

## **THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SURFING TOURISM DESTINATIONS**

A Case Study of Peniche, Portugal

Afonso Gonçalves Teixeira

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A dissertation submitted to the School of Tourism and Maritime Technology of the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Sustainable Tourism Management

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed description of the current state of the surfing tourism industry in Peniche, Portugal, and to perform a sustainability-oriented analysis of its development. Also, this thesis represents an attempt to contribute to the overall field of surfing tourism, specifically to a better understanding of the implications of this form of tourism's development in developed country settings. A thorough review of the literature on surfing tourism was performed, which suggested that a proper contribution to the understanding of the issues surrounding the sustainability of surfing tourism destinations should be based on the perceptions of local stakeholders. As such, a Social Constructivist approach to qualitative research was employed during the analysis of twenty-four semi-structured interviews with local surfers and business owners of the county of Peniche. The analysis of the stakeholders' main perceptions and concerns regarding surfing tourism suggested that there currently are a few threats to the sustainability of the industry in Peniche. Respondents have identified an "uncontrolled" growth of the local surfing tourism industry, which has been increasingly responsible for changes on both the commercial and recreational contexts, which in turn have caused a few economic, sociocultural and environmental impacts on the destination. The identified growth has been propelled by promotional efforts made by public and private entities, but the results suggest that there has not been an adequate investment in regulatory, infrastructural and logistical support for the growth of the industry that has resulted. Stemming from this realization, a set of recommendations for the implementation of innovative sustainability practices is presented, based on the main challenges to the industry's future development pointed out by respondents. It is argued that such practices can turn Peniche into a benchmark for the sustainability of surfing tourism in destinations of developed nations, through the overcoming of future environmental, sociocultural, and economic challenges.

**Keywords:** surfing tourism; sustainability; sustainable tourism management; Peniche; social constructivism.

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## RESUMO

O presente estudo tem como propósito apresentar uma descrição detalhada do atual estado do mercado de turismo de surf em Peniche, Portugal, bem como analisar o seu desenvolvimento com base em princípios de sustentabilidade. Esta dissertação procura ainda, contribuir para uma melhor compreensão das implicações gerais do desenvolvimento do turismo de surf em destinos de países desenvolvidos. Após uma análise detalhada da literatura, constatou-se que uma contribuição adequada para a compreensão dos desafios inerentes ao desenvolvimento sustentável de um destino de surf, deve-se basear nas perceções dos seus *stakeholders* locais. Assim, desenvolveu-se uma investigação qualitativa, através da análise de 24 entrevistas semiestruturadas com surfistas locais e empresários de Peniche, baseada no paradigma do Construtivismo Social. A análise das opiniões e perceções destes *stakeholders* revelou que, em Peniche, podem-se identificar atualmente, uma série de ameaças à sustentabilidade do mercado turístico de surf. Os participantes do estudo referiram que houve um crescimento “descontrolado” deste nicho de mercado, o que tem vindo a causar alterações nos contextos comercial e recreativo do surf em Peniche. Por sua vez, essas alterações são responsáveis por uma série de impactos económicos, ambientais e socioculturais que se têm vindo a verificar no concelho. O crescimento do mercado turístico de surf ao nível local foi em grande parte motivado pelos esforços promocionais feitos por entidades públicas e privadas, contudo os resultados do estudo indicam que não tem havido um investimento adequado que suporte o próprio crescimento deste mercado, ao nível de regulação, infraestrutura e apoio logístico. Com base na identificação destas ameaças à sustentabilidade do turismo de surf em Peniche, este estudo apresenta um conjunto de recomendações para a implementação de práticas inovadoras de sustentabilidade, procurando superar os desafios ambientais, socioculturais e económicos identificados através dos resultados das entrevistas com os *stakeholders*. Este estudo sugere que uma eventual implementação das sugestões apresentadas, teria o potencial de contribuir para a consolidação de Peniche como um destino de referência ao nível da sustentabilidade do turismo de surf no contexto de países desenvolvidos.

**Palavras-chave:** turismo de surf; sustentabilidade; gestão de turismo sustentável; Peniche; construtivismo social.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**CMP** – *Câmara Municipal de Peniche* (Municipality of Peniche)

**CT** – Championship Tour

**FASST** – Framework Analysis for Sustainable Surf Tourism

**GITUR** – *Grupo de Investigação em Turismo* (Tourism Research Center)

**GSTC** – Global Sustainable Tourism Council

**IHPT** – Portuguese Hydrographic Institute

**INE** – *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (Portuguese Institute of Statistics)

**IPS** – International Professional Surfers

**ISA** – International Surfing Association

**KSWC** – Kelly Slater Wave Company

**NIS** – *Núcleo de Investigação em Surfing* (Surfing Research Unit)

**SIMA** – Surf Industry Manufacturers Association

**SLSA** – Surf Life Saving Association

**STOKE** – Sustainable Tourism Operator's Kit for Evaluation

**STW** – Save The Waves Coalition

**UNEP** – United Nations Environment Programme

**UNWTO** – United Nations World Tourism Organization

**WCED** – World Commission on Environment and Development

**WSL** – World Surf League

**WSR** – World Surfing Reserves

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# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 STUDY FRAMEWORK

The act of riding waves, commonly designated as surfing, has been generating increasing global interest over the last few decades. According to Ponting (2008), such interest has been mainly motivated by the distribution of “imagery of empty perfect waves breaking in remote exotic locations”. In fact, what was traditionally only appealing to a confined group of surfers, suddenly became highly marketable to the mainstream population as a symbolism for the ‘dream’ of freedom. Consequently, the participation in surfing grew exponentially to a total of 35 million surfers, according to latest estimates (Ponting & O’Brien, 2014), who ride the waves of at least 162 countries (Martin & Assenov, 2012). As the number of surfers increases, so does the size of the multi-billion-dollar surfing industry that is constantly striving to communicate the existence of empty perfect waves, despite most of the world’s quality surf breaks currently facing serious overcrowding.

Tourism represents a substantial portion of the overall surfing industry, mainly in the form of commercial surf tourism, where specialized tour operators commercialize package holidays to people wishing to surf the breaks of a certain destination (Buckley, 2002a). Due to the rapid development of this form of tourism worldwide and to the relevance it currently places in the overall tourism sector, surfing tourism specific research has been growing. In fact, research in this field has been determinant to understanding the impacts commonly caused by the development of surfing tourism.

Recently, this body of research has been focusing on the sustainability of the industry, as it has been demonstrated that the commercialization of surfing tourism usually takes place in fragile coastal environments, home to marginalized indigenous communities (O’Brien & Ponting, 2017). Besides, the satisfaction of surfing tourists is entirely dependent on the conservation of relatively uncrowded waves. Thus, it becomes clear that surfing tourism is commonly associated to very specific impacts which should be addressed in a sustainable manner, to guarantee a balance between the economic, environmental, and sociocultural dimensions of the destinations. Moreover, an alternative commercial approach must be pursued, since the massification of this type of tourism quickly leads to its deterioration.

Over the last decade, Portugal has established itself as a reference in the global surfing tourism industry. The country is currently facing an unprecedented increase in overall tourism activity, and surfing tourism is one of the segments contributing to such growth. Naturally, tourism represents an attractive economic opportunity for a country that has been

severely impacted by a global economic crisis. In this context, the Portuguese tourism board and local political leaders have identified the country's privileged positioning in the surfing tourism market, and have been deeply involved in the international promotion of the country's waves. One of the most successful promotional actions was achieved in 2009, with the settlement of a stage of the World Surf League Championship Tour in the county of Peniche.

The media exposure obtained by an event of such dimension has contributed to a boost in the development of the surfing tourism industry in Peniche, where it is currently responsible for a determinant contribution to the local economy. However, as previous research has shown that the rapid development of surfing tourism at the local level commonly jeopardizes the industry's own sustainability, it becomes necessary to assess the state of surfing tourism in Peniche to understand if it risks facing the same impacts of several other destinations worldwide. These impacts, typical of the traditional surfing tourism business model, include but are not limited to, overcrowding of surfing resources, conflict between host communities and surfing tourists, exclusion of host communities from the provision of tourism services, and shifting local economic contexts (Buckley, 2002a,b; Ponting et al., 2005; O'Brien & Ponting, 2013). Thus, this study seeks to adopt the underlying concepts of sustainable surfing tourism, such as community participation (Towner, 2016), long-term planning and restrictions to growth (Ponting et al., 2005), and attempts to apply them to the specific case of Peniche, Portugal.

## **1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR RESEARCH**

Having worked as a surf instructor in the surfing tourism industry of Peniche for three consecutive seasons, the author of this study has witnessed firsthand the impacts that this industry's rapid growth can cause at the local level. During that period, the author came across some of the underlying concepts of sustainable surfing tourism development, which triggered the will to pursue the development of a research project that could provide a deeper understanding of the state of surfing tourism in Peniche. In fact, the regular contact with the industry's actors revealed that there was a growing concern regarding its future.

The relevance of the specific case of surfing tourism in Peniche as a research subject is demonstrated by the number of existing studies focusing on it. Previous research has deeply enriched the knowledge on the topic of surfing tourism in Peniche, through the characterization of the profile of its surfing tourists (Rebelo, 2010), their motivations (Rebelo & Carvalhinho, 2012), and their satisfaction with the surfing experience in the county (Nunes, 2015). Peniche and the success of its surfing tourism have even motivated

research that contributed to the fields of events management (Santos, 2013), and territorial management (Cabeleira, 2011; Reis, 2015).

However, no research focusing on the adoption of sustainable surfing tourism principles to the reality of Peniche has been found. In fact, most work on this issue has been focused on understanding the implications of surfing tourism development in less developed country settings. As such, it has been identified that research focusing on the sustainability of surfing tourism in developed countries is necessary to better understand the phenomenon, and that it represents an important contribution to the overall field of study.

The sustainability approach to surfing tourism research is one that acknowledges the host community's stakeholders as central players in the delivery of the tourism product. In this context, the concerns of the community's members regarding the development of the industry are accepted as valid issues, which need to be addressed. Thus, this study consists of an attempt to 'give voice' to the members of the community of Peniche that are more likely to feel the impacts caused by the local industry's current paradigm.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

Following the need to assess the real perceptions of specific stakeholder groups, a qualitative approach to data collection was adopted. This allows the researcher to limit the influence of preconceived ideas that could hinder the pertinence of the results, instead granting participants the opportunity to introduce their real perceptions and concerns. This study's methodological approach is guided by a Social Constructivist paradigm, which defines reality as being dependent on social context, since it is grounded by social interactions, relationships, and experiences (Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014). This means that the perceptions of participants are accepted as valid data, thus rejecting the need to gauge the veracity of each participant's perceived notions.

The adoption of this approach underlies the need to develop a broad research question, that acts as a guide for the direction of the research process (Boeije, 2010; Maxwell, 2005; Sandelowski, 2008). Nonetheless, a case study was selected to generate valuable constructed knowledge that can be adapted to similar cases, specifically those of surfing tourism destinations of developed nations. Thus, the following research question was formed:

- How do local surfers and businesses of Peniche view the development of surfing tourism and what do they consider the key challenges to its sustainability?

Stemming from this guiding research question, three main objectives of the study have been proposed, which are the following:

- 1) To contribute to a better understanding of the challenges to the sustainable development of surfing tourism in destinations of developed nations;
- 2) To provide an analysis of the development of surfing tourism in Peniche;
- 3) To present recommendations for the sustainable development of surfing tourism in Peniche.

The primary method used for the collection of data was a set of semi-structured interviews with twenty-four participants from different local stakeholder groups. Fifteen of those interviews were performed with local surfers from Peniche, while the other nine interviews were conducted with business owners of the local industries of surfing, tourism, and surfing tourism. The interviews were conducted for over four months, recorded and then fully transcribed, to enable an accurate analysis of the extensive amount of data collected. Field notes and participant observation have been the secondary methods of data collection.

#### **1.4 THESIS OUTLINE**

The present thesis is divided into seven chapters, which guide the reader through a literature review from the most generic to the most specific concepts that sustain the study, to the final results generated by the research, providing a deeper explanation of the methodological approach in between. The current chapter seeks to provide an introductory contextualization of the study, which can be used as a guide for the rest of the thesis.

The second chapter focuses on the overall field of surfing tourism. It starts by providing a definition of tourism, which allows the further definition of surfing tourism that will be adopted throughout the document. Thereafter, an historical description of the evolution of surfing and its relation to tourism is presented.

The third chapter introduces the concept of sustainability to the field of surfing tourism. First, the overall concept of sustainable development is addressed, followed by a definition of sustainable tourism. Then, the concept of sustainable tourism is adapted to the specific niche of surfing tourism, and its typical impacts that hinder sustainability are presented. Finally, the chapter presents two models that are used for the assessment and measurement of sustainability in the surfing tourism industry.

The fourth chapter focuses on the study's specific case study. A description of surfing tourism in Portugal is provided, through a chronological review of how it has been developing over the years. Thereafter, the case of Peniche is broached through a

characterization of the county at three different levels, which are its history, demography, and privileged natural surfing resources. The chapter ends with a description of the overall tourism in Peniche, with a special focus on the niche of surfing tourism.

Chapter five provides a guide to the methodology used during the research process. It presents a variety of concepts necessary for the justification of the qualitative approach selected, as well as for the understanding of the underlying Social Constructivist paradigm. The chapter provides further explanation on the process of selection of the research question, the case study approach, and the entire process of data collection, treatment, and analysis.

The sixth chapter is the 'juice' of the study, where all the results are presented and discussed. The chapter is divided into the five main different themes that were identified during the process of data analysis. Under each theme, the perceptions of local surfers and business owners are presented separately in different subsections, and a conclusion to the theme is provided, where the crossing of data from both stakeholder groups is performed.

Finally, the thesis ends with chapter seven, where the main conclusions of the study are summarized. Moreover, recommendations for the future development of surfing tourism in Peniche are provided, based on the results. The chapter ends with an identification of the study's main limitations and contributions to the field of research, followed by recommendations for further research projects that can extend the knowledge on the subject.

## CHAPTER 2 - TOURISM AND SURFING

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, the number of people who participate in the act of riding waves has been rapidly increasing. Following such growth in the number of surfers worldwide, an industry to cater for their needs has also been flourishing. The traveling undertaken by surfers to ride high-quality waves represents a determinant contribution to the increasing dimension of the overall surfing industry. This chapter presents a detailed description and contextualization of surfing tourism, stemming from a deep review of the literature on this specific niche of the overall tourism industry which has been getting increased academic and commercial attention. A brief definition of tourism in the context of this study is followed by a contextualization of the global surfing tourism industry, which in turn is followed by the conceptualization of surfing tourism. The chapter ends with a historical narrative of the development of surfing tourism, which is performed in parallel with the history of surfing itself.

### 2.2 DEFINING TOURISM

*The commercial organization and operation of holidays and visits to places of interest.*

*- Oxford English Dictionary*

The definition of tourism presented above is in line with the wide, commercial-based common perception of this particular concept. However, for the scope of this study, it does not provide enough comprehension on the different aspects covered by the action of the growing worldwide tourism industry. It is thus necessary to analyze different academic approaches to the phenomenon in order to come up with a broader, in-depth definition.

Researchers have long been struggling with the definition of tourism, as it is a concept that can have many different meanings to different people, and there is yet no definition that is widely accepted as encompassing all its possibilities (Cooper et al., 2007; Theobald, 1998). In the context of this study, more important than diving into all the conceptualization possibilities and attempts, is to focus on the aspects of tourism that generate overall agreement amongst academics.

One largely acknowledged characteristic of the field of tourism is its interdisciplinarity, since the causes and effects of tourism are commonly studied by researchers from different

disciplines (Kozak & Kozak, 2013), who contribute to the creation of knowledge on the “complex set, or bundle, of economic, political, sociocultural and environmental processes related to tourist activities” (Shaw & Williams, 2004, p.9). Another feature of tourism that generates broad agreement between researchers is that it implies the temporary displacement of people, or travelling, away from the place of permanent residence (Sharpley, 2006; Smith, 2010; Tuna, 2011). However, it is hard to include further limiting characteristics in the broad definition of the term, since researchers use different definitions to guide their research, which can have an economic, sociocultural, or environmental perspective (Tuna, 2011). As such depending on the needs of each author, the traveler can be limited according to the length of stay, the purpose of the trip, or the distance travelled (Sharpley, 2006).

The complexity surrounding the conceptualization of tourism has been well described by Shaw and Williams (2004), as quoted below:

*Drawing a hard line around the tourism sector is (...) a largely futile exercise, and it is more useful to recognize that it has blurred boundaries (p. 10).*

This study adopts the definition of tourism introduced by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which is depicted below. It is arguably the most used definition of the concept, because it is broad enough to encompass the activities performed by all types of visitors away from their home environment for no more than a year. Furthermore, it considers tourism to be an activity performed by tourists, instead of providing a business-centered perspective. The focus on the activity side of the concept is important for the scope of this study, since it covers the social effects of an activity-oriented form of tourism.

*The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (UNWTO, as cited in Govers, Hecke & Cabus, 2008, p. 1053).*

## **2.3 SURFING TOURISM**

### **2.3.1 Global Context of Surfing**

The sport of surfing has been growing in terms of participants at a staggering rhythm in recent decades. Buckley (2002a) estimated there were more than 10 million surfers worldwide back in 2002, and that the number of participants would increase at a rate of 12% to 16% per annum. According to Ponting and O'Brien (2014), latest estimates suggest there are currently 35 million surfers, who practice their wave-riding activities in at least 162 countries (Martin & Assenov, 2012). As the number of surfers increases, so does the

economic value of the global surfing industry. According to Buckley (2002a), “surf-branded clothing” make up the core of the industry, to which the specific hardware (surfboards, wetsuits, etc.) and traveling also make important contributions. The total of the industry’s three dimensions was calculated by Buckley (2002a) to generate US\$10 billion annually by the beginning of the 2000s. According to an estimate by O’Brien and Eddie (as cited in Ponting & O’Brien, 2014), the global surf-related industry is currently responsible for revenues ranging between US\$70 and US\$130 billion each year.

As a consequence of the increasing popularity surrounding the act of riding waves, surf breaks located near highly populated regions of the developed world are experiencing serious overcrowding (Buckley, 2002a; O’Brien & Ponting, 2013), leading to associated episodes of conflict between surfers, also known as “surf rage” (O’Brien & Ponting, 2013). The typical crowded conditions of surf breaks in the cities is responsible for making the “cash-rich, time-poor” (Buckley, 2002a) surfers travel to surf in uncrowded, remote locations. In fact, surfers represent a highly mobile population, embarking on international trips to surf at a much higher rate than the rest of the population does for overall leisure purposes (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013).

Even though surfers represent a very small niche of the overall traveling population, their hyper-active traveling behavior, and their preference for remote locations of developing nations are responsible for very relevant impacts. As such, it is now argued that surfing tourism “has become a social phenomenon of sufficient economic, social and environmental significance to justify academic attention” (Buckley, 2002a, p.406). In fact, Martin and Assenov (2012) conducted a review of the literature regarding surf tourism, finding that the first study on the subject was conducted in 1997 and that, by 2012, there was a total of 102 papers specifically dedicated to surf tourism research, sixty percent of which were produced in only five years.

### **2.3.2 Defining Surfing Tourism**

An increasing number of authors have been feeling the need to perform research on the phenomenon that is the tourism of surfing. As such, different conceptual interpretations have been suggested in order to fit each researcher’s necessities for a certain study. The debate begins with the placement of this type of tourism within the overall tourism field. Some authors place surf tourism under the “nature-based adventure tourism” sector, as suggested by Buckley (2002a), while other authors — such as Dolnicar and Fluker (2003a) — argue that it is part of the wider set that is sport tourism. However, in his PhD thesis Ponting (2008) mentions the works of Farmer (1992) and Stranger (1999), suggesting that the main motivation to surf is not sportive. Instead, the “thrill’ related to the risk of surfing

waves is what motivates most people to surf. Surf tourism may be more relevantly placed as a subset of sport tourism, for example in the case of professional surfers traveling to and from competitions. In this context, it is not hereby intended to enter the debate of placement of surf tourism in a specific typology, as both mentioned possibilities are accepted and they may even overlap at some points.

As previously demonstrated, the concept of tourism itself can be subject of diverging interpretations, which translates to the definition of the specific forms of tourism. As such, several definitions of surf tourism have been suggested by different authors. Table 1 shows the most relevant contributions to the conceptualization of this phenomenon presented to date.

Table 1 Definitions of surf tourism and surfing tourism.

Author(s)	Year	Definition
Buckley	2002(a)	"Surfing becomes tourism as soon as surfers travel at least 40 km and stay overnight with surfing as the primary purpose for travel (...) commercial surf tourism may be considered as purchasable holiday packages where clients travel more than 40km from home, stay overnight, and intend to devote their active leisure time principally to surfing." (pp.407-408)
Dolnicar & Fluker	2003(a)	"Surf tourism involves people travelling to either domestic locations for a period of time not exceeding 6 months, or international locations for a period of time not exceeding 12 months, who stay at least one night, and where the active participation in the sport of surfing, where the surfer relies on the power of the wave for forward momentum, is the primary motivation for destination selection." (p.187)
Ponting	2008	"Surfing tourism is travel and temporary stay, undertaken by a surfer, involving at least one night away from the region of the surfer's usual domicile which is undertaken with the primary expectation of surfing waves." (p.25)
Martin & Assenov	2008(a)	"[Surf tourist is] Any traveler who deliberately engages in the sport of surfing, including first time surfers, beginners, and highly skilled surfers."

An analysis of the different definitions of the concept presented above indicates a wide agreement that surf tourism is differentiated by the underlying purpose of traveling – surfing waves –, even though Martin and Assenov (2008a) reject such assumption. However, as with the overall definition of tourism, different interpretations are possible regarding the length of the stay and the distance traveled. There is also a wide consensus that surf tourism

involves at least one overnight stay, but Dolnicar and Fluker (2003a) propose a maximum stay of 6 and 12 months for domestic and international tourists respectively. Regarding the distance covered by the trip between home and the destination, Buckley (2002a) defends it must be of at least 40 km.

Buckley (2002a) makes a distinction between “recreational surf travel” and “commercial surf tourism”. The former is characterized by the absence of specialized tour operators in the trip’s planning process, which is carried out by the surfers themselves; the latter, on the other hand, is distinguished by the commercialization of packages covering the necessary planning of the surf trip. It is argued that the expansion of commercial surf tourism has been responsible for a shift in the profile of the clients, who “arrive with lower and lower individual experience, expecting higher and higher levels of instruction, assistance and safety from tour guides and operators” (Buckley, 2002a, p.408).

Ponting (2008) includes both recreational and commercial tourism in his definition, yet he presents a conceptualization of *surfing tourism* instead of *surf tourism*. The distinctive feature of this concept is that it addresses “surfers touring, not tourists surfing” (p.25). The author thus introduces the notion of surfer, who is “a person who possesses sufficient skill and knowledge to utilise the power of a wave for forward momentum, track at an angle across the face of a wave, and anticipate and respond to its changing contours” (p.23). A slightly different approach is presented by Dolnicar and Fluker (2003a), who merely focus on the dependence on the power of the wave for forward momentum, not proposing a minimum level of skill and therefore including first time surfers and beginners, as do Martin and Assenov (2008a).

For the specific case of surf tourism in Thailand, Martin and Assenov (2008a) also propose a subcategorization of the concept, depending on the traveler’s level of motivation for surfing and depth of experience. The authors make a distinction between: (1) *Hard surf tourism*, performed by travelers with high motivation for surfing and an increased level of skill; (2) *Soft surf tourism*, carried out by surfers traveling “with surfing as an objective, but not a primary motivation for his, or her travel”; and (3) *Incidental surf tourism*, composed by the group of tourists who only feel the push to experience surfing while at the destination. This division of the concept of surf tourism is not considered in this study, since the author believes the motivation for surfing is determinant for its definition. The limits regarding the distance traveled and the length of stay may vary according to the context of each study, but the initial motivation to surf waves is necessary to identify this specific form of tourism. In this context, it is important to note that the term *surfing tourism*, as used by Ponting (2008), is hereby considered more appropriate, since it implies the act of surfing, as

opposed to *surf tourism* which merely suggests the existence of breaking waves.

The definition of surfing tourism provided in the scope of this study derives from the overlapping of the UNWTO definition of tourism with the specific definitions presented in Table 1, and is the following:

*Surfing tourism involves traveling to and staying in places outside one's usual environment for not more than one consecutive year, undertaken with the primary expectation of surfing, where one relies on the power of the waves for forward momentum.*

## **2.4 HISTORY OF SURFING TOURISM**

### **2.4.1 The beginning**

*It's easy to imagine that wave-riding in one form or another likely took root on antediluvian beaches from Brazil to Senegal, Lebanon to Borneo. For any society living on a temperate coastline, riding waves would likely be a natural, if not intuitive act (Warshaw, 2010, p. 21).*

It is believed that the first time a watercraft was used to ride waves dates back to around 3000 B.C., when fishermen of the pre-Inca civilizations created the *caballitos de totora*, "little horses" made of bundled reeds (Warshaw, 2004; Warshaw, 2010). The Chimu and Moche civilizations, located where is now northern Peru, developed the *caballitos* as a means to easily push through the highly consistent surf, as well as to use the incoming waves to safely return with their catch back to shore (Warshaw, 2010). The origin of this unique surf craft is linked to the place where now sit the ruins of Chan Chan, next to the small coastal city and World Surfing Reserve of Huanchaco, where they are to this day the vessels used daily by local fishermen (WSR, n.d.).

Since then many different vessels and wave riding crafts have been developed and used in different parts of the world, particularly as part of the ancient Polynesian society. In fact, despite the evidence that Peruvian fishermen and West African kids rode waves before the Polynesians (Westwick & Neushul, 2013; Warshaw, 2010), there is no clear link between those ancient ways of riding waves to what is modern surfing, a purely recreational and universal activity. Only on the main islands of the South Pacific was surfing practiced by both children and adults, and only in Tahiti and Hawaii it was performed in a standing position using full-length boards (Warshaw, 2010). However, the beginning of modern surfing is connected to the Hawaiian archipelago, because of the communal importance and cultural component it acquired.

In fact, the story of the sport of surfing as we know it today started in eleventh century Hawaii, around four thousand years after the first *caballito de totora* was used by a fisherman. Likely brought to the archipelago by Tahitian surfers, the act of stand-up riding waves for pleasure rapidly developed in the Hawaiian Islands to become more than a recreational activity, turning to a social way of life (Westwick & Neushul, 2013). Men and women of all ages took part on this religious-like activity, with many different rituals and prayers associated with it. Some of the best spots, however, were exclusively meant for Hawaiian royalty members to show off their strength and skill (Ponting, 2008; Westwick & Neushul, 2013).

Ponting (2008) notes that the Hawaiians also used to travel between islands with the primary goal of finding new waves to surf. The author, thus, concludes that surfing tourism may also have originated in ancient Hawaii, where those Hawaiian explorers would have been the world's first surfing tourists. This shows that tourism and the will to explore new, uncharted waves has been part of the sport of surfing since its early days.

#### **2.4.2 From royalty to near extinction**

For centuries, the Hawaiians surfed and traveled while every other civilization had no knowledge about all the wave-riding possibilities developed in Hawaii over the years. In fact, the first Westerners to establish contact with Hawaii and its unique culture were European Captain James Cook and his crew onboard the *Resolution*, in 1777 (Ponting, 2008; Warshaw, 2010). It was then that the first reporting of wave-riding as a form of generating pleasure was written, as follows: "I could not help concluding that this man felt the most supreme pleasure while he was driven on so fast and so smoothly by the sea" (Warshaw, 2010, p.31). Captain Cook has long been credited as the author of the iconic phrase, but it is now considered to have been written by the *Resolution* surgeon William Anderson (Warshaw, 2010).

Ten months later Cook returned to the archipelago, now commanding not only the *Resolution*, but also another British tall-masted sailing ship, the *Discovery*. It was January 1778 when the vessels arrived in Hawaii and only then did Cook and his men get a real understanding of the cultural importance of surfing, as well as the unique skills of Hawaiian natives as a water people (Westwick & Neushul, 2013). However, the great cultural differences between Hawaiians and Europeans soon led to conflict, culminating in the assassination of Captain Cook.

American missionaries arrived in Hawaii in 1820, imposing their Christian values and traditions to the natives, which led to the rapid decline of surfing since it was regarded as a

non-productive activity (Westwick & Neushul, 2013). However, the cultural discrepancy was not the main reason for the near extinction of surfing as a way of living. The diseases brought by Westerners to Hawaii were responsible for a demographic collapse “more extreme than the one suffered by medieval Europe during the Black Death” (Westwick & Neushul, 2013, p. 27). According to Westwick and Neushul (2013), just over a century after Captain Cook first set foot in Hawaii, only five to ten percent of its native population had survived, and as the Hawaiian population was almost extinguished, so was the act of riding waves for pleasure. A few years later, in 1898, Hawaii officially became part of the U.S. territory.

*After losing their religion, their land, their livelihoods, and their lives, the Hawaiian people had lost their independence (Westwick & Neushul, 2013, p. 29).*

### **2.4.3 How tourism saved surfing**

The act of surfing in Hawaii was, by the end of the nineteenth century, almost nonexistent. However, the annexation to the U.S., together with an increasingly prosperous middle class and the introduction of mandated public holidays, were responsible for making Hawaii a very attractive tourism destination (Warshaw, 2010; Westwick & Neushul, 2013). It then became normal for *haoles*<sup>1</sup> from the U.S. mainland to enjoy their free time in the Hawaiian archipelago, and so did the reputable American adventure writer Jack London. There, London met Alexander Hume Ford, American surfing enthusiast living in Hawaii who introduced London to George Freeth, born in Honolulu and one of the greatest surfers of Waikiki in the early twentieth century. Inspired by Freeth’s wave-riding skills, Jack London wrote to a wide American audience about the “royal sport for the natural kings of the earth” (London as cited in Westwick & Neushul, 2013, p. 33).

In order to protect beach access to surfers from the growing construction of hotels in Waikiki, in 1908 Alexander Hume Ford bought a beachfront property and created surfing’s first organization, the Outrigger Canoe and Surfboard Club (Warshaw, 2010), which was a success among visiting *haoles*. Later, in 1911, the local Hawaiian beach boys of Waikiki created their own club, the Hui Nalu, and provided entertainment and surf guiding for the increasing number of tourists. The promotion of Hawaii as a tourism destination was made around surfing with the help of both surf clubs, which contributed to the revival of the sport. As part of the promotional strategy, members of both clubs gave several surfing demonstrations outside of Hawaii (Warshaw, 2004; Warshaw, 2010; Westwick & Neushul, 2013). George Freeth was the first, who started surfing the beaches of California in 1907,

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<sup>1</sup> *Haole* is a term used in Hawaii to refer to individuals who are not descendants of native Hawaiians.

and he was followed by the 'father' of modern surfing, Hui Nalu's cofounder Duke Kahanamoku. Born in Honolulu, Duke became in 1912 an Olympic gold medal swimmer, which provided him with the necessary fame to attract attention towards his demonstrations of skillful surfing to the rest of the world. Duke was the world's best surfer, and he gave surfing demonstrations in California, Australia, and New Zealand (Warshaw, 2004; Westwick & Neushul, 2013).

As a consequence of all the promotional efforts, Waikiki became "perhaps the most famous beach in the world" (Westwick & Neushul, 2013, p. 44), and surfing was now an activity that lured people from all over the globe. Waikiki remained the world capital of surfing and surfers kept flowing in, but the popularity of surfing spread to mainland U.S., where California started to have its own surfing culture in the 1920s (Warshaw, 2010). In this decade, the few Californian surfers would drive up and down the coast in search of the perfect wave, leading to the discovery of Malibu in 1927 (Warshaw, 2010). Two years later, access to that stretch of coast was granted and Malibu quickly earned the reputation of the "best wave in the coast" (Warshaw, 2004, p.359). A new surf culture emerged in Malibu during the 1930s and the proximity of the perfect righthand pointbreak to Hollywood made surfing more attractive than ever as a marketable commercial activity (Warshaw, 2004).

#### **2.4.4 The expansion**

In fact, it was during the 1930s that surfing in California had its first major boost. This was related to the introduction of the hollow board by Tom Blake in 1930, which was a much lighter and easier to ride watercraft than the common solid-wood planks, making it possible for the average Californian to enjoy the surf (Westwick & Neushul, 2013). Furthermore, in 1935 Blake was the first to introduce a stabilizing fin, giving the boards greater stability and maneuverability (Warshaw, 2010). In the same decade mass production of surfboards started, making them affordable to the middle class American workers and propelling the development of surfing. Later, in the post-World War 2 period, fast technological development and American prosperity extended into surfing, with many new introductions to surfboard design and most importantly, the creation of the wetsuit in 1951, adapted to surfing by Jack O'Neill in 1952 (Warshaw, 2004), which allowed surfing to be practiced in different latitudes.

By this time, surfing was also getting increasing attention in Australia, although it was growing with a distinct inherent culture. The first surfboard was taken to the country in 1912, but the act of riding waves only attracted Australians after Duke Kahanamoku's demonstrations in the country (Ponting, 2008). In Australia, though, surfing was an auxiliary of the lifesaving act, thus ruled by the powerful Surf Life Saving Association (SLSA)

(Warshaw, 2010). Australians kept the act of surfing mainly limited to the members of the lifesaving associations, until a group of American surfers including the massively influential Greg Noll, visited the country in 1956 for the Melbourne Olympic Games and introduced the revolutionary balsa Malibu surfboard. Soon after that, most Australian surfers were separated from the lifesaving organizations and pursuing a surfing lifestyle on their own (Warshaw, 2004). Once again, surfing tourism was responsible for triggering a boost in the development of the sport.

Surfing was expanding rapidly and everything was set for the sport's first great boom, which came in 1959 with the Hollywood movie *Gidget*. The film played on movie screens across the United States and sparked the curiosity of young people from coast to coast, while giving surfers their very own image of anti-system rebels within a commercial, consumerist society (Westwick & Neushul, 2013). *Gidget* was just the start, as the commerciality of surfing triggered many other movies about the lifestyle to come out in the 1960s, which culminated in 1966 with the release of *The Endless Summer*, which is still to this day considered one of the greatest surf movies ever. At the same time, a new music category called surf music was created, which became the second most popular in the U.S. mainly due to the success of Hawthorne's band *The Beach Boys* (Westwick & Neushul, 2013). Surfing had now been communicated to the masses and the beaches of Southern California suddenly became crowded by "hordes of clueless kooks<sup>2</sup>" (Westwick & Neushul, 2013, p. 104). Malibu lost its magic and crowded surf breaks were now a reality throughout the coast, which motivated an increasing desire to search for uncharted, perfect waves. Thus, all the elements had come together for the beginning of the commercialization of surfing tourism.

#### **2.4.5 A profitable industry**

*The Endless Summer* generated awareness in the surfing world that there were many perfect waves around the globe waiting to be discovered, just like the righthander depicted in the movie, in South Africa's Cape St. Francis. This represented a great shift in the surf culture, as the search for perfect waves in exotic destinations became (and is, to this day) the sport's holy grail (Warshaw, 2010). The surf travel ideal had thus been introduced, and it soon started being extensively explored in other surf movies and in the articles of surfing magazines around the world (Warshaw, 2004). The increasingly crowded conditions mainly in breaks near urban centers, combined with the emerging episodes of violence related to localism in California, Hawaii, and Australia (Westwick & Neushul, 2013), only increased surfers' yearning to find new breaks to surf on their own.

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<sup>2</sup> *Kook* is a derogatory term used in surfing to refer to unexperienced surfers, or beginners.

By the end of the 1960s, the first Australian surfers started to travel to the island of Bali in Indonesia (Warshaw, 2010; Westwick & Neushul, 2013), with Uluwatu becoming surfing's newest 'perfect wave'. Indonesia had all the exotic elements for traveling surfers and as such, many traveled to Bali during the early 1970s, while new businesses emerged to satisfy the needs of the many visiting surfers (Westwick & Neushul, 2013). While the surfing tourism industry was developing in Bali, a few surfers started targeting some of the other Indonesian islands (Warshaw, 2010). American surfers Bob Laverty and brothers Bill and Mike Boyum set on an adventure to the island of Java, leading to the discovery of the world-class break of G-Land (Warshaw, 2010; Westwick & Neushul, 2013). The Boyum brothers then started building a treehouse which eventually became the world's first official surf camp, registered in 1977 under the name of Blambangan Surfing Club (Warshaw, 2010). The camp was an instant success; by 1982 surfers were paying a thousand dollars for a ten-day package, and by 1985 the Boyum brothers were making an annual revenue of \$250,000 (Westwick & Neushul, 2013). Paying to surf perfect waves in exotic destinations became acceptable, which made the industry of commercial surf tourism very attractive for investors, leading to its fast development around the world.

In parallel to the development of surfing tourism, another facet of the sport was also going through fast progress during the 1970s, although "it seemed to pull the sport in completely different directions" (Warshaw, 2010, p. 300) — professional competitive surfing. It all started in 1964, with the first edition of the World Surfing Championships at Australia's Manly Beach, which was covered by television networks ABC and Australian ATN-7 (Warshaw, 2010). However, it was during the 1970s that competitive surfing started turning into something that could be performed professionally, culminating in 1976 with the creation of the first world circuit, put together by the newly formed International Professional Surfers, or IPS (Warshaw, 2010).

In contrast to surfing tourists paying to travel around the world surfing perfect, empty waves, professional surfers were coming up with a way to get paid to have an identical lifestyle, while inspiring many young surfers to become future competitors. However, both sides of the sport were highly attractive for marketing purposes. On the tourism side, the small treehouse surf camp quickly led to the emergence of the first exclusive surf resort in 1983, the famous Tavarua Island Resort in Fiji (Warshaw, 2010). On the competitive side, the recognition and media coverage obtained by the world circuit triggered the second great boom of surfing, mainly driven by the surfwear industry.

The surf clothing manufacturers formed what in 1986 was already a billion-dollar industry, culminating in the creation of the Surf Industry Manufacturers Association (SIMA) in 1989

(Warshaw, 2010). According to Ponting (2008), SIMA later estimated the total international surfwear industry sales to be of US\$4.5 billion by 2002. This number showed a staggering growth during the following years, to US\$6.52 billion in 2004 and US\$7.48 billion in 2006 (Ponting, 2008). This growth of more than 66% in just 4 years is representative of an increasing public interest in surfing and was mainly motivated by the development of big multinational companies such as Rip Curl, Quiksilver, and Billabong.

#### **2.4.6 Surfing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Just before the turn of the century, the surfing tourism industry expanded due to a change on the surf traveler's profile. Surfing tourists became less driven by the solo search of new breaks, and instead started looking for businesses that provided comfort and safety (Ponting, 2008), as well as the guarantee of many hours of surfing in perfect conditions. Ponting states that:

*(...)the surf explorers of the sixties and early seventies, and their less adventurous peers were becoming the new professional class (...). With less discretionary time but more disposable income, surf tourism options like those offered at Fiji's Tavarua Resort became more appealing (Ponting, 2008, p. 62).*

The places where the new surfing tourist could embark on an adventure to surf in perfect conditions became predetermined by the surf media, as it had long been determining the shifting notion of 'perfect wave' itself through "normative imagery" (Ponting, 2008). As the new trend in surfing tourism was being set, the industry was growing at a high pace, working together with the surf media to market the surf camps, resorts and liveaboard boat charters that were opening up around these 'perfect waves'. Equally part of this combined marketing effort was the surf clothing industry, as "surfwear firms entered a profitable symbiosis with the surf media" (Westwick & Neushul, 2013, p. 289). Ponting (2008) called this a "tripartite marketing synergy" between the surf media, tour operators and surfwear manufacturers, to create a new imagery surrounding the surfing lifestyle.

The professional competitive side of surfing has been since the beginning, developing in a different direction. The majority of the people that have been targeted by the big surfwear corporations are non-surfing consumers, who nonetheless identify with the search of the perfect wave, as a metaphor for their lives (Ponting, 2008). Surf competitions do not encompass the adventurous side of the lifestyle that is communicated through the "tripartite marketing synergy" and as such, have commonly been marketed using a different approach. However, technological development brought new possibilities and now every World Surf League (WSL) Championship Tour event is broadcast live for free in the internet. In fact, the WSL official website had an increase in pageviews from 12.7 million in 2013 to

42.9 million in 2015 (CMP, 2016). Through its webcasts, the WSL promotes the destinations where the contests take place to an increasing number of people; the surf brands also promote themselves and their new products during commercial breaks. In this context, it is apparent that in recent years professional competitive surfing has increasingly been a part of the traditional “tripartite marketing synergy”, adding a fourth dimension to it.

The promotional marketing efforts of all the different sub industries of surfing have been contributing to the growing popularity of the sport. This growing popularity can be proven by the increase in global surfing participation over the last few decades, which has been estimated to range from 23 million (International Surfing Association, as cited in Warshaw, 2004), to 25 million (Aguerre, as cited in Transworld Business, 2008), through to 35 million participants (Ponting & O’Brien, 2014).

For the future of the sport, it can be hypothesized that surfing will soon be going through another major ‘boom’ in recognition and participation. As covered in this chapter, the recent history of surfing has been marked by periods of greater expansion of the sport. Curiously, those moments have been taking place every two decades — first in the 1960s, then during the 1980s, and more recently in the 2000s. If this cyclical trend is maintained, the next decade will witness a major surf ‘boom’, which can be triggered by different developments of the sport. One major development of surfing that will communicate its competitive side to a much broader audience is the inclusion of surfing in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, for the first time in history (ISA, 2017). Additionally, the recent technological developments surrounding man-made waves have been responsible for the inauguration of several wave pools in inland areas of the developed world. This might contribute to a great increase on the number of surfing participants, as the sport will become more easily accessible for many inland populations that otherwise would have to travel long distances to surf. Furthermore, the acquisition of the Kelly Slater Wave Company by the WSL (WSL & KSWC, 2016) suggests that wave pools will also play a part in professional competitive surfing.

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented the concept of surfing tourism, by describing how this activity's development has occurred over the decades, as well as providing an image of its current global context. Following the tendency of the overall tourism sector, researchers have recently been introducing the need for sustainability in the surfing tourism industry. Considering the many characteristic impacts of this form of tourism, some specific dimensions for the achievement of its sustainability have been introduced. The following chapter describes the notion of sustainability and how it might be adapted to the surfing tourism realm.

## **CHAPTER 3 - SUSTAINABILITY OF SURFING TOURISM**

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the concept of sustainability has been increasingly introduced in most of the world's industries and areas of development. In fact, it can be argued that the term sustainability is currently used for all kinds of situations, often improperly, and only as a way to express environmental concerns. This chapter briefly explores the issues surrounding sustainability, and it deepens on the understanding of exactly what the concept means in the context of tourism, and specifically surfing tourism. Moreover, the importance of measuring sustainability is highlighted, and two existing models for the assessment of sustainability in the surfing tourism industry are presented. Those models are the Framework Analysis for Sustainable Surf Tourism (FASST), and the certification program STOKE Certified.

### **3.2 UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

The emergence of the concept of sustainable tourism has derived from the need to balance the positive economic impacts commonly related to the development of a growing tourism industry, with the potential negative effects that the same development can cause to local environments and communities (Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011). It is important to note that sustainable tourism is not one specific form, or niche, of the overall tourism industry. Instead, every different form of tourism can, and should, adopt strategies of sustainable development in the future (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). In fact, to fully comprehend the concept of sustainable tourism, one should first consider the concept of sustainable development. Therefore, it is hereby presented a description of the grounds of sustainable development, followed by their application to the tourism sector.

#### **3.2.1 Sustainable Development**

The concept of sustainable development became widely recognized since the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) released a report on the subject, in 1987 (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005; Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011). The definition of the concept presented in that report is still to this day the most commonly used, which considers sustainable development to be "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987).

As the definition of the concept suggests, sustainable development is deeply rooted in the notion of equality for all people in the present, while making sure that the resources are managed in a way that will allow future generations to have the same opportunities of the present. The WCED introduces two main concepts that are essential for the achievement of sustainability. Those concepts are the “needs” of the population, with a focus on the essential needs of the poor; and the “limits” faced by the environment to absorb the effects of technological and social activity (WCED, 1987; Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011).

As the importance of sustainable development in all fields of society is now widely recognized, the concept has been rapidly evolving to provide a more practical applicability. The UNEP and UNWTO (2005) highlight the three main “pillars” for the enforcement of practices of sustainable development, which are: (1) Economic sustainability, (2) Social sustainability, and (3) Environmental sustainability. A balance between all these dimensions should be pursued at all times, making sure that (1) all economic activity is viable and effective, (2) benefits and opportunities are equitably distributed amongst everyone in society, and (3) natural resources are properly managed and conserved.

### **3.2.2 Sustainable Tourism**

The issue of sustainability has been gaining relevance in the field of tourism, mainly because the latter is usually characterized by an imbalance between the typically positive impacts brought to local economies, and the risks it carries to the environments and communities of host destinations. Thus, the introduction of the concept of sustainable development to the field of tourism arises from the need to narrow the gap between the impacts generated in the three main areas of development, by providing a framework for a tighter equilibrium between the economic, social, and environmental impacts and benefits (Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011).

On their sustainable tourism guide for policy makers, the UNEP and UNWTO (2005) emphasize three important dimensions that exemplify the pertinence of adopting sustainability to all tourism activities. Firstly, tourism implies a large number of interactions between visitors, host communities and local environments, which need to be monitored to prevent any of the three to be impacted in a negative way. Secondly, it is argued that tourism provides visitors and hosts with an increased awareness about environmental and cultural issues, thus generating a great demand for sustainable practices in the industry. Finally, tourism must strive to become more sustainable because the industry itself depends on the preservation of clean and authentic environments and heritage. These dimensions are well epitomized in the following quote (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005):

*Tourism has immense power to do good. Yet it can also be the vector for the very pressures that may destroy the assets on which it relies. Developed without concern for sustainability, tourism can not only damage societies and the environment, it could also contain the seeds of its own destruction (p. 10).*

As previously stated, sustainable tourism is not one specific form of tourism. There are many definitions of the concept utilized by different authors, which is related to the multiplicity of definitions of its underlying notions: sustainability and tourism (White et al., 2006). However, it is widely agreed that sustainable tourism is a sort of management approach (English Tourism Council, as cited in White et al., 2006), or organizational framework (Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011), used by different entities and organizations to make the overall tourism industry more sustainable. Nevertheless, considering the activity-based definition of tourism adopted in this study, it seems restrictive to think of sustainable tourism as a form of orientation to be adopted only at a managerial level within organizations. In fact, both visitors and hosts, being determinant stakeholders of the tourism industry, can have sustainability-oriented motivations that influence the way communities and environments are impacted. In this context, this study will adopt the World Tourism Organization's definition of sustainable tourism presented below.

*Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, p. 12).*

### **3.3 SUSTAINABLE SURFING TOURISM**

As it has been done for the broad concept of tourism, it is necessary to understand the main issues surrounding the sustainability of surfing tourism worldwide. Researchers in this field have mainly been interested in the challenges for the sustainable development of surfing tourism in developing countries. However, it is hypothesized in this study that the rapid growth of surfing tourism in Western developed nations, may pose similar difficulties if appropriate planning and management actions are not taken.

In order to understand how to better achieve higher levels of sustainability, the current section explores how surfing tourism generally impacts the economic, environmental, and sociocultural aspects of the destinations where it takes place.

#### Economic Impacts

As surfing becomes an increasingly practiced activity, new surf-related businesses are created to respond to the different needs of surfers from all over the world. In this context, surfing has become an activity of substantial economic relevance, triggering the realization of many studies to assess the economic activity generated by surfing at different surf breaks

and regions.

A study on the impact of surfing to the local economy of Mundaka, a small rural village in Spain's Basque Country, focused on the tourism of surfing to calculate the value that a world-class wave represents to the local community of only 1,900 people (Murphy & Bernal, 2008). The authors highlight that surfing tourism was, at the time, the main source of income to the area, concluding that it could potentially represent a total of \$4.5 million in annual economic impacts. The economic impacts generated by the interest in quality surf breaks are multiplied to a much greater extent when those breaks are in more populated areas, as is the case of the big wave break of Mavericks, in California, which generates a total of \$23.8 million per annum (Coffman & Burnett, 2009). In Australia's Gold Coast, the overall surf industry was responsible in 2008, by 9.4% of the local economy's total output, and 12.6% of total employment. The main contribution to the Gold Coast's local surf industry was that of surfing tourism, which contributed in the year 2008 with a total output of almost \$820 million (AEC Group Ltd., 2009).

A recent study by Oxford University's Department of Economics (McGregor & Wills, 2016) focuses on the contribution of surfing waves to the increase in local economic activity. The authors used the variation in night-time light emissions over the years as an indicator of economic activity in over five thousand locations, reaching the conclusion that "high quality surfing waves boost activity in the local area". In the same study, McGregor and Wills (2016) go on to estimate that surfing waves are responsible for contributing between US\$18 million to US\$22 million each year to the economy of their surrounding 50km, totaling more than US\$50 billion of economic impact globally.

### Environmental Impacts

One of the main challenges of the overall tourism industry is to find solutions to reduce the level of environmental degradation caused by the rise of the industry itself. Surfing tourism, just as any other form of tourism, is responsible for causing global and local negative environmental impacts.

Butt (2015) notes that surfers are a group of the global population which will be highly exposed to most of the predicted effects caused by climate change, such as sea-level rise, coastal flooding, and coastal pollution. As the author puts it:

*The effects of environmental degradation (...) will probably be more immediate and more profound on us surfers than on other members of the rich nations of the world (p.200).*

The author believes that this higher sensitivity to climate change is the reason surfers “ought to be more environmentally aware” than the rest of the population (Butt, 2015). However, surfers increased environmental awareness does not translate into lower contributions by surfing tourism to environmental degradation. Buckley (2002a) hypothesized that the contribution of surfing tourism to the global environmental issues was identical, per person per day, to that of tourism as a whole. Butt (2015) goes even further as to say that, despite their environmental consciousness, surfers represent a greater impact to the global environment than the average citizen, which is related to the very active traveling habits of this specific niche.

On the impacts of surfing tourism to local environments, Buckley (2002a) argues that they are especially relevant when this activity takes place in small islands. According to the author, the increased pressure in places where traditional communities had subsistence lifestyles causes very serious impacts. As surfing tourists start visiting these places, their demands need to be addressed, which ultimately leads to issues such as increased water consumption, pollution of drinking water sources and destruction of reef systems and marine ecosystems.

### Sociocultural Impacts

In general, tourism presents serious social and cultural risks to any community that becomes dependent on it, which in the absence of proper management tends to lead to divisions and conflicts within those communities (Buckley, 2002a). Furthermore, Buckley (2002a) goes on to argue that the sudden influx of money is the main reason for cultural impacts caused by tourism as a whole, such as increased competition amongst local entrepreneurs, overcrowding due to rising job opportunities and, more often than not, crime. The author also mentions the typical tensions within host communities, generated by the emergence of “up-market enclave-style tourist accommodation” built by people from wealthier countries, relegating local people to “second class citizens”.

Because surfing tourism usually takes place in remote locations of developing nations, the above-mentioned impacts oftentimes follow the development of commercial surfing tourism. However, as noted, they are typical to tourism in developing nations in general. Still, other forms of sociocultural impacts, specific to the segment of surfing tourism, are also commonplace in such communities. Buckley (2002a) highlights the social impacts that stem from the conflict between surfers and fishermen for the use of the “seas and reefs”. The author notes that in many villages of the Pacific islands and southeast Asia, the access to these resources is controlled by the communities, so as foreign surfers use the same resources without permission, serious impacts may occur. O’Brien and Ponting (2013) add

that, in many cases, the growth of surfing tourism is not followed by the development of surfing as a sport in the local context. In fact, the authors note that occasionally “encouraging locals to surf has been frowned upon” by surfing tourism operators, out of fear of overcrowding the resources that should be protected for the locals in the first place, which motivates conflict between the local community, surfers and tour operators. O’Brien and Ponting (2013) blame the industry’s traditional ways of doing business, as follows:

*The traditional surf tourism business model has typically lacked formalized planning and ties to host area communities which, far from collaboration, has resulted in fierce competition among operators, unrestrained growth, overcrowding and largely deleterious impacts on host communities (p.165).*

The authors claim that in order to avoid the mentioned impacts to the local communities where surfing tourism takes place, destinations and/or businesses must strive to involve host communities “as full partners” in a process of strategic planning of the industry. The planning of surfing tourism at the local level, besides being performed with community collaboration, must focus on integrating and leveraging community assets, as well as recognizing limits to growth (O’Brien & Ponting, 2013).

### **3.4 MEASURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SURFING TOURISM**

As the concept of sustainable tourism is further developed by specialized academics, it is also argued that practical tools must be developed to put the concept in practice in the tourism industry. It must become common practice to measure and monitor the sustainability of the actions undertaken by different agents of the tourism industry, which is why standardized frameworks and sets of indicators have been developed (Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011; White et al., 2006). For the specific niche of surfing tourism, two models for the assessment and measurement of sustainability have been found. One is an analytical framework used to analyze the sustainability of the surfing tourism in destinations of developing nations. The other is a certification program, consisting of a list of indicators for the assessment of the sustainability of surf hotels and resorts. Both are hereby briefly described.

#### **3.4.1 Framework Analysis for Sustainable Surf Tourism (FASST)**

Motivated by the need to assess the level of sustainability of different surfing tourism management plans, the FASST was created as an analytical framework that would help conduct sustainability analysis of surfing tourism mainly in less developed countries (Ponting, 2015). The FASST was first engineered in the context of a study by Ponting et al. (2005) on the construction of surfing tourist space in the Mentawai islands in Indonesia.

Later, O'Brien and Ponting (2013) adapted the framework to an innovative, successful approach to surfing tourism management in Papua New Guinea, adding a new dimension to the tool. After that, Ponting and O'Brien (2014) produced the latest paper using the framework, as an analysis of the Fijian government's move to deregulate its surfing tourism industry, once again adding a new dimension and presenting the name of Framework Analysis for Sustainable Surf Tourism for the first time. Currently, the framework is composed by five dimensions, or principles, which are hereby presented and briefly described.

#### A distinct move away from economically neo-liberal approaches to development

Ponting and O'Brien (2014) point out the criticism made to the adoption of economic neo-liberalism in the overall development of tourism, as it is usually contrary to forms of development that encompass environmental sustainability and local participation. The authors go on to highlight that "regulation that incentivizes sustainable use of surfing resources and encourages resource owners to enter the market is most conducive to longer-term sustainability" (p.391). In this context, the natural surfing resources are considered to belong to host communities, which should be compensated by the use and economic exploration of those resources. Issues regarding the compensation of local communities have been identified in the context of "boat-trips", where surfers pay to stay in vessels tracking the best waves (O'Brien & Ponting, 2013), although it has been stated that land-based surf camps also commonly present very little local offsets (Buckley, 2002a,b). O'Brien and Ponting (2013) suggest "an alternative, more strategic approach to surf tourism planning and development" (p.160), which positions host communities as central players in the provision of commercial tour services.

#### The need for formal, long-term, coordinated planning that recognises limits to growth

Considering the dependence of successful surfing destinations on the conservation of uncrowded surf breaks, the establishment of limits to the local growth of surfing tourism becomes necessary so that the recreational carrying capacities<sup>3</sup> of the breaks are not exceeded. This notion is in line with the previous principle of the framework, as the Western, neo-liberal, idea of success may run the risk of overcrowding, which would spoil the attractiveness of a destination (O'Brien & Ponting, 2013). Thus, an approach towards qualitative — as opposed to quantitative — growth must be pursued, through the engagement of host communities in the planning process for the development of the

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<sup>3</sup> *Recreational carrying capacity* is "the level of use... which a natural resource can sustain without an unacceptable degree of deterioration of the character and quality of the resource or the use of that resource" (Davis & Tisdell, 1995, p.34).

commercial surfing tourism industry in a sustainable manner, where social and environmental costs are balanced with the economic benefits (O'Brien & Ponting, 2013; Ponting & O'Brien, 2014).

#### Systematic attempts to foster cross-cultural understanding

Ponting and O'Brien (2014) argue that sustainable surfing tourism relies on the facilitation of cross-cultural learning and understanding, by considering it in policy and planning. Stemming from the previous principles, the engagement of host communities in this process is reinforced, as local people should be incentivized to get involved in the provision of the surfing tourism product. For such involvement to be possible, host communities must be empowered with knowledge about tourism (O'Brien & Ponting, 2013) and in this case, about surfing as well. Thus, specific training on tourism should be provided for local people, and they should be incentivized to get involved in the sport of surfing. However, as previously stated, commercial surfing tour operators commonly try to avoid overcrowding of the breaks by discouraging surfing to be practiced by host communities.

#### Village-level surf-sport development

Following the last dimension of the framework, O'Brien and Ponting (2013), in the context of their study on the management of surfing tourism in Papua New Guinea, suggested the addition of a fourth principle that focuses on the development of surfing as a sport at the local level. The authors have identified several benefits for local communities in Papua New Guinea resulting from the adopted strategy, which considered surfing development at the village level to be "central to its mission and sustainability". The identified benefits included empowering local women and kids through surfing, but also in a commercial perspective, the widespread local surfing knowledge and experience allowed the involvement of youth in the provision of surf-specific services (O'Brien & Ponting, 2013; Ponting & O'Brien, 2014). Thus, in order for surfing tourism to be sustainable, it must represent a contribution to the development of surfing as a sport in the local context.

#### Contribution to poverty alleviation

Presented by Ponting and O'Brien (2014), this last principle of the FASST appears as a combination of the remaining four dimensions and composes the single most important concern for communities of surfing tourism destinations. According to the authors thus, sustainable surfing tourism destinations must use the economic success of the industry as a trigger for local poverty alleviation. Ponting and O'Brien (2014) go on to cite the work of Scheyvens and Russell (2012) in order to provide a guiding tool for the assessment of this fifth principle, consisting of three key conditions for poverty alleviation, which are

“opportunity”, “empowerment”, and “security”.

### **3.4.2 STOKE Certified**

As the demand for sustainability in the tourism industry increases, new programs are being created to measure the level of sustainability of operators’ practices, through the use of indicators. After the assessment, those programs provide a certification ‘stamp’ for operators, recognizing that their actions are sustainable and have been verified by a third-party entity. This growing trend in the industry has already reached the niche of surfing tourism, with the creation of STOKE Certified in 2014 (O’Brien & Ponting, 2017), the first certification program that considers the different specificities of surfing tourism development.

Stemming from research conducted by San Diego State University’s Center for Surf Research, the STOKE Certified program used the Global Sustainable Tourism Council’s (GSTC) criteria as a starting point, to adapt overall sustainable tourism indicators to the reality of surfing tourism (O’Brien & Ponting, 2017). This program was developed to target surf hotels and resorts, which usually have unique characteristics, such as the following (O’Brien & Ponting, 2017):

- 1) They have a small number of rooms;
- 2) Are located in fragile coastal environments;
- 3) Are commonly inserted in marginalized indigenous communities;
- 4) Are entirely dependent on a natural resource that can rapidly become overcrowded and consequently, devalued.

The STOKE indicators have been tested in five pilot resorts located in Hawaii, Indonesia, Costa Rica, and Fiji (O’Brien & Ponting, 2017). The company has worked with some of the world’s biggest and most famous surf resorts, evidencing the industry’s interest in the acknowledgment of sustainability. Furthermore, STOKE Certified has been dedicated to not only provide the accreditation ‘stamp’, but to act as an educator of sustainability in some of the world’s most fragile contexts, aiming to sensitize all local stakeholders regarding the issues of sustainable development (O’Brien & Ponting, 2017).

The STOKE certification model consists of 142 criteria spread throughout four different areas of sustainable development, which are (STOKE Certified, n.d.):

- 1) Sustainability Management;
- 2) Social and Economic Impacts Management;
- 3) Cultural Heritage Impacts Management;
- 4) Environmental Impacts Management.

For each criterion, STOKE has three distinct compliance indicators that distinguish the operators’ actual levels of sustainability for their different areas of action (STOKE Certified,

n.d.). Thus, operators must begin by getting benchmarked by a STOKE member, who will compare the practices underway with the set of criteria. This allows STOKE to provide operators with a comprehensive assessment of their level of sustainability compliance, as well as providing help in the process of becoming fully compliant with the criteria. An independent evaluator then visits the site to assess the operator's level of compliance with each criterion. Finally, the operator can become certified, and depending on the score attained, it is placed under one of the three levels of certification, which are (1) Certified, (2) Sustainable, and (3) Best Practice (STOKE Certified, n.d.).

Despite targeting a very specific niche of the overall tourism industry, STOKE Certified benefits from the fact that surfers are a much less diffuse group than the general travelling population (O'Brien & Ponting, 2017). For that reason, STOKE has the potential to generate brand awareness and achieve high media exposure within the global surfing community, through a marketing strategy simply focused on a few surfing magazines, surf forecasting websites, and the broadcast of the World Surf League's (WSL) events. In fact, in 2015, STOKE Certified was featured in announcements during the broadcast of two of the main WSL Championship Tour events, the Pipeline Masters in Hawaii and the Fiji Pro in the island of Tavarua, due to the existence of STOKE member resorts in both locations (O'Brien & Ponting, 2017).

### **3.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter has shown that sustainability is a wide, complex concept that can have different practical applications, depending on the context. Here, the notion has been analyzed in the context of surfing tourism development. It became evident that this form of tourism is typically characterized by specific economic, environmental, and sociocultural impacts on the host communities. As a consequence of such impacts, two tools have been created to help assessing and monitoring them, thus presenting a way of measuring the sustainability of surfing tourism management practices. One of those tools, the STOKE Certified sustainability certification, has the potential to achieve sufficient market penetration to generate widespread demand for sustainability within the surfing tourism market. Despite most of the research on this specific area having been performed in the context of developing nations, the following chapter will present a description of surfing tourism in Portugal, as the concept of sustainability may also be relevant for surfing tourism destinations of the Western world.

## CHAPTER 4 - SURFING TOURISM IN PORTUGAL

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*Beautiful wave-rich country, great friendly people, excellent food, and just endless possibilities of surf (WSL commentator Kaijo Guerrero about Portugal, during the WSL Big Wave Tour Nazaré Challenge broadcast. December 20, 2016).*

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall tourism industry in Portugal is going through a period of unparalleled growth, having achieved a growth in its activity of 11.5% between the years 2015 and 2016 (Jornal Económico, 2016). The proliferation of low-cost airline companies, the country's safety and political stability, and the promotional efforts made by the tourism board, are only some of the many causes that can be assigned to such a growth. In the specific case of the actions of the Portuguese tourism board *Turismo de Portugal*, a great focus has been placed in the attraction of people to ride the country's waves. Consequently, along with the overall tourism industry, surfing tourism has also been witnessing a substantial growth at the national level. This chapter presents a brief history of this form of tourism in the country, followed by a contextualization of Peniche, as a case of evident growth of surfing tourism in Portugal.

### 4.2 HISTORY OF SURFING TOURISM IN PORTUGAL

As is the case for the global history of surfing, the development of this sport in Portugal has been since its beginnings, deeply linked to traveling. As such, in the context of this study, it is of increased relevance to tell the story of the development of wave-riding activities in Portugal in parallel with the history of surfing tourism. The importance of traveling and foreign influence in the Portuguese history of surfing has been well depicted by Rocha (2008a), who states that during the 1960s, surfing in Portugal was only practiced by foreign travelers and half a dozen Portuguese people.

However, wave-riding activities have been practiced in Portugal long before that. Video records dating back to 1927 show a group of people in the Portuguese northern beach of *Leça da Palmeira*, riding white-waters<sup>4</sup> in *alaia*-looking<sup>5</sup> boards in prone position (Macdonald, 2012). Macdonald argues that the people riding the waves in the film are likely to be members of wealthy British families that had businesses in the Portuguese city of Porto, which reinforces the foreign contribution to surfing in the country. The video represents the first visual record of surfing in the European continent (Macdonald, 2012).

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<sup>4</sup> Name given to the white foam resulting from the breaking of waves.

<sup>5</sup> *Alaias* are ancient, finless Hawaiian surf crafts made of wood.

However, the activity did not establish itself in Portugal for several decades after the recording of the video.

Considered the 'father' of Portuguese surfing, Pedro Martins de Lima accounts that his first contact with the sport happened accidentally, when in 1945 he came across a magazine with pictures of Duke Kahanamoku surfing in Hawaii (Lima, 2008). One year later, in 1946, Lima started bodysurfing the breaks of *Carcavelos*, using a pair of swimming fins bought by his cousin during a trip to Hawaii. Once again, traveling was deeply connected to the riding of Portuguese waves. Lima used to bodysurf with two brothers from *Carcavelos*, and the three were able to get their hands on one-meter long cork planks, which they started using to ride in prone position by 1947, in what Lima (2008) calls "improvised bodyboarding". Lima has since, and to this day, been riding the breaks of the Portuguese coast in many different forms. Only in 1959, though, the Portuguese 'father' of surfing could ride waves in a standing position, after buying a 10 feet longboard in Biarritz, France.

In fact, for decades Biarritz had a determinant role on the development of surfing in Portugal, as well as in the rest of Europe. Lima (2008) argues that the French city was "an eternal source of information" about surfing. As such, the few Portuguese dedicated surfers of the 1960s were forced to regularly travel to the "European surfing mecca" (Vieira, 2008), so that they could buy material and get in touch with more experienced surfers and thus, develop their surfing knowledge and skill. In this context, it can be argued that the first Portuguese surfers were also the first Portuguese surfing tourists, according to the definition of the concept adopted in this study. This form of tourism performed by Portuguese surfers to more developed surfing nations had a great impact on the settlement of a surfing culture in the country. Later, in 1978 Carlos Vieira started a long surfing journey around the world (Vieira, 2008), which lasted several months, thus making him the first Portuguese surfing "globe-trotter" (Lima, 2008).

However, it was not only the travels of Portuguese surfers that composed the national context of surfing tourism – also during the 1960s, the first foreign surfers started exploring the country's coastline in search of waves. During the summer of 1969, several groups of surfers – mainly Australians, Americans, and British – visited Portugal, due to an article published that same year by American magazine *Surfing* on the waves of southern Portugal (Lima, 2008; Vieira, 2008). One of the foreign surfers who visited the country during that year was Australian Nat Young, surfing world champion at the time, whose visit contributed to the beginning of national media attention to the sport. The first journalistic piece on surfing was published in October of the same year, which combined with the easier access to surfing gear (according to Vieira, foreign surfers were the source of gear for Portuguese

surfers), set the stage for an increasing national participation in surfing during the 1970s.

The Portuguese revolution, which culminated in the end of the dictatorship in April 25<sup>th</sup> of 1974, also had an important indirect contribution to the spread of surfing throughout the country (Rocha, J., 2008b). This historical date entirely shifted the social context of Portugal, which became a country that 'opened its doors' to the rest of the world, becoming part of the international community. The results of such internationalization affected the context of surfing shortly after, with the hosting in 1977, of the first international surfing contest held in Portugal, which took place in Peniche (Rocha, J., 2008c). Many other international competitions have followed since then, held throughout the Portuguese coastline (Rocha, J., 2008c), which have since represented an important contribution to its growing attractiveness within the international community of surfing tourists.

Again, the turn of the decade marked a shift in the context of national surfing. By 1979, the first surf school in the country was inaugurated (Rocha, A., 2008), which represented the beginning of the commercialization of surfing that gained momentum throughout the 1980s (Rocha, J., 2008d). During this decade, surf-related businesses started emerging, promoting the freedom associated with surfing to a wider spectrum of the population. In assisting the dissemination of this idyllic lifestyle, the first Portuguese surfing magazine, *Surf Portugal*, launched in 1987 (Nunes, 2015), had a determinant participation through the publication of high-quality-surf imagery.

Due to such promotional efforts, Portugal started following the international trend of growth in surfing participation by the beginning of the 1990s. In fact, the number of regular surfers (surfing at least once a week) went from around one thousand in 1990, to about ten thousand by 2000, all the way to 70,000 in 2009, when that number was growing at an annual rate of 25% to 30% (Bicudo & Horta, 2009). Furthermore, the continuous promotion of surfing in Portugal, combined with the increasing number of traveling surfers worldwide, led to the beginning of the commercial surfing tourism industry in Portugal. The first surf camp owned by a Portuguese opened in the year 1993 in Baleal (Esteves, 2008), a surfing hot spot located in the county of Peniche. This surf camp is still to this day a reference in the region<sup>6</sup>, and marked the beginning of an industry that currently represents an important source of income in many cities and villages throughout the Portuguese coast.

More recently, the promotion of the Portuguese surfing quality to the international market has been marked by three main events, as follows: (1) the settlement of a stage of the World Surf League (WSL) Championship Tour in Peniche, since 2009; (2) the recognition of

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<sup>6</sup> Currently under the name Baleal Surf Camp, this is one of the biggest surfing tourism operators in the county of Peniche.

Ericeira as a World Surfing Reserve, by the Save The Waves Coalition; and (3) the revelation of the big wave break of Nazaré (Lima, 2012), where the record for biggest wave ever surfed was attained, and where a stage of the WSL Big Wave Tour is held. Each of those events has represented a direct contribution to the growth of surfing tourism at the regional level, while also contributing to the promotion of the Portuguese coastline as a source of several quality surf breaks.

In fact, the case of the World Surfing Reserve in Ericeira is a good example of the type of promotional efforts being performed, which are based on a concern for the sustainable development of natural resources. The World Surfing Reserves program is managed by the Save The Waves Coalition (STW), and it “serves as a global model for preserving wave breaks and their surrounding areas by recognizing and protecting the key environmental, cultural, economic and community attributes of surfing areas” (STW, n.d.). This is a strategic promotional tool for Ericeira, as it represents an international, independent recognition of the intrinsic value of its surfing waves as exceptional natural resources that deserve to be preserved. The importance of external recognitions such as this has even been highlighted by Aníbal Cavaco Silva, President of Portugal at the time of Ericeira’s acknowledgment as a World Surfing Reserve, who stated that “the designation of Ericeira as a World Surfing Reserve should serve as an example to stimulate everyone to aspire to a more environmentally healthy country with an excellent standard of living” (STW, 2011).

As a further statement to the importance that the surfing segment currently represents to the Portuguese overall tourism industry, is the fact that the national tourism board, *Turismo de Portugal*, considers surfing a key product for the promotion of tourism in Portugal.

*Surf is regarded as an important segment in water sports tourism as it diversifies the supply, attracts the market and energises the regional economies, thus enriching the value of this proposal in a country anchored in a distinctive natural resource – the Portuguese sea (Turismo de Portugal, 2012).*

### **4.3 THE CONTEXT OF PENICHE**

The county of Peniche has had a constant presence throughout the Portuguese history of surfing. Its indisputable consistency of high-quality waves has been responsible for attracting surfers from all over the world for over half a century. Consequently, Peniche is a unique case of commercialization of surfing tourism in the world, and arguably the most famous in the Portuguese coast. This section provides a presentation of Peniche, starting with its historical and demographic contextualization, followed by a description of its unique natural features, and further characterizing its local tourism industry.

### **4.3.1 Characterizing the county**

#### **4.3.1.1 Historic and demographic notes**

For most of its history, Peniche has been an island off the coast of Portugal, consisting of an economically valuable center for the exploration of maritime resources (CMP, n.d.b). Besides the extensive fishing, the production of fish preserves became the island 's main source of economic development since the first century AD. Still today, more than two thousand years later, Peniche is home to several factories for the production of canned fish (CMP, n.d.b).

Throughout the sixteenth century a string of dunes has slowly formed, connecting the island of Peniche to the continent. As Peniche became connected to the rest of the country by land, it soon became more populated and economically relevant, achieving its municipal autonomy by the year 1609 (CMP, n.d.b). By the seventeenth century, Peniche had finished building a complex system of fortifications along the peninsula, to watch over the coast and guard it from any attempt of invasion (CMP, n.d.b). Within this system, the Fortress of Peniche went on to assume a much greater historical relevance by the 1930s, when it became one of Portugal's main political prison for the dictatorial regime (Calado, 1991). The prison was in function for the following four decades, until the revolution of April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1974. It is argued that the existence of the prison in Peniche has been the single main challenge for the development of the city in recent history (Calado, 1991), which limited its economic growth during a time when new, highly profitable fishing techniques were being introduced (CMP, n.d.b).

Currently, Peniche maintains a great economic reliability on the natural maritime resources, being one of the main centers of the Portuguese fishing industry, while promoting alternative forms of economic development through the exploration of the potentialities of its coastline (CMP, 2009). Moreover, agriculture also represents an important contribution to the local economic primary sector. The secondary and tertiary sectors are mainly driven by the food processing industry, and tourism and services, respectively (CMP, n.d.a).

With a population of 27,753 inhabitants (as of 2011) and a total area of 77.7 square kilometers (CMP, n.d.a), the county of Peniche is composed by one urban parish and three rural parishes (CMP, n.d.a). The county is part of the West region, and the city of Peniche represents the region's second biggest urban center.

#### **4.3.1.2 A surfer's paradise – Natural features**

The development of such an impactful surfing tourism industry in Peniche is due to the quality and consistency of its natural resources, specifically its surfing waves. In fact, the

level of attractiveness of a destination for surfers is influenced by a series of natural, uncontrollable characteristics. Many different factors need to come together to create a great surfing destination, where there would be at least one 'perfect wave'. A brief explanation of how the natural elements influence the breaking of the waves in Peniche is hereby presented.

According to McGregor and Wills (2016), the following factors determine the quality of surfing waves: (1) the shape of the coastline, (2) the gradient of the sea floor (or bathymetry), (3) the swell, and (4) local winds. All these requirements need to somehow tune in for high-quality waves to break. While the shape of the coastline and the bathymetry are stationary, the swell and local winds are constantly changing, which is why no surf break constantly provides high-quality waves. However, in Peniche according to the world's leading surf forecasters of Surfline, there is one break where the four elements consistently come together – Supertubos.

*An open swell window to the powerful storms that rage through the North Atlantic, protection from northerly winds that often plague the coast, and a unique bathymetry all come together to make Supertubos one of the best beachbreaks in the world (Warren, Korte & Collins, 2015).*

While a break with the quality of Supertubos is often enough to establish a successful surfing destination, some of the most renowned destinations worldwide are those that present more than one quality surf break. McGregor and Wills (2016) argue that "offshore" local winds - blowing from land to ocean - are ideal for surfing, as they cause the waves to pitch more when they break. The geographic configuration of Peniche, being a peninsula and having beaches facing north, south, and west, make it a 'paradise' for surfers, as it can provide "offshore" conditions with almost every wind direction.

Furthermore, being the westernmost European country, Portugal has a coastline that is highly exposed to the North Atlantic swells, making it a country with plenty of surfing options. The country's Center region, however, possesses an above-average consistency of swell and quality surfing waves. In fact, this part of Portugal's coastline works like a 'magnet' for swell, due to its unique bathymetry, specifically that of the famous Nazaré Canyon. The Canyon consists of a depression on the sea floor causing a considerable difference in ocean depth (Warren, Korte & Collins, 2015), as shown in Figure 1.

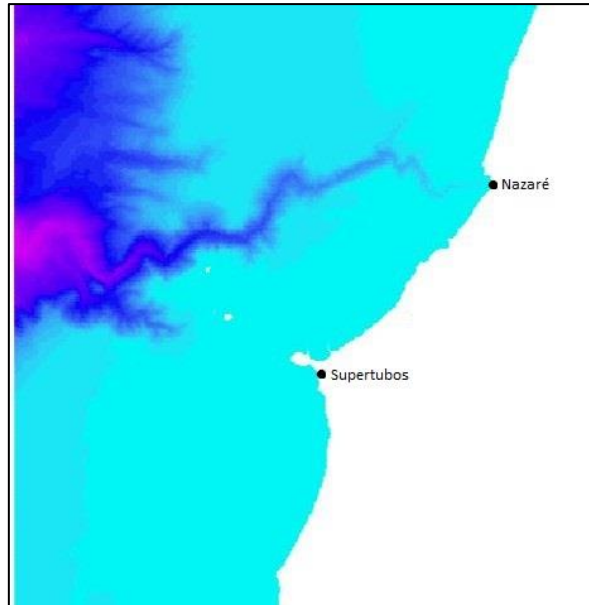


Figure 1 Bathymetry of part of the Portuguese central coast. Adapted from Portuguese Hydrographic Institute [IHPT] (2013).

This Canyon attracts different swells to the central region of Portugal and is responsible for producing some of the world's largest waves at Praia do Norte, in Nazaré. As the image shows, there is a branch of the Canyon that juts out towards Peniche, helping refract the incoming swells onto the same direction, making Peniche more consistent in smaller days than adjacent areas (Warren, Korte & Collins, 2015).

### 4.3.2 Tourism in Peniche

#### 4.3.2.1 Non-surfing Tourism in Peniche

Peniche's historical deep connection to the ocean translates even into its tourism industry, as most of the county's visitors are to some extent, attracted by the local maritime resources. This attractiveness is related to the unique local heritage, which is the result of many generations of a population turned to the sea, and which translates into highly authentic knowledge and practices. According to Henriques (2010), there are in Peniche four main areas of heritage with sufficient power of attractiveness to generate interest in the international tourism market, which are the following.

- 1) The geomorphological heritage, composed of unique geological formations throughout the county, resulting from thousands of years of erosion;
- 2) The built historical heritage, offering a diverse range of religious and military buildings of relevance, which reflect the historical context of the county;

- 3) The archaeological underwater heritage, as a result of the numerous shipwrecks along the coast of Peniche over the years, which left significant archaeological evidence dating as far as the nineteenth century;
- 4) The intangible heritage, of which the sea-inspired gastronomy and the craftsmanship stand out.

The author highlights two forms of tourism that should be pursued in the county of Peniche, by exploring the potential of the resources based on the four areas of local heritage above. Thus, Henriques (2010) explores ways to target in Peniche the markets of Religious Tourism and Nature Tourism, in which surfing and other maritime activities represent the niches of greatest competitive advantage.

However, a document issued by the Municipality in 2009, which laid out its vision for the strategic development of the county until the year 2025 – the *Magna Carta* (CMP, 2009) –, showed that traditional beach tourism was still dominant in the county of Peniche. In that comprehensive report, the Municipality highlights the importance of tourism for the future development of Peniche, and describes two important characteristics of the local tourism industry. First, it recognizes that there was at the time, no cohesive strategic direction to avail the local resources, nor an adequate, qualified tourism business activity, despite the county's potentialities. Second, it characterizes Peniche as being a holiday-residence destination of reference, thus mainly visited during the weekends and summer (CMP, 2009).

Currently, it seems that this is still the reality of the local overall tourism industry. According to data from the Portuguese Institute of Statistics, in 2015 the average length of stay in the lodging units of Peniche was of two nights, and 46.5% of those stays happened during the summer months of July, August, and September (INE, 2016). Furthermore, Peniche had for the same year, an average of 2.8 guests per resident, substantially above the national average of 1.8 (INE, 2016), which is a good indicator of the weight of tourism in the local economy. Peniche is inserted in the Portuguese West region, composed by 12 different municipalities, of which Peniche leads in terms of the number of lodging facilities, with a total of 28. However, in 2015 Peniche had only the third highest number of overnight stays in the West region (INE, 2016). Table 2 shows some of the most relevant data of the tourism in Peniche during the year 2015, compared to the national and regional context.

Table 2 Relevant tourism data of the year 2015. Data source: INE (2016).

	Portugal	West	Peniche
Number of guests per resident	1.8	1.3	2.8
Overnight stays July-September (%)	38.9	42.9	46.5
Average length of stay (number of nights)	2.8	2.0	2.0
Number of lodging units	4,339	127	28
Number of guests	19,161,180	475,169	76,505
Number of overnight stays	53,074,176	930,180	155,939

However, it can be argued that the data above does not evidence the real dimension of tourism, since the lodging units provided via mobile applications (e.g. Airbnb) are not considered. In fact, of the 28 lodging units identified in the county of Peniche, only 17 are designated as *Alojamento Local*, or Local Accommodation, which is the necessary designation to provide short-term house renting through online platforms. In contrast, as of June 2017, there are a total of 401 units registered under this designation in the county of Peniche (Turismo de Portugal, 2017). Likely, the 17 Local Accommodation units identified for the year 2015 were those that can also be considered tourism enterprises, such as hostels and guest houses. Nonetheless, it is clear that the total lodging capacity, and overall tourism impact, are not yet fully covered by statistic data.

#### 4.3.2.2 Surfing Tourism in Peniche

Surfing tourism in Peniche, specifically in Baleal, began around the year 1964, when the first foreign surfers appeared searching for waves, and who would sleep in the local lifeguard's locker room (Esteves, 2008). Throughout the following years, the presence of foreign surfers in Baleal during summer time became ordinary, which triggered the interest of the locals in the sport. Thus, surfing tourism was responsible for the first generation of surfers in Peniche, who would mindfully watch the foreign, more experienced surfers, and later try to replicate their moves (Esteves, 2008). Right after the Portuguese revolution, in the summer of 1974, surfers started venturing out of Baleal on the search for waves, leading to the discovery of the famous break of Supertubos. Since then, Peniche has been a reference for all Portuguese surfers, who regularly travel to the county to surf.

Commercial surfing tourism started in Baleal, with the creation of the first Portuguese surf camp in 1993 (Esteves, 2008), a moment that marked the beginning of a local

transformation. With the opening of surf camps and surf schools, surfing in Baleal became accessible to everyone, and the traditional summer tourists started joining the surf classes. Thus, for economic reasons, commercial surfing tourism in Peniche started targeting those who wanted to learn how to ride the waves, changing the profile of the typical surfing tourist in Baleal. Through a quick online search as of June 2017, it is possible to identify more than thirty businesses providing surfing experiences for tourists. Nevertheless, it is not possible to determine the exact number, as according to the President of the Association of surf schools and surf camps of Peniche, Leopoldo (2012), many of these businesses operate clandestinely (as cited in Nunes, 2015).

The turn to the 21<sup>st</sup> century marked the start of a wider recognition of the potential benefits that surfing tourism could have to a small city's community like that of Peniche. In this context, the beginning of local political involvement in surfing has been witnessed, leading to the decision of the city council to brand itself as 'Peniche, the Wave Capital' in 2007 (Nunes, 2015). Over this last decade, the Municipality has maintained the focus of its differentiation surrounding surfing and other wave-riding activities.

The political decision to embrace surfing and promote it internationally had as its most impactful result, the establishment of a World Surf League (WSL) Championship Tour (CT) stage. The CT is the 'first division' of competitive surfing, held throughout the world's best surf breaks to crown the annual world champion of surfing. Peniche has been a part of this circuit since 2009, when 'The Search' stage, promoted by Rip Curl in a different venue each year, happened in the break of Supertubos. Due to the success of the event and the quality of the waves of Supertubos, the event became a permanent stage on the WSL tour. Every year, the event attracts thousands of visitors to the county of Peniche to watch the world's best surfers compete (NIS, 2015). This event has constantly brought to Peniche a total annual turnover ranging between €7 and €8 million over the years (GITUR, 2012a,b; NIS, 2014; NIS, 2015), and has reached a total economic impact of more than €10 million in its 2015 edition (NIS, 2015). Even though the tourism associated with this event does not fit the definition of surfing tourism adopted in this study, since surfing is not necessarily the primary motivation for the trip, it still represents a powerful promotional tool for the development of the specific surfing tourism industry.

Previous research has focused on the phenomenon of surfing tourism in Peniche, providing valuable data on the profile of its surfing tourists (Rebelo, 2010), their motivations (Rebelo & Carvalhinho, 2012), their satisfaction with the surfing experience (Nunes, 2015), as well as providing contributions to the fields of sports events management (Santos, 2013) and territorial management (Cabeleira, 2011; Reis, 2015). The variety of research triggered by

this specific local niche of tourism is a statement to its relevance as an area of great academic interest.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

Throughout this chapter, the phenomenon of surfing tourism at the national and local level, has been contextualized and described. At this point, it is clear that surfing tourism is an industry that can greatly impact the places and communities where it develops, and that Peniche is a place where this form of tourism has been thriving. As such, it is important to perform research on this phenomenon, to better understand in which ways the county and community of Peniche have already been affected. Furthermore, research allows new ideas to form regarding the sustainable development of this local industry in the future.

## **CHAPTER 5 - METHODOLOGY**

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Deriving from the research question, the main objectives of this study are (1) to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges to the sustainable development of surfing tourism in destinations of developed nations, (2) to provide an analysis of the development of surfing tourism in Peniche, and (3) to present recommendations for the sustainable development of surfing tourism in Peniche. The development of surfing tourism in Peniche has already been broached in previous studies (Cabeleira, 2011; Nunes, 2015; Rebelo, 2010; Rebelo & Carvalhinho, 2012; Santos, 2013), which shows its relevance as a case study. However, none of the previous research projects have addressed the concerns of local stakeholders. In order to “give voice” to some of the most impacted agents of the local community, this study adopts a qualitative approach. This chapter presents justification for the chosen methodological approach and its underlying paradigm, as well as a description of the process of selection of the research question and the specific case under analysis, finishing with a brief portrayal of the research process.

### **5.2 A QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

Tourism is a multidisciplinary field of study addressed via different paradigms and methodologies, and has recently been getting increasing attention by the academic world (Jamal & Robinson, 2009). However, for a long time the research of tourism phenomena had been highly focused on the analysis of quantitative data, through a positivist approach around the business-related dimension of the tourism industry (Jennings, 2009; Tribe, 2005). It is now just over a decade since Tribe (2005) announced the “turning point” in tourism research, when different approaches and methodologies became widely accepted, shifting the status quo and propelling tourism research to a new era. This transition was highly motivated by the growing popularity of the concept of sustainable tourism, which considered tourism’s impact to be wider than previously accepted. With it came the need to perform qualitative research to explore the broad effects of tourism, followed by an increasing number of authors researching “outside of the orthodox mainstream agendas” (Jennings, 2009).

The fact that the concept of sustainable tourism implies the balanced achievement of sustainability at the three main underlying areas of tourism impact – economic, sociocultural, and environmental – led the change in tourism research towards a broader field of study, and away from the traditional western-centric, economically oriented

approach (Jennings, 2009). In fact, until the late twentieth century, little consideration was given to indigenous populations and the influence of local cultures in the study of tourism phenomena, as research was mainly performed “using western epistemologies as lenses” (Jennings, 2009). In contrast, many authors now believe that the social context of tourism systems is the cornerstone of sustainable tourism, which can only be attained through a profound understanding of the conflicting needs of different stakeholders (Diedrich & García-Buades, 2009; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2009).

Following the overall trend of sustainable tourism research, the literature on surfing tourism development has also been highlighting the social impacts distinctive of this specific tourism niche, as well as the necessity to build surfing tourism around the needs of local communities (Buckley, 2002a,b; O’Brien & Ponting, 2013; Ponting & O’Brien, 2014; Towner, 2016). Thus, to understand the state of surfing tourism in any destination and to have a sustainable approach towards its future development, the understanding of local stakeholders’ perceptions and opinions on the subject is of utmost importance.

Therefore, this research seeks to explore the real perceptions of a predefined group of participants, without influencing the themes covered by them or limiting the amount of data, which suggests a qualitative approach is the most appropriate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Leavy, 2014). Additionally, the adoption of any methodology needs to be based on a paradigm, which guides the entire research process (Jennings, 2009). This specific research and its underlying approach are based on the Social Constructivism paradigm, which is explained in more detail in the following section.

### **5.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Recently, literature on qualitative research has been questioning the suitability of positivist and postpositivist approaches to address certain phenomena typical of the social sciences (Constantino, 2008; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014). In sum, positivists argue that “knowledge of the social world can be obtained objectively through observation and experimentation” (Constantino, 2008, p. 116). The constructivist paradigm presents a shift in approach, diverting from the positivist focus on explaining phenomena, instead highlighting the need to understand phenomena of the human and social sciences (Constantino, 2008). A constructivist oriented research implies the involvement of the researcher in the social phenomenon being analyzed, as opposed to the positivist emphasis in observation. In fact, in the constructivist realm the researcher is a participant of the social reality being analyzed, and his or her interaction with the remaining participants and the surrounding environment will determine the characteristics of the

constructed knowledge (Constantino, 2008; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014).

Social constructivism rejects the idea that every societal phenomenon is objectively real; instead, according to Holstein and Gubrium (2011), it highlights the “socially constructed character of lived realities” (p. 341). According to this paradigm, reality is created based on social interactions, relationships, and experiences, which means it is dependent on social context (Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014). Overall, it means that there are different truths and realities which exist simultaneously, depending on how different participants of the society perceive certain phenomena. The dependence of tourism on cultural issues and its broad social impact have been responsible for an increasing constructivist approach to research of tourism phenomena, as stated by Tribe (2006):

*Since it is not possible to understand tourism prior to acculturation or outside of any culture, reflecting on cultural situatedness helps to understand the consequences of this fact (p. 361).*

Furthermore, if people’s realities are socially constructed, so will be the knowledge deriving from the analysis of specific social phenomena. In fact, the interpretation of socially constructed realities through the researcher’s specific point of view will result in socially constructed knowledge (Constantino, 2008; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014). The construction of knowledge is influenced both by the interactive data collection process between researcher and participants (Constantino, 2008) and by the researcher’s interpretation of the findings (Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014). Thus, different researchers can potentially create different knowledge, as eventual bias is accepted. Nevertheless, qualitative methodology tools must be used to ensure the focus on consensual language by the participants, which is determinant for the credibility of the resulting knowledge (Constantino, 2008; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011).

#### **5.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Based on the underlying assumption that knowledge is generated through interaction between researcher and participants, it is not intended with this study to present specific *a priori* research questions and hypotheses to be proven or denied through the analysis of the data. Instead, as it has been recurrently stated by different authors (Boeije, 2010; Maxwell, 2005; Sandelowski, 2008), research questions in qualitative studies should provide a guidance for the direction of the research, without limiting it to the examination of preconceived ideas. As Sandelowski (2008) addresses it, this approach contrasts from what is commonly performed in quantitative research:

*Whereas research questions in quantitative research restrict, and commit researchers to, the variables that will be addressed, research questions in qualitative research are broad enough to permit the discovery of the specific (...) empirical and/or analytic subjects that will ultimately be the focus of study (p. 786).*

The growing academic attention surrounding the sustainability of the surfing tourism industry has been primarily focused on its action on destinations of developing countries (Buckley, 2002a,b; O'brien & Ponting, 2013; Ponting & O'brien, 2014; Towner, 2016). This study emerged from the researcher's hypothesizing that perhaps, surfing tourism impacts communities of developed nations in a different way than what is commonly found in developing countries, which lead to the definition of the following research problem:

- How does the development of surfing tourism impact the communities of developed nations?

On one hand, the fact that the subject of this study has not been widely explored in previous research proves the need to develop a broad research question, which helps avoiding the tendency to assess the validity of previous assumptions, instead contributing to the creation of new knowledge. On the other hand, the research problem presented above is too broad and thus hinders the selection of a research orientation that would enable the construction of valuable knowledge. Thereby, it becomes necessary to come up with a research question that is narrower than the research problem, while broad enough to justify the proposed qualitative approach.

In order to facilitate the creation of knowledge that will contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon relative to the research problem, the researcher opted to adopt a case study approach, which enables the narrowing of the research question to the specific case being analyzed. Following the social constructivist approach, the selection of a crucial case becomes necessary. A crucial case is one where the phenomenon being studied is most likely to occur, making theoretical generalizations possible (Blatter, 2008). In this context, the county of Peniche was selected, as previous studies on the development of surfing tourism in the destination prove its relevance as a case study for surfing tourism in the developed world (Cabeleira, 2011; Nunes, 2015; Rebelo, 2010; Rebelo and Carvalhinho, 2012).

As such, the following research question, specific to the case being studied, was developed:

- How do local surfers and businesses of Peniche view the development of surfing tourism and what do they consider the key challenges to its sustainability?

Recognizing that this study presents an interpretive approach to a specific social phenomenon, the influence of the researcher's previous familiarization with the case being analyzed is accepted (Sandelowski, 2008).

## **5.5 PENICHE, A CASE STUDY**

The case study is a common methodological approach to academic research, consisting of the in-depth study of a specific, individual unit in a particular context over a certain period of time (Blatter, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Simons, 2014; Woodside, 2010). This approach is not limited to a specific methodology, as it can be used in both quantitative and qualitative research with distinct objectives. However, as stated by Woodside (2010):

*We propose that deep understanding of the actors, interactions, sentiments, and behaviors occurring for a specific process through time should be seen as the principal objective by the case study researcher (p. 6).*

This approach to case study research is highly relevant to this specific study, as its focus on understanding phenomena is consistent with the underlying constructivist paradigm. Moreover, according to Blatter (2008), constructivists consider the "empirical endeavor of doing case studies as a contribution and check to a theoretical discourse" (p. 69). As such, it is intended with this study to make a valuable contribution to the emerging theoretical discussion regarding the sustainable development of surfing tourism, through the introduction of knowledge on the impacts it has been causing to the community of Peniche.

However, the contribution of this specific case to a broader understanding of the implications of surfing tourism development in destinations of developed countries is limited, as it relies on the generalizability of the studied phenomenon to other cases. According to the Penguin Dictionary of Sociology (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 2006), "a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class". This view presents a clear hindrance to the generation of new knowledge based on results derived from case study research projects. However, such perspective is not widely accepted, as other authors believe that case studies provide opportunities to generalize from a specific case to others with similar characteristics (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Simons, 2014). Accordingly, these authors warn of the need for the context of the specific case to be richly described, in order to allow the recognition and connection of other cases with the one portrayed in the study, unfolding the possibility of a theoretical causality inference.

*The more you learn in depth about the particularity of one person, situation, or context, the more likely you are to discover something universal (Simons, 2014, p. 466).*

The literature on the social constructivist paradigm highlights the need for the research and its subsequent analysis to be based around consensual opinions expressed by individuals for whom the phenomena being studied are most likely to take place (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). As such, the researcher went through a careful process of selection of the most appropriate respondents and methods of data collection and analysis. The criteria used throughout this process is addressed in more detail in the section below.

## **5.6 METHODS OF INQUIRY**

The process of data collection in qualitative research projects is not limited to a single method; in fact, qualitative studies are usually based on data collected through various methods, such as interviews, participant observation, focus groups, visual data, memos, or any other previously existing documents that contribute to the contextualization of the subject of the study (Boeije, 2010).

This particular study follows the common practice of qualitative studies and as such, data collection methods included qualitative interviews, participant observation and field notes, or memos. Participant observation in this study derives from the researcher's experience as a surfer and surf instructor living in Peniche for five years, thus being immersed in the reality of the case being analyzed. The field notes were taken immediately after some of the interviews conducted, in order to complement and contextualize the data collected through those interviews. Both of the referred methods contributed to the analysis of the case, but the interviews composed the primary method of data collection and the one explored in this section.

### **5.6.1 Developing the interviews**

The researcher wanted to use the method of interviewing to collect data that would provide an interpretive opportunity to address this study's research question. This required the researcher to have some control over the course of the interviews and the topics addressed, while providing interviewees with the opportunity to freely state their main concerns and points of view. As such, the chosen method of inquiry was the semi-structured interview, which is "a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions" (Ayres, 2008, p. 810). The researcher developed two distinct interview guides, in order to properly address the two main stakeholder groups of participants.

Regarding the local surfers of Peniche, the focus of this study was to ascertain how they perceived the growth of surfing tourism and the impacts it has been causing in the

community, as well as how they would like to see it develop in the future. The interviews with the business owners of the county had a higher focus on the business context of local tourism and on the tourists' motivations; the impacts of the industry's development on the environment, local community and economy were also addressed with most operators.

### 5.6.2 Data collection

A total of twenty-four interviews were carried out across the different stakeholder groups, including fifteen local surfers and nine business owners, distributed as shown in Table 3. Twenty-two of the interviews were conducted in the county of Peniche in places chosen by the participants, more often than not in between surf sessions; the remaining two were conducted through recorded phone calls. The length of the interviews varied between 16 and 45 minutes and they were performed between June and September 2016. With the intent of protecting anonymity, the real names of the participants are not shared in this study.

The strategy for the recruitment of participants was to come up with a group of respondents that would provide the most relevant data possible. In that context, the selected business owners were representative of different sectors of the industries of surfing and tourism, while the local surfers covered a wide range of generations, ranging from 19 to 60 years old. The selection of the interviewees was made by the researcher and the supervisor of this study, himself an influential local surfer of Peniche, who facilitated the accomplishment of the interviews due to his extensive local network. One of the interviews was conducted in English, with a foreign business owner; all the remaining were conducted in Portuguese. The interviews were recorded using a specific application on the researcher's smartphone and later fully transcribed, to allow their consequent analysis.

Table 3 Participants by age and stakeholder group.

Stakeholder Group	Local Surfers	Business Owners			
		Surfing Tourism Operators	Tourism Operators	Surfing Brand Managers	Surf Shop Managers
Participants by age	19 y.o.	37 y.o.	35 y.o.	41 y.o.	36 y.o.
	23 y.o.	47 y.o.	58 y.o.	51 y.o.	39 y.o.
	32 y.o.	49 y.o.			
	33 y.o.				
	34 y.o.				
	36 y.o.				
	37 y.o.				
	38 y.o.				
	39 y.o.				
	40 y.o.				
	41 y.o.				
	42 y.o.				
	42 y.o.				
	48 y.o.				
	60 y.o.				

### **5.6.3 Data analysis**

Interviews were transcribed and analyzed at the Center for Surf Research office, located at San Diego State University. The analysis of the interviews was made separately for each of the two main stakeholder groups. The researcher did not use any software to support the analysis of the transcribed interviews. Instead, a process of immersion within the data took place, as all transcriptions were printed, carefully and repeatedly read, from which the main concepts and themes emerged. After identifying the key themes of a specific interview, the researcher proceeded to draw a diagram that exemplified the topics covered and the relationships between them. After coming up with an identification of the main themes and a diagram for each interview, the researcher would go through all of them again, in order to identify the common subjects covered and start coding each of them using a universal language. All interviews were analyzed in their original language, while the most relevant excerpts of the interviews conducted in Portuguese were translated to English by the researcher, to enable their inclusion in this thesis.

Following the constructivist approach to qualitative data analysis, the researcher focused on the consensual themes (Constantino, 2008; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011), constantly looking to highlight the topics that were covered by more than one respondent. After going back and forth with the resulting codes and diagrams, the researcher strived to come up with two general diagrams, one for each stakeholder group. After many attempts, the researcher came up with the two sets of diagrams presented throughout the next chapter, which seek to provide a comprehensible visual demonstration of the complex relations between the main identified themes and concepts.

## **5.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter has covered the necessary topics to justify the way in which the research has been conducted. The long process of data treatment has enabled the identification of several dimensions of the current reality of surfing tourism in Peniche. All those dimensions are detailed in the following section, which presents the perceptions of the different stakeholders towards each of them. Also, for each stakeholder group, the next chapter includes the diagrams exhibiting the relations between all the identified dimensions. Thus, the following chapter is the result of the careful methodological approach taken during the research process, which has been described in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6 - LOCAL PERCEPTIONS – INTERVIEW RESULTS**

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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 5 described the methodological approach undertaken during the research stage, which enabled the understanding of the perceptions of local surfers and business owners of Peniche regarding the local surfing tourism industry. The current chapter presents the results that stemmed from the process of data collection and analysis, through a careful depiction of the main issues surrounding this industry's development, as perceived by the study's participants.

This chapter is divided into several sections, each referring to a different theme identified during the process of data analysis, which are followed by a concluding section to the chapter. The theme sections are, in turn, divided into subsections that separately present the perceptions of each stakeholder group, as well as the diagrams that provide a graphic demonstration of how the different perceptions interrelate. These sections are concluded with brief summarizing subchapters that highlight the most relevant findings within each theme.

### **6.2 “THE GREAT BOOM” – GROWTH OF SURFING TOURISM**

It is undeniable that, over the last decades, the county of Peniche has become increasingly recognized as an exceptional surfing destination, which has been motivating the growth of a specialized commercial industry to meet the demand of international surfing tourists. The exceptional natural features of the peninsula provoked the appearance of the first surf-related businesses and the settlement of international wave-riding competitions along its several breaks, which have incited increasing media attention towards surfing in Peniche, and thus more visitors have followed. This section explores the perceptions of the county's local surfers and business owners on the local growth of surfing, tourism and more specifically of surfing tourism. It finishes by overlapping the perceptions and viewpoints of both groups of stakeholders, coming up with a set of causes and conditions of this growth that are widely accepted by both surfers and business owners.

#### **6.2.1 Local surfers**

The growth of surfing in Peniche did not happen overnight. According to the data gathered from the interviews with local surfers, there are three main temporal stages that are clearly identifiable throughout this growth process. In its first stage, the sport of surfing was widely

unknown to the national and local population, so there were only a few people riding the waves of Peniche, which remained mostly uncrowded for several years. In fact, the first few generations of local surfers struggled to fit in the community, as people did not recognize surfing as a valid way of life. According to several respondents, it was not socially acceptable for youngsters to spend their time on the beach and consequently they felt marginalized within the local community.

*There was also a change of mentalities facing the sports of surf and bodyboard, and all beach sports. Back in my time, when I started, these sports had some negative charge, they were highly associated to youngsters apart from society, with some difficulty to plug in, either in the working world or in the overall civic participation to society (Local surfer, 32 y.o.).*

The “change of mentalities” identified in the statement above signaled the end of the first stage, and with it came the transition to the second period of the growth of surfing in Peniche. This shift was driven, according to the local surfers, by the following four interrelated reasons.

- 1) The natural features of Peniche, excellent and highly consistent for the practice of wave-riding activities;
- 2) The emergence of the first surf-related businesses in the county;
- 3) Peniche started to host international surfing contests, which sparked the attention of the media;
- 4) The media attention given to surfing made the sport become more familiar for the general population.

*There was that nationwide development, with the media giving great importance to nature sports, nature exploration sports, including surfing, for appearing often on television. Surfing had a boom like others did not, and at the expense of television and magazines it exploded, and exploded also in Peniche (Local surfer, 48 y.o.).*

The increasing exposure of the sport of surfing in the traditional media platforms was followed by an overall social acceptance of surfing and surfers, which in turn triggered the rapid growth of surfing in Peniche. All of the national and local development of surfing culminated in the inclusion of Peniche as one of the stages of the main surfing competition worldwide, the World Surf League Championship Tour (CT), in 2009. Since then, Peniche has been hosting this event every year, which has been the main trigger for the turn to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and current stage of the local growth of surfing. In fact, it is widely argued by local surfers that the CT completely changed the reality of surfing in Peniche. Surfing became a trendy sport and surfers went from being marginalized to being incentivized to become high-performance, professional athletes. According to the respondents, this shift in the place

taken by surfing in society and its popularization were responsible for a loss of surfing's identity.

*The phase we are in now, which is a post-Boom phase, after the explosion, which started when there was the first Rip Curl Pro here in Peniche, is a stage, in short, more 'trendy', as they say in English, more fashionable. And it is a stage in which perhaps surfing has lost a little more of its identity, so to speak (Local surfer, 42 y.o.).*

Currently, Peniche is still in this third stage of development and local surfers perceive the growth of surfing to be increasing every year. However, this growth started, and has been consistent since, the second stage. In Peniche, this development has been identified by local surfers mainly in the following four dimensions.

- 1) The tourism industry has been growing very rapidly and consistently: respondents argue that every year there are new businesses opening to cater for surfing tourists;
- 2) The crowd on the surf breaks has also increased substantially, as the tourism industry develops and more people feel attracted by the destination;
- 3) The local economy of Peniche has been shifting, currently having surfing tourism as an essential source of revenue and employment.

*And at the economic level, for example, I think it is very positive for Peniche, because it is a county with some problems with the economy and employment, and today it is obvious that it is already part of the commercial and business reality of Peniche, it brings income to the county, and employs people in the county, that is now undeniable, it is a fact (Local surfer, 41 y.o.).*

- 4) The training methodologies have been developing rapidly, as professionalization is now an attractive and incentivized future for younger generations, enabling the technical development of surfers to be carried out in a much faster fashion than previously.

The main perceptions of local surfers regarding the growth of surfing tourism are graphically displayed in Figure 2.

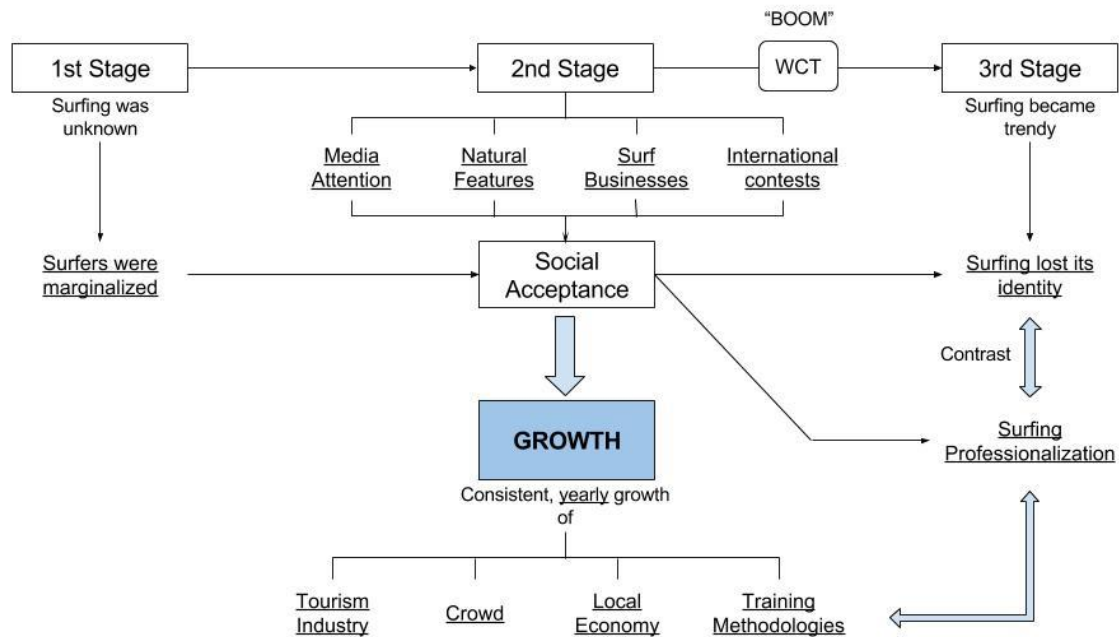


Figure 2 Local surfers' perceptions on local tourism growth

### 6.2.2 Business owners

The data collected through the interviews with business owners suggests that the growth of surfing tourism in Peniche had its beginning around the year of 1985, when according to one respondent, the first international contest held in the county took place. However, there is evidence that the first international competition happened in 1977 (Peniche Surf News, 2012). The 1985 contest, however, had a much greater impact on the media, even being covered by a national television broadcasting channel (Peniche Surf News, 2013), which supports the respondent's perception. The following decade, until the year of 1995, witnessed the emergence of the first surf-related businesses in Peniche – the “pioneers”. These first surf schools, surf camps and surf shops were joined by a few more businesses (mostly targeting surfing tourists) until the turn of the century. In fact, according to the business owners, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the growth has been constantly increasing, with more operators emerging each year. The dimension of this constant growth was enlarged since the first year of the CT in Peniche, which one business owner describes as having marked “the great boom” of surfing tourism in the county.

Regarding the causes of the growth, local operators indicate a slightly narrower list than that of local surfers, associating the development and growth of the surfing tourism industry

to the local natural features, the Championship Tour stage and to the emergence of surf schools and surf camps which have targeted and attracted a new market.

*Having the peculiarity to have on the same day a world championship tour stage taking place in Supertubos, and immediately north — about 200/500 meters — be running a surf lesson in optimal conditions, when on the other side are optimal conditions to get barreled... this peculiarity allows to have a consistency and diversity of waves either for professionals or for beginners, which makes this a very peculiar and unique geographical space (Surfing Tourism Operator, 47 y.o.).*

The above-mentioned causes have been, according to this stakeholder group, the engines of what is now widely regarded as an uncontrolled growth of tourism companies in Peniche. The respondents argue that, since the world tour stage first happened in 2009, surfing and lodging businesses have been establishing in Peniche with little regulation, causing “an unbridled growth of the surf market” (Tourism Operator, 35 y.o.). In the case of the surfing tour operators, respondents perceive the growth as having been driven only by surf schools and surf camps, although most of those businesses still provide very similar services to similar target markets.

*I think there is a lot of the same, a lot of similar surf camps opening up, and I don't think it's sustainable in the long run, you know (Surfing Tourism Operator, 37 y.o.).*

Regarding the growth of lodging facilities, on the other hand, respondents argue it has been carried out mainly through the establishment of low-cost accommodation, such as hostels and ‘local accommodation’. ‘Local accommodation’ is a type of lodging facility considered in the Portuguese law, which allows “the provision of temporary lodging services in facilities that do not meet the legal requirements to be considered tourism enterprises” (Decreto-Lei nº 128/2014). It is argued that these accommodation businesses are also mainly targeting surfing tourists, which supports the notion that the majority of tourism companies in Peniche have been attracting very similar markets.

*If you think of the evolution, it is not very clear, in my opinion... I mean, as with everything, there are companies that evolved a lot and companies that evolved less, there is no doubt that there are many more tourism companies, and specially tourism companies of accommodation where we had a huge boom. And this huge boom of accommodation companies is closely related to the surf product - I'm talking about the local accommodation and hostels (Tourism Operator, 58 y.o.).*

Figure 3 consists of a diagram showing the perceptions of business owners regarding this issue and how they relate to each other.

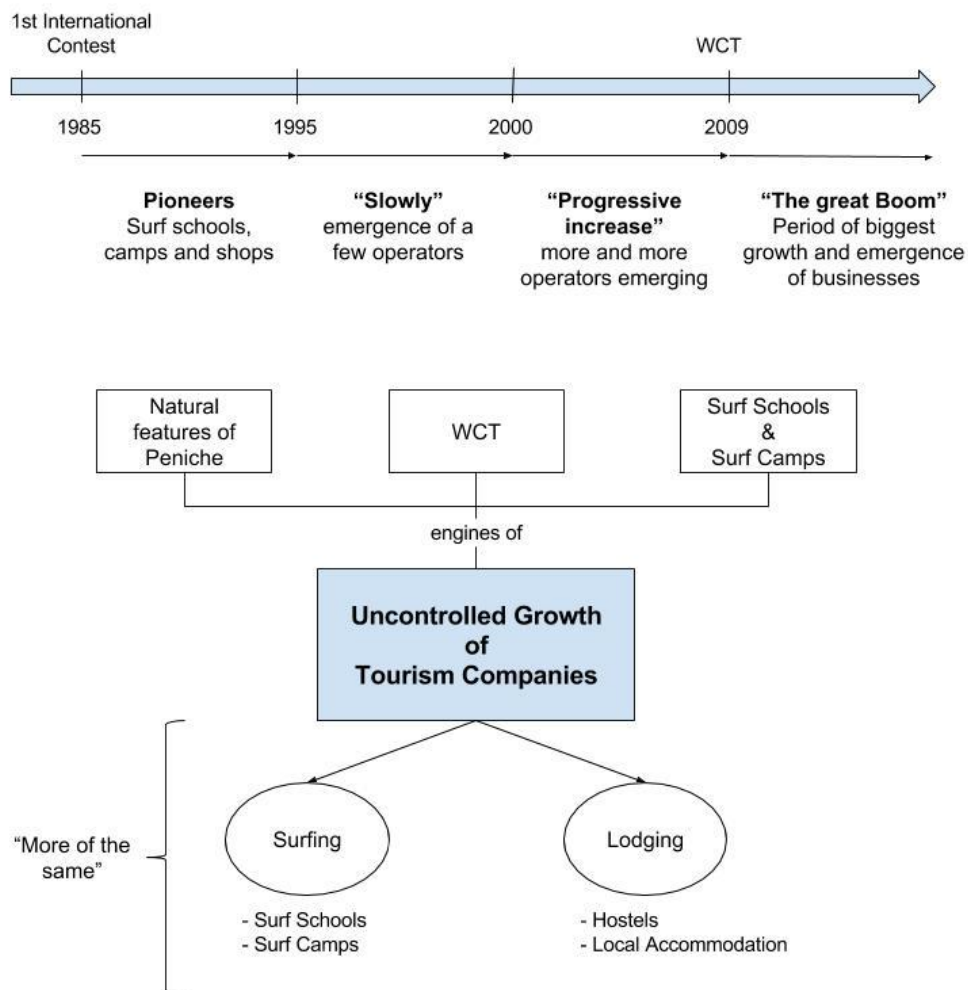


Figure 3 Business owners' perceptions on local tourism growth

### 6.2.3 Conclusion

Having analyzed the results from the interviews with the two different stakeholder groups regarding the growth of surfing tourism in Peniche, it is now possible to construct a sequence of how that growth happened. Furthermore, this section describes what were the main dimensions of the growth and highlights the most relevant concerns that should be considered in the context of the industry's local management.

It is clear for all the respondents of this study that Peniche presents a set of natural attributes that make it a rare case of highly consistent, high-quality surf, especially in the context of mainland Europe. The remarkable natural assets of Peniche were noticed by the international surfing community, motivating the implementation of surfing competitions that

had surfing competitors from different parts of the world visiting Peniche. In order to respond to the needs of visiting surfers, surf-related businesses such as surf shops and surf camps slowly started emerging. As the worldwide notoriety of wave-riding activities increased, businesses started targeting a different market, of people wanting to learn how to surf, and who started flowing to Peniche. The turn of the century marked the first 'boom' of surfing tour operators emerging in Peniche, the majority of which having beginner's surf courses as their main product. Less than a decade later, in 2009, started "the great boom", motivated by the settlement of the break of Supertubos as one of the stages of the world Championship Tour of surfing, providing Peniche with worldwide media attention and notoriety.

The visibility awarded by the event triggered a rising demand for surfing tour services in Peniche. The commercial surfing tourism industry that had been growing every year since the turn of the century, went on to develop itself in an 'uncontrolled' way since "the great boom" of 2009. According to respondents, most of the newly formed businesses provide the same surfing and lodging services as the previously existing companies, mainly in the form of beginner's surf-class packages and low-cost accommodation. With the development of this specific tourism industry, local surf breaks became more crowded but the overall local economy of Peniche has been vastly benefited.

In this context, it would be appropriate to come up with a mechanism to control the growth of commercial tourism, promoting and incentivizing a more varied service supply to a wider spectrum of the surfing tourism market. Also, there is a clear distancing between the previous generations of surfers from Peniche and the current state of surfing. The older surfers, used to surf alone and being subject of social repression, now witness surfing provide younger generations opportunities that they never had, as a consequence of the increasing recognition of surfing as a good social practice. It is important to make sure that the contribution of these older generations of local surfers to surfing's current development is highlighted and preserved, as their satisfaction and feeling of belonging is determinant for the sustainable development of surfing.

### **6.3 IMPACTS CAUSED BY THE TOURISM GROWTH**

The second main theme resulting from the interviews is related to the way in which Peniche got impacted by the growth of surfing tourism described in the previous section. In fact, the growth of any form of tourism at the regional level is commonly followed by economic, sociocultural, and environmental impacts. In this specific case, both stakeholder groups have identified how these different dimensions have been affected in Peniche. The

respondents have identified mainly positive impacts caused by this growth, however there are a few areas in which it is perceived that surfing tourism has been impairing the destination. This section presents a separate analysis of the perceptions of both stakeholder groups, followed by a summary of the main positive and negative impacts.

### **6.3.1 Local surfers**

As mentioned in the previous section, the growth of surfing tourism has been changing the local context of Peniche, directly and indirectly causing impacts that affect the perceptions of local surfers towards it. The respondents from this stakeholder group perceive the growth of this form of tourism in the county as being very important for the community, as they note that it has been generating mainly positive impacts. As quoted below, one local surfer believes Peniche is promoting its best asset, which allows its international differentiation as a surfing destination.

*I think it's super important, it is the best thing that Peniche has to offer, either nationally or even to compete internationally. It cannot be considered that we have great advantages, or qualities, or things to be able to attract people, whether for business or leisure, we do not have many, so surfing and what is involved around it was a good advantage (Local surfer, 40 y.o.).*

This “super important” growth has clearly been responsible for positive impacts, two of which are highly valued by the population of local surfers. First, there has been a substantial increase in turnover at the local level, which is noticeable not only in the case of surf-specific businesses but also for the overall local commerce. The second main positive impact is the creation of jobs, very important in the specific context of a mainly rural county traditionally dependent on the economic primary sector and where there are limited opportunities outside that sector.

*In terms of work, there is a lot of people from Peniche who like to surf that, due to the surf-related tourism, can make a living doing more or less what they like. And so this tourism ends up being a good thing, also because it eventually creates some jobs to local people who enjoy the sport (Local surfer, 23 y.o.).*

The two main positive impacts identified represent distinct levels of benefits to different sectors of the community. Naturally, it is the local surfers' perception that local businesses are benefited the most, specifically tourism operators, who collect the direct benefits of the economic development. Notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that the rest of the commercial sector, in all its forms, is also indirectly benefited. Also, the Municipality has been considered to benefit from the growth of surfing tourism, as the associated increase in revenue allows a greater investment on the needs of the host community. Despite recognizing that the benefits are not homogeneously distributed throughout the community, there is wide

agreement that the benefits caused by the development of tourism reach the overall community of Peniche.

*The older surfers can get a bit upset about this or that, but they have counterparts. They can have jobs that give them counterparts and thus they do not need to engage in jobs that have nothing to do with them. The overall community because there is no pollution, the rulers because there is above average revenue coming into the county... I think it is well divided between who will benefit more or less, I think it's very good (Local surfer, 42 y.o.).*

When stating that there is no pollution, the local surfer quoted above was comparing the current context of Peniche to what it could have been in case another strategic direction was taken. The respondent highlighted that, before the election of the current city council, the people of Peniche faced the possibility of having a deep-water port being built in the city. That would have had a great impact on the lives of the community and would severely harm, if not entirely destroy, several surf breaks of the region, including Supertubos. Instead, a strategy of investment in surfing and its related tourism industry was pursued, which the respondent perceives as causing a much smaller local environmental impact.

Nonetheless, the environmental pressure caused by the increasing number of visitors and construction is still perceived by a few respondents as representing a negative impact for the local population. These local surfers believe monitoring and planning should be more effective on the reduction of environmental impacts, for the benefit of both the local community and the tourists that visit the county. The other main negative impact identified is related to the increasing number of people surfing the breaks of Peniche. Even though most respondents agree that surfing tourism has been advantageous for the overall community, there are some who do not feel benefited by it and believe that the excessive crowding of the surf breaks makes them the most impaired sector of the community.

*It is exactly the people who have those businesses, they are the main beneficiaries. I'm not, what I want is to ride waves, I do not want to be having all the crowd around me. The common surfer here from the peninsula does not benefit, what we get is lots of trouble in the water (Local surfer, 60 y.o.).*

In fact, most local surfers perceive themselves as being the most impaired stakeholder group. However, the majority of the respondents argue that the economic benefits surpass the negative impacts on their surfing experience caused by the crowding of the breaks. There is a clear contrast between the negative and positive effects of surfing tourism development on local surfers, who are simultaneously benefited and impaired. If local surfers do not perceive the benefits that the development of this industry brings to them, though, they feel highly prejudiced by it.

The graphic diagram showing the relations between the impacts caused by the tourism growth, as perceived by local surfers, is depicted in Figure 4.

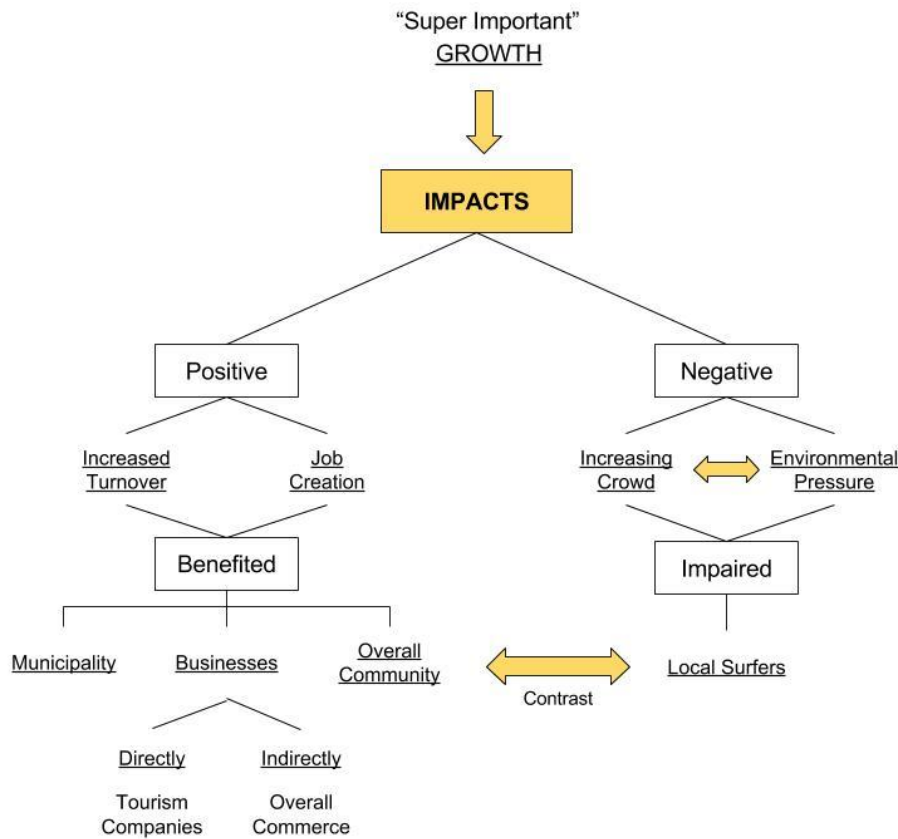


Figure 4 Local surfers’ perceptions on the impacts of the tourism growth

### 6.3.2 Business owners

The local business owners of Peniche pointed out a greater number of impacts caused by the growth of surfing tourism in the county, which can be allocated in three different areas of society — the environment, the community, and the economy. Despite identifying more ways in which Peniche has been impacted, respondents from this stakeholder group also perceive the growth of surfing tourism as having been mainly beneficial for the overall local development.

In the environmental sphere, there is a wide agreement within this stakeholder group that, during summer, there is a much greater amount of garbage being produced that is not collected in a timely manner, especially in the area of Baleal where there is a high concentration of tourists. In fact, according to most local business owners, the local environmental realm gets substantially impaired, as the garbage containers rapidly start

overflowing during the months corresponding to tourist high season.

*Of course, in summer you see Peniche with garbage, it is normal since there is much more population and the people who collect the garbage are the same (Surf Brand Manager, 51 y.o.).*

Despite an apparent unsatisfactory waste management, business owners widely perceive the development of surfing tourism as overall not causing severe impacts on the local environment. Many respondents have even put it in perspective, considering this specific form of tourism to be less environmentally harmful than overall tourism or other economic activities. In this context of comparison between surfing tourism and other forms of development, many respondents consider surfing tourism to even bring positive environmental impacts to Peniche, due to the three following reasons:

- 1) The contribution of environmentally concerned local businesses, through the arrangement of regular beach cleanups and the promotion of environmental awareness;
- 2) The profile of most surfers, regarded as having increased environmental responsibility and awareness;
- 3) The local lifestyle of Peniche, as the result of the combination of the previous two reasons, which engages visitors and local people in the preservation of the local environment.

*I think this surfing population has a good thing, which is the fact that they are ecological. It is not a kind of people fouling too much, or that pollutes, I think in that aspect, surfing perhaps even influenced in a positive way, because people sometimes do beach cleanups, and collaborate with that kind of actions (Surfing Tourism Operator, 49 y.o.).*

There is an overall feeling among local business owners that the development of tourism has not caused worrisome environmental impacts thus far. Notwithstanding, it is highlighted that some of the respondents, during unrecorded conversations, have expressed some concerns regarding the future and believe the environmental risks and impacts should be regularly monitored.

Regarding the sociocultural impacts, business owners do not identify any way in which the development of surfing tourism has caused harm to the local community of Peniche. On the contrary, respondents agree that the whole host community has been benefited along the process. The increasing opportunities that have been arising to set up businesses in Peniche, due to the growing number of visitors, are perceived as being the main trigger of the positive impacts on the local community. Investment typically follows the identification of such opportunities to set up new businesses, which in turn is followed by the creation of

jobs. According to respondents, the process of business settlement and job creation has a positive impact on the host community's quality of life, as people do not have to leave the county to find jobs that suit them.

*Well, the quality of life, in that aspect, everything was for the best, everyone got to gain from this and is gaining from this. Many people maybe did not think they could have such subsistence, perhaps they would have to leave here to go work away, there were lots of emigrants here. Today there is a lot of people who have a business, thanks to tourism, or are working for someone else, which was not possible (Surf Shop Manager, 36 y.o.).*

Besides the social benefits of job creation and business opportunities, these consequences of tourism development also translate in an overall economic growth at the local level. More specifically, the respondents have identified two main benefits to the local economy generated by such growth. The first is the reduction of tourism's seasonality, which is linked to the local characteristics of the surf. The waves in Peniche are less consistent during the traditional high-season months of summer, which motivates surfers to visit the county when the quality of the surf is superior, thus "now the season begins in April and ends in October, and formerly it was only from around July 20<sup>th</sup> until the middle of August" (Surfing Tourism Operator, 49 y.o.). The second main economic benefit brought by surfing tourism is that it provided a solution to an economy traditionally dependent on a declining fishing industry. In fact, respondents argue that Peniche has always been highly dependent on this primary sector activity, which has been getting less lucrative and thus providing less job opportunities.

*Peniche has mostly been living, in recent decades, always from the fish market and the fishing arts and everything, and I think for about 10 to 15 years now, a difference has been noticed... and I think so, economically it [surfing tourism] has been greatly improving the Peniche municipality, at all levels (Tourism Operator, 35 y.o.).*

Despite attributing a great relevance to the economic benefits generated by the local surfing tourism industry, some respondents believe there is room for an even greater economic growth. There are two ways in which those respondents believe Peniche could be subject to such growth, which are: (1) the creation of new tourism products, avoiding the dependence on one specific form of tourism and attracting different segments; and (2) the reduction of the amount of money that is undeclared and transacted "under the table", allowing the Municipality to have a greater tax income.

*I know there is more money coming here, but I am sure there is a lot of money that Peniche never sees, because there is a lot of money under the table, which I don't know how to regulate, but that's probably one way of generating more income for Peniche (Surfing Tourism Operator, 37 y.o.).*

The main impacts identified by local business owners are laid out in Figure 5.

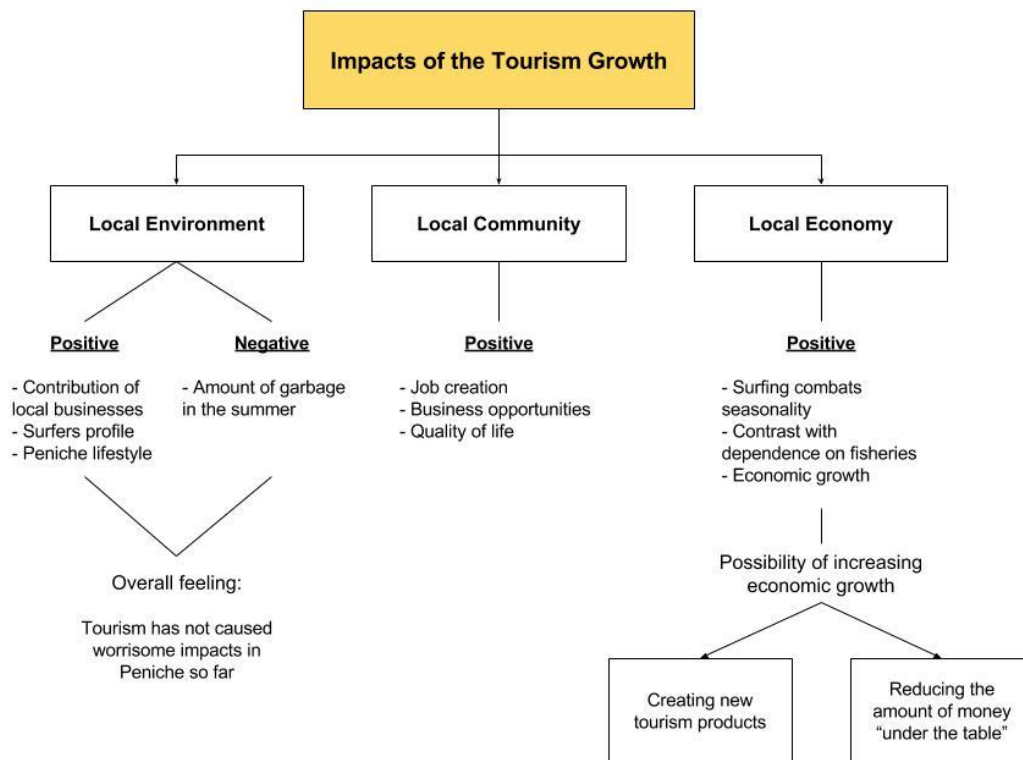


Figure 5 Business owners' perceptions on the impacts of the tourism growth

### 6.3.3 Conclusion

Respondents from the two different stakeholder groups have identified different impacts caused by the growth of surfing tourism in Peniche, which have been separately analyzed in this section. However, it is possible to identify common perceptions of both groups regarding this matter, which enables the crossing of those perceptions for the construction of a complete set of ways in which surfing tourism has affected Peniche's local environment, community, and economy, as follows.

#### Local Environment

The increasing demand for surfing in Peniche has been motivating the construction and emergence of several tourism enterprises, as a way of extending the local capacity. This process of construction is perceived as having caused pressures to the local environment of Peniche. Because of such pressures, the process of waste disposal in the county is inefficient at times of high tourist activity, as the collection and treatment of garbage does not follow such variations. It is recommended that the local entity responsible for waste

disposal establishes regular communications with the Municipality's tourism department and tour operators and that it is appropriately funded, in order to solve the identified issue.

Most of the respondents, however, felt that the negative impacts on the local environment have been little to none. Furthermore, some have even identified positive impacts, related to the contribution of local tourism operators and surfers to Peniche's environmental preservation. These respondents argue that surfers are a highly environmentally aware segment of the population and, as such, regularly get engaged in preserving and generating awareness. Despite this context of environmental concern warranted by a strong local stewardship, institutional efforts must be made to assess and monitor identified environmental risks that may pose challenges in the future.

### Local Community

The development of surfing tourism has caused a wide range of positive impacts on the local community of Peniche, reaching all its different social segments. The emergence of new businesses has been responsible for increasing the number of local job opportunities, which granted a superior quality of life for the people of Peniche. Naturally, business owners have collected the direct benefits, but the overall community is currently more developed due to the benefits brought by surfing tourism. Local surfers, however, have had to struggle with the increasing number of surfers who visit Peniche and surf the local breaks *en masse*, defying their recreational carrying capacities. This is a clear negative social impact felt by local surfers, specially by the older generations, who feel they did not have the same benefits in the past as those generated by tourism in the present. There is a clear contrast between the benefits and impairments posed on local surfers, who should be specifically targeted towards maximizing the perceived benefits and generating a perception that the benefits brought by tourism surpass the deterioration of their surfing experience.

### Local Economy

It is undoubtedly the area of society which has been more positively affected by the growth of surfing tourism in Peniche. None of the interviewed stakeholders have identified a single negative impact to the local economy, while there is loose agreement that the county has been experiencing economic growth since this specific industry started developing. The way in which surfing tourism has combated the typical seasonality of the visits carried out by traditional beach-goers is one of the most important benefits, as it allows for a greater consistency of revenue throughout the year for the whole local business sector. Furthermore, this form of tourism represents an alternative local source of revenue to the local economy, which has traditionally been mainly supported by the fishing industry.

Despite the wide range of economic benefits caused by surfing tourism in Peniche, it is recommended that new tourism products are developed with the intent of reducing the dependence on this form of tourism, thus attracting new segments. Also, a more incisive enforcement of business regulations must be carried out, in order to reduce the amount of undeclared money transactions, thus generating higher tax revenues to grow the local economy even further.

## **6.4 “FAST FOOD OF SURF SCHOOLS” – CURRENT STATE OF TOURISM**

Stemming from the two previous sections, which have described how surfing tourism has grown in Peniche and what impacts it has caused to the host destination, the present section explores how both stakeholder groups perceive the current condition of the local tourism industry. Having in mind that the interviewed business owners are in some way depending on tourism for the survival of their businesses, it comes as no surprise that their perceptions regarding tourism’s current conditions are different from those of local surfers. Interestingly, however, it is still possible to establish several connections between both points of view, which allows for a comprehensive description of what the tourism industry currently looks like in Peniche and what have been the main reasons for it to do so, as presented in this section.

### **6.4.1 Local surfers**

*I think it grew spontaneously and very quickly and turned out to become a ‘fast food’ of surf schools (Local surfer, 23 y.o.).*

The sentence quoted above is well demonstrative of the overall perception that local surfers have regarding the development of tourism in Peniche. Most respondents from this stakeholder group share the opinion that there has been a massification of the surfing tourism industry at the local level, which is currently hindering the provision of standardized, high-quality services. Local surfers build up on the idea of the reduction of seasonality presented in the previous section, assigning a great level of importance to that specific change generated by the development of this form of tourism. However, there is among the local community of surfers a widespread impression that a different approach must be pursued, moving away from the current massified state of tourism and towards a culture of higher-quality, higher-pricing surfing tourism.

*There is enormous potential, that I think is currently not being properly explored, because it is being explored in a massified way and not through quality, which would allow us to get increased added value, that is, to have fewer people but paying more, thus leaving more money in the city (Local surfer, 41 y.o.).*

There is a clear perception of a low-quality experience being provided to surfing tourists in Peniche, which is according to local surfers motivated by two reasons, namely the low-quality standards of tourism operators, and the destination's lack of capacity to properly respond to a massified tourism industry. At the destination level, local surfers feel that the current infrastructure lacks the ability to provide a high-quality surfing experience, which affects both local and visiting surfers. It is argued that, when it was performed, the local urban planning did not consider such a growth in this specific form of tourism, and therefore local beaches face a lack of adequate facilities, such as parking. For surfers specifically, there is also the perception of a shortage of supporting facilities such as showers and lockers. The consequences of this infrastructural gap are more evident during the summer months, when local surfers feel that there is a 'collapse' of the city, as the response to everyone's needs gets substantially compromised.

*The issue of tourism in general, in Peniche... needs to take a qualitative leap, also in the quality of beach facilities, the quality of the beach infrastructures. For example, we are a major surfing center, but to take a shower on the beach is very complicated... In Baleal, for example, it is already at full pressure, it is horrible... the cars on the beach parked all over the place, everything is deregulated, loads of people, loads of boards in the water, we are only trying to make money through quantity (Local surfer, 41 y.o.).*

At the level of the services provided by local surfing tourism operators, the low-quality standards adopted are highly criticized by local surfers, who target local surf camps as the main drivers of the current massification. The respondents see the main surf camps as big, industrialized businesses, which are mostly motivated by economic grounds and show little concern regarding the effect that their activity has on the recreational experience of other beach users. Furthermore, local surfers argue that the way in which these businesses perform their activity spoils the actual learning and dissemination of the surfing culture. In fact, respondents account that several surf camps hire unqualified surf instructors to deliver the classes, who do not properly transmit to beginners the whole surfing experience with its associated culture and lifestyle.

*The surf camps here are industries, they are factories. They are factories of experiences, of getting people to stand up. 'Get on your feet in one week, drink alcohol, go out at night, it's done'. So, it starts diverging from what surfing really is, and instead it looks like an assembly line, and that is a shame... We must transmit the surfing culture a bit more, we have to teach people how to behave in the water, which is something that is not transmitted here (Local surfer, 34 y.o.).*

Overall, there is among the respondents from this stakeholder group, a sense of risk that the tourism in Peniche might end up getting undermined through such massification. Three different reasons to justify such concern are pointed out by local surfers, which are the

following:

- 1) The dissatisfaction of tourists, mainly caused by the low quality of the services provided by the surf camps. These tourists end up either not returning to Peniche or returning to surf on their own, instead of opting for the standardized surf-class packages. The case of tourists who return to Peniche, despite refraining from purchasing commercialized learn-to-surf services, represents a problem for the county in the form of a lower economic yield per visiting surfer;
- 2) The local tourism's excessive dependence on surfing. Respondents have the perception that the whole tourism industry of Peniche has been increasingly targeting surfing tourists, thus alternative forms of tourism have not been developing. Accordingly, the entire tourism industry can get seriously harmed if Peniche becomes less attractive for surfing tourists;
- 3) The increasing crowding of surf breaks. Respondents feel that the growing number of surfers in the water may hurt the reputation of Peniche as a surfing destination, making it less attractive and consequently less visited. This is in line with Ponting's (2008) notion of a dreamy surfing tourist space ('Nirvana'), where 'uncrowded conditions' appears as one of the symbolic elements for its construction.

*I work with tourism and recently I have been having people telling me that they leave Peniche because there is a lot of people. They say they will choose another place on the coast that has fewer people, and that stays with me. I would never hear that 10 years ago, I never heard it before, and now I have been hearing it - it was not just one person -, that they leave because it is too crowded (Local surfer, 38 y.o.).*

The most relevant dimensions identified by local surfers regarding the current state of tourism in Peniche, and the ways in which they relate, are graphically shown in Figure 6.

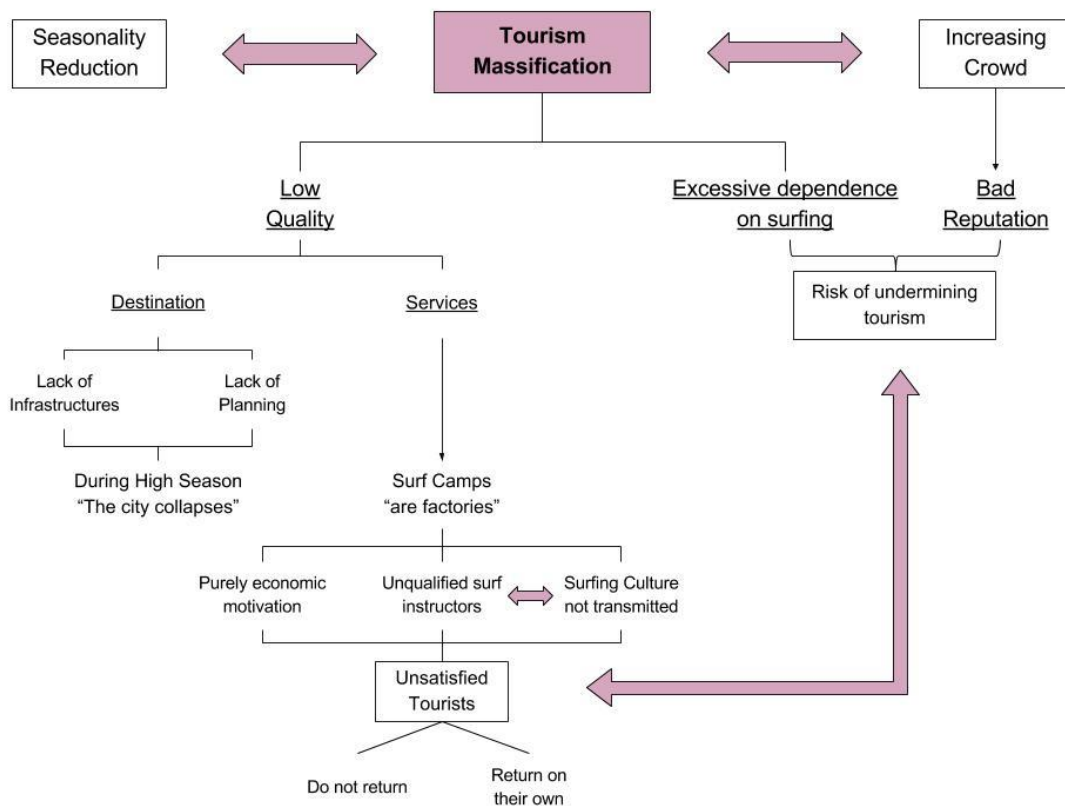


Figure 6 Local surfers' perceptions on the current state of tourism.

#### 6.4.2 Business owners

Being deeply entrenched in the local tourism industry, the interviewed business owners present a different perspective on its current state, providing valuable inside information regarding the local commercial context. Two main topics have been covered by this stakeholder group, the first of which is related to the industry's geographic distribution in the county, while the second one extensively covers the different nuances of its business context.

These respondents have identified an uneven geographic distribution of the local tourism industry, by noting that there is a clear development of tourism businesses in Baleal, as opposed to the actual city of Peniche where such development is not as evident. Baleal is part of the county of Peniche and is located at approximately 5.5 km northeast of the city center, as shown in Figure 7.

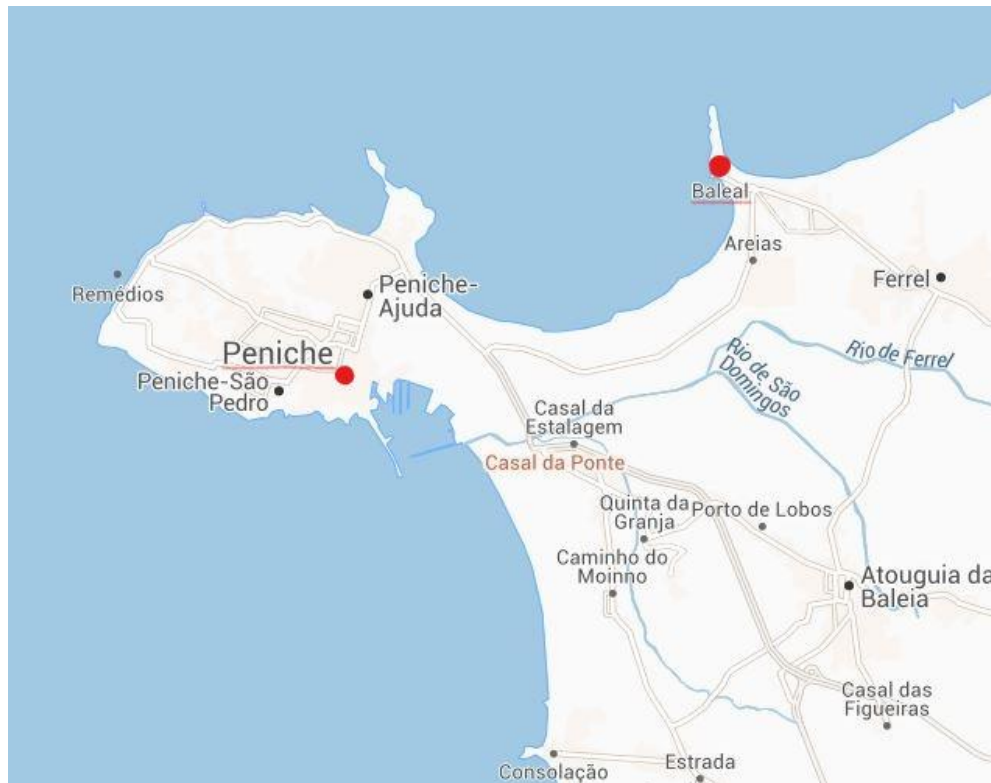


Figure 7 Location of Peniche and Baleal (adopted from <https://www.viamichelin.pt/web/Mapas-plantas>)

In fact, some respondents have argued that this preference to set up new businesses in Baleal has been slowly ‘emptying’ the city of Peniche, where the benefits of the tourism development are less tangible. The higher concentration of tourists in Baleal has been naturally followed by a growing number of activities and events taking place there, to which part of the population of Peniche may have difficulty attending due to the distance. During unrecorded conversations, several participants have expressed their discontentment regarding this situation, which they perceive as setting a separation between tourists and the local community, which is mainly concentrated within the city of Peniche. Also, a respondent of this study who has lived in Baleal his entire life has highlighted that housing prices there are becoming quickly inflated due to tourist demand, making it harder for local people to remain there, which even deepens the separation between locals and visitors. This phenomenon should be target of further research, as it may potentially be responsible for serious negative social impacts in the future.

*Peniche used to be more developed than the county, the county had almost no tourism. Right now, we have poor tourist offer in Peniche and good tourist offer in Baleal, related to surfing, so in a way I even consider that Baleal emptied Peniche, Peniche only has surf clients when Baleal is full, there is a clear preference for Baleal (Tourism Operator, 58 y.o.).*

When describing the current context of commercial tourism in Peniche, many business owners have mentioned a ‘war’ between operators, mainly those that provide commercial surfing tourism services – the surf schools and surf camps. There are several dimensions that justify such conflict between operators, all of which contribute to the current “unsustainable” commercial environment. However, it is possible to arrange all those dimensions into the three main causes of the “war” of surf schools and surf camps. Those causes are (1) A pricing conflict, (2) The reduced safety in the water, and (3) The proliferation of “illegal” businesses, all of which are hereby explored.

1) A pricing conflict

The growth of surfing tourism in Peniche has motivated the settlement of new businesses, especially in the last decade, which in turn has contributed to the current state of great competition between surfing tour operators. Such competitive context has been causing many business owners to realize the need to differentiate their businesses as a way of gaining some competitive advantage. In Peniche, according to respondents, such differentiation has been pursued under two different strategies: by reducing prices, or by increasing quality.

Participants believe that the most recent companies to enter the market, have adopted a strategy of differentiation by providing lower-priced services. Such strategy is not well accepted by the interviewed business owners, who argue that reducing the prices of the services will inevitably lower the quality with which they are provided.

*If you see this 35, or whatever, surf camps, all market themselves to the same niche group, and then they have to compete with prices, which brings the quality down (Surfing Tourism Operator, 37 y.o.).*

Most respondents from this study seem to support the alternative differentiation strategy, which is accomplished through an increase in quality. However, the provision of higher quality services is, in this case, associated with an increased financial cost for the company. Thus, high-quality surfing tourism services in Peniche are commercialized at higher prices, which shows that each differentiation strategy adopted will eventually have the other strategy’s opposite as a result. It is argued that the older businesses are those that have shown greater capacity to adapt to these market variations.

*Look, at first the ones who were aware were very few, and practically those that existed at that time are the ones that are still more dynamic, and almost all of them still exist, they are the ones who have constantly been evolving and innovating (Surf Shop Manager, 36 y.o.).*

It is important to highlight that, despite the perception that most businesses adopt the strategy of price reduction, none of the interviewed business owners expressed a favorable position towards such strategy. This may have happened either because, by coincidence none of the respondents adopted that strategy in their companies, or because they did not mention it as something favorable, even if they did adopt it. Further research would be advisable to better understand the position of local business owners regarding such strategies.

## 2) Reduced safety in the water

Among this stakeholder group, there is wide concern regarding the lack of safety that is occasionally felt in some surf breaks. Business owners believe that the increasing crowd, especially that of surf schools and surf camps, is the main driver of such perception of danger. In other words, it can be said that the recreational carrying capacities of these surf breaks are sometimes exceeded by surf schools and surf camps. One of the reasons pointed for this high concentration of several operators in the same breaks is related to the lack of access to other breaks. It is argued that very few beaches have the necessary access infrastructure for tour operators to use, which causes a high concentration of groups in a small number of breaks.

*It is really reaching the limit. Unless they create more accesses and arrange more beaches, because it's a bit what is missing...Peniche beaches are not very well indicated, nor is there great access to them, so it is all concentrated in the same places, a bit for lack of access (Surfing Tourism Operator, 49 y.o.).*

Also contributing to the increasing crowd of commercial surfing tourists in the local surf breaks are the several surf schools and surf camps based outside the county of Peniche, which nonetheless use its surf breaks to conduct surf classes. There is a wide sense of discontent related to this issue, as local business owners perceive that outside surf schools are increasingly using the natural assets of Peniche without making any positive contribution to the county. Respondents argue that this clearly damages the local tourism industry.

*There is no control on the number of schools, they do not understand that it comes to a point that, instead of helping, it only gives a bad reputation because it is a chaos in the water, there are already people who leave Peniche because of that. Because there are schools coming from everywhere, there are even schools in places where there is no sea... What happens is that these schools that come from the outside, who are not even from around here, are damaging the local tourism (Surfing Tourism Operator, 49 y.o.).*

Thus, the increasing crowd of beginners and commercial surfing tourists is deeply linked to the limited accessibility of surf breaks and to the excessive number of outside surf schools.

The reduced safety in the water stems from a combination of the overcrowding with the indiscriminate rental of hard surfboards, according to respondents. It is argued that many people with very limited surfing experience opt to rent surfboards and try to surf on their own. However, many of those people rent hard boards instead of the appropriate soft surfboards, putting everyone at risk and contributing to the increasing number of accidents with consequences in the water.

### 3) The proliferation of “illegal” businesses

The third cause to the “war” between surfing tourism operators is related to the identified growth of a parallel economy within the surfing tourism industry of Peniche. Business owners argue that there is an increasing number of “illegal” companies, which do not comply with all the legal requirements, providing services for tourists.

*The problem is not only the surf camps and schools, because those are federated and are paying, the problem is all that is around, the people who teach, who put in the internet the rental houses, taking money off of those who are paying the taxes, that's what should not be allowed, and everybody knows that it happens... that is what is wrong, that everyone knows it happens (Surf Brand Manager, 51 y.o.).*

This is also related to the price discrepancy presented previously, in the way that these “illegal” businesses are able to set lower prices, since they do not have to consider the costs associated to the legal obligations. Naturally, respondents perceive this situation as causing great damage to local tourism. Business owners argue that such operators have only been able to settle in Peniche because there is a lack of legislation enforcement at the local level. This study's participants consider a firmer enforcement of the regulations to be necessary to make the business context fairer.

*It is becoming a place with an excess of unlicensed operators, excess of students having unprofessional, unsafe monitoring, with poor material, with people not duly authorized to perform their function, and illegal people in this sense... and so it becomes a bit ungrateful, and kind of like a jungle (Surfing Tourism Operator, 47 y.o.).*

The diagram in Figure 8 shows the perceptions of local business owners regarding the current state of the tourism industry in Peniche.

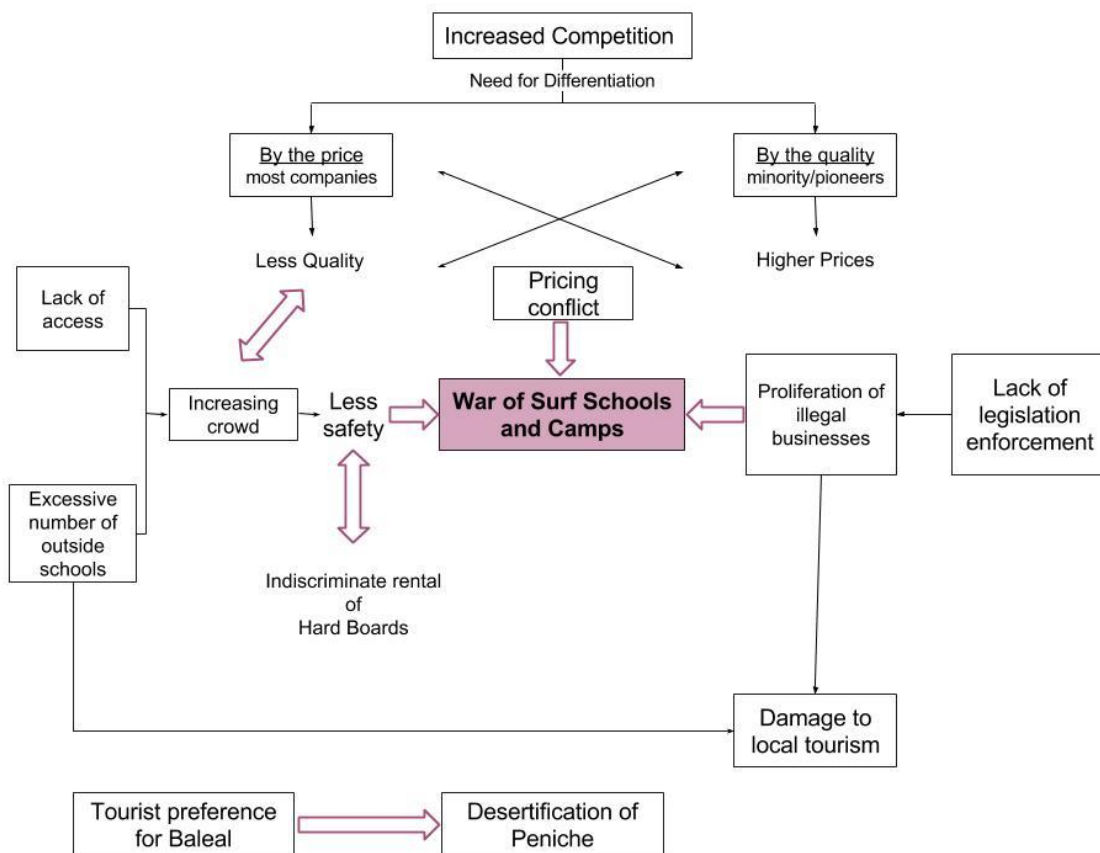


Figure 8 Business owners' perceptions on the current state of tourism.

### 6.4.3 Conclusion

Having described the perceptions of both stakeholder groups, it becomes clear that the tourism industry in Peniche has been developing rapidly, in a way that local surfers describe as “massified”, while business owners perceive it as “unsustainable”. Both local surfers and entrepreneurs fear that the growth of tourism at the rhythm that has been witnessed could ultimately endanger the industry itself. This risk perceived by the community is, in fact, characteristic of surfing tourism and supported by the work of O'Brien & Ponting (2013), who argue that the excessive number of surfers can lead to the destruction of the very product that is sold to surfing tourists.

According to respondents, one of the main reasons to justify their concern is the growing number of surfing tourism operators providing low-quality, low-priced services. Such businesses are often non-compliant with all the local legislations and regulations, so they do not contribute to the local economy as it would be desirable. Also, this is responsible for

creating an uneven local business context, which generates conflict and can seriously hinder the sustainable development of tourism in the future. Furthermore, participants have argued that some of those operators hire unqualified surf instructors and surf guides, which translates in the dissatisfaction of surfing tourists. However, Nunes' (2015) study on the satisfaction of surfing tourists in Peniche shows that the excessive number of people in the water (overcrowding) is the main factor causing visitors' dissatisfaction, especially those with greater levels of surfing ability. Nevertheless, there is an interesting relation between the crowding of surf breaks and the thriving of low-cost surfing tourism services, which upholds both the perceptions of the respondents and the results of Nunes' research. In fact, according to Ponting and O'Brien (2014), the increasing crowds in outdoor recreational activities commonly lead to a shift from "visitors with lower crowding thresholds and higher daily spending patterns" to visitors "with higher crowding thresholds and a concomitant lower daily spend". It can be hypothesized that the crowding of local surf breaks has been responsible for the dissatisfaction of visitors with "lower crowding thresholds" in Peniche, which has triggered the appearance of lower quality, low-cost services to cater for visitors with "higher crowding thresholds".

Crowding is, thus, one of the main causes of damage to local surfing tourism industries. In Peniche, the perception of excessive crowding in some moments is not only due to the increasing number of visitors, but also to the limited number of breaks supported by access infrastructures, and to the excessive number of surf schools based outside the county which conduct their classes in the breaks of Peniche. The limited accessibilities make most surf schools and surf camps concentrate in the same breaks, which combined with the indiscriminate rental of hard surfboards to unexperienced surfers, contribute to the widespread feeling of danger in the water.

Finally, there is a perception that the preference for setting up new businesses in Baleal has been damaging the tourism industry within the city of Peniche. Part of the population of the city of Peniche has been feeling excluded from the process of tourism provision, as it is concentrated in Baleal. This can have serious social impacts in the future, thus further research is suggested towards understanding the real extent of this issue. Further research is also suggested on the differentiation strategies used by surfing tourism operators, as well as their perceptions on how those strategies have been affecting the businesses.

## 6.5 SURFING IN PENICHE

The previous section presented an analysis of the ways in which the development of surfing tourism has contributed to the current state of the tourism industry in Peniche. As this specific niche market has influenced the overall context of tourism in the county, it has also changed the local state of surfing as a sport and recreational activity. This section focuses precisely on the effects that the development of surfing tourism has been causing on the local surfing experience. It is the only theme that did not have enough input by both stakeholder groups to justify a separate analysis, which is why only the perceptions of local surfers are addressed in this section. Being the most affected by the changing context of this recreational activity, most local surfers have in some way expressed how they feel about the current state of surfing in Peniche.

One of the most widespread perceptions regarding this issue is that there is a low average level of surfing proficiency in the county, which according to local surfers can be justified by two reasons. The first, already depicted in previous sections, is related to the extensive growth of mainly surf-learning tourism operators in Peniche, which attract low-skilled surfers and absolute beginners to the local breaks. Also perceived as having been influencing the low level of surfing skills in the county is the lack of support for local athletes of wave-riding sports. It is argued that local government does not perform enough investment towards developing the surfing skills of younger generations, which in some cases do not have the necessary economic background to support such development. As presented in the third chapter of this study, according to the Framework Analysis for Sustainable Surf Tourism (FASST), the local surf-sport development is one of the principles for the establishment of a sustainable surfing destination (O'Brien & Ponting, 2013).

*I think the Municipality of Peniche provides very little support to local surfers, I think it is mainly focused on the CT and on what they are financially interested, and that they don't invest on the development of young surfers here in Peniche. How is it possible that in a place with so many conditions for surfing and to be a good surfer, there are only one or two people, or young people who surf well here in Peniche? (Local Surfer, 19 y.o.)*

According to local surfers, due to the lack of surf-sport development in Peniche, a generation renewal of surfers has not been observed. Participants highlight that there used to be a much greater number of young local surfers in previous generations than there currently is. Most respondents would like to witness a development of young local surfers, who could achieve competitive success as well as preserve the local surfing heritage. Also, it is argued that the transmission of local values to a greater number of younger surfers could possibly contribute to increasing the unity between local surfers, who are currently

perceived as being disunited and getting involved in unwanted conflict situations.

*Now, what I think will be the biggest problem here in Peniche is that people are not united, nor the school owners nor the local surfers. I see many situations in which, instead of the local surfers being united among them, they are fighting each other (Local Surfer, 39 y.o.).*

There is, within this stakeholder group, the perception that a higher unity between local surfers would contribute to a better environment throughout the local surf breaks, one that would reduce the conflict between locals and increase the level of respect shown by visiting surfers. In contrast, local surfers currently feel they are disrespected by visitors when surfing. This is clearly a widespread perception, since most participants have highlighted the disrespect towards local surfers, which has been considered “highly ungrateful”, as this group naturally feels entitled to a more respectful approach from surfing tourists.

*It may seem a bit contradictory, but what I have been noticing in recent years is that foreigners are those that least respect, I do not know why, I don't know if the rules in their countries are different - and here I'm being ironic - but yes, there has not been the respect that there should be (Local Surfer, 33 y.o.).*

However, such situations seem to be typical of a specific context, instead of the norm throughout every surf break of the county. Local surfers highlight that such disrespect is mostly felt during high-season months, in breaks where the required level of surfing is lower and access is easier. In fact, participants consider such breaks to become “impossible to surf” at times, since they become overcrowded with disrespectful, uninformed surfing beginners. Besides the lack of respect shown by some of the visitors, it is perceived that most people surfing the accessible breaks during summer have little to no knowledge of the surfing etiquette and safety ‘rules’<sup>7</sup>. Local surfers mention the local surf camps and schools as having part of the blame for this wide lack of knowledge, due to their low-quality standards mentioned in the previous section. It is argued that such businesses should strive to prepare their customers to surf on their own, by actively transmitting the inherent values of surfing and its ‘code of conduct’.

*In the surfing lessons, due to the high flow of customers, usually in the morning everyone goes in the water, no one gives much importance to the priorities and rules and everything, it is just the basic standard for everybody. And what happens is that, often, the people who had a class the first time in the morning, in the afternoon will already be surfing on their own without the slightest notion (Local Surfer, 23 y.o.).*

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<sup>7</sup> In order to establish some control over the effects of crowds in surf breaks, the global surfing community has developed a set of informal ‘rules’ of behavior, which make up what can be designated as surfing’s ‘code of conduct’, as depicted in Appendix 3.

The conjugation of the described context in the most accessible breaks at high season is responsible for local surfers' perception of danger. Participants argue that there is a clear lack of safety in these breaks, as a great number of these uninformed surfing beginners take hard surfboards to the water, despite not having enough skill and knowledge to ride them safely. In some summer days, though, surfing is only possible in these accessible breaks, which means local experienced surfers end up sharing the waves with unskilled visitors, in an unsafe context. Naturally, this contrast generates conflicts between local surfers and visitors, which may become a source of negative social impacts in the future. As such, it is highly recommended that both the surfing businesses and the Municipality manage visitor behavior, by educating them on how to preserve a safe, healthy environment in surf breaks.

*Now we have reached the point of having the tourists coming here and telling us, the local people, and local surfers of Peniche: 'I come here, I am helping satisfy your hunger, so you have to give me your waves'. And this, of course, creates conflict, and this is what we now hear from the tourists who come here, this is our problem (Local Surfer, 36 y.o.).*

In contrast, at surf breaks where access is harder and the level of difficulty is increased, local surfers do not feel the same type of behavior from visiting surfers. In fact, most of the respondents who pointed out the issues related to the disrespect from foreign surfers, have also recognized that, mostly during lower-season months, high-quality surfing is barely affected by the ill-informed actions of visitors at local surf breaks. In the context of Peniche, higher-quality waves demand a higher level of surfing proficiency, which means that unexperienced surfers do not go into local surf breaks when they are providing their best conditions. Furthermore, most respondents acknowledge that, as experienced surfers make up the minority of visitors, it is still possible to surf quality waves with very few people in the water.

*It is those situations that happen more often in the summer, in the winter it is more relaxed, and when there are really good waves people know how to behave in the water, it is different. When the surfing is better, there is less confusion, but in the spots where there is a great mixture of beginners and experienced surfers it becomes a bit ungrateful, and those people do not even realize it (Local Surfer, 37 y.o.).*

Curiously, despite the wide agreement among local surfers that the current state of local surfing is as portrayed above, respondents have shown disparate feelings towards it. It is possible to divide this stakeholder group in two, according to their perceptions on the local surfing context, as follows.

- 1) One subgroup would be composed of local surfers who believe that efforts must be made to attract better surfers to the county. These respondents believe that would help increase the overall level of surfing, both of visitors and locals, and that it would reduce the disrespect towards locals.
- 2) The other subgroup consists of local surfers who feel happy with the current situation. According to them, targeting the market of surf-learning tourism allows for great economic development based on the use of resources that would barely be used by them anyway, which are the lower-quality waves. These respondents feel that attracting experienced surfers would increase the crowds in high-quality waves, which would have a much greater impact on their recreational experience.

Thereby, there clearly are not enough efforts being made to better educate visiting unexperienced surfers on how to behave while practicing wave-riding activities. Also, certain surf breaks at specific times of the year are perceived as being unsafe, and respondents fear that more serious accidents may happen in the future. Both the local government and businesses should target these situations, striving to provide a better overall local service of surf teaching, as well as to better manage the recreational experience by assessing the carrying capacities of the breaks that present higher risk of accidents. Finally, all local stakeholders should engage in defining an overall strategy for the future development of the industry, as some respondents believe a shift towards attracting better surfers must be made, while other believe the surf-learning market has the potential to provide the best balance, if properly managed.

The results stemming from the respondents' perceptions on the current state of surfing in Peniche are epitomized in Figure 9.

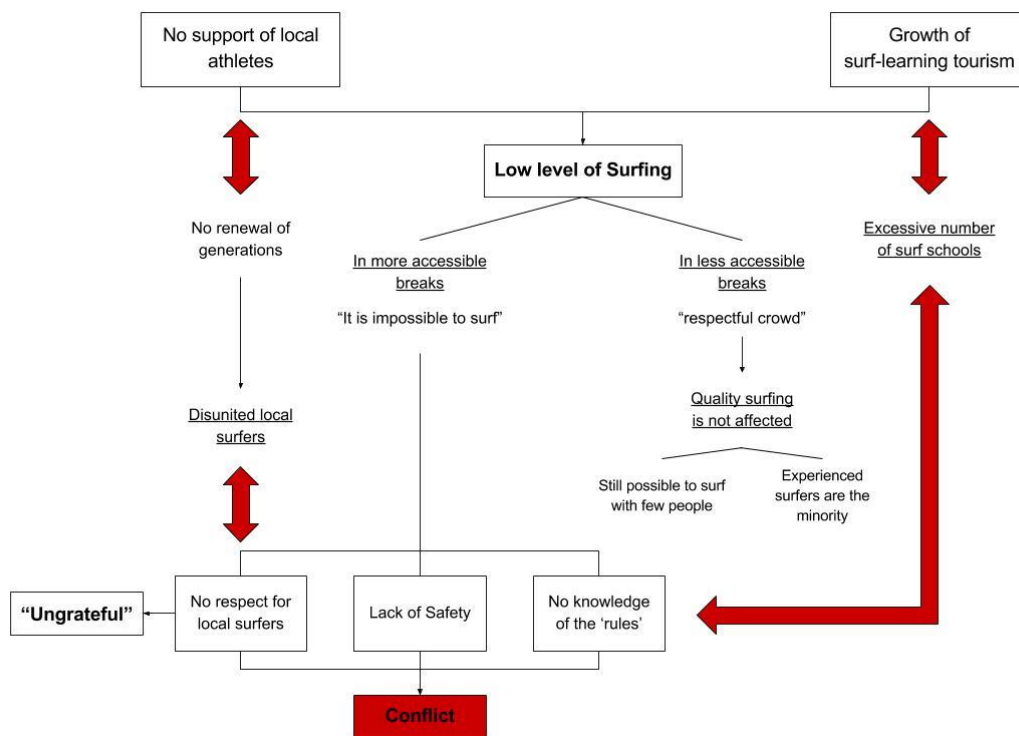


Figure 9 Local surfers' perceptions on the current state of surfing

## 6.6 POLICY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This is the last theme that emerged from the analysis of the interviews with the two groups of stakeholders. In fact, they are two different themes, which were aggregated due to their interrelatedness. After describing the growth of surfing tourism in Peniche, the impacts that it has spawned, and how the local tourism industry and surfing recreational experience have been affected, respondents revealed their perceptions on the local policies targeting the issue of surfing tourism, as well as what the future should be like in their view. This section readdresses some of the topics covered throughout this chapter, as respondents have provided concrete suggestions for the future development of the most relevant issues related to surfing tourism in Peniche. The current section separately presents the perceptions of local surfers and business owners, following with a concluding subsection that establishes the connections between the perceptions of both stakeholder groups.

### 6.6.1 Local surfers

As it has been shown throughout this chapter, it is clear that most local surfers of Peniche have mixed feelings about the local development of surfing tourism. On one hand, members of this stakeholder group have shown a great understanding of the benefits brought to their local community. On the other hand, most surfers perceive the growth of surfing tourism as having happened in a very rapid and uncontrolled way, and are now feeling some of the negative consequences that such a form of tourism development can cause.

Regarding the actions performed by the local Municipality and its contribution to the witnessed growth of this specific form of tourism, there are two disparate perceptions that have been widely addressed by the respondents. First, local surfers argue that the Municipality has done an excellent job at promoting the destination to the national and international markets. Respondents recognize that, over the last decade, there has been a huge boost in the recognition of Peniche as a tourism destination, as opposed to its former status when “perhaps 90% of the people from this country did not know where Peniche was located” (Local Surfer, 40 y.o.). However, respondents also agree that, despite successfully promoting the destination, the Municipality has not been able to provide adequate regulatory, infrastructural and logistical support for the growth of the industry that has resulted. Local surfers argue that the affirmation of Peniche has boosted the development in the form of business creation and visitor increase, but that they do not perceive many substantial changes and developments targeting tourism being performed by the Municipality on the county thus far.

*What I can tell you is that at least the Municipality is doing an excellent work in terms of promotion, through the World Tour event. A great effort, a great media attraction, by the Mayor, which is extraordinary, hardly anyone could have done a better job than him, both in favor of surfing, as in favor of the county... However, I do not see any changes, I do not see improvements, the city itself is not developed because of surfing, people talk about the millions of euros that stay in Peniche, but honestly, I would like to know where, because directly I cannot see it, you know? (Local Surfer, 48 y.o.)*

Thus, respondents believe that the Municipality must get more involved and make further investment on the development of surfing tourism. Local surfers argue that there has been a clear definition of the direction that should be undertaken, revolving around tourism and the ocean, and that it is time for the Municipality to show a greater level of commitment to this strategic direction.

*We have assumed that we are targeting surfing and tourism, which I believe just makes the city go in the right direction, we do not want to become an industrial city. But on the other hand, we have to assume it, we have to assume the decision that was made and do things seriously. If it is tourism that we are going*

*for, then it has to be quality tourism, we have to do things in a healthy way (Local Surfer, 42 y.o.).*

The participants from this stakeholder group believe that an increasing involvement of the Municipality in the process of development of surfing tourism would allow this economic activity in Peniche to reach what is perceived by them as the ideal future, which would be based on the following six principles.

1) Quality increase

The perceptions of respondents regarding this issue have been explored in depth in the fourth section of this chapter. There, it had become clear that there is a predominance of low-quality surfing experiences being delivered to the visitors of Peniche. Respondents believe that, in order to take the local industry of surfing tourism in the right direction, the Municipality must team up with the industry's players with the intent of increasing the destination's overall quality. This perception is related to the low-quality standards of most surfing tourism operators, as well as to the lack of investment on adequate infrastructure, which is directly linked to the next principle.

*Those who provide a better service will be the ones who will succeed and who will be able to make money and have a sustainable tourism. I think that those who have to help with that are the local entities, which in my view are a little away from this process (Local Surfer, 48 y.o.).*

2) Planning and Infrastructure

It is the most consensual idea among the local surfers of Peniche. As already stated, this group of respondents is not satisfied with the Municipality's level of involvement on the provision of conditions for surfing, which affects both surfing tourists and local surfers. As such, participants argue that, considering the international recognition of Peniche as a great surfing destination, local planning and infrastructure should have a greater focus on this activity. Thus, the Municipality should involve the industry's most determinant stakeholders to set up a set of quality surf-specific infrastructure throughout the beaches of the county.

*There is no infrastructure for surfing, for the culture of surfing and for the 'Wave Capital', as they branded it some time ago – because it suited them at the time –, but it is the 'Wave Capital' on paper, on the logo, because in reality there is nothing... So many people who come here, so much money that it generates, so much money that was invested in the contest, and then there isn't a counterpart; which would be to have our beaches better and better, more organized, with informative signs, with policing so that there are no thefts, with clear parking lots, with biodegradable materials, woods, nice things that have to do with nature (Local Surfer, 34 y.o.).*

### 3) New tourism products

Most local surfers believe that the tourism industry in Peniche is becoming highly dependent on the surfing-related products. There is a wide concern among this stakeholder group that such dependency may cause serious harm to the county in the future, as other sectors of the overall tourism market are being set aside. According to respondents, the massive targeting of surfing tourists may cause serious overcrowding issues, thus undermining the surfing tourism itself. For that reason, it is believed that new products must be developed, and a balance must be found between surfing tourism and other forms of tourism, in order to preserve this industry for the future.

*We are already known, we have already spread the word around, maybe now we could change a bit the direction, maybe promote a bit more that historical and cultural part, we could become an appealing destination for other types of tourists to visit, instead of only targeting people to surf, since those people will always come (Local Surfer, 38 y.o.).*

### 4) Improvement of the level of surfing

As extensively explored in the fifth section of this chapter, regarding the current state of surfing in Peniche, local surfers believe that the overall level of surfing in the county is substantially low, mainly due to the lacking support given to local surfers and to a poor transmission of surfing culture. Respondents argue that, to increase the number and skill of local surfers, incentives should be provided to local younger generation to engage in wave-riding sports. Moreover, surfing's inherent culture and 'code of conduct' should, according to participants, be more actively communicated to visiting inexperienced surfers, so that a better environment at local surf breaks is achieved. This goal should be pursued both by the surfing tourism operators and the Municipality.

*There has to be a real culture, a wave culture, a surfing culture, a surfing lifestyle culture. That has to be promoted, it has to be written, as today there are informative signs about everything and anything, maybe there has to be something about that too (Local Surfer, 41 y.o.).*

### 5) Legislation and Inspection

It is the second most consensual principle among local surfers, after the Planning and Infrastructure dimension. Most respondents believe that some specific legislation affecting surfing and tourism must be revised, and that enforcement must become stricter. One dimension where the revision of legislation is perceived as necessary is that of the surf schools, as participants believe that controlling the action of these operators (e.g. through the establishment of quality criteria) is necessary to guarantee visitor satisfaction. Also, the issue surrounding the regulation of caravans and motor homes has been recurrently

broached. Local surfers complain that these vehicles are currently occupying several parking lots and natural areas, where they do not have the necessary conditions, thus causing concerning visual and environmental impacts. Finally, respondents believe that a way to control the rental of hard boards must be pursued, since unexperienced surfers regularly rent this type of boards, contributing to an unsafe feeling at certain surf breaks.

*I think that the board rentals, the way it is available for everyone, makes the surfing more dangerous, because people do not know anything about surfing, they are not being accompanied by a surf school, they do not know the basics, and then they go to Supertubos thinking it is the same as Cantinho da Baía<sup>8</sup> (Local Surfer, 19 y.o.).*

#### 6) Destination protection and preservation

Despite not detecting any worrisome impacts caused by tourism to the local environment, local surfers understand the importance of focusing on its protection and preservation. In this context, respondents believe that one determinant principle for the successful development of Peniche as a tourism destination is the constant monitoring of possible environmental impacts, and their adequate management.

*The ideal situation would really be that Peniche could economically take advantage of this development, that there would be more jobs, at that level I am completely in favor. As long as it was something sustainable, as long as it did not abuse the natural resources we have, that there was respect for the community, for the locals, that there was respect for the environment. I think that is what it is all about, the ideal situation would be something within those lines (Local Surfer, 33 y.o.).*

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<sup>8</sup> *Cantinho da Baía* is a beginner-friendly surf spot in Baleal, as opposed to Supertubos, which is characterized by its high degree of difficulty.

The opinions of local surfers regarding local policies, and their ideas for future development, are summarized and graphically displayed in Figure 10.

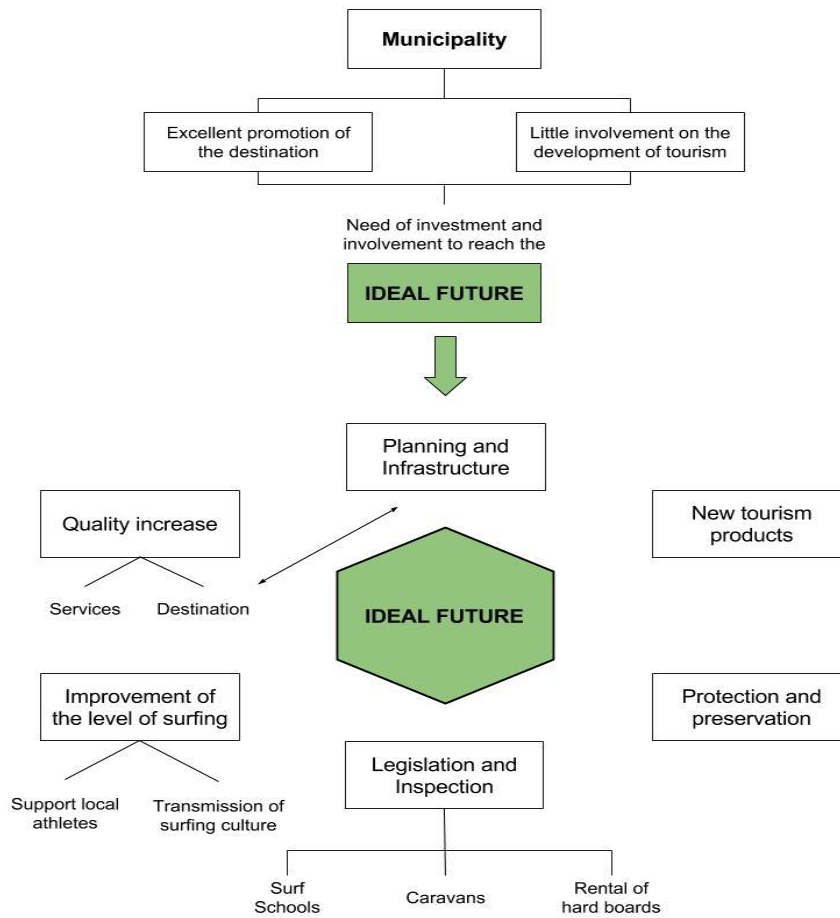


Figure 10 Local surfers' perceptions on policy and future directions.

### 6.6.2 Business owners

The perceptions of the interviewed business owners regarding local policy and the future of the tourism industry are very much in tune with those of local surfers. In fact, respondents from both stakeholder groups have very similar opinions on the Municipality's role on the development of surfing tourism, and as such, similar suggestions for future action have been mentioned. However, it is necessary to highlight this group's growing concern that the local tourism industry will become spoiled if overall policy and management practices are not changed. Many respondents have mentioned that, if the rhythm of the industry's growth is not controlled, it will become massified and unsustainable in a near future.

*Right now (...) Peniche risks beginning to massify and call into question the own sustainability of this destination as a place to learn how to surf in the future, with unpredictable consequences (Surfing Tourism Operator, 47 y.o.).*

Just like the local surfers, the business owners have also emphasized the great promotional efforts made by the Municipality. Respondents believe that the current reputation of Peniche as a great surfing destination is, in great part, due to the Municipality's action in promoting the break of Supertubos through the settlement of the stage of the Championship Tour. Also in line with local surfers' perceptions, these respondents argue that the level of involvement of the Municipality on the provision of surfing experiences to visitors has not been satisfactory thus far. Such lack of involvement by the city council in the development of tourism has been noticed, according to participants, under the two overall areas of investment and decision making, which are separately explored.

### Decision making

In the case of the Municipality's decision-making process regarding the issues surrounding surfing and tourism, respondents argue that it is performed with no consultation with them as local players of the industry. These participants believe that the Municipality should engage local businesses more actively in decision making, when the issues being decided will directly affect the local business context. Their perception, however, is that such engagement is not pursued and that consequently, there is currently a clear distancing between local businesses and the Municipality.

*There are lots of things that are a bit wrong, and they [Municipality] do very little, they do not even ask those who have the understanding, they have their own ideas and they do things in their own way, and do not even ask those who know (Surfing Tourism Operator, 49 y.o.).*

Adding to this perceived distancing, respondents have also mentioned the difficulties and hurdles faced by anyone who wishes to set up a business in the county. It is argued that there is an excessive bureaucracy associated to the settlement of new businesses, which causes serious delays to the process. In this context, respondents believe that the Municipality could be more supportive of the investments made in the county through the creation of businesses, by simplifying the bureaucratic process for these micro and small enterprises. Business owners have mentioned that all the hindrances to the establishment and sustenance of their companies are responsible for making them feel frustrated and powerless at times.

*I think there ought to be a greater support for local businesses, no doubt... I understand the paperwork, to start a business everybody has to go through the paperwork, but I think they could facilitate that a little bit more, because it is for the improvement of the place, as we are investing on it; and it is for the good of the entrepreneur, who starts working sooner (Surf Shop Manager, 39 y.o.).*

In order to turn this situation around and reduce the current distancing between businesses and local government, respondents believe that the creation of an organized, official business association is of utmost importance. In fact, without an entity encompassing all local businesses, “there is no formal link between business owners and the Municipality” (Tourism Operator, 58 y.o.). Under the supervision of such association, respondents believe there should even be a sub entity for the surf-specific tourism operators. In fact, an association of the local surf schools and surf camps has already been created, but respondents argue that it should have a greater influence in decision making. Associating the local businesses allows for a greater impact from this highly determinant stakeholder group, not only through participation in the process of decision-making, but also by providing valuable feedback for the establishment and revision of legislation. Respondents believe that this association could also contribute to the establishment of a different strategic direction for the overall local tourism industry, which should according to them consider the establishment of the following.

- 1) New commercial areas. Respondents believe it is important for Peniche to provide areas of shopping and entertainment, which would bring tourists closer to the host community and provide different forms of leisure.
- 2) New tourism products. Just as suggested by local surfers, these respondents believe it is necessary to develop more tourism products in order to ensure the industry’s sustainability.

*A business association would be important, it would be very important! Indeed, this has to be achieved, it is the way to get to the business activity, and to the development on a coherent manner and with the involvement of everyone, but this is not being done (Tourism Operator, 58 y.o.).*

### Investment

In agreement with the vision shared by local surfers, the interviewed surfing and tourism entrepreneurs of Peniche perceive the investment made by the Municipality on the development of surfing tourism to be unsatisfactory. This group’s respondents believe that investment must be guaranteed in the areas of municipal planning and construction, and in the enforcement and revision of specific regulation and legislation.

When suggesting investment in municipal planning, business owners are (just like local surfers) referring to the need of having land-use planning consider the great flows of tourists during high-season months, which should be followed by the construction of adequate infrastructure. Furthermore, respondents introduce a different suggestion for the future development of Peniche, which is perceived as being fundamental, and which consists on the planning of the county’s beaches. Participants highlight that beach activities are having

a great increase in popularity, and that it is now necessary to properly regulate and plan the different areas of each beach for specific purposes. The beaches that were traditionally used mainly by vacationers in the summer months, now are a place that the same people must share with surfers, football players, and participants of many other activities. According to respondents, this shift in the context of beach usage has been responsible for an increasing number of conflict situations, and national regulations have not followed accordingly thus far. It is recommended that the Municipality of Peniche must lead the way in finding solutions for appropriate beach-use planning and regulation, through engagement with the determinant stakeholders, such as the surf school association. By achieving solutions that meet everyone's expectations, the county of Peniche can become a benchmark of good practices in beach planning, and thus inspire the national rearrangement of legislation.

*Then I think in the future possibly we have to seriously think about the issue of water corridors, also delimiting and differentiating what is bathing use from sports use... and it will also safeguard the area that is for the surfers and the area that is for the bathers, and will not generate any type of tension, which has already been happening sometimes because these areas are in conflict with each other (Surfing Tourism Operator, 47 y.o.).*

In fact, business owners argue that they would like to witness further involvement and investment in the reformulation and enforcement of such regulations. This process should be performed in close proximity with local stakeholders, specifically with the business and surfing tourism operators' associations previously suggested. Besides beach-use legislation, respondents have repeatedly mentioned the need to control the 'illegal' businesses mentioned previously in this chapter, through a greater inspection of their compliance with the legal and financial requirements. It is perceived that enforcement at this level would increase the local tax revenue, as businesses would be forced to have their tax situation regulated. Such increase in revenue would, in turn, allow for even more investment on planning and further enforcement, thus completing and justifying the cycle of investment.

*The solution would be, first of all - which is what has not been done yet - to have duly legalized operators in their activity, with well-defined criteria in order to operate, and that the captaincies<sup>9</sup> can have a uniform legislative body from north to south of Portugal, making it a very coherent legislative body. Also, there would have to be an oversight, this goes hand in hand, there has to be legislation and then an enforcement of the law. Now we already have legislation, and even with this legislation, there is no supervision, then it is the same as not having the law, which is even worse (Surfing Tourism Operator, 47 y.o.).*

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<sup>9</sup> The captaincies (*Capitania* in Portuguese) are the Portuguese regional bodies responsible for regulation and enforcement at the beaches and in the ocean.

Figure 11 shows the different perceptions of business owners on local policy-making and future development of the industry.

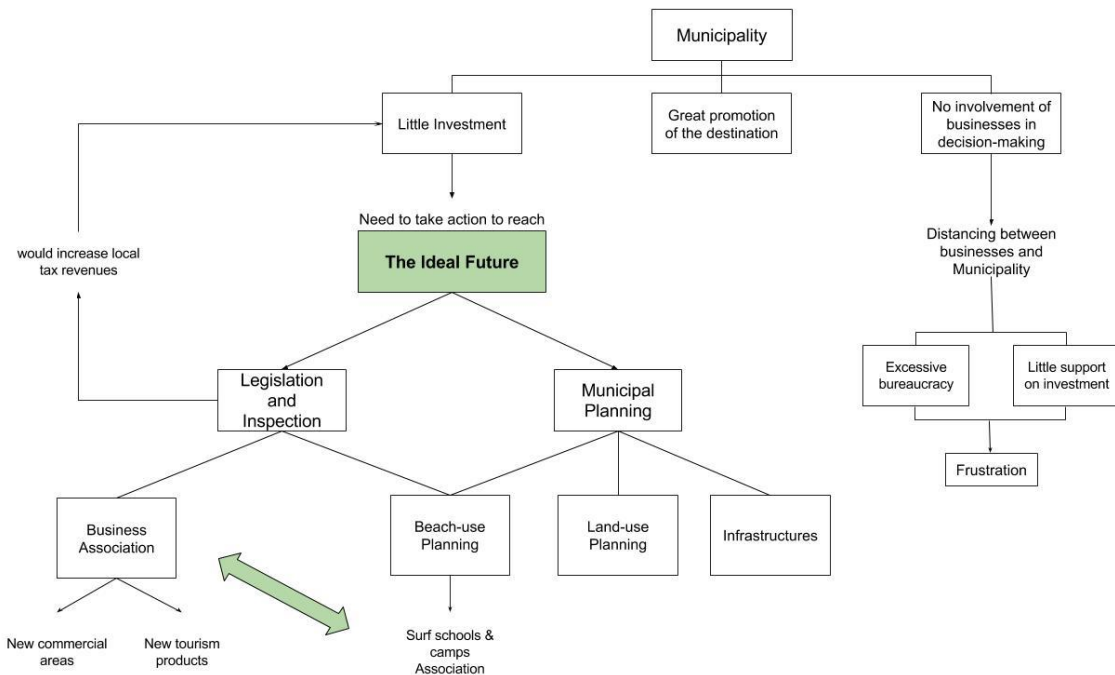


Figure 11 Business owners' perceptions on policy and future directions.

### 6.6.3 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the perceptions of both stakeholder groups regarding the current local policies and the desired future of the surfing tourism industry have been depicted. Several points of convergence can clearly be identified between what is perceived by local surfers and business owners, which enables the development of suggestions based on highly consensual, and thus valid, data.

First, it is clear that the Municipality has been a central player in establishing the current widespread recognition of Peniche as an excellent surfing destination. The promotional efforts carried out mainly over the last decade were of vital importance to the reputation of the 'Wave Capital' brand within the global surfing tourism market. The settlement of the World Surf League Championship Tour stage in the county has been the single major contribution to such renown. It is suggested that the Municipality carries on its efforts to develop the destination's brand, though a shift towards promoting the sustainability of the local surfing tourism industry is highly advisable.

Following this approach revolving around sustainability, the Municipality should strive to get more involved in the provision of the overall surfing experience to visitors. Such involvement would ideally occur in the form of further investment and engagement with local

stakeholders, namely the tourism operators. Specifically, it is recommended that the Municipality engages with these operators in order to: (1) redesign the local legislation and regulation of businesses and beach-use; (2) promote the creation of business associations to facilitate the regular communication between both parties; (3) come up with strategies to properly address visitor behavior in surf breaks; (4) incentivize the development of new tourism products and the attraction of different market segments; and (5) promote the adoption of sustainability and quality criteria by local operators. Furthermore, it is also hereby suggested that the Municipality increases the public investment in the following areas: (1) developing new urban planning frameworks; (2) building eco-friendly infrastructure to enhance the recreational surfing experience; (3) increasing the enforcement of legislation; (4) actively monitoring and addressing local environmental risks.

Overall, there is the perception that the surfing tourism industry in Peniche currently faces the risk of becoming too massified, thus questioning its ability to be preserved in the long run. However, despite perceiving that a shift in strategy is overdue, most participants believe that it is still possible to achieve higher levels of quality and sustainability. A focus in the underlying assumptions and concepts of sustainable tourism would allow a shift in strategy for the development of this industry at the local level, guaranteeing the balance between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts, and thus maintaining a thriving commercial activity for future generations.

## **6.7 SUMMARY**

Throughout this chapter, the perceptions of local surfers and business owners of Peniche on the local surfing tourism industry have been presented. It is clear that this industry has had a major boost over the last few decades, which has been responsible for reshaping the reality of the county. As with any form of tourism development, though, the rapid increase in the number of visitors, and the consequent industry growth it has spawned, has led to impacts on the local environment, community, and economy. Also, the current commercial and recreational contexts of Peniche are considerably different than those of a not so distant past. As these contexts are continuously changing, a growing concern that the surfing tourism industry will be seriously harmed is evident. As such, a new strategic direction, one focused in sustainability, is regarded as a solution to better balance the impacts caused by such a steady growth.

The next chapter summarizes the main findings of this study and presents a set of recommendations on the best way to address the underlying issues. Furthermore, the contributions of this study to its academic context and the limitations that could not be overcome are also depicted. Finally, the themes that deserve further research, for a better understanding of the subject, are pointed out.

## CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSIONS

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### 7.1 MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Surfing's growing popularity has been responsible for the development of a profitable industry of surfing tourism, currently present in every country featuring coastlines with "surfable" waves (Ponting, 2008). In this context, Portugal emerges as a reference within the industry, because of its concentrated diversity of quality surf breaks. As this form of tourism's power to generate economic growth at the local level has been proved, many Portuguese entities of different parts of the public and private spectrums have been getting involved in it. At the national level, the tourism board *Turismo de Portugal* has been using the sport to develop the country's image and positioning within the international tourism market. The country's first form of commercial surfing tourism appeared in Peniche, which is to this day one of the greatest European surfing benchmarks, due to specific public and private investment performed in the county.

Since research on this subject is limited, the current study makes an important contribution to the understanding of the implications of surfing tourism development in developed country settings, which is related to the study's first objective: (1) to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges to the sustainable development of surfing in destinations of developed nations. In this context, many of the impacts identified are not new, and have already been associated with destinations of developing nations, such as overcrowding, unruled growth of the industry and the exclusion of host communities from the process of decision making. However, it can be hypothesized that some issues are more concerning for destinations of developed countries, such as quality decrease due to fierce competition between operators, the lack of beach-use planning, the inadequate regulation and inspection of operators, and the inappropriate infrastructural support. To overcome these issues, leadership and guidance is necessary, which according to this study's results should, for the specific case of Peniche, be promoted by the public sector. However, it is not argued that this is a global solution, since such leadership can have many different sources depending on the context of each destination.

This study provides an attempt to characterize the surfing tourism industry in Peniche, as well as the ways in which its development has been affecting the destination, which constitutes the achievement of the second objective of the study: (2) to provide an analysis of the development of surfing tourism in Peniche. Many results have emerged from the data collected, mainly through interviews with local stakeholders. Stemming from such results, a set of final findings is hereby laid out, followed by the author's recommendations for the

future development of surfing tourism in the county of Peniche, thus achieving the study's third objective: (3) to present recommendations for the sustainable development of surfing tourism in Peniche.

Every aspect of the act of riding waves has been rapidly changing over the last decades. In Peniche, surfers went from being rejected and marginalized, to being idolized by younger generations with dreams of becoming professional surfers. However, it was the local tourism industry that witnessed a greater variation. Every year, surfing tourism in Peniche increases through the inauguration of new operators, and since the settlement of the CT in 2009, this growth has become "uncontrolled". As it invariably happens, such growth has been accompanied by several impacts on the destination, which for the most part are regarded as positive by the local community, at the economic, sociocultural, and environmental levels. However, despite a wide optimism towards the development of surfing tourism in Peniche, there are a few issues that concern local stakeholders. First, because of an insufficiently strict policy of business regulation, the local economy does not collect the full extent of its due benefits. Second, the crowding of local surf breaks spoils the recreational experience of local surfers, triggering occasional moments of conflict with visitors, which threatens the sociocultural sustainability of surfing tourism in Peniche. Finally, the local environment has also been affected, due to an increasing pressure motivated by the construction of tourism developments, as well as to an inefficient management of waste disposal during the months of greater tourist activity.

If not properly managed, the negative impacts identified may risk the sustainability and long-term prosperity of the local overall tourism industry. Furthermore, it is perceived that this industry may be endangering its own sustainability, because of the quality discrepancy between different operators. The need for differentiation within a reduced local market has led many operators to substantially reduce the prices of the services provided, consequently also dropping their quality. Moreover, some of those operators do not fully comply with the business regulations, which distorts the business context and hinders the remaining businesses. It is widely perceived that local commercial surfing tourism in Peniche is currently characterized by the provision of low-quality services, by a great number of operators that are frequently in conflict. This conflict is exacerbated by the limited carrying capacities of beginner-friendly surf breaks where most surf schools and surf camps operate, which get overcrowded and thus threaten the safety and satisfaction of the commercial surfing tourists.

In the context of the surf breaks where unexperienced surfers feel more comfortable, there are in fact a few issues related to overcrowding. This occurs more frequently during high-

season months, when swell is less consistent and the surfing options consequently more limited. Under these conditions, episodes of visitors' disrespect towards local surfers occur, which is linked to the fact that unexperienced surfers do not possess sufficient knowledge of surfing's 'code of conduct'. Thus, the crowding thresholds of local surfers get exceeded in such situations, spoiling their recreational experience and increasing the risk of conflict and accidents.

The existing literature on the sustainability of surfing tourism enables the inference that, if sustainable solutions to the mentioned issues are not pursued, Peniche risks jeopardizing its local surfing tourism industry in the future. Therefore, the author's interpretation of the perceptions of participants led to the achievement of the third objective of the study, through the following set of recommendations for the sustainable development of the industry.

- It is recommended that Peniche pursues sustainability-oriented management practices. Decision-making should be done with deeper involvement of determinant local stakeholders, such as tourism operators and local surfers, whose perceptions should be regularly monitored. The direct economic and environmental impacts caused by surfing tourism should also be assessed.
- Peniche should promote and develop itself as a premium learn-to-surf destination offering world leading levels of service and professionalism. Through a greater involvement between the public and private sectors, service quality and infrastructure improvements should occur in parallel with increasing prices (instead of the actual high volume, low yield surf school model);
- Beach-use planning and regulations for operators should be rethought. Local regulation must ensure these operators are able to provide a quality service, without compromising the quality of the surfing experience for local surfers and non-commercial surfing tourists. Such regulations should be regularly enforced;
- The creation and development of complimentary tourism products and services should be encouraged. The dependence of the local tourism industry in surfing must be reduced, through a more effective transmission of the county's historical, cultural and natural heritage;
- The education of surfing tourists should be prioritized. The transmission of surf break information, surfing's 'code of conduct', and local surfing values, should be performed not only by the service providers, but also through public investment in signage.

## **7.2 LIMITATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

Throughout this study, it was possible to provide an answer to the research question, as summarized in the previous section, and to meet the three main objectives laid out in the beginning. However, regarding the first objective, it may be argued that the contribution has been limited, due to the restrictions posed by the Case Study approach. Nonetheless, a deep understanding of the context of Peniche has been enabled, contributing to the academic debate and allowing theoretical causality inferences for similar cases.

Further limitations to the scope of this study arise from the influence of researcher subjectivity in the interpretations of the collected data. Despite this being accepted by the Constructivist paradigm, it still represents a limitation for relying on the direction taken by the researcher due to his previous familiarization with the case. Finally, the fact that only two groups of stakeholders were addressed limits the results, for not providing a description of the entire community's perceptions on the studied subject.

## **7.3 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Throughout this study, a few suggestions for further research have been made, which are hereby compiled. First, research should be performed on the separation between the local community of Peniche, mainly located within the city boundaries, and the surfing tourists visiting the county, who mostly stay in the area of Baleal. Research should focus on the potential social impacts caused by this distancing in the future, which could risk the sustainability of local tourism. Also, future research projects should focus on the differentiation strategies of local operators, in order to understand the effects that pricing differences have on the variation of perceived quality.

Finally, it is recommended that further research should attempt to provide ways to measure the sustainability of surfing tourism destinations of developed nations. As it has been presented in this study, there are currently two models focusing on the assessment of sustainability within the surfing tourism industry. However, none of the two enable the measuring of sustainability of a destination like Peniche. The Framework Analysis for Sustainable Surf Tourism (FASST) has been developed in the context of surfing tourism in remote developing island nations, which are typically affected differently than destinations of mainland developed countries. The indicators of the STOKE Certified certification also do not allow the assessment of a surfing destination, as they target the sustainability of surf hotels and resorts. Stemming from the existing models, it is recommended that (1) the FASST is further developed, adapting to the impacts of surfing tourism in developed nations, and (2) a program for the certification of surfing tourism destinations is created.

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# APPENDICES

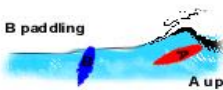

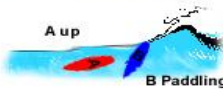
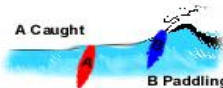


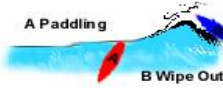
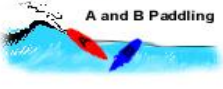

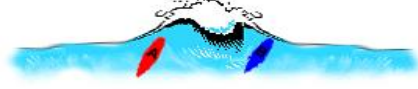



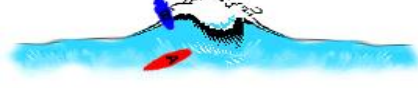
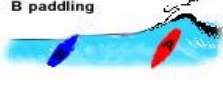

Appendix 1: Compilation of local surfers' perceptions for each theme.

Local Surfers	19 y.o.	23 y.o.	32 y.o.	33 y.o.	34 y.o.	36 y.o.	37 y.o.	38 y.o.	39 y.o.	40 y.o.	41 y.o.	42 y.o.	42 y.o.	48 y.o.	60 y.o.	TOTAL
<b>GROWTH</b>																
Social acceptance			x								x	x			x	5
Yearly growth	x	x			x										x	4
<b>IMPACTS</b>																
<b>Positive:</b>																
- Increased turnover	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	13
- Job creation	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x			11
<b>Negative:</b>																
- Increasing crowd				x	x	x	x			x	x				x	8
- Environmental pressure				x	x					x	x			x		4
<b>CURRENT STATE OF TOURISM</b>																
Tourism Massification					x			x			x					3
Seasonality reduction	x		x	x	x		x		x							6
Low quality destination		x	x			x		x	x	x	x			x		8
Low quality services		x			x						x			x	x	5
Excessive dependence on surfing						x		x						x		3
Unsatisfied tourists		x			x	x		x						x	x	5
<b>SURFING IN PENICHE</b>																
Low level of surfing	x	x		x					x				x			6
No renewal of generations	x			x					x		x					4
Excessive number of surf schools		x				x				x						5
No respect for local surfers				x		x								x	x	5
Lack of safety	x	x	x	x		x					x			x	x	7
No knowledge of the rules	x	x	x		x	x		x		x		x	x	x		12
Conflict				x	x	x		x			x	x			x	9
<b>POLICY &amp; FUTURE DIRECTIONS</b>																
Excellent promotion of the destination	x			x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	10
Little involvement/investment	x				x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x		11
Need for municipality involvement:																
- Planning & Infrastructures	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		12
- New tourism products		x				x		x				x	x	x		6
- Protection & Preservation				x	x					x						4
- Legislation & Inspection	x				x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
- Improvement of the level of surfing	x	x		x					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
- Quality increase		x	x				x		x	x	x			x		8

## Appendix 2: Compilation of business owners' perceptions for each theme.

Business Owners	Surfing Tourism Operator	Surfing Tourism Operator	Surfing Tourism Operator	Surfing Tourism Operator	Tourism Operator	Tourism Operator	Surfing Brand Manager	Surfing Brand Manager	Surf Shop Manager	Surf Shop Manager	TOTAL
<b>GROWTH</b>											
Uncontrolled growth of tourism companies	x	x									3
<b>IMPACTS</b>											
Positive impact on the environment	x				x						2
Negative impact on the environment		x			x		x				4
Positive impact on local community	x	x		x	x				x		7
Positive impact on Economy	x			x	x		x		x		7
<b>CURRENT STATE OF TOURISM</b>											
Price and quality discrepancy	x	x		x	x		x		x		8
Lack of beach access	x				x						2
Excessive number of outside schools	x				x		x				3
Less Safety	x			x			x				3
Lack of legislation enforcement	x	x		x			x				5
Proliferation of illegal businesses	x	x		x			x		x		6
War of schools and camps		x					x		x		4
Desertification of Peniche					x		x		x		4
<b>POLICY &amp; FUTURE DIRECTIONS</b>											
Great promotion of the destination	x			x	x						4
Little investment	x			x			x		x		5
No involvement of businesses in decision-making	x			x							4
Excessive bureaucracy		x					x		x		4
Tourism will become massified/unsustainable		x		x			x		x		5
Need for Municipal planning:											
- Land-use planning				x					x		3
- Infrastructures	x			x					x		6
- Beach-use planning	x			x					x		6
Need for legislation and inspection	x			x							5
Need for a Business Association:					x						3
- New shopping areas					x				x		2
- New tourist products	x				x		x		x		5

**Appendix 3: Surfing's code of conduct.** (Retrieved from: <https://happydudes.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/surf-etiquette.jpg>)

 <p>B paddling A up</p>	<p>Surfer A is up and surfing a wave, Surfer B is paddling to take-off. <b>Surfer A has right of way.</b> Surfer B must get out of the way of Surfer A. If B does catch the wave he/she is "dropping-in" on Surfer A. <b>NEVER DROP IN and ALWAYS LOOK OVER YOUR SHOULDER!</b></p>
 <p>Both paddling</p>	<p>Surfer A and B are both paddling for the same wave and both are relatively close to the peak. However, Surfer A is nearer the peak and therefore has the right of way. <b>Surfer A has right of way.</b> Surfer B MUST stop paddling, get out of the way and give way to Surfer A.</p>
 <p>A up B Paddling</p>	<p>Surfer A is riding a wave, Surfer B is attempting to take off between Surfer A and the peak. By virtue of having established right of way in the take-off zone, <b>Surfer A has the right of way.</b> Surfer B is not entitled to catch the wave and should wait for the next wave.</p>
 <p>A Caught B Paddling</p>	<p>An unridden wave has <b>just</b> been caught by Surfer A, Surfer B is taking off in a more ideal, closer to the peak, position. Unless surfer A has been riding for "a while" (see example above), <b>Surfer B has right of way.</b></p>
 <p>A Up B Up</p>	<p>Surfer A and B have both caught the same wave, surfer A is on the shoulder close to the peak Surfer B is in the broken, whitewater, section of a wave. <b>Surfer A has the right of way.</b> Surfer B should <b>KOOK OUT</b> (go straight towards the "beach" riding the whitewater).</p>
	<p>Surfer A is riding on the shoulder when the whitewater momentarily "catches up to him" (or he/she gets tubed), Surfer B is paddling for the wave. <b>Surfer A has the right of way.</b> Surfer B must not takeoff. Since there is a chance that Surfer B did not see Surfer A, Surfer A must let Surfer B know he's coming.</p>
 <p>A Paddling B Wipe Out</p>	<p>Surfer B was riding the wave when his progress was halted, Surfer A is in position to take-off. <b>Surfer A is entitled to takeoff.</b></p>
 <p>A and B Paddling</p>	<p>Surfer A and Surfer B are paddling for take-off, Surfer B is attempting to get closer to the peak by paddling in front of (or around) Surfer A. <b>Surfer A has right of way.</b> Surfer B is snaking, <b>DO NOT SNAKE!</b></p>
	<p>Surfer A and Surfer B are both attempting to take-off in a situation where there is a rideable left and right shoulder. <b>Surfer A has right of way on the right hand shoulder while surfer B has right of way on the left hand shoulder.</b> Call out, "left" or "right" as appropriate. Communicate.</p>
	<p>Surfer A and Surfer B are both attempting to take-off in a situation where there is a rideable left and right shoulder, but Surfer B is attempting to cross-under the peak. <b>Surfer B is not entitled to cross under the peak to the shoulder already occupied by Surfer A.</b></p>
	<p><b>Surfer A is entitled to cross under the the peak to the unoccupied right-hand shoulder.</b> In doing so the left-hand shoulder will become available for other surfers to catch.</p>
 <p>A and B Up</p>	<p>Surfer A and Surfer B are both riding in a wave that is closing out. Both surfers are entitled to takeoff and ride the unbroken wave section and neither has right of way. <b>Both must pull off the wave before a collision occurs.</b> Use common sense.</p>
	<p>Surfer A is riding the wave Surfer B who is either stationary or paddling out. Surfer A has priority but must try to avoid Surfer B. Surfer B must try to paddle away so as not to interfere with A.</p>
	<p>Surfer B has thrown the board to duck dive. <b>NEVER THROW YOUR BOARD.</b> It is a danger to you and others. Note: For the same reason do not "kick-out" of a wave when close to other surfers.</p>
 <p>B paddling</p>	<p>Surfer B is paddling out. When paddling out: use any rips or channels and paddle around surfable sections. <b>DO NOT</b> paddle out through the lineup or the rideable sections of the break.</p>
 <p>A Up B Wipe Out</p>	<p>Surfer B has been "caught inside". When caught inside stay in the white water and go around the rideable sections of the break to get back out.</p>

If anyone around you is violating these rules inform them directly, immediately and politely (dip).

**RESPECT THE BEACH & OTHERS**

This code was developed by the Surfrider Foundation and modified by Happy Dudes.

Print this out and distribute it freely to as many people as you can.

## **Appendix 4: Script for the interviews with local surfers (translated).**

### **PRESENTATION**

- Confidentiality of the collected data
- Theme under study (scope of the work, master's student ...)
- Questions typology

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Age**

**For how many years have you been surfing?**

#### **Born in Peniche?**

- Yes
  - Living in Peniche?
  - Surfing only in Peniche?
- No
  - Where?
  - For how many years living in Peniche?
  - Where in Peniche do you live?

The order in which questions are asked is irrelevant; new questions may arise and some of these questions may not be asked, depending on the interviewer's judgment.

### **QUESTIONS:**

How do you describe the growth/development of surfing in Peniche, since you started surfing to this day?

What is the importance of the growth of surf tourism for the county of Peniche?

In your opinion, who are the main agents benefited with this growth?

And the most impaired?

What is your opinion regarding the crowd?

Overall, do you consider surf tourists have knowledge on the rules of respect and surfing's "code of conduct"?

What is your opinion regarding the current policies relating to surf tourism?

What would be the ideal future for the surfing in Peniche, and what should be done in that regard?

## **Appendix 5: Script for the interviews with business owners (translated).**

### **PRESENTATION**

- Confidentiality of the collected data
- Theme under study (scope of the work, master's student ...)
- Questions typology

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Age**

**For how many years do you have your business?**

#### **Born in Peniche?**

- Yes
- No
  - Where?
  - For how many years living in Peniche?

The order in which questions are asked is irrelevant; new questions may arise and some of these questions may not be asked, depending on the interviewer's judgment.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Since you started your business, how has the evolution of the surf-related companies been in Peniche?

Over the years, you must have made some changes on the company and on the way your services are provided. What were the main causes which led to those changes?

In your opinion, do you think the number of tourists that visit Peniche to surf, during high season, is acceptable?

What is your opinion regarding the local policies related to the development of the industry of surfing tourism?

With this question I want to understand, in a simple manner, your opinion on the influence that the tourism of surfing in Peniche has in 3 different areas. Thus, in your opinion, in what way does the growth of the tourism of surfing influence:

The Environment

The Local Community

The Economy

What would be the ideal future for the tourism of surfing in Peniche, and what should be done to achieve it?

What are the main obstacles to the achievement of the ideal future you described?