

## **Ka Po'ina Nalu<sup>1</sup>: a preliminary analysis of Peniche local surfers' satisfaction concerning the surf tourism growth**

**José Miguel Nunes<sup>a</sup>, Susana Mendes<sup>b</sup> and João Paulo Jorge<sup>c</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> *Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Centre of Tourism Applied Research (CITUR)*  
*jose.nunes@ipleiria.pt*

<sup>b</sup> *Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Marine and Environmental Sciences Centre (MARE)*  
*susana.mendes@ipleiria.pt*

<sup>c</sup> *Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Centre of Tourism Applied Research (CITUR)*  
*jjorge@ipleiria.pt*

### **Abstract**

It is recognized that tourism is a sector that can contribute to the economic growth of a territory. Tourism produces social benefits to the region and positively contribute to the maintenance of a natural environment by protecting natural areas such as coastal areas, for example. On the other hand, the support of the local population is essential for the development, successful operation, and sustainability of tourism. In the case of surf tourism, achieving the goal of favorable community support for the tourism industry requires also an understanding of how local surfers formulate their attitudes toward tourism. Therefore, assessing residents' satisfaction plays an important role in the management of a surf destination, particularly the satisfaction of the local surfers.

The purpose of this study is to examine the satisfaction, among local surfers, regarding the growth of surf tourism, development model and territorial management of the municipality of Peniche, Portugal. This city is a well-known surfing destination, specifically since one of the stages of the world surf tour takes place on the beaches of this municipality.

In order to achieve the objective of this study, surveys were applied to the local surfers community (n=119). The questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first focused on the surf practice; the second on the satisfaction level about the tourism growth and development model; and the third on the local surfer's profile.

The results of the survey carried out on the local surfers community have led to the conclusion that the data and information provided by this preliminary study will enable better governance and planning for the destination, looking to ensure the sustainability of the surf tourism in Peniche and, consequently, greater satisfaction for the local community and tourists.

**Keywords:** Surf tourism, Local surfers, Satisfaction, Tourism growth, Local development model.

### **Introduction**

In Europe, the popularity of surfing has grown in an explosive way. (Young, 2000) and consequently the number of surfers has increased. Due fundamentally to the diversity, consistency and quality of the waves, allied to the warm temperate climate, Portugal becomes one of the most popular destinations of the old continent for surfing (Silva, 2005; Bicudo & Horta, 2009; Publituris, 2014; Alves, 2016; Carvalho, 2016; CW, 2017). Therefore, it was considered in 2014 by Bloom Consulting, the most attractive country for surfing in all world (Nunes, 2015)

According to the oldest known video record, in Baleal Beach, from 1964, the surfing activity in Peniche municipality dates back more than 50 years ago (SP, 2014). With the arrival of the World Tour in 2009 along with a huge growth in media coverage, Peniche becomes one of the key locations for this

---

<sup>1</sup> Hawaiian expression for "the surf zone"

activity in Portugal. Nowadays the brand tag “surf” is one of the most researched topics on Peniche municipality (BC, 2016).

As suggests Swarbrooke (1999, cited by Ponting, 2001), “host communities are rarely homogenous in their attitude towards tourism development and are often factionalized into a variety of interest”, namely “those involved with tourism development and those not involved but whose normal activities will be impacted upon by tourism development.” A good relationship between local hosts and tourist is essential for the long-term development of tourism destination (Ap & Crompton, 1998). In a surfing destination, this fact becomes even more evident. In order to understand this relationship, it is fundamental to evaluate the preferences, motivations and satisfaction levels that directly relate the local surfer to the surf tourism and the surf tourists.

### **Surfers, surf tourism and local surfers**

Ponting (2008) refers a surfer as “a person who possesses sufficient skill and knowledge to utilize 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”. In this sense, he defines the surf tourism as “a travel and temporary stay, undertaken by a surfer, involving at least one night from the region of the surfer’s usual domicile which is undertaken with the primary expectation of surfing waves”.

Another perspective is provided by Dolnicar and Fluker (2003a), which classified surf tourism as a sub-sector of sports tourism, however he cautioned that “surf tourism does not necessarily only include active surfing participants, but also spectators and non-surfing travel companions” (Fluker, 2003, cited by Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003b).

Martin and Assenov (2011) proposed that surf tourist is “any travel who deliberately engages in the sport of surfing, including first-time surfers, beginners and highly skilled surfers”.

As Ponting (2015) supports, sustainable management, socioeconomic, cultural and environmental impacts are the four key areas to sustainable surf tourism. In this sense, he refers that each tourism destination has its own culture, environment, customs and laws, so, the model of exploration of this surfing tourism market should be designed and adapted take into account the local conditions.

The host communities must be the central players in decisions regarding the use of their surfing resources, such as define their own involvement in the surf tourism enterprise (Ponting, McDonald & Wearing, 2005; O’Brien & Ponting, 2013; Abel & O’Brien, 2015), in the way to “ensure that surf tourism development does not make host communities bystanders and servants in their own land.” (Abel & O’Brien, 2015)

According to Bennet (2004, cited by Beaumont & Brown, 2014) “being a local means belonging to a particular beach or area of coastline where you were either born or have lived for some accepted period of time”. However, these authors emphasize that the territory is useful to make known the perceptions of ownership of a beach, in order to perceive the identity of the community and its social and / or symbolic limits. In this way it will be possible to perform a more detailed examination of the idea of place and space.

How Laurence & Cartier (2003, cited by Beaumont & Brown, 2014) noted that places can consist of ‘layers of cultural sediments that are bound, eroded and metamorphosed locally’, forming a repository of meaning for residents of the place. On the other hand, outsider surfers may see a place as merely a spatial resource to be exploited (Beaumont & Brown, 2014), so, has Preston-Whyte (2002) mentioned, “social structures, and their subsequent management in the water, differ significantly from those of normal modern life”.

In addition to being born or living in a particular place, being a local means to be a long time regular surfer at a particular surf spot or area, having an extreme knowledge of the wave and the place, linked with good memories and earned their position in the lineup hierarchy, which allowed to be accepted by the local surfing community.

In this sense, surfing reaches levels that are far beyond the economic, such as happiness, relationship with nature and physical benefits (Hardin, 1968), i.e., the living by the ocean and beach life style (Jorge & Reis, 2011).

### **Methodology**

According to the main propose of this work, the focus of data analysis lead us to: (1) to characterize the sociodemographic profile of the respondent (including gender, age, education level and

professional activity); (2) evaluate the degree of importance to the satisfaction about the tourism growth and management based on surfing and (3) the level of satisfaction of respondents with respect to the attributes related to the surfing tourism development (namely, “Beach accessibilities”; “Beach supports”; “Job creation”; “Number of surfers in the water (crowd)”; “Peniche image as a surf tourist destination”; “Environment (pollution, natural landscape, etc)”; “New investments (non-touristic)”; “New investments (touristic)”; “Relationship with the crowd”; “Relationship with surf tourists (out of water)” and “Safety on the water”).

To achieve the objective of the study, it was elaborated a questionnaire (by the authors). It consisted of three parts: the first (questions 1 to 4) centered on the surf practice; the second (questions 5 to 7) on the satisfaction level about the tourism growth and the implemented model; and finally, the third (questions 8 to 14) on the local surfer’s profile.

The most recent data indicate that the resident population in Portugal is 10.562.178 and in Peniche county is 27.753 (INE, 2012). On the other hand, it is estimated that there are 200.000 surfers in Portugal (Mateus, 2012; Mariano, 2012; SP, 2014b; Fonseca, 2016). As a result, these represent 1.89% of the Portuguese population. In this sense, it is estimated that in Peniche the number of local surfers is 524. Thus, a sample of 119 individuals was determined using the most conservative estimate for a single proportion (0.5), a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 8%.

## Results

The summary of the main socio-demographic characteristics of the local surfers surveyed showed that the majority of local surfers in Peniche, match the following profile: male, aged 36 or older, “advanced” surf level with 20 to 30 years of surf experience, three or more times per week of practice and high education level. Additionally, 44.5% have some kind of profitable activity related to surf business and 58.5% of those at full-time (37.7% with your own business).

Regarding to the overall satisfaction related to the tourism growth based on surfing in Peniche (Fig. 1), 50.4% of the responders are globally satisfied (i.e., 39.5% are “Satisfied” and 10.9% are “Very satisfied”). Only 11.8% of the responders rated as “Unsatisfied” and 35.3% as “Poorly satisfied”.

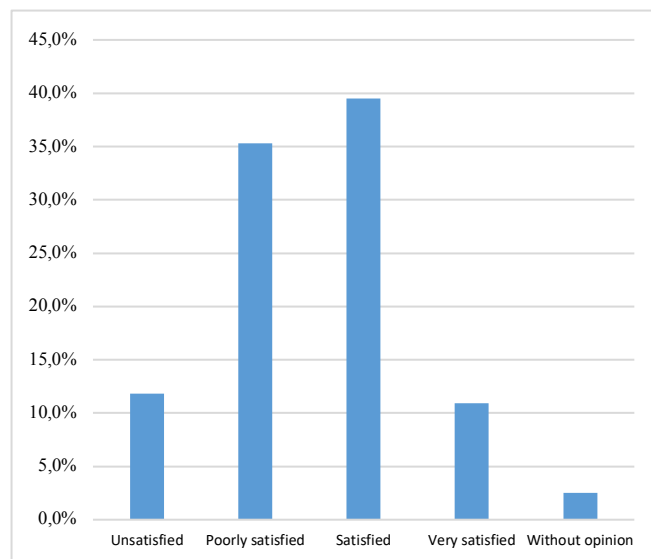


Figure 1 - Satisfaction concerning tourism growth based on surfing

When the question is about the development model and the territorial management implemented it is noted that the majority (76.5%) of responders are displeased with it (Fig. 2). The “Poorly satisfied” decreased slightly (0.8%), but the “Unsatisfied” have a huge grow (i.e., 30.2%) to 42%. On the other hand the “Satisfied” decrease to 17.6% and the “Very satisfied” to 1.7%, that is, a decrease of 21.9% and 9.2%, respectively.

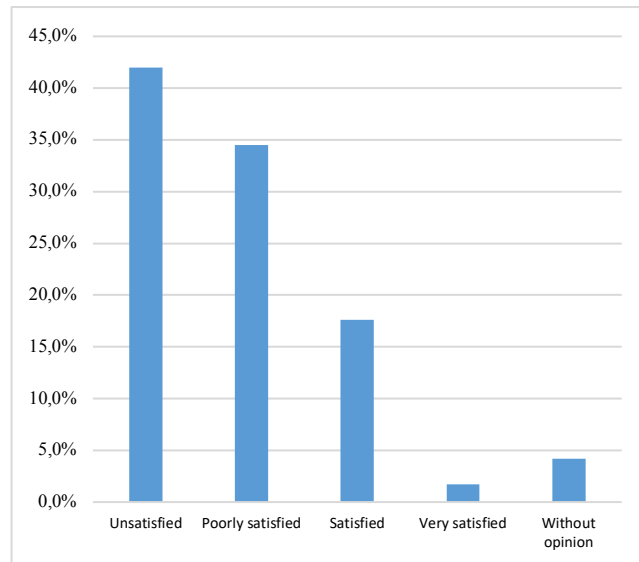


Figure 2 - Satisfaction concerning implemented development model and territorial management

Additionally, it was analyzed the level of satisfaction of respondents concerning the attributes related to the surfing tourism development in Peniche (namely, “Beach accessibilities”; “Beach supports”; “Job creation”; “Number of surfers in the water (crowd)”; “Peniche image as a surf tourist destination”; “Environment (pollution, natural landscape, etc.)”; “New investments (non-touristic)”; “New investments (touristic)”; “Relationship with the crowd”; “Relationship with surf tourists (out of water)” and “Safety on the water”; (Fig. 3).

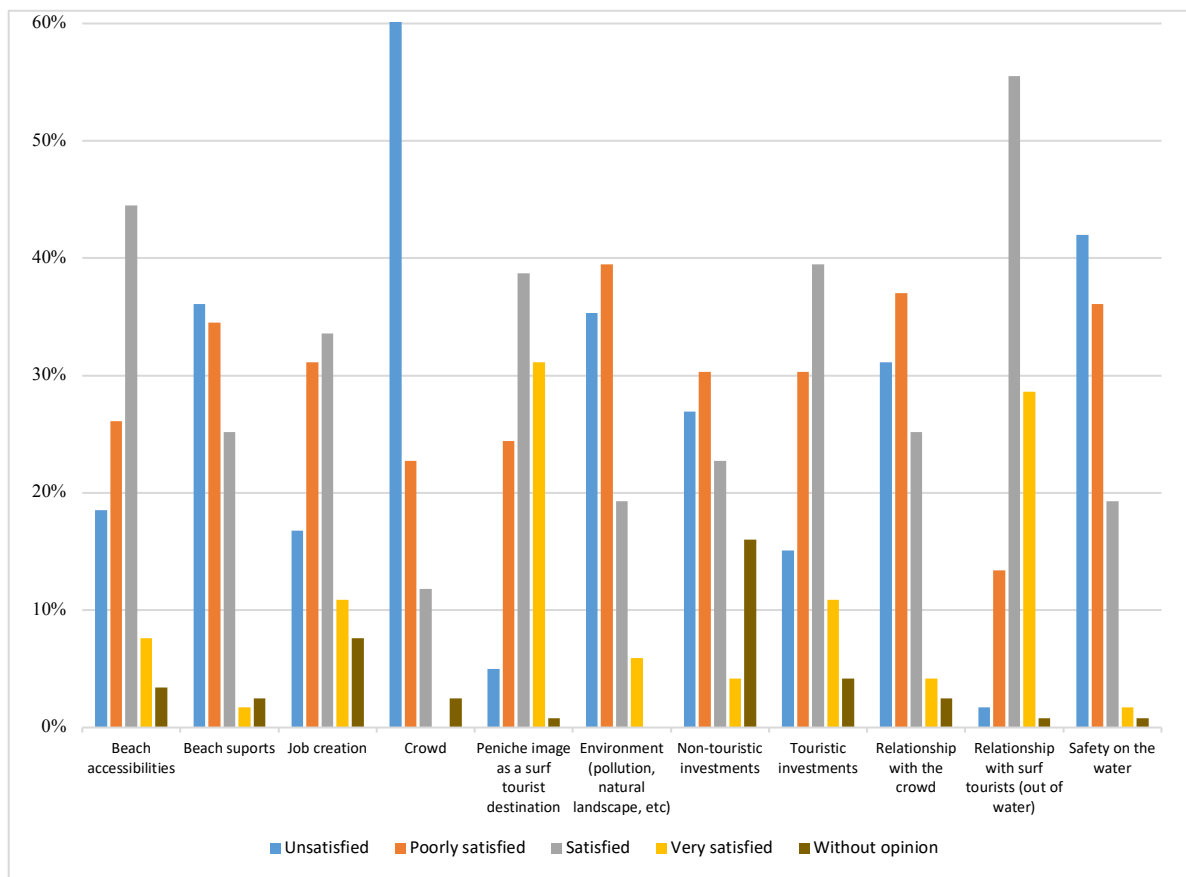


Figure 3 - Satisfaction level about attributes related to the surfing tourism

Concerning to “Beach accessibilities” 52.1% of the local surfers are globally satisfied with it (i.e., 44.5% rate as “satisfied” and 7.6% as “Very satisfied”). However, 44.6% presented a different opinion, divided by 18.5% of “Unsatisfied” and 26.1% of “Poorly satisfied”. A few participants demonstrated no opinion (3.4%).

Regarding to “Beach supports”, the majority (70.6%) were discontented (“Unsatisfied” with 36.1% and “Poorly satisfied” with 34.5%). Only 25.2% rated as “Satisfied” and an irrelevant 1.7% as “Very satisfied”. Concerning “Environment (pollution, natural landscape, etc.)” the results are similar, 74.8% (i.e., 35.3% “Unsatisfied”; 39.5% “Poorly satisfied”) are globally negative and only 25.2% (i.e., 19.3% “Satisfied”; 5.9% “Very satisfied”) presented a positive opinion.

Regarding the touristic new investments, 50.4% are globally satisfied and 45.4% indicated opposite opinion. On the other hand, 57.2% are globally unsatisfied with the non-touristic investments. In this case, only 26.9% considerate satisfied. For those who are satisfied with touristic new investments, 10.9% are even “Very satisfied”, in contrast, for those who are unsatisfied with non-touristic investments, that is 26.9%. With no opinion are 4.2% relatively to the first attribute and 16% to the second one.

When asked about “Job creation” the respondents are almost split in a half, with 44.5% generally satisfied and 47.9% generally unsatisfied. Also, the “Satisfied” and the “Poorly Satisfied” had a similar percentage, 33.6% and 31.1%, respectively. The “Unsatisfied” and the “Very satisfied” are perceptually more distant from each other, 16.8% and 10.9%, respectively. With no opinion are 7.6% of the respondents.

One of the most important items about surf studying is the “crowd”. Regarding to this, the results showed that 85.7% are globally unsatisfied (i.e., 22.7% “Poorly satisfied”; 63% “Unsatisfied”) and only 11.8% rated as “Satisfied” (no one indicated “Very Satisfied”). Probably as result of that, the “Safety on the water” had a huge displeasure percentage (78.1%). However, 19.3% of the respondents are “Satisfied” with this item and a no relevant percentage (1.7%) rated as “Very satisfied”.

Regarding to the “Relationship with surf tourists (out of water)”, 55.5% of the participants were “Satisfied” with the item and 28.6% are even “Very satisfied”. Only 1.7% are “Unsatisfied” and 13.4% “Poorly Satisfied”. When the question is “Relationship with the crowd” the opinion is completely different by the responders and, 31.1% are now “Unsatisfied” and 37% are “Poorly satisfied”. A global satisfaction was presented by 29.4% of the respondents (i.e., 25.2% were “satisfied” and 4.2% were “Very satisfied”).

Finally, concerning to “Peniche image as a surf tourist destination” a huge satisfaction (69.8%) are demonstrated by the participants in the study (i.e., 38.7% rated as “Satisfied” and 31.1% as “Very satisfied”). The “Poorly satisfied” are 24.4% and only 5% rated as “Unsatisfied”.

## **Conclusions**

Tourism, as an activity that takes advantage of the local and unique resources in order to obtain from these, economical benefit, is indeed a privileged asset for the sustained regional development. One of the most important factors that enables the development of the tourism activity in a positive way is the opinion of local communities. In surf tourism, the local surfer’s opinion is fundamental.

This study allows us to conclude that there is a generalized satisfaction among the local surfer’s community concerning to tourism growth based on surfing. The “Job creation” and the “economic growth” are the main positive aspects to reinforce this state of mind. The environment issues and the deregulated and disorganized growth are the main negative aspects.

Regarding to the tourism management are a generalized dissatisfied between the local surfers, and more important, the huge majority of them do not even consider that are an implemented model for surfing tourism in Peniche.

In short terms, the majority of the Peniche local surfers want and are satisfied with surfing tourism in Peniche county. However, above all, they want specific rules and regulations for the activity in the way they can also enjoy the waves calmly between friends.

We strongly believe that the data and information provided by this research will enable the adequate positioning for this particular segment, looking to ensure the sustainability of the surf tourism activity in Peniche, supported in better governance, local development model and territorial planning.

## References

- Abel, A., & O'Brien, D. (2015). Negotiating Communities: Sustainable Cultural Surf Tourism. In G. Borne, & J. Ponting (Eds.), *Sustainable Stoke: Transitions to sustainability in the surfing world* (pp. 154-165). University of Plymouth Press.
- Alves, V. (2016). "Prémio cinco estrelas" para surf e desportos aquáticos em Portugal. Retrieved from Dinheiro Vivo: <https://www.dinheirovivo.pt/empresas/premio-cinco-estrelas-para-turismo-em-portugal/>
- Ap, J., & Crompton, J. (1998). Developing and testing a tourism impact scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, 37, 120-130.
- BC. (2016). *Portugal City Brand Ranking 2016*. Retrieved from Bloom Consulting: <http://www.bloom-consulting.com/rankingportugal/index.html#/?municipality=162>
- Beaumont, E., & Brown, D. (2014). 'It's not something I'm proud of but it's... just how I feel': local surfer perspectives of localism. *Leisure Studies*. doi:10.1080/02614367.2014.962586
- Bicudo, P., & Horta, A. (2009). Intergrating surfing in the socio-economic and morphology and coastal dynamic impacts of the environmental evaluation of coastal projects. *Journal of Coastal Research, Special Issue 56*, 1115-1119.
- Carvalho, J. (2016). *Ericeira já criou 3000 empregos ligados ao surf*. Retrieved from Expresso Economia: <http://expresso.sapo.pt/economia/2016-10-23-Ericeira-ja-criou-3000-empregos-ligados-ao-surf>
- CW. (2017). *Portugal Is About To Blow Your Mind*. Retrieved from Coastalwatch: <http://www.coastalwatch.com/surfing/21129/portugal-is-about-to-blow-your-mind>
- Dolnicar, S., & Fluker, M. (2003a). Who's Riding the wave? An Investigation Into Demographic and Psychografic Characteristics of Surf Tourists. *International Research Conference for the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education*. Retrieved from <http://ro.uow.edu.au/commpapers/248>
- Dolnicar, S., & Fluker, M. (2003b). Behavioural market segments among surf tourists - investigating past destination choice. *Journal of Sport Tourism*, 8 (3), 186-196. doi:10.1080/14775080310001690503
- Fonseca, T. (2016, Outubro 25). *Peniche, a onda que vale milhões*. Retrieved Outubro 26, 2016, from ECO - Economia Online: <https://eco.pt/2016/10/25/rascunho-peniche-a-onda-que-vale-milhoes/>
- Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*, 162 (3859), 1243-1248. doi:10.1126/science.162.3859.1243
- INE. (2012). *Censos 2011 Resultados Definitivos - Portugal*. (I. Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Ed.) Lisboa. Retrieved Agosto 15, 2016, from [https://www.google.pt/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEWjfxqnlx\\_PPAhWDWhQKHbpTAFwQFggvMAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcensos.ine.pt%2Fngt\\_server%2Fattachfile.jsp%3Flook\\_parentBoui%3D148313382%26att\\_display%3Dn%26att\\_download%3Dy&usg](https://www.google.pt/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEWjfxqnlx_PPAhWDWhQKHbpTAFwQFggvMAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcensos.ine.pt%2Fngt_server%2Fattachfile.jsp%3Flook_parentBoui%3D148313382%26att_display%3Dn%26att_download%3Dy&usg)
- Jorge, J., & Reis, P. (2011). Surf Tourism and Market Segmentation by Motivation: The Rip Curl Pro 2010 Portugal. *Paper presented at the V International Tourism Congress: The Image and Sustainability of Tourism Destinations*. Retrieved from <http://gitur.ipleiria.pt>
- Mariano, C. (2012, Fevereiro 10). *Papel do Surf na Economia em discussão na FIL*. Retrieved Setembro 10, 2015, from Federação Portuguesa de Surf: <http://www.surfingportugal.com/papel-do-surf-na-economia-em-discusso-na-fil.html>
- Martin, S., & Assenov, I. (2011). Beach and Costal Survey of Thailand: What Future for Surf Tourism. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts*, 3 (1), 77-78. Retrieved from <http://www.jthca.org>
- Mateus, B. (2012, Outubro 21). Surf em Portugal. *Jornal Correio da Manhã*. Retrieved Outubro 23, 2012, from <http://www.cmjornal.pt/mais-cm/domingo/detalhe/surf-em-portugal>
- Nunes, J. (2015). *O surfista e a sua satisfação na componente da experiência turística de surf: O caso de Peniche*. Tese de Mestrado. Retrieved from <http://nis.ipleiria.pt/teses/>
- O'Brien, D., & Ponting, J. (2013). Sustainable Surf Tourism: A community Centered Approach in Papua New Guinea. *Journal of Sport Management*, 27, 158-172.
- Ponting, J. (2001). *Managing the Mentawais: Sustainable Tourism Management and the Surfing Tourism Industry in Mentawai*. Retrieved from Mentawai: <http://www.mentawai.org/surfingindustry/>

Ponting, J. (2008). *Consuming Nirvana: An exploration of surfing tourist space*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis), University of technology, Sydney, Australia. Retrieved from <https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/handle/10453/19997>

Ponting, J. (2015). The Audacity of Stoke: Surfing the Ivory Tower. In G. Borne, & J. Ponting (Eds.), *Sustainable Stoke: Transitions to sustainability in the surfing world* (pp. 188-197). University of Plymouth Press.

Ponting, J., McDonald, M., & Wearing, S. (2005). Deconstructing Wonderland: Surfing Tourism in Indonesia. *Society and Leisure*, 28 (1), 141-162.

Preston-Whyte, R. (2002). Constructions of surfing space at Durban, South. *Tourism Geographies*, 4 (3), 307-328. doi:10.1080/14616680210147445

Publituris. (2014). *Portugal soma pontos como destino de surf*. Retrieved from Publituris: <http://www.publituris.pt/2014/12/16/portugal-soma-pontos-como-destino-de-surf/>

Silva, P. (2005). *Salvar Carcavelos e o resto das praias*. Retrieved from Artigos publicados na imprensa por Pedro Adão e Silva: <http://pedroadaoesilva.blogspot.pt/2005/02/salvar-carcavelos-e-o-resto-das-praias.html>

SP. (2014a). *Promórdios do surf em Peniche: tudo começou há 50 anos - vídeo*. Retrieved from Surf Portugal On-line: <http://www.surfportugal.pt/noticias-surf-portugal/4002-primordios-do-surf-em-peniche-tudo-comecou-ha-50-anos-video>

SP. (2014b). *Surf contribui com 400 milhões de euros para a economia nacional*. Retrieved Abril 28, 2014, from Surf Portugal: <http://www.surfportugal.pt/noticias-surf-portugal/4441-surf-contribui-com-400-milho>

Young, N. (2000). *Surf Rage: A surfer's guide to turning negatives into positives*. Nymboida Press.