to challenge myself sometimes like to get out there and try to surf better each time and if the conditions are a bit wild to challenge myself to surf proper conditions. Like, yes it's like home I guess. You know. I just enjoy it so much.

**Who do you surf with?**

I mostly surf alone or with my older brother and sometimes with my friend Chantal.

**How long does your average surf session last?**

So probably between an hour and an hour and a half. I generally start to get tired after about an hour and a half. I used to be able to surf like 2 and a half hours but now I am not as fit so it's a bit more difficult.

**Why did you start surfing? What was the reason?**

I guess yes my dad got me into it and then I just started to enjoy it quite a lot and progressed a bit so it became a nice sport where I could surf competitively and make friends and stuff, so yes nice to spend time with people and make new friends and stuff and also like my family.

**Why do you keep on surfing?**

I just enjoy it so much. It's a nice way after a tough day at work or on the weekend wake up and go for a surf and just enjoy it. It's really fun in the water.

**How often do you surf per week? (on average)**

Probably it's about maybe like once a week, once every ten days.

**Which are your favorite surf spots?**

Probably a point break. I like a right hand point break. I think of Jeffreys bay. It's so nice because if it's like quite big you can sit to the side and kind of avoid the sets. You can sit in the channel and also there is also a nice take off spot and kind of more predict a little bit more what the wave is going to be like which is quite nice. And it normally it runs quite a bit and you are able to get a couple of turns in.

## **Muizenberg: Surf Spot and Economy:**

### **What makes Muizenberg attractive for you? / Why do you surf in Muizenberg?**

It's convenient. It's like 5 minutes from my house. And I grew up surfing there so whenever I go there I always bump into someone I know in the water or I always see a friendly face.

### **How do you normally get to Muizenberg?**

I drive.

### **When are you going for a surf? What influences your decision?**

I look at the tides and also the conditions. So I normally try to check the surf report on windguru for the week and see what days are going to be good. If I am going to surf after work it would be in the evening so that's kind of the only time I can surf. And if it's on the weekend I try to surf either really early or very late in the afternoon to try and avoid the crowds.

### **Do you just surf in Muizenberg or do you combine it with other things? (Meeting friends, shopping etc.)**

Generally I unless if it's a quick surf I don't really combine it with other things but if I am going with my brother often we go for like a coffee afterwards if it's the morning or a beer afterwards if it's the evening. Sometimes to Tigers Milk in Muizenberg...

### **Do you have a routine surfing in Muizenberg? If so what does it look like? (Warm up, always going for coffee before or after, buying wax etc.)**

So if I am surfing like a Saturday morning I normally wake up, have a coffee at home, drive down, park by Striped Horse always, get into my wetsuit, leave my keys with lifestyle, paddle out in front of lifestyle and then have my surf. Then get out and get changed and if I go for coffee that would be after that.

### **If you had to tell, how much money do you think you spend in Muizenberg each visit on average?**

25 Rand.

### **Do you subscribe to surfing media? (online/ magazines)**

I follow on Instagram a lot of the surfing magazines and like surfing pages and stuff like that. But I don't have any magazine subscriptions.

### **Do you feel stimulated by the surfing media?**

It depends on the site but yes. Like often it's quite cool, like WSL will always have pretty cool things, posts and stuff but I mean some surf sites get a bit annoying. Like sometimes Stab can like try almost like sexualize surfing especially with women and stuff and they always like show you the girls in bikinis and stuff and don't really show women surfing themselves but like in general yes, I think I always get pumped up to go surf and stuff.

### **What you just said with e.g Stab magazine sexualizing women, would you then not buy their products and go onto their website and check things?**

I normally will just stroll past their posts, I won't like open the articles but if I see something quite cool then I will go and open it.

**So what do you think of those adverts when you only sexualized adverts?**

It's a bit annoying, like wow, its 2020, the world in surfing. It's such an all time...the women are surfing on a level with the men it shouldn't just be how you look like or stuff it should be also about how you surf.

**That would target you more? Or what would attract you more to see?**

Like actual women surf videos of women surfing and stuff. That also inspires you more because if I see a video of like Jhon Jhon Florence or whatever I'll be like oh wow that's so cool but it's so unachievable because it's like a guy doing crazy airs but then if you see like some of the girls surfing you think okay they are like really good but like maybe I can do a little bit of what they've done, yes.

**How would you describe your role in the surfing industry?**

Like last year when I was at University I was quite involved at UCT surf club and I've had a bit of a role there and I was trying to run the club especially last year, getting involved and trying to get sponsors from like outside companies and chatting to ZigZag and things like that, trying to get people inspired. But since leaving University I don't really have much of a role. I just kind of try to tell people how fun surfing is for me at work. But that's kind of it.

**Lived Experiences**

**How would you describe the experience of surfing?**

Answered above.

**How and what do you feel when you come to Muizenberg and get ready to surf?**

Excited. I just get into the water, go surf, yes.

**How do you feel after a surf?**

It depends. Sometimes I am frustrated or sometimes I had a bad surf or Muizenberg can often be really crowded so you get out of the water and you are like oh that was such a waste of time because it was so crowded. But like most of the times I get out and I am a little tired but you feel good, feel refreshed. Also obviously the exercise makes you feel happy as well.

**What makes a surf a bad one?**

Answered above.

**What makes it a good one?**

Answered above.

**How do you decide if you actually go into the water or not?**

It's a crowd factor. Depending on how crowded it is then I look at the tide. I generally like to ride Muizenberg on a pushing high, so maybe three hours before high tide. I don't really like surfing it on a low tide. So if the tide is really low then I might just wait then. And then also the wind, like if it's super windy it's so difficult to get into the waves then I am like what's the point. Then I won't go in.

**Do you surf other spots next to Muizenberg?**

Yes I surf on the west coast side with Chantal or go surf like Melkbos, Big Bay or Doodles, spots like that. On the odd occasion I will go to long beach but 99% of the time it's Muizenberg because it's convenient.

**If yes, do you feel any different about surfing there? (and how?)**

Sometimes I feel bit more anxious because I know Muizenberg is quite a gentle wave compared to long beach sometimes. Depends on size and stuff but if long beach is a bit bigger and it's quite a shore break then I get a little nervous, but yes.

**How and what do you feel when you come to other surf spots e.g., point breaks or reefs?**

Answered above.

**Do you feel pressure to perform when in the water?**

Yes, especially if there is less kind of beginner people and there are more people who know what they are doing. So if you paddle out at a spot like long beach you don't want to look stupid, so there is definitely more pressure to perform.

**Does it come from other people or yourself?**

I think it's a combination of both of them, like knowing myself. I am at long beach I must try surf a little bit better and there is always people who sit there and watch the people surfing. So you feel that. And then you can also see people sometimes look around in the water so it is like a combination of the two.

**How do you feel about crowds? How are you acting?**

I don't like them. If it is really crowded I probably won't paddle out because I get annoyed. Generally sometimes struggle to get waves at a spot like long beach especially when it's busy and there is like a lot of guys in the water. So if it's crowded I might not even paddle out because I am not going to get many waves.

**Did you have any negative experiences so far with regards to surfing?**

Like twice I've been assaulted by people in the water which is quite like shit. Like I've taken waves before and then someone dropped in on me and then I've whistled to tell them to get off the wave and then they would turn around and be like Fuck off or whatever.

**Women or men?**

No, just men. And then I've had people ride into me, beginners which has been not nice.

**Injuries?**

No not like any major. Just like boards hitting me and stuff and bruising but no stitches or anything.

**Does it happen to you that you come to surf and you are the only girl in the line-up? If yes, what do you feel then and what do you do about it and your surf?**

Yes. I feel sometimes like the guys want more to see how you surf as the only girl out there. So you sometimes feel a bit more pressure. But generally if I surf in the evening in Muizenberg and I am the only girl next to guys and I know them, then I am fine. At a spot like long beach you would be a bit more intimidated.

**But Muizenberg it's fine to surf as a woman in the line-up?**

Yes, it's rare that you are the only woman in the water these days.

**What are you doing / How do you feel when you are the only girl in the water and you see another girl paddling out?**

A bit more like excited, 'ooh another girl'. If you know them it's nice or if it's a friend but you generally feel like maybe a little bit more comfortable depending on where you are surfing.

**So you don't become more competitive with that girl?**

I mean it depends. Sometimes I do. Personally I will be like I wonder how this girl surf, if I don't know them. There is kind of competitiveness coming out a little bit, like Oh I surf better than them or they surf better than me then I just watch to see how they surf and then I guess if I surf better than them I guess I feel a little better about myself maybe.

**But you wouldn't be unfriendly or hustler her?**

No not hustle, not unfriendly, just kind of like from the side and have a look.

### **Prize Money and Sponsorship**

**Last year at a surf competition in South Africa the male winner got ZAR 8000 and the female ZAR 4000. What do you think about that?**

It's unfair. But that has been happening. Growing up that was always how it worked. Like men always used to win or the prize money was always so much bigger in the men's division and they always try to defend it with the fact that okey more guys enter than girls enter but I think now there is quite a drive for equality especially on the main stage like WSL giving equal pay and stuff which is really cool. I mean you are carrying the same expense to get to a competition and your boards and your wetsuit, all those expenses if you have to fly to Durban or whatever for a competition, you're paying the same amount like the guys traveling there why shouldn't you in the same amount. Yes. So it's unfair. So I am glad there is more of a drive now for equal pay.

**How do you feel about equal prize money?**

Answered above.

**Do you feel changes in the line-up since the introduction of equal prize money?**

I haven't myself felt a change with the pay thing. But definitely in the last like 5 years there has been a lot more girls starting to surf and surf spots that they wouldn't surf before like generally in the past, you'd go long beach there would only be like 2 girls in the water. These days, if you, there is like 6 girls in the water. So that's really cool and stuff but I don't think it's linked to the equal pay thing or haven't noticed that myself.

**Have you ever surfed a competition? If so how many, when and where?**

Yes. I've surfed quite a few when I was a junior. I surfed the SA junior champs three years in a row and then, that was under 16 and under 18 divisions but...

**Are you currently sponsored or have you been sponsored for surfing before?**

I used to have like a sponsorship deal with reef, They kind of just gave me good deals on wetsuits like half prize and stuff. And I used to get my boards from Vudu surf. They used to give me a good deal. I was like their team rider, that was when I was like 16 / 17 years old, so a long time ago.

**What made you stop surfing competitively?**

It got quite expensive. Just to enter the competition was a lot of money and I was never like winning competitions or anything. So I didn't ever think like I was gonna go professional so I got to the point where I say when I was younger it was fun seeing my friends and stuff but I didn't really have the time or the money especially when I started university.

**If you are buying...which surf brands are you buying the most?**

Boards I will just go to lifestyle and buy like their boards. They always give me a good discount and wetsuits I don't really have a brand wetsuit. But at the moment my wetsuit is a billabong and my capsule is also a billabong. So that's the last two I've bought in the last few years.

**So does it have to be Billabong?**

I just like how it felt.

**And bikinis and stuff?**

I generally buy from Cotton on or other shops. I find surf clothing are very expensive these days and I don't like a lot of the styles it is quite rare that I find something I like and then it will be quite expensive. So generally I buy my clothes by Woolworths or like Cotton on or like that.

**Do you think those bikinis of Billabong, Roxy etc. cater to you? Can you actually surf in them?**

I think it's very difficult to surf in these bikinis very often like they are more for fashion than for surfing.

**Would you wish that they offered more functional stuff for women?**

I think it would be cool but at the same time the things are so expensive it's almost the same prize to get a capsule then I rather buy that than a bikini.

**If you have know of any or follow up on it, who is your favorite male and who is your favorite female surfer?**

Favorite female, Carissa Moore just because she is like always such a bubbly, happy kind of person and she surfs so well. I've never seen her get like angry or she has always got a smile on her face and then she came to South Africa she came to Waves for Change and joined in and stuff which was cool. And favorite male surfer...I like Conner Coffin. I have a bit of a crush on him. I like his surfing style I think it's really smooth and stuff. He just carves in like J-Bay. I met him once in J-Bay as well and he was really nice, so yes.

**Do you want to add anything?**

Not that I can think of.

## Appendix 5: Observation Sheet

**A: Observation Sheet for counting surfers accessing the beach**

Date:	Starting time:	Ending time:
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**Conditions:**

Please tick the right box for every surfer that comes **OUT** of the water!

Men	Women



### **B: Summary of All Observations**

<b>Date &amp; Time</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>04.02.2020</b> 10:35 am – 12:05 pm (90 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low tide</li> <li>- Onshore wind</li> <li>- Generally good conditions</li> <li>- Observing on the right due to better waves, about same beach length</li> </ul>	White: 92 Colored/Black: 15 Sup / Body board:12  <b>Total: 119</b>	White: 75 Colored/Black:3 Sup / Body board:4  <b>Total: 82</b>
<b>04.02.2020</b> 12:23pm – 12:33 pm (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Around low tide</li> <li>- Onshore wind</li> <li>- Generally good conditions</li> <li>- Observing on the right due to better waves, about same beach length</li> </ul>	White: 11 Colored/Black: 3 Sup / Body board:1  <b>Total: 15</b>	White: 4 Colored/Black: 0 Sup / Body board:2  <b>Total: 6</b>
<b>04.02.2020</b> 1:09 pm – 1:25 pm (16 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Around low tide</li> <li>- On shore</li> <li>- Generally good conditions</li> <li>- Observing on the right due to better waves, about same beach length</li> </ul>	White: 20 Colored/Black: 2 Sup / Body board: 2  <b>Total: 24</b>	White: 18 Colored/Black: 0 Sup / Body board: 0  <b>Total: 18</b>
<b>05.02.2020</b> 9:49 am – 10:25am (36 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dropping tide</li> <li>- Rainy/windy</li> <li>- Hard to determine gender due to conditions</li> <li>- Observing on the left side (roundabout to toilet house)</li> <li>- Stopped observation due to weather</li> </ul>	White: 31 Colored/Black: 4 Sup / Body board:1  <b>Total: 36</b>	White: 37 Colored/Black: 2 Sup / Body board:1  <b>Total: 40</b>
<b>24.02.</b> 1:27 pm – 1:50 pm (Shark Alarm) (23 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low tide</li> <li>- Sunny Day / Beach Weather</li> <li>- Observing on the Left Side</li> </ul>	White: 55 (1 of those coach) Colored/Black: 8 (1 of those coach) Sup / Body board: 0  <b>Total: 63</b>	White: 31 (1 of those coach) Colored/Black: 0 Sup / Body board: 0  <b>Total: 31</b>

Date & Time	Conditions	Men	Women
<b>04.03.</b> 10:51 am – 11:43 am (52 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low Tide</li> <li>- Small Waves</li> <li>- Nice Conditions for Beginners</li> <li>- Sunny Day</li> </ul>	White: 32 (1 of those coach) Colored/Black: 18 (1 of those coach) Sup / Body board: 7 (3 white, 4 black (one black coach))  <b>Total: 57</b>	White: 28 Colored/Black: 1 Sup / Body board / Foil: 6 (3 Body Board, 3 Foil)  <b>Total: 35</b>
<b>Subtotal</b> 207 minutes		<b>314</b>	<b>212</b>

## Appendix 6: Observation Sheet for Staff Members

Please fill in the sheet accordingly!

<b>Shop name:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Starting time:</b>	<b>Ending time:</b>

Purchase number	Total amount spent	Number of Items bought	Female	Male	Active surfer
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

## Appendix 7: Category Scheme

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0	Participant									
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			code 1 for yes, 0 for no											
Main CategorySurf History and Background														
Subcategory I Description of a Typical Surfer														
Subcategory II Gender														
	male (more guys than girls)	P3: "A typic	8	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
	female	P4: "Well w	3	7	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Subcategory II Look														
	Wetsuit tan	P10: "Norm	6	4	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
	Blonde	P5: "I mean	5	5	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
	Well built	P6: "I mean	3	7	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Billabong Board shorts	P2: "Blonde	1	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sunscreen in the face	P2: "Sunscr	1	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Barefoot	P4: "What’s	1	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory II Character														
	Care free/ laidback /friendly	P5: "Most cl	5	5	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
	Environmentally conscious / love of the sea / pas	P1: "A typic	4	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Living a healthy life	P1: "A typic	2	8	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Selfish	P1: "Surfers	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Liking the power struggle in the water	P3: "A typic	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Pretentious	P2: "I tell m	1	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory I Initial Attraction														
Subcategory II	Family member / friends as teacher /surfs as well	P4: "My sist	7	3	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Subcategory II	Living close to the beach	P6: "I was b	6	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Subcategory II	Attractive setting	P2: "When l	2	8	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory II	Lifesaving	P1: "I did lif	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0	Participant									
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		code 1 for yes, 0 for no												
Main Category Surf History and Background														
Subcategory I Enduring Involvement														
Subcategory II Attraction														
	Love the water / feels like home	P5: "I love t	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Fun hobby / Enjoyment	P7: " I just e	8	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Traveling	P3: "Surfing	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Blonde Hair / Sun tan	P1: "I think	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory II Social Aspect														
	Making friends /Connecting with people or family	P7: "Surfing	9	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Subcategory II Sensory Enjoyment														
	Relaxation/ Escape	P8: " You pi	7	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Happiness	P6: "Probab	6	4	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
	Being in nature	P2: "A beau	5	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
	Feeling like Home	P6: "Like, y	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Feeling of Sun	P1: "I think	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Feeling of a Wetsuit	P1: "I think	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sense of Freedom	P3: "It's a se	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory II Hard to Define Values														
	Feeling of Stoke	P2: "It just k	5	5	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Surfing as Center of Life	P3: "Surfing	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Subcategory II Achievement														
	Competitive Surfing	P9: "I starte	4	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Personal Challenge	P10: "I like	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Superior feeling to non-surfers	P1: It's obvi	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory I Surf Behavior														
	Subcategory II Surfing other spots besides Muizenberg	P3: "Yes – t	9	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Subcategory II Surfing with friends	P8: "... most	8	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Subcategory II Surfing with family member/s	P4: "I actual	6	4	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
	Subcategory II Surfing alone	P7: "I mostl	6	4	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
	Subcategory II Surfing twice a week or more	P4: "Depenc	6	4	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Subcategory II Surfing once a week or less	P5: "I was s	2	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Subcategory II Surfing three times a week or more	P3: "No I try	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Subcategory I Factors influencing the Surf Behaviour														
	Subcategory II Conditions /wind / swell / tide	P2: "I am ch	9	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
	Subcategory II Webcam / lifestyle surf report / Wavescape	P2: "I am ch	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
	Subcategory II Time	P1: "Probab	7	3	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
	Subcategory II Going in if already there	P3: "I don't	7	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
	Subcategory II Situation in the line-up / Crowds	P2: "If it's te	5	5	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
	Subcategory II Money	P7: "It got q	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Subcategory II Weather	P1: "Probab	2	8	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Subcategory II Relying on friends forecast	P1: "Kind of	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Subcategory II Lack of Inspiration/ Motivation	P1: "You go	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Subcategory II Being tired	P1: "If I kno	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Subcategory II Blue Bottles	P8: "I think	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0	Participant									
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			code 1 for yes, 0 for no											
Main Category	Muizenberg Beach - Surf Spot and Economy													
Subcategory I	Setting Characteristics													
Subcategory II	Surf Break													
	Shape and Size of Wave	P2: "Beca	8	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
	Userfriendliness	P1: "Beca	7	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Crowds	P3: "I really	6	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Convenient Distance	P7: "It's cor	5	5	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
	Consistency of Waves	P1: "Beca	3	7	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Water Temperature	P6: "It's a lc	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Absence of Adequate Control	P3: "It is ver	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	High Wave Count	P1: "So whe	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory II	Environment													
	Community Feeling	P4: "It's alw	6	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
	Inclusivity of all Levels	P10: "I find	4	6	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Social Aspect	P10: ". But i	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
	Safety	P1: "Beca	3	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Business Aspect	P3: "I come	2	8	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory I	Muizenberg Economy													
Subcategory II	Way of Transport													
	Car	P3: "With m	9	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Walking	P2: "Walkin	2	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Train	P5: "With th	1	9	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory II	Routine in Muizenberg													
	Food / Drinks afterwards	P1: "No, I co	8	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Meeting up with someone	P10: "Like I	6	4	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Stretch / Warm up	P1: "So I wc	5	4	1	0	/	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Looking for a place to sit in the line-up	P4: "Then w	4	5	1	0	/	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Depends on the person coached	P3: "It depe	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory II	Money spent in Muizenberg on Average (ZAR)	ZAR54 on average			90	0	200-	25	100-	20	25	30	0	50
	Coffee / Hot drink / Smoothie	P1: "Maxim	6	4	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
	Food	P1: "Maxim	6	4	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
	Petrol	P5: "I don't	9	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Car guard	P3: " And th	5	5	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
Main Category	Perceived Role in Surf Industry													
Subcategory II	High Involvement	P3: "I am ve	6	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
Subcategory II	Inspiration for other surfers /Uplifting women	P7: "...and I	6	4	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Subcategory II	Contribution to the economy	P1: "I contri	4	6	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Subcategory II	Contribution to gender equality	P1: "I contri	3	7	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Subcategory II	Giving back to the earth and environment	P6: "I think	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0	Participant									
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		code 1 for yes, 0 for no												
<b>Main Category Lived Experiences</b>														
<b>Subcategory I Perceived Barriers to Gender Equality in Surfing</b>														
<b>Subcategory II General and Structural Reasons</b>														
	Lack of Institutional Support	P4: "So also	6	4	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
	Cultural background / Racism	P3: "Numbe	4	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Sexist Industry	P8: "They re	3	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Money involved	P9: "From a	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Lack of Interest	P3: "Numbe	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Subcategory II Commercialization and Sexual Objectification</b>														
	Wrong targeting by brands and media	P10: No. To	7	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
	Missing of more functional clothes adverts etc / g sti	P3: "So I am	7	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
	Media representation of female surfers	P8: "The wa	5	5	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
<b>Subcategory II Prize Money and Sponsorship</b>														
	Unequal Prize Money	P2: "I think	7	3	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Advancement of female surfers through equal prize	P3: "Surfing	7	2	0	1	1	0	1	/	1	1	1	1
	Different Prize Money is fair	P1: "I think	3	7	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Lack of Sponsorship Opportunities	P8: "The wc	3	7	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Subcategory I Surf related Experiences</b>														
<b>Subcategory II General Experiences</b>														
	Only girl in the line-up	P2: "Yes, bu	7	3	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
	Feeling hardcore/special	P9: "To be h	3	7	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
<b>Subcategory II Positive Experiences in General</b>														
	Fun in the water	P2: "It does	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Healing power of the ocean / Fear reduction	P3: "The oce	6	4	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
	Connecting / Surfing with friends	P10: "And b	6	4	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Relaxing / Calming / Stimulating / Coming down to	P5: "It's cal	5	5	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
	Energizing / mood booster / Happiness	P3: "You ca	5	5	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
	Good / long waves	P4: "When l	4	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
	Sense of Freedom	P1: "It gives	2	8	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Naturally learning of life skills	P3: "The oce	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Beautiful nature (rainbow, sunset, etc.)	P10: "When	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Subcategory II Positive Experience with males</b>														
	Respect and acknowledgment due to surfing heavy	P3: "Yes, of	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Subcategory II Positive Experiences with females</b>														
	Greeting /Connecting / making freinds / Cheering / IP	P2: "Actuall	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
	Supportive	P4: "No, no,	5	5	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Feeling more comfortable / less pressure	P1: "...we c	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0	Participant									
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		code 1 for yes, 0 for no												
<b>Main Category</b>	<b>Lived Experiences</b>													
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>Negative Experiences in General</b>													
	Pressure if there is crowd	P1: "That's a	10	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Injuries of own board / self caused / spot	P2: "Injuries	7	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
	Absece of Surf etiquette	P4: "Muizen	7	3	1	1	1	1	0		1	0	1	1
	Pressure from self	P3: "No I ha	6	4	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
	Injury / Dings because of someone else	P6: "I didn't	6	4	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
	Spot Characteristics / Conditions	P1: "There's	5	5	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Being assaulted / Shouted at	P1: "Definit	4	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
	Pressure from family members / friends / camera	P2: "Mostly	3	7	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Shark Alarm	P10: "A sha	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Low wave count	P1: "Definit	2	8	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Racism	P4: "It's kin	2	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Pressure from coaches	P3: "No I ha	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Dirty water	P10: "Or if t	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Subcategory II</b>	<b>Negative Experiences with Male Surfers</b>													
	Pressure to perform in order to be respected as surfers	P1: "...the lo	8	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
	Being disrespected as a surfer	P1: "No. I th	4	6	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Dropping in / stealing waves	P4: "...a lot	4	6	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Discussions at the beach or in the water	P3: "Yes. I h	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Other males also having a hard time	P1: "Even if	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Subcategory I</b>	<b>Negative Experiences with Female Surfers</b>													
<b>Subcategory II</b>	Jealousy / Competition	P7: "Someti	4	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0



	Category	Example	Sum 1	Sum 0	Participant									
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			code 1 for yes, 0 for no											
Subcategory I	Feelings and Constraints participating in Surfing													
Subcategory II	Feeling before surfing													
	Excitement / Motivation	P3: "Do I ge	7	3	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
	good feeling / Mood booster	P2: "Genera	4	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Annoyed by sunscreen	P2: "The on	1	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcategory I	Feeling after a surf session													
	Feeling good	P4: "Most o	10	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Feeling a Sense of Stoke	P1: "Salty (I	5	5	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Feeling Refreshed	P3: "Young	4	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
	Feeling Exhausted / Tired	P2: "Can't b	3	7	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Feeling Salty	P1: "Salty (I	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Feeling Calm / Clear headed	P1: "Salty (I	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Feeling Energized	P1: "And als	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Feeling Frustrated	P7: "Someti	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Subcategory I	Feelings /Constraints when surfing another spot													
	Feeling concerned with spot / wave characteristics	P1: "Surfing	7	3	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Feeling nervous	P1: "So Kon	6	4	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
	Feeling unwelcome e.g. by locals	P1: "So Kon	6	4	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Feeling concerned with crowds	P4: "Muizen	6	4	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
	Feeling inconfident because of perceived lack of ski	P4: "Travell	5	5	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
	Feeling uncomfortable because of male surfers	P1: " I don't	4	6	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Feeling pressured to perform	P5: "Compl	4	6	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
	Feeling as being treated differently	P4: "So I thi	3	7	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Feeling frustrated about absence of surf etiquette	P4: "Muizen	3	7	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Wild Life Concerns	P1: "Surfing	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Selfish people	P1: "It's mo	2	8	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0