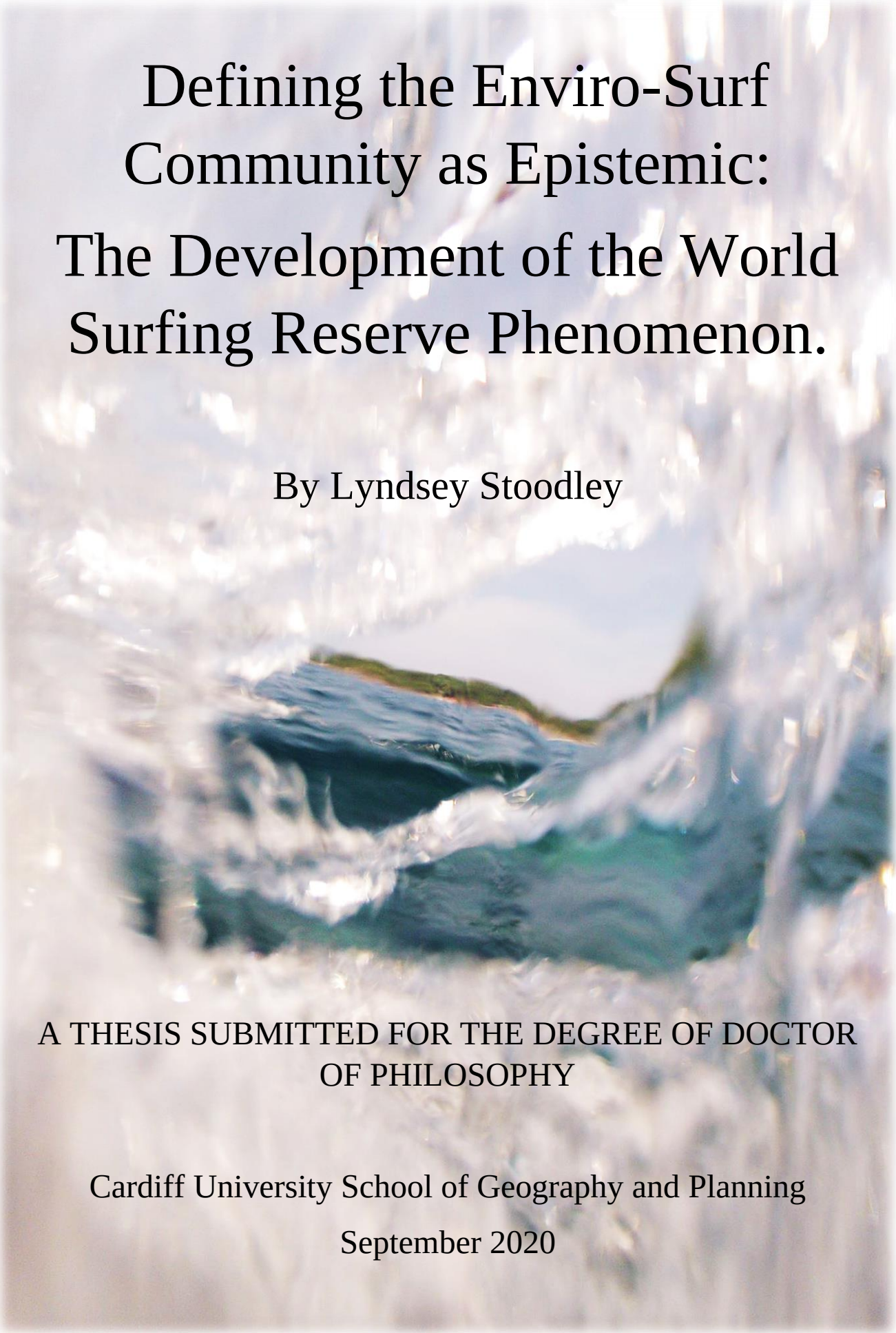
Defining the Enviro-Surf Community as Epistemic:

The Development of the World Surfing Reserve Phenomenon.

By Lyndsey Stoodley



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Abstract

As a common feature in littoral spaces around the world, modern surfing has grown to be heterogenous, mobile, and wildly popular. Alongside this rise in popularity is increasing pressure on the use of the surf zone from development, coastal management, high numbers of surfers, and other water users. This thesis explores the way in which a niche within the broader surfing community has responded to these pressures by shedding cultural stereotypes of 'slacker' or 'beach bum', to mobilise and create stewardship solutions for coastal and (surf)cultural protection. One such solution is the World Surfing Reserves programme, a novel form of coastal designation that seeks to protect both the liquid surfing space and the shoreside culture that serves it. Through the World Surfing Reserves example, this thesis charts the evolution of surfbreak protection and the consequential ordering and bordering of surf zones. In doing so, it argues that the key mobilisers of people and policy are those who make up the 'enviro-surf community'. This community, it is argued, can best be understood as an epistemic entity (after Haas 1992a). Sharing common beliefs, values and goals, this group of experts in surfbreak protection exert an authority over this niche domain which provides opportunity to mobilise and emplace strategies to protect. In suggesting that World Surfing Reserves present a clear demonstration of how this community work in practice, this thesis then utilises the concepts of policy mobilities to explore the policies that are being generated, mobilised and mutated by multi-scalar enviro-surf networks. Drawing on empirical data from multi-site ethnographies, and an extended case study of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, this research presents an examination of the consequences for the littoral zone, the surf community more broadly, and our understandings of political action and protection in surfing.

In loving memory of Charlie Morgan (1955-2019)

W4FWT

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I have been very excited to write this page for a long time. Now I am here, I realise that I am overwhelmed by the support that I have received over the past 4 years from so many people in so many places, and can't articulate the extent of my gratitude. I will try though, and will keep it brief so I can go to the pub before they have to close again…thanks Covid.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

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List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

> "when the Kirra groyne was first built … in late 1972, my activism was the surfing version of Tiananmen square, you know that photo of that one person standing in front of a tank? Well I was the one person standing in front of the bulldozer at Kirra Point. I look up into the bulldozer and I realise that the guy driving it was my sister's boyfriend, who was actually feeding me. He said, 'what you doing Rabbit?', I said, 'um not much' [and, with that, the protest was over]. The Kirra groyne was built" (Rabbit Bartholomew, opening address at the International Surfing Symposium, in Currumbin, Gold Coast, Australia, 2017, recorded by the author).

This tale of surf activism in the 1970s symbolises the relative strengths, and obvious weaknesses, of stakeholders on the coast; this thesis will showcase how they have changed. The absence of organised activism and the failure of the disorganised and small scale protest at Kirra, on the Gold Coast, Australia, led to a groyne being built to trap sand and nourish the tourist friendly beaches of Coolangatta (the first in a number of modifications to the small rocky headland).

Figure 1 Waves breaking off the Kirra Groyne *Image source: Author 2019*

The modifications have affected the way that surfable waves break off the point and disrupted the potential number and quality of breaks at this surf spot. As the modifications continue, in 2009, 1500 surfers paddled out into the water, collectively forming a map outline of Australia, to protest the loss of the surf at Kirra Point due to sand pumping. In 2014, threatened once more, with the development of an ocean cruise ship terminal and casino, the community gathered, and this time formed an expansive "W S R" in the sand.

Since 1972, therefore, the world of surf activism has changed. The relevant strengths of stakeholders on the coast, not simply the Gold(en) ones in Australia, have developed; from one person to an organised community, with shared interests, that can mobilise at a global scale to articulate a vision for surfing and the protection of its geographies. This thesis critically explores this dynamic development of surf activism in the guise of World Surfing Reserves (or WSRs).

Figure 2 Activism on the Gold Coast

Left: Advertising the 2014 rally and paddle out in protest against development of an ocean cruise terminal: Right: numbers on the beach; Australia outline in the water 2009, and in 2014, when the waves were too big to safely paddle out, surfers formed the WSR in the sand.

Image sources: *Save Our Spit:n.d; Swilly 2009, 2015*

The opening vignette was made by former World Champion surfer, and current member of the Order of Australia, Wayne "Rabbit" Bartholomew at the International Surfing Symposium, held on the Gold Coast in 2017. The point that this tale was told to an audience of academics, surf industry stakeholders, politicians and community members at an event where surfbreak protection was a key theme is also illustrative of a shift in surf-based activism. Just as he is no longer dependent on his sister's boyfriend for food, surfers on the Gold Coast and around the world are no longer alone and unprepared to deal with threats to surf breaks of significance. In this changing context, this thesis argues that particular clusters of local surfers are mobilised and supported by what will be termed the 'enviro-surf

community', a group made up of actors who hold both a connection to surfing, and a will to enhance the environment in which surfing can take place.

This thesis aims to identify and understand the evolution of surfbreak protection and the consequential ordering and bordering of surf zones, arguing that the key mobilisers of people and policy are those who make up the 'enviro-surf community'. With a focus on World Surfing Reserves, it explores the policies that are being generated, and then transferred, and how these are working in practice, by using the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve as a case study. These aims have been met through a combination of extensive desk-based research and a range of first-hand primary empirical data which explains and conceptualises this development to answer the following questions:

- Who or what is the enviro-surf community?
  - Who is part of it, and why? How did it start and how has it developed?
- How does the enviro-surf community demonstrate itself in practice?
  - What are World Surfing Reserves and what do they seek to do?
- How do World Surfing Reserves work in practice?
  - Critically investigating the localisation of World Surfing Reserves: A case study of The Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve.

In exploring these questions, this thesis contributes to the growing interdisciplinary field of surfing studies, human geographies of water, and policy mobilities. Falling at the nexus of these areas, this work fills a significant gap in existing literatures and enhances geographical understanding of leisure-based activism. In this space, this thesis argues that an 'enviro-surf community' exists, and it can be classified as *epistemic* in nature (after Haas 1992). I argue that this community has established itself as legitimate creators and mobilisers of policy which has an international scope; with World Surfing Reserves, a programme from California non-governmental organisation (NGO) *Save the Waves* exemplifying a collaborative multi-scalar approach to surfbreak protection. This programme presents an effective opportunity to amplify the voices of the surfing community. The lack of diversity within both the enviro-surf community, and the local groups which enact the aims of the wider community, however, raises significant concerns over the silences which remain.

This chapter introduces the study which has generated these findings, by first summarising the topic of surfing and surfbreak protection, outlining the key terms and scope of the project, and then exploring the research questions in more depth. An overview of the chapters which follow is then presented.

1.2 Surfing: a heterogenous, political, and protective pursuit.

Surfing is the act of riding a breaking wave; the deliberate utilisation of an (ordinarily) oceanic pulse of energy to be propelled towards the shore. Surfing as we know it today has a long, complex and contested history (Laderman 2014, Gilio-Whitaker 2017, Walker 2011). From its origins in Polynesia, as the pastime of kings, queens and commoners, surfing has become mobile, globalised and is now a common feature in littoral spaces around the world.

With this mobilisation, the popularity of modern surfing has grown wildly and in addition to extensive proliferation geographically, surfing now encompasses a variety of bodies, technologies and aspirations. Though dominated by the "young, white, male", surfing has become increasingly heterogenous, and where privilege allows, its popularity transcends age, gender and race (Wheaton 2017 p177). Surfers can now choose from a wide variety of equipment depending on their preferred style, and can surf year-round worldwide thanks to developments in, for example, wetsuit and wave forecasting technologies. In addition to a range of types of surfing, the practice can mean many different things to participants. Regarded as a sport, lifestyle, religion, therapy, or profession, surfing encompasses a range of characteristics which contribute further to its overall popularity (Farmer 1992).

Going hand in hand with this rise in popularity is the growing pressure on both the use of the surf zone, and the wish to protect it. Surf spaces are under pressure from a range of stakeholders, from within surfing, and also from other coastal users. In many locations, demand for the finite resource of rideable waves, from an increasingly diverse surfing community, far outstrips supply; while other stakeholders, including coastal engineers, resource developers, and marine gentrifiers (for example), generate further demand and threats to surfing environments through initiatives such as marina development and beach privatisations.

A consequence of this pressure is conflict in and out of the water. The surf zone has become a highly prized area that is at risk of change, and there are no certainties surrounding which group will remain satisfied with the resources available. Though some development can be beneficial to surf spots (the creation of 'the wedge' in southern California being perhaps the most notorious example of an accidentally engineered wave, see Figure 3), the majority of impacts have negative consequence for surfing.

Figure 3 The Wedge. Newport Beach, California

In 1916 the US Army Corps of Engineers built a jetty to protect Newport Harbour from storms, and make the entrance safer. This was extended to 1900 feet in 1936, in a bid to further enhance safety, and the modifications altered the way in which the wave formed and broke at the site. These waves can reach 30 feet in height and are famously powerful. The Wedge is particularly popular with bodysurfers and bodyboarders. Image source: Visit Newport Beach, n.d.

Surfers have witnessed how these threats can impinge on their surfing experience and this has often been hard to bear. As one surfer puts it when asked about the destruction of prized break, Killer Dana, lost with the development of a marina in the wealthy southern Californian city of Dana Point:

> "It was like a sudden death that you couldn't talk about. I couldn't even look at it for probably 10 years, just the most painful thing you can imagine. It was a whole world, a whole history erased. I knew I'd never feel at home in Southern California again. If they can do that, they can do anything." (Chris Ahrens in Heller, no date)

The language of death, erasure and distrust used in this quotation, clearly shows the impact of Ahrens' loss. Felt physically, personally and also in relation to his identity as a surfer, this sense of loss carries many of the significant components that serve as motivation to protect both the surfing environment, namely embodied experience, and the culture and identity that it facilitates (Anderson 2013, 2014b; Ford and Brown 2006; Stranger 2010; Taylor 2007; Wheaton 2004, 2007). The quotation is also problematic, and raises issues of how modern surfers have, in a largely indiscriminate manner, taken over Indigenous spaces in many areas

around the world in order to practice their sport (Gilio-Whitaker 2017; Olive 2019; Walker 2008). This lost wave however, with its surfing history of around 40 years has become immortalised in the local community, and in surfing discourse more broadly.

Figure 4 The rough and smooth waters of Dana Point, California

The rollers of Killer Dana once broke where sailboats and kayaks now cruise calmly in the sheltered marina. Image source: Author 2017

Killer Dana is just one of a number of lost and threatened surf spots globally and surfers are becoming increasingly aware of how development can affect or destroy altogether the waves that they ride (see, for example, Nelsen et al 2013). They have also seen their sport explode into popular culture and continue to endure the accompanying overcrowding and commercialisation which emphasises further the notion that rideable waves are a limited, vulnerable resource. If even the most special of waves can be destroyed then what, if not their own action, is there to protect the spot that means so much to them?

In response to this pressure, therefore, many surfers are shedding the cultural stereotypes of 'slacker' and 'beach bum', drawing instead on acquired expertise and social capital, to mobilise in an attempt to create stewardship solutions for coastal protection.

> "Well we were those stereotypes, right. And so yeah, a lot of us, we were, we just lived to surf. And so you know [we were like that] when we were young and it's as we got older you realise that, hang on here, actually we're seeing these places that we value so highly, we love dearly, we want to treasure and continue to treasure [them]" (Surfbreak Protection Society Member. Interview. Aotearoa New Zealand, 02/03/2017)

Surfers such as the interviewee above have put into action their experience, knowledge and motivation to position themselves as policy influencers and creators of innovative strategy to protect and preserve the surf zone. These efforts are led by a group of actors who hold both a connection to surfing, and a will to enhance the environment in which surfing can take place. Referring to themselves collectively as the 'enviro-surf community', they occupy a niche within the broader surfing community (after Global Wave Conference 2015). Though trends have been identified in regard to surfers' attitudes towards environmental stewardship (Anderson 2009; Anderson & Stoodley 2018; Larson et al 2017), it is evident that a vast number of surfers and water users would not be considered, nor consider themselves as environmentalists, nor activists. Many remain unconcerned by surfing's environmentally damaging characteristics, content with driving or flying to surf on their unsustainable boards in questionably clean water (Hill & Abbot 2009). I argue however, that the enviro-surf community stands out as a protagonist for change. Its members are now organised, professional, and constitute a community that can be classified as 'epistemic' in nature. This thesis will argue these points by drawing on and adapting the conceptual framework of epistemic communities which are underpinned by the definition and typology laid out by Haas (1992a) in the 'keystone' text of the field (Dunlop 2012 p230). According to Haas,

> "(an epistemic community is) a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area" (1992a p3).

The issue area I am concerned with here is surfing space, and coastal management more broadly. I will argue that members of the enviro-surf community have, as we will see throughout the course of this work, utilised existing and innovative methods to assert their authority, generate knowledge, and present and project it in a way which is bringing attention to their expertise from an audience beyond the beach. In meeting this definition, the emergence of this group can also be seen as a representative example of the maturing, professionalisation of a niche element within broader surfing culture.

As this thesis will demonstrate, the solutions created by the enviro-surf community have become increasingly sophisticated, and now include statutory and non-statutory approaches to surfbreak protection which operate on multiple scales. In Peru, for example, the Ley de Rompientes (Law of the Breakers) exists to protect a number of the most prized surf spots, while surf breaks of national significance are incorporated into New Zealand's Coastal

Planning policy (Ball 2015; Edwards and Stephenson 2013; Monteferri et al 2020; Reiblich 2013). An international crowdfunding campaign facilitated the purchasing of land in Chile to secure the wave at Punta de Lobos from development, and the United States National Register of Historic Places now includes two key surf spots in California (Blum 2015; Parrino 2017). A further example of surfbreak protection is that of Surfing Reserves, and it is on the highest level of this initiative that this work is focussed.

1.3 World Surfing Reserves (WSRs).

Launched in 2009 by Californian Non-Profit organisation *Save the Waves*, World Surfing Reserves are a form of coastal designation that seeks to protect both the liquid surfing space, and the shoreside culture that serves it. This thesis suggests this is an attempt by surfers to culturally order and geographically border (or (b)order) the littoral zone (after Anderson, 2015), and establish a new mandate for its continued protection. Designation is of itself symbolic, though further layers of protection are often incorporated into the WSR framework, and communities are supported by *Save the Waves* and the wider WSR network. To become a World Surfing Reserve, communities submit an application which demonstrates support from surfers, businesses, government officials and local and regional councils, to show how the region meets the selected criteria of environmental characteristics, surf history, community engagement, as well as what is regarded to be world class surfbreaks. Once designated, local leadership committees are responsible for creating and implementing a local stewardship plan. These plans identify threats and opportunities and vary according to the priorities and needs of each reserve, as well as local political, economic, and environmental parameters.

There are currently 11 established WSRs worldwide, as shown in Figure 5. Also visible in the map is the geographic range of the Reserves, with a heavier concentration in the western hemisphere, in what are seen as surfing hotspots. There are three Reserves in California, and 3 on the east coast of Australia, yet there are currently no reserves in Africa or Asia. Spanning four continents and 8 countries however, the World Surfing Reserves programme is highly mobile and, this thesis suggests, is a formative example of how the epistemic enviro-surf community has mobilised surf focussed policy in response to challenges to the surf zone.

Figure 5 *Approved World Surfing Reserves 2019.*

In order of date of acceptance: Malibu, USA; Ericeira, Portugal; Manly, Australia; Santa Cruz, USA; Huanchaco, Peru; Bahia de Todos Santos, Mexico; Punta de Lobos, Chile; Gold Coast, Australia; Guarda do Embau, Brazil; Noosa, Australia; Punta Borinquen, Puerto Rico.
Reserve logos source: Save the Waves. Photographs: Author 2016-2017

This thesis critically engages with the *spatial* and *social* movement of the World Surfing Reserves programme. It analyses the emergence and identification of the enviro-surf community and its role in surfbreak protection in an attempt to enhance our understanding of human(surfer)-water relations, and the cultural, political, and economic significance of the 'in-between' space of the littoral zone. This is achieved by answering the following research questions.

1.4 Research questions

RQ1: Who or what is the 'enviro-surf community'? Who is part of it, and why? How did it start, and how has it developed?

The first question explores the enviro-surf community itself, the various actors who make up its membership, and what this membership entails. This includes identification of the organisations, individuals and institutions who have mobilised to protect surfing spaces on an international scale. This question also incorporates an analysis of the group as an epistemic entity, using the criteria laid out by Haas which include: shared beliefs (normative and causal), shared notions of validity, and common policy enterprise (1992a p3).

RQ2: How does the 'enviro-surf community' demonstrate itself in practice? What are World Surfing Reserves and what do they seek to do?

Having established that the enviro-surf community is identifiable on an international level, and can be considered to be epistemic in nature, this question looks to how the group utilises multi-scalar networks to work towards the common goal of protecting and preserving the surfing environment in specific surfing places. Exploring a shift towards proactive strategies, and focussing on World Surfing Reserves, this question frames its functioning through key policy mobilities concepts of assemblages, mobilities and mutation, and addresses the role of international and local actors.

RQ3: How do World Surfing Reserves work in practice? Critically investigating the localisation of World Surfing Reserves: A case study of The Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve.

This question looks towards the case study of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve to explore the initiative in practice. It seeks to understand how, and why, the Gold Coast enviro-surf community have worked with their international counterparts to mobilise this policy of

surfbreak protection and how this has been translated and reintroduced into localized spaces. This question also incorporates an evaluative summary of the programme in an analysis of the environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts of the World Surfing Reserve in the Gold Coast example.

Though these questions are distinct and discrete, they are inherently linked, and develop cumulatively across the course of the thesis to the resulting conclusions. Now, having established the project background and its key research questions, I move to present an overview of the approach that has been taken, and outline the structure of this work.

1.5 Approach taken & structure of the dissertation

This thesis is divided into 8 chapters. Following this introduction, a literature review situates the project among existing work and establishes its theoretical foundations. The methodological approach taken is then detailed in Chapter 3, before its empirical element is presented in Chapters 4-7. Split into 2 parts, with 2 chapters in each, the first empirical section focusses on the global level; the enviro-surf community and its development. The second part explores in depth the case study of the Gold Coast, building on the preceding chapters to analyse and evaluate the process and product of this particular WSR. These 2 parts are weighted equally, though the chapters of the second are different lengths; Chapter 6 charts the emergence and acceptance of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve and is necessarily more substantial than the evaluation of its presence which comprises Chapter 7. A conclusion brings together the findings of this work and provides direction for future research. These chapters are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Precis of Literature Review

To answer the questions introduced above, as well as to identify and understand the evolution of surfbreak protection and the consequential (b)ordering of surf zones, I have adopted an approach which has engaged literatures on surfing place and practice, epistemic communities and policy mobilities. In centring this work around the liminal, littoral space of the surf zone, I am contributing to the turn to water in human geography (Anderson & Peters 2014, Peters

2010; Steinberg & Peters 2015), and the more nuanced approach that is being undertaken in regard to specific watery spaces (Anderson and Stoodley 2017). This turn, spearheaded by the likes of Peters and Steinberg, for example, is a response to the 'landlocked' thinking which continues to dominate human geography and relegates our watery world to the margins (Lambert et al 2006).

Straddling the marine and terrestrial worlds, in a state of constant flux, the surf zone presents a unique space through which our natural and social realms come together. The first part of the literature review focusses on the key geographical concept of place to explore this intersection, arguing that each surf zone is unique, and dependent on a mix of marine, terrestrial and atmospheric variables. Beyond the physical aspects of the wave, surf zones are culturally significant and bear an influence over the surf-shore identities of surfers (after Anderson 2014b). These places are vulnerable to change and, as in the case at Kirra Point, interference to the way in which a wave can break can impose a threat to its physical and cultural potential. To frame the challenges which are prompting surfers to mobilise to protect these spaces, I present a summary of the four main types of surfing breaks and the most common threats that are faced.

This formal mobilisation is relatively recent, and to provide the context for this action, the second part of the literature review takes a step back to present a potted history of surfing. I draw here on mainstream and critical interpretations of surf history, depicting a selection of key points which chart the transition of the activity from a ritual, to a subculture, and into the contemporary mainstream. Through this section, surfing and surfers are shown to be mobile, heterogenous, political and protective.

The motivations for surfing are explored next, along with the values that can be attached to the practice and the spaces in which it can occur. For some, surfing represents a profession, while for others it can be a source of fun, therapy or spirituality. The intrinsic and extrinsic values of surfing and surfing spaces are often significant, and these can be attached to both specific places, and surfbreaks in general. When threatened, some surfers mobilise to protect these valuable littoral assets, and the way in which they do this has developed from localised and reactive, to proactive initiatives such as the World Surfing Reserves programme. I explore this shift to begin to identify *who* is protecting these spaces, and how their activism has broadened in reach, becoming professionalised, sophisticated and respected in decision making circles. To analyse this development, I proceed with a discussion on the study of the role of expertise in policy making and explore the literature which provides the conceptual foundation for my

argument that a group of surfers who are politically active and environmentally engaged, the 'enviro-surf community', can be defined as epistemic in nature.

According to Haas, epistemic communities possess four common characteristics;

> (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members
>
> (2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes;
>
> (3) shared notions of validity – that is, intersubjective, internally-defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and
>
> (4) a common policy enterprise – that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence (Haas, 1992a, p. 3).

In establishing that the enviro-surf community can indeed be classified in line with Haas's framework of epistemic communities, this thesis then argues that the concept of policy mobilities can be utilised as a framework through which the emergence and movement of World Surfing Reserves can be effectively studied. This framework, which begins from an assumption that epistemic communities "transfer, emplace, and utilize certain forms of knowledge as part of their practice", incorporates literatures on poststructuralism, mobilities and policy transfer (McCann 2011 p15). I explore this literature through its key concepts of assemblages, mobilities and mutations, to provide an analytical lens through which the *spatial* and *social* movement of World Surfing Reserves, and the broader movement of ideas through the enviro-surf community, can be explored. To do this, I first outline policy transfer and its limitations, before articulating how geographers (such as, for example, Baker and Trebenos 2015; McCann & Ward 2012; and Peck & Theodore 2010) have developed this concept to view policy making as a "relational and emergent social process" which operates across scales and geographies (McCann & Ward 2012 p328).

The chapter concludes with a discussion on *who* mobilises policy, and how the sites of this mobilisation are particularly important for the movement of policy, and form key component in the methodological approaches to the study of its movement and mutation.

Methodology

With the conceptual foundations of the project laid out in Chapter 2, this thesis then moves to focus on the methodological approach which has been engaged in order to answer the central research questions which were identified in Section 1.4. Exploring this process in depth, Chapter 3 describes how a qualitative research programme has been employed to understand the creation and movement of surfbreak protection policy, through the example of World Surfing Reserves. To achieve this overarching aim, I constructed a research design that comprises a hybrid grounded theory- case study framework, conducted across three key phases.

I begin in Chapter 3 by stating my philosophical position, and depicting the constructionist ontological, and interpretivist epistemological stances that were taken to pursue this work. This position sees the social world as a continually evolving process, whereby any understanding of the world is interpreted by its participants. As such, researcher positionality is important to acknowledge, and I reflect here on my role as a white, queer, female, Welsh surfer, and discuss the potential impact that these characteristics may have had on the access to relevant spaces, the data collected, and even its interpretation. This combination of traits, unique to me, has resulted in my occupying an 'in between' space throughout this research. Having described these starting points, the chapter then moves to explore the research design through an exploration of its three phases and the frameworks which have been used to underpin them. Phase One consists of a grounded theory led programme of preliminary fieldwork wherein I travelled to a number of surfing locations, including 6 World Surfing Reserves, and attended a range of events. In line with the grounded theory approach, I kept an open mind, and conducted constant comparison throughout this phase, accumulating sufficient data to progress into Phase 2, which involved the selection of a case study. This approach is presented next, and is followed by a summary of my thinking surrounding the various options available to me, this included for example, multi-site and international comparisons, and various single site analyses. I explain in detail how the Gold Coast, with its engaged local surfing community and relatively sophisticated approach to its WSR designation emerged as the top choice through which to meet the aims of this project.

With the conceptual foundations and research questions established by this point, and the case study site selected, I returned to the Gold Coast to conduct Phase 3 of the methodology. This element built on Phases 1 and 2, to zoom in on the Gold Coast and its World Surfing Reserve to evaluate how it functions on a local level, and how it interacts on the international level. In both Phase 1 and 3, a range of methods were employed to collect data; these are detailed in the

second part of Chapter 3, where I describe how I utilised semi structured interviews, surveys and participant observation. In total, I interviewed 30 key stakeholders, with participants including, for example, local council officials, surfers, and activists. I supplemented this focussed data with that collected from a survey which asked participants questions relating to their surfing experience, their environmentalism, and their awareness and perceptions of World Surfing Reserves. Over the course of 2 years, 150 responses from 12 countries were gathered. Furthermore, I engaged in auto ethnography and participant observation. As a surfer, I embraced my subjective, embodied position in this research to produce field notes, video clips and a reflective journal which detailed my thoughts and experiences throughout the process. These findings were then triangulated as part of the data analysis process, which is described in Section 3.6. I detail here how I conducted initial and focused coding of my data according to the grounded theory guidelines, developing categories to synthesise the data and the key themes that were emerging. Section 3.7 explores the key features of textual analysis and outlines its function in this project. In the final section of Chapter 3, I address the ethical considerations which were made prior to, and during this research before a brief concluding summary leads into the first of my empirical analysis chapters.

Chapter 4: Who or what is the 'enviro-surf community'? Who is part of it, and why? How did it start and how has it developed?

The first of the research questions to be addressed is Who/What is the enviro-surf community, and this is the focus of Chapter 4. As stated earlier in this chapter, the enviro-surf community is a group made up of actors who hold both a connection to surfing, and a will to enhance the environment in which surfing can take place. Chapter 4 elucidates the position of the enviro-surf community as epistemic, and explores the emergence of this group: how it began, how it has developed, who is part of it, and how it functions. To do this, I begin with a discussion on the origins of the term 'enviro-surf' community, and argue that though an exact origin is not clear, the Global Wave Conference, hosted by *Surfers Against Sewage* in 2015, marks a key point at which a collaborative and common effort can be identified. The chapter then goes on to chart the emergence of the enviro-surf community itself. I argue that it has evolved from a loose band of organisations, including *Surfers Against Sewage*, *Surfrider Foundation*, and *Save the Waves* into an identifiable, recognisable entity. Contributing to this growth is the generation of and engagement in collaborative, network strengthening opportunities, and I focus next on the instrumental role that 'microspaces' have played in bringing together a range

of actors whose beliefs and aims align. These actors are acknowledged in the following section, and while a concrete membership roll is not possible, I list individuals and organisations who have been identified, through ethnographic engagement, as being the prime movers of the group. The chapter then confers the position of the enviro-surf community as epistemic, through an analysis of the identified group against Haas' criteria of shared beliefs (rationale), shared causal beliefs, shared notions of validity, and common policy enterprise (1992). I expand these criteria to also consider the importance of social capital in this instance, with the 'who' aspect of the group playing a key role in its efficacy, and propose that the communities' iterative actions provide momentum and synergy which mutually reinforces the group's position, authority, and aims on an international level.

I do not suggest that World Surfing Reserves are necessarily the end goal of the enviro-surf community. I do, however, assert that they are exemplary in the way that they demonstrate, through the effective utilisation of multi-scalar networks, how a global discourse has become established as local practice. Along with a summary of its content, this concludes Chapter 4.

Chapter 5: How does the Enviro-Surf Community demonstrate itself in practice? What are World surfing reserves and what do they seek to do?

Having established in Chapter 4 that an identifiable, epistemic, enviro-surf community exists, this thesis moves in Chapter 5 to analyse how this international entity demonstrates itself in practice. To do this, I turn to the example of World Surfing Reserves and explore the programme through key policy mobilities concepts of assemblages, mobilities and mutation to answer the second research question. This is achieved by first examining the broad range of proactive strategies that the enviro-surf now enact in surfing spaces globally. I argue that of these statutory and non-statutory approaches, World Surfing Reserves most clearly reflect the development of the enviro-surf community as a collaborative, authoritative enterprise. I go on to highlight the key aspects in the emergence and mobilisation of the programme across scales and geographies, and discuss the partnerships, conflict and learning which have shaped its story. This includes an exploration of the scaling of surfing reserve models, from Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve, to National Surfing Reserves, and through to the global World Surfing Reserves programme which has demonstrable support from the breadth of the enviro-surf community, and in communities on a local level. I present in this chapter an analysis of the programme as an assemblage of global and local governance, arguing that the *Save the Waves* 'Vision Council' constitutes, in effect, a practical manifestation of the global epistemic enviro-

surf community, and that Local Stewardship Councils embody this community on a local level. Local policy actors contribute embodied, place specific knowledge and focussed engagement, thus providing the necessary capacity for the relational, global programme to become fixed in a particular place. I suggest that without aligned multi-scalar networks, the WSR programme lacks efficacy. I summarise the contents of Chapter 5 in its conclusion, before moving to relate these arguments to the real-world example of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve.

How do World Surfing Reserves work in practice? Critically investigating the localisation of World Surfing Reserves: A case study of The Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve.

This section of the thesis looks to the practical strategies that are in place and how they are interpreted and perceived by actors within and outside of the management of GCWSR. Exploring how the community have mobilised policy, this question delves into the case study of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, to investigate how local versions of surfing reserve policies have been taken up by the epistemic enviro-surf community, translated and reintroduced into localised spaces. Over the course of 2 chapters, I provide an overview of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, first by relating this back to the previous empirical chapters to analyse the networks, knowledge and nagging that resulted in its adoption. I then follow this with an evaluation of the Gold Coast Surfing Reserve in regard to its environmental, social and cultural, and economic impacts.

Chapter 6: Contextualising Place, Protection and Policy in the Gold Coast

Informed by fieldwork conducted in the region in 2017 and 2019, this chapter begins with overview of the area itself, highlighting the various faces of the south-east Queensland city before it then moves to analyse the Surf Management Plan (SMP). This plan is a comprehensive, surf specific document, produced by the Gold Coast City Council, which acknowledges the importance of surfing for the Gold Coast, and demonstrates a place specific surf epistemology. Through this analysis the threats that are being faced in the Gold Coast, of sand pumping, overcrowding and development are explored. It is argued that the SMP facilitated the formal recognition of the 'surfing amenity', and opened up spaces of persuasion where lines of communication with decision makers could be established.

The chapter then charts the emergence of the WSR as a viable, proactive, policy option, and includes a demonstration of how the Gold Coast meets the criteria for acceptance into the programme, as set by *Save the Waves*; of surf quality, environmental characteristics, cultural

and historical significance, and local support and capacity. A discussion on the role of leadership, and the Local Stewardship Council which constitutes the key governance mechanism of the Reserve follows, and within this, the significance of the local dimension of the multi-scalar enviro-surf community is highlighted.

The final section of Chapter 6 explores how and why the World Surfing Reserve programme has become accepted and implemented in the Gold Coast. I argue that the relative simplicity of the programme, along with the ability for local communities to present localised versions of a reserve to stakeholders and decision makers, has been fundamental in the garnering of support at both the local and international level. The opening up of communication between various stakeholders has been effective in creating spaces of persuasion, wherein mutually beneficial outcomes for politicians and surfers can be negotiated. Furthermore, the amenability of the programme, and the willingness of its proponents to agree to the imposition of significant restrictions, has enabled it to be received positively by decision makers.

Chapter 7: Evaluating the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve

Chapter 7 builds upon the place-specific context established in Chapter 6 to evaluate the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve. Through an analysis of the key impacts and implications of the designation, this chapter explores key questions surrounding the dialogue, symbolism, representation, and reinforcement of the local WSR and broader international enviro-surf community. I argue that the WSR process has provided access to spaces of persuasion, previously beyond the reach of local surfers, which create opportunities for multi-directional learning. In adapting to the expectations and procedures of local decision making, local surf activists have gained space, and recognition, as experts adept in advising and influencing policy within their niche. I suggest that while the restrictions imposed on the WSR create uncertainty around the extent of this influence, the unwavering enthusiasm and confidence of its supporters carries power in and of itself.

As an (as yet untested) symbolic designation, the GCWSR potentially stands as a catalyst for action, or complacency, and while public awareness of its presence has increased, understandings of what it means for the Gold Coast remain unclear. This symbolism is significant, and the approach raises many further questions on the impact on the credibility of the enviro-surf community, and those who have publicly supported the designation. Chapter 7 goes on to argue that the hegemonic surfing demographic, the white male, is the focus of

WSRs, and stand to benefit most from their success. The protection and preservation of a dominant surfing narrative is buoyed by the growing social capital and increasing organisation of its proponents and continues to marginalise those who do not fit neatly in this group. The final substantive section of the Chapter looks to the 2020 Global Wave Conference, and an announcement made by Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk that her government would be seeking legislative protection for the GCWSR. This, I argue is demonstrative of the connectivity and momentum that the multi-scalar enviro-surf community has been able to generate through its networks and knowledge.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In the final part of this thesis, key arguments are summarised, and the significance of these are discussed. The contributions that this work has made to the study area are outlined, and directions for future research are explored. I suggest in Chapter 8 that through its innovative methodological and theoretical approach, this work has presented a timely analysis of the agents of surfbreak protection and their evolving agency. I have drawn attention to a niche within surfing which has elevated its position to generate influence over surfbreak protection. This community is not, however, reflective of the wider surfing community, and as yet fails to actively support marginalised groups in coastal and surfing spaces, serving instead the already the dominant identities, bodies and narratives that are produced in, and around the surf zone. While WSRs are therefore recognised as an inventive strategy to work towards the protection of the surf zone, and the surfing experience, narrow representation insists that without the inclusion of a wider range of voices, it stands to perpetuate inequalities in surfing space. Future research directions include the development of our understandings of representation, particularly on the creation of narratives. Gold Coast legislation, the future of WSRs, and alternative approaches to surfbreak protection are also presented as important aspects in the research agenda of this field.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the topic, aims and scope of this thesis. The layout of the work is presented and provides a summary of key arguments that are made over its course. Relevant literature and concepts such as that of epistemic communities, policy mobilities and surfing have been briefly introduced, and will now be developed thoroughly as we move into Chapter 2; the literature review.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This thesis critically explores the World Surfing Reserves programme and its role in surfbreak protection. As we have seen in Chapter 1, it asks these key questions:

- Who or what is the enviro-surf community?
- How does the enviro-surf community demonstrate itself in practice?
- How do World Surfing Reserves work in practice?

As such, this thesis will critically engage with literatures informing each aspect of these questions. To this end, this chapter will present an exploration of literatures of surfing, epistemic communities, and policy mobilities, to better understand the practice of surfing, the importance of surfing spaces, and the ways in which surfers have mobilised to protect them. In contextualising World Surfing Reserves as a common policy enterprise pursued by the epistemic enviro-surf community, this chapter establishes a base from which the subsequent empirical analyses are drawn. Though surfing, and surfers, may not ordinarily be linked to debates on expertise and policy, the use of these theoretical frameworks in this thesis has allowed for a unique analysis of surf-centred environmentalism, which highlights the innovative forms of activism that have emerged from a matured, professionalised niche within surfing.

Split into five main sections, this literature review first situates this work in the field of human geography. Focussing on the key concept of place, part one looks to the intersection between the land and water worlds, the littoral zone, in which a surf zone is situated. Drawing on this work, the thesis will argue that each surf zone is entirely unique, dependent on a mix of marine, terrestrial and atmospheric variables coming together in such a way as to produce a rideable wave. Beyond the wave itself, it will suggest that surf zones are important culturally, influencing shore-side communities and the identities of surfers. They are, however, also vulnerable to change, and can be impacted by development, sand movement, or erosion, for example. The chapter will then summarise the four main types of surfing breaks, and common potential threats, to frame the challenges that surfers mobilise to face.

The second section of this chapter looks back in time to present an overview of surfing history. Drawing on key points identified from mainstream and critical accounts, the transition from surfing as a Polynesian ritual, to a marginalised subculture, through a pop culture boom in the 1960s, into its contemporary status as a mainstream activity is charted. Through this process, surfing is shown to be not only mobile, heterogeneous, political, and protective, but also in a state of relative mature development, with appropriate skills and capacities to enter into a new phase of surf-environmental-action.

For surfers and other coastal stakeholders, surf zones are important places for personal, socio-cultural and even economic reasons. The third section of this chapter moves to discuss the motivations and values which are attached to surfing practice and surfing place. As a sport, profession, lifestyle or religion, surfing can mean many different things, and participants may surf for a combination of thrills, wellbeing, or competition. Each iteration, and its associated motivations carry various intrinsic and extrinsic values for a surfer which can be attributed to a specific or generic surf zone. This is important here as, when threatened, some surfers mobilise to protect these valuable littoral assets. Connecting with the previous discussion, the second part of this section looks to the ways in which this has occurred to date. Moving from localised, unorganised, reactive campaigning, towards proactive initiatives such as World Surfing Reserves, the section will argue that surf activism is shown to have broadened in reach, becoming professionalised, sophisticated and respected in decision making circles. To understand this shift, this thesis will identify who is protecting these spaces, and for whom, arguing that a group of surfers who are politically active and environmentally engaged, the enviro-surf community, can be defined as epistemic in nature. Epistemic communities are

> "a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area" (Haas 1992b p3).

The following section explores this concept and its relevance to this project, presenting key conceptual facets of the framework laid out by Haas (1992), including the criteria for categorisation, the role of expertise, and criticisms of the concept. In using this framework to understand the enviro-surf community and their role in the forwarding of the World Surfing Reserve programme, a unique perspective on the development of surfbreak protection, and the

importance of networks, knowledge, and claims to authority can be gained. Additionally, by defining the enviro-surf community as epistemic, in line with the criteria laid out by Haas, it has been possible to engage with a further body of literature, policy mobilities, to explore how this group has innovated and emplaced surfbreak protection mechanisms such as World Surfing Reserves across geographical scales.

As will be discussed in Section 2.6 of this chapter, policy mobilities incorporate literatures on poststructuralism, mobilities and policy transfer to apply a more geographically sensitive lens to the movement and mutation of policy and programmes. The concept is used through this thesis to explore the assemblages that make up World Surfing Reserves, and to explore how it has mobilised on international and local scales, having been effectively mutated into various, context appropriate, forms. I argue here that World Surfing Reserves incorporate multi scalar networks and a range of location specific variables, bound together through common values and understandings of surfing. 'Microspaces', or places where policy can 'touch down' are particularly important for both the strengthening of the epistemic enviro-surf community, and for the mobilisation of policy in line with their aims. The chapter then looks to agents of policy mobility before it concludes with brief summary of the discussed literature and leads into the next chapter.

2.2 Surfing place

Encompassing a dynamic physical environment, complex social, and cultural relationships, and embodied practice, surfing constitutes an area of study that spans the academic spectrum. Though it remains on the margins of formal study in terms of volume, there exists a vast, ever-growing, range of interdisciplinary surfing research. In the natural sciences, waves, beaches and watersheds have been examined, and understood (see, for example Butt 2009, 2014; Bryan et al 2019; Castelle, 2007; Razak et al 2014; Robertson et al 2013; Scarfe et al 2003, 2009(a), 2009(b); Short 1985). In the humanities, the historical, artistic, philosophical and even legal aspects of surfing have been explored (Ball 2015; Bleakley 2016; Booth 2001, 2012; Cooley 2014; Jaggard 2014; Laderman 2014; Moser 2017; Oram & Valverde 1994; Reiblich 2013; Taylor 2007; Walker 2011; Westwick and Neushul 2013). In the social sciences, surf centred

economic, and sociological, geographical and political research has been conducted (Anderson 2012b, 2014a,b; Augustin 1998; Borne 2018; Borne & Ponting 2017; Hough-Snee & Eastman 2017; Lazarow et al 2009; Olive 2019; Stranger 2010; Wheaton 2007). Due to its exploration of the interrelationships between people, place, and environment, and the spatial and temporal variations across surfing spaces and environmental activism, this thesis appropriately, and effectively sits in the field of human geography.

As its linguistic roots might suggest, geography (earth writing) remains intensely focussed on the terra, resulting in a 'landlocked' discipline which has placed the oceans, seas, and other watery spaces at its margins (Lambert et al 2006). Straddling the watery and terrestrial worlds, the surf zone, and the practices which occur within them present opportunity to reframe the land-locked study of people and place that is prevalent in human geography. This thesis seizes this opportunity, and in doing so contributes to the more than land approaches to the field (Anderson & Peters 2014; Grundy-Warr 2015; Peters 2010; Steinberg 2001; Steinberg & Peters 2015).

As will be seen throughout this work, World Surfing Reserves are a novel form of coastal designation that also spans this liminal space, seeking to protect both the liquid surfing space, and the shoreside culture that serves it. It is an attempt by surfers to (b)order the littoral zone (after Anderson, 2015), and establish a new mandate for its continued protection. Its amphibious approach mirrors the land-sea world that surfers inhabit, and highlights the various physical and socio-cultural aspects that come together in and around surfing environments. Though similarities can be found among these aspects (key features of waves for example will be discussed in Section 2.4), the range of variables insist that each World Surfing Reserve, and indeed each surf zone is unique. Surfing is site-specific, and site dependent; it has to take place where there are breaking waves, and how these waves form, and break is different at every spot (Blum 2015; Rider 1999; Skellern 2013). Many of these surfing spaces carry significant meaning and attachment at the individual and societal level and from a geographical perspective, this meaning transforms a surf space from an abstract 'blank sheet' into an important 'place' for surfers and other coastal stakeholders (Tuan 1977 p54, and Cresswell 2014 p4).

Though broadly understood as a "meaningful segment of space", place for geographers has been theorised extensively, resulting in numerous iterations of how we can view and interpret 'places' (Cresswell 2014 p4 see also; Casey 2001; Cresswell 1996, 2014; Hubbard et al 2004; Massey

1994, 2005; Relph 1976; Thrift 1996; Tuan 1977). For example, for Cresswell, places are meaningful locations, while Agnew argues that a 'place' is made up of 3 attributes: 'location', 'locale', and 'sense of place' (1987). For Agnew, 'location' refers to the physical, objective site, 'locale' the context in which social relations unfold, and 'sense of place' to the subjective aspects or atmosphere of a place, which can be identified individually or collectively. For Casey, place is "thoroughly enmeshed" with the self, a relationship of "constitutive coingredience", whereby one is not possible without the other (2001). The constituent co-ingredients of surfing place, for instance, comprise both the water, where a wave forms, and breaks over submerged land, and the shoreside gateways, and bases which provide opportunity for surf, and beach culture and meanings to develop (I expand upon this reading of place in Section 2.2.2).

In these more traditional approaches to geography, place has been characterised as a "static and rigid conceptualisation of space", fixed and fossilised, and singular in its meaning (Pugh 2009 p579). This configuration of place can be viewed as a component of "sedentary metaphysics" (after Malkki 1992), produced as a result of "our incessant desire to divide the world up into clearly bounded territorial units", and underpinned by rooted conceptions of culture and identity (Cresswell 2004 p110). Cresswell suggests that it is through such rooted and sedentary metaphysics, that we "reaffirm and enable the commonsense segmentation of the world into things like nations, states, counties and places" (2004 p16). In viewing these territorial categories segments as unchanging, boundaries that determine what a place is, and who belongs within it are created. When places are then considered as "closed, bounded, and stabilised", and the identities and cultures that have formed them are "deemed to be coherent and preserved", any change to their composition can be framed as a threat (Anderson 2012b p574). Incoming ideas, people or things, for example, threaten the constitutive coingredience of a place. Resultingly, fixed ways of thinking about place can generate problematic (reactionary/competitive) senses of place, based on ideas of "single, essential identities", which are drawn from and developed through "introverted, inward looking history" (Massey 1994 p151).

While it is possible to interpret place as stable, static and vulnerable, human geographers have over recent decades, worked to challenge and disrupt such thinking. Moving beyond these fixed notions of place, conceptual understandings that are far more based on process and relationality have been developed (see Doel 1999; Massey 2005; Murdoch 2006; Rose 2002; Whatmore

2002). Rose, for example, asserts that places are "never stabilised, normalised, sedimented or structured [rather] they are always in a process of dynamic unfolding and becoming" (2002 p385). Anderson states that "places can be plural and provisional; place is no longer sedentary and stable but evolving and emergent." (2012b p575). In understanding place as 'porous networks of social relations', Massey argues that places are both relational and generative, they are unique, and, through their composition of social relations, are in a state of constant flux and filled with power (Massey 1994 p121). These approaches argue for a more progressive sense of place, which is extroverted, conscious of connectivity with the wider world, and thus allows for more positive integration of the global and local (Massey 1994 p155).

In surfing, threats to the established order of place- including the perceived intrusion of 'others'- often provoke reactions which highlight tensions between sedentary local, and mobilised global surfing identities (see Anderson, 2014b). Anderson suggests that surfers "informally police their surf shore area in order to protect their identities from mobile surfers" (2014 p245). How these local versus global spatial identities coalesce or conflict with more progressive senses of (surf) place connects 'interestingly' in the case of WSRs. This project engages with these different conceptualisations as it works to understand the role of WSRs in making and shaping place. In this context, it is possible to explore whether WSRs can be viewed as a localist, reactionary response (implying a fixed, sedentary sense of place) or whether they can be better understood as a different response from a more mobile, processual sense of place. Are WSRs a way of synthesising or overcoming the tensions outlined above, with surfers wanting to be protectionist, but also wanting the freedom to travel? Or are they a new form of localism that acknowledges movement while reinforcing existing (b)orders? To what extent has the creation of a global network replaced notions of my local and your local, with *our* surfing reserves? To tackle questions such as these, it is important to acknowledge the power dynamics that are inherent in place, and in its protection.

Power in place is not equal; the individuals and groups who operate within these meaningful segments of space are not homogenous, and instead operate with varying levels of control or freedom, with many factors (including race, gender and economics, for instance) having an impact (Massey 2005).

The creation of WSRs has presented a new element to the power dynamics of surfing place. It can be argued that in some surf zones, WSRs and their associated global network have caused a shift in power from the local to the transnational, and as such, further questions around who is marginalised, or who gets to determine what the appropriate surfing culture or technology is, emerge. Is, for example, the authenticity/cultural capital that local surfers draw power from diminished by the role of *STW*, who now hold power over locals who are required to subscribe or be subsumed by it? Or do the dominant local surfers retain their power, and use the network to further strengthen their position? In other words, do new power networks reinstall notions of localism, or(/and) reinterpret notions of localism in a global network with a different language? Though these are questions that this thesis does not directly set out to solve, I take this conceptual discussion around place and power through my research objectives, and return to them in my conclusion.

Now, having introduced the key concept of place, I turn to how understandings of water in geography have been developed in recent years, before further narrowing my focus to the specificities of surfing places.

2.2.1 **Geographies of water**

Like much of human geography, place has focussed on the landed meanings attached to locations. Watery spaces, which make up over 70% of our planet, directly or indirectly impact the daily lives of us all, be this through the shipping of trade or weather patterns (for example). In the past, watery spaces have often been characterised as a void from the perspective of shoreside territory, they have been reduced to a blank space, or a "backdrop to the stage on which the real action is seen to take place- that is, the land" (Mack 2011 p17). In spite of, or perhaps because of, this overwhelming influence of our ocean world, the terra-centric nature of western existence has enabled a forgetfulness as we go about our days "beyond the sight of the sea" (Langewiesche 2004 p3). In a turn to water however, geographers have taken up the challenge to engage in the study of these spaces to present a more nuanced study of liquid spaces, in attempts to better understand this underexplored realm.

It has been argued that the oceans are a space that are "beyond representation" (Lambert et al 2006 p483), and "since the sea is a space that cannot be located and cannot be purely experienced, thalassography-sea writing- presents a challenge" (Steinberg 2014 p xv). For

geographers, this oceanic amnesia or avoidance is not simply failure to acknowledge, or adequately interpret, these spaces as more than empty voids that has relegated studies of water to the margins. Until recently, Steinberg argues, "we lacked the conceptual, and analytic tools for grasping this exceptionally ungraspable space" (ibid p xvi).

The turn to water has seen the emergence of such tools, as a number of geographers have recognised, and attempted to address, the terrestrial bias and turned to the sea. From Steinberg (2001), Steinberg &Peters (2015), to Bear and Bull (2011), and Elden (2004), human geographers are exploring how 'flat', 'wet', and 'vertical' ontologies can re-scape both the emerging coming togethers of our inquiry, and our approaches to them. Through these ontologies, much work has been done to increase our understanding of the watery world.

Lambert, Martins and Ogborn (2006) looked to reorient the concerns of historical geographies by centring around the sea, while Grundy-Warr et al build upon their research on 'fluid frontiers' to 'rethink' political geography "through, beyond and below our territorial gridlocks" (2015 p96). Bear and Bull (2011) challenge geographies 'terrestrocentrism' with their theme issue which responds to the materiality of water. Bear is also among a number of scholars who have looked to the non-human in the watery environment, focussing on governance of fishing zones, and the mobility of the fish within and outside of these. Many have looked at engagement with the sea, thinking from the water, to better understand this wet world; Peters on the transgressive positioning of pirate radio stations (2011, 2015), Vannini and Taggart from their vehicle on water in its frozen form (2014). Anderson from his kayak (2014c), lisahunter (2018) and others from their surfboard (including, for example, Evers 2015; Olive et al 2016; Stoodley 2020). Further work has engaged with the exploration of the value in sea-human relationships (Anderson & Peters, 2014; Cooney, 2004; Ford & Brown, 2006; Mack, 2011; Peters, 2010; Steinberg, 1999, 2001, 2013).

This broad range of literature is indicative of how the conceptual and analytical tools to grasp our watery world have been developed and utilised in order to firmly establish the turn to water in human geography. The foundations laid through work such as that listed here have not only created space and debate within geography for the meaningful study of water, but have also provided a point of departure in the ongoing conceptualisation of the oceans and hydro worlds more broadly (Anderson 2019; Bear 2019; Engelmann 2019; Gee 2019; Peters & Steinberg

2019). More recent literatures have attempted to move beyond the notion of a neatly divided land-sea binary, projecting instead understandings of our oceans and seas that go beyond their liquid materiality, and beyond assumed spatial boundaries. As Peters and Steinberg state:

> "The ocean is not simply liquid; it is not simply wet. It is solid (ice) and air (mist); it generates winds, which transport smells and tastes that permeate senses and imaginations, emoting the 'marine' and the 'maritime' miles inland." (Peters & Steinberg 2019 p294)

To grapple with this idea, and to conceptualise the way in which the ocean "exceeds" itself, the authors posit a 'more than wet ontology' that widens further the possibilities for exploring and "understanding a world beyond the static simplicity of landed place" (2019 p305). This perspective provides the scope to consider the ocean as not just connected to land, but as being in excess of itself. Though welcoming the continued attention to more than land approaches to geography, other scholars have pointed to a range of limitations to such a provocation. Bear, for example, questions the space afforded to nonhuman aspects of the excessive ocean, critiquing it as being "oddly lifeless" in its approach (2019 p331). Anderson, on the other hand, asserts the importance of language, and the need for more nuanced ways of describing components of the hydrosphere, while cautioning against the temptation of allowing the excessive ocean to swallow up all hydro worlds (2019).

A dynamic element in this hydrosphere, and the environmental focus of this thesis, is the surf zone, which occupies an in between space that is sometimes land, and sometimes sea. The waves that break within this littoral zone form far away, and are influenced by local and distant weather systems; the surfers who ride these pulses of energy access them from the land, and return to the land, taking salt, sand, and stories with them. As we will see throughout this work, surfing and surfing place, extends beyond the wave, beyond the ocean, and even beyond water.

Acknowledging this complex composition, I draw from, and contribute to, the ongoing discussion of a more than land approach to geography. Like surf zones, World Surfing Reserves present a disruption to a neatly divided notion of land/sea, and serve as an excellent empirical example of a non-binary approach to protected space. As has been introduced, WSRs are a form of coastal designation that seeks to protect both the littoral surfing space, *and* the shoreside

culture that serves it. As well as being about more than land and more than water, they also go beyond their physical geographies to encompass the culture that, as discussed in Section 2.2.2, is both tied to, and constructed within, these areas. I return in my conclusion to discuss the extent to which these WSRs dissolve the boundaries of the land/sea and the physical/cultural, along with the implications this may have for protected spaces and surf activism.

I now move in this chapter to explore further the physical environment of the surf zone, and how this has been explored by geographers; the factors that make it function, and the threats that are now faced. The evolution of surfing practice, with key elements of its historical, cultural and social significance then follows.

2.2.2 **The surf zone**

Waves can occur in all bodies of water, and surfers are now taking to riding them in rivers, lakes, and even in artificial wavepools (see Roberts and Ponting 2018 and Stoodley 2015 for more on artificial, freshwater waves). Aligning with the focus of the World Surfing Reserves, this work looks to the saltwater waves of ocean, and sea surfing. This unpredictable, inconsistent environment remains the most prevalent realm for surfing, and shapes the narratives and imagery of the activity. The waves here are the result of the coming together of an enormous range of variables, which combine in some sort of 'magical mix' to create 'packets' of energy that are suitable for surfing (Butt 2014). The wave that crashes onto the shore is far more than the final expulsion of liquid energy. It is the culmination of a series of processes, impacted by fluctuating, and fixed factors which occur over a vast area.

The way in which a wave breaks is dependent on terrestrial, marine, and atmospheric factors; a watershed, a wave corridor, sand, wind, swell, geology, bathymetry and so on. Since Walker's 1974 work on recreational surfing parameters, much research has been undertaken in regard to the technicalities of these processes which allow for waves to form, and for surfing at a range of competence levels to occur (see, for example, Bicudo & Horta 2009; Butt, 2009, 2014; Edwards & Stephenson 2013; Hutt et al 2001). For practical purposes, surfers have developed their own understanding of these parameters. Butt remarks that "without realising it, most surfers are scientists", honing their understanding of the waves through the acquisition of information as a result of watching and waiting, thinking, and talking about waves (2014 p9). Sometimes, the information learned through experience is shared in the form of guidebooks (for example,

Stormrider Guide) or through various online platforms such as MagicSeaweed, and Surfline. Often, it is not, but in either case, it is argued that understanding waves for surfing requires more than charts, observations, and descriptions. This specific knowledge, and certainly the refinement of this knowledge is gained through the embodied, place-based, practice of surfing (Booth 2020, Evers 2006; Ford & Brown 2006; Roy 2015; Waitt & Warren 2008).

I can, for example, access surf forecasts that can be easily checked online; this tells me what time the tide will be high or low, and what size the incoming swell will be, as well as information about the wind speed, and direction. There may be a comment on when the best time to go is, and some offer visual indicators of the surf quality. I know, beyond this, that if I go surfing at my local break when the tide is coming in, the take-off (when I catch the wave) will be a little mellower, and the wave will have a slightly different form than it does when the tide is going out. The rips (ocean currents) are strongest at low tide, and my favourite time to be in the water is about 2 hours before high tide; high enough so the wave doesn't close out (break all at once), but not so high as to be breaking onto the rocks. Still, no two waves are the same, but it took me many visits (and many waves on my head) to realise that this pattern existed; I didn't read it, but I felt it.

This knowledge is not learned or communicated in the same technical way as the formal research listed above, but such practical understandings of how these factors play out in their local break, or transfer to others, highlight the different epistemologies that can emerge in the surf zone. The learning, understanding, and feeling that arises through this process is a key aspect of the surfing experience, and further reinforces the relevance of the place-based approach that has been taken in this thesis.

Just as I have reflected on what I learnt about my particular break, other scholars have explored various implications of their (and others') embodied engagement with their surfing practice (Booth 2020; Brennen 2016; Evers 2006; Ford & Brown 2006; Humberstone 2011; Ingersoll 2016). Ingersoll describes the 'literacy' that surfers can possess; an awareness of the rhythms of the sea, the movement of the sand, and function of the body to feel and respond to the wave. While Ingersoll acknowledges the affect of the sea on surfing bodies, and the relationships that are engendered through literacy, she argues that western cultures maintain an ontological separation between surfer and environment. Taking an alternative perspective, Evers, for

example, has theorised about the relationship that he has to his local surf spot. For him, this goes beyond just knowing how it might break given certain conditions, to becoming part of who he is, as he states:

> "each watery collision … at my local surf break was another battering my body endured, tying it more tightly to the local environment. It became more than a place; it became my turf. The boundary between the place and me blurred; in fact, the boundary was erased." (Evers 2010 pp75-76)

To return to Casey's co-constitution of place, the erasure of this boundary between surfer and environment, suggests that both the surfer, and the surf zone are intimately linked, to the extent that human and the environment become part of the same entity (2001). The surfed wave is a co-constitution of surfer, wave, ocean, or as Ford and Brown list, it is an assemblage of 'genetics, neurophysiology, tools (surfboard, wetsuit, wax), life history, personal dispositions, encultured narratives from the surfing subculture and media, and so on" (2006 p162). Though fleeting and in constant flux, as a relational place, the surfed wave can, according to Anderson, can be viewed as both an assemblage, and a convergence (2012). The surfed wave as an assemblage, he argues is a coherent unit in which surfers, their boards, and the wave itself are connected. While as a convergence, these elements are not just parts, they blur into a single entity or process. In both theorisations, the surfer and the surf are connected, and each wave manifests as a specific place: unique, fleeting, and fundamental to the surfing experience (ibid). The impact of such connectivity can be profound, as we will explore later in this chapter, and indeed throughout this thesis, as some surfers mobilise to preserve these powerful connections. In addition to protective impetus, the connections that surfers hold for their practice can also influence their identity; this becoming a co-constitution of their landed and ocean selves. Anderson describes this as a surfer's 'surf-shore identity', whereby components of both the aquatic surf zone, and the local shores which connect to it are assembled (2014b).

Having established the importance of the surfed wave for the generation of knowledge, connectivity, and identity, we return to the physical aspects of the surf zone to establish a foundation of the context in which surfbreak protection occurs. The scientific, lay, and embodied knowledge described has become important in surfing. Not just to find a wave to ride,

or predict when or how it might break, but also to understand how the coastal processes work; what factors affect it, threaten it, which tools are required to protect it, and to be motivated to do so. Reiblich identifies 3 components of a surf break as requiring consideration from a surfbreak protection standpoint (2013). The first is the submerged land beneath the surfbreak, or the "topographic geomorphological transition between open ocean and the wave zone" (p48). The second is the wave corridor, the offshore space through which the wave forms and travels, and the third turns to the land, focussing on access to the surf zone. Public access, he argues is just as important, as without this "it does not matter whether it is protected or not" (ibid).

Each of these factors bear a significance on the surf that breaks into an area, and if a change is made then there will be an impact on the wave. These three fundamental components are necessary for surf zones; the first two for the generation of surfable waves, and the third for the opportunity to ride them, at which point the wave becomes the surfed wave; the relational place in which the surfer and wave converge/assemble.

Any change to the physical aspects of a surf break therefore presents a threat to the wave itself, and also these connections among surfers. Further discussion on these social, cultural, and embodied connections can be found in Section 2.3 as I describe the trajectory of modern surfing history. Here, however, I focus on the wave itself, and with such a vast combination of potential variables, changes to the wave corridor, submerged land or access points inevitably manifest in unique ways. There are, nevertheless, some key threats which are important to understand, in order to contextualise the area of surfbreak protection. Table 1 provides this context, and draws on the work of Oram and Valverde (1994), to present a general summary of the 4 most common types of naturally occurring waves, to explain how breaks differ, and how they are endangered by different activities.

Table 1 Types of surf breaks and potential threats

Type	**Description**	**Potential Threats**
Beach break  (*Image source: Author)*	Swells break over a sandbar. Relies on sand deposition; bottom contour variable so conditions can be unpredictable, with peaks shifting. Affected by wind, tide and swell. Sandy bottom means beach breaks are often more forgiving for beginners.	Any development (inland or coastal) which interferes with sand movement and deposition. Breakwaters or jetties which can disperse wave energy. Pollution. Barriers to access.
Reef break  (*Image source: SurferToday, n.d.)*	Submerged rock or coral reef, over which waves break. Bottom contour constant so reef breaks are generally more consistent than beach breaks but are still affected by wind, tide and swell.	Offshore breakwaters which inhibit incoming swells. Destruction of reef for building materials. Pollution. Barriers to access.
Point break  (*Image source: Author)*	Waves break off land which juts out into the sea. A rock headland, for example. Lateral breaking of waves can allow for extended ride distance. Often combine with beach and reef breaks to produce world renowned surf locations.	Though less affected by the movement of sand than beach or river mouth breaks, point breaks will be affected by offshore development and breakwaters. Pollution. Barriers to access.
River mouth  (*Image source: Author)*	Occurring when sand deposited at a river mouth or other opening to the ocean (harbor, creek for example) forms a bar. Waves then break over this bar.	Any interference with sand movement and deposition. This includes sand blocking groynes, for example. Dredging to allow for the passage of vessels. Pollution. Barriers to access.

As the table suggests, there are 4 main types of surf break and a number of potential physical threats to these. Some spots are more susceptible to damage from certain activities than others, and the impact on some will go unnoticed from a human perspective. For some surf zones however, such as those described in the introduction to this thesis (Kirra Point, Killer Dana), any change to any of these factors can carry significant weight in the local surfing population, and the global surfing imagination. These places equate to more than the waves that break into them. Each is unique, and the practices and cultures that are present in each shape and are shaped by surfing. Surf zones are meaningful to surfers as places of recreation, employment, lifestyle, and spirituality (Beaumont & Brown 2015, 2016; Farmer 1992; Taylor 2007; Wheaton 2004). While the reaction of contemporary surfing communities, when faced with some of these threats, vary, the meanings that are attached to these places can provide impetus for surfers to act to protect (Booth 2020; Reineman & Ardoin 2018).

Throughout this thesis, I argue that there are a particular group of surfers who are mobilised to proactively protect both the physical surf zone, and the significant social, cultural and personal aspects which accompany them. The approaches which are being taken to do this have become increasingly sophisticated, and, I argue, represent a maturing of the surfing community away from the 1960s stereotypes of beach bum and slacker, towards the professionalised, expert environmentalist.
In Chapter 4 I chart this shift in detail, though to establish the empirical context for this work, the following section outlines the evolution of surfing; depicting the key points in its trajectory from Polynesian ritual, to a marginalised subculture, through a boom in the 1950s/60s; and to todays professionalised, monetised, mainstream action sport. It does this in a way that highlights how the surf-shore identity of surfers, that is how their watery and terrestrial worlds assemble, has influenced their human-water-beach-land relationships over time, resulting in a contemporary surfing community that is heterogenous, mobile, political, and protective.

2.3 Commodification, contestation and connection: a brief surfing history

Surfing history is contested and complex. There are a number of works which have established a broad narrative (Kampion 2003; Warshaw 2010; Westwick and Neushul 2013), and many which have taken a focussed or critical approach (Comer 2010; Laderman 2014;

Walker 2011; Wheaton 2004). In this section, I do not seek to give a comprehensive surf history, or indeed critique that history. My aim is to present a number of surf-shore identity land/watermarks which highlight the evolutionary path that has led to the argument in this thesis that surfers now are part of an epistemic community, and are mobilising policy to protect their surfing environments and cultures.

2.3.1 **Early surfing**

Early evidence of wave riding can be traced back thousands of years to reed boats called Cabillitos de Tortoro, used for fishing and surfing in Peru (Warshaw 2010), and the first written account of surfing, it is argued, comes from Ghana in the 1640s (Dawson 2017). In these instances, in promoting the efficient movement of catch to shore, surfing occurred as a by-product of industrious activity. The most talked about part of early surfing history however, where participants surfed for cultural and recreational reasons, comes from Hawaii, and it is here that the trajectory of modern surfing takes hold.

The popular narrative of Hawaiian surfing states that while the sport was for kings, queens and commoners prior to American colonization in the late nineteenth century, it suffered a decline in participation to the point of extinction before it was 'rescued' by a small number of "elite white male settlers" in the early 1900s (Gilio-Whitaker 2017 p218). It has, however, been argued by the likes of Clarke (2011), Walker (2011), Moser (2017) and Gilio-Whitaker (2017), that this was far from the reality of the situation in Hawaii. While the numbers of people surfing did indeed decline, it remained an important part of Hawaiian culture throughout the period. From the arrival of the first protestant missionaries in 1819 to the forced US annexation in 1893 surfing continued, and continues to carry, great significance for Hawaiians. This heritage, or a westernised interpretation of this heritage, has also become central to surfing cultures and imaginations globally.

The movement of surfing out of Hawaii and into the United States, or California more specifically, marks the transition of surfing from a traditional local ritual to a global industry. This move is largely attributed to two Americans, Alexander Hume Ford and Jack London; a promoter and a storyteller who, to thoroughly simplify a long, intricate story, created a tourism industry in Hawaii, which placed surfing, and its exotic excitement at the forefront of its marketing campaigns. More comprehensive accounts of this important, problematic (racist, exploitative, environmentally damaging) phase can be found in works by Gilio-Whitaker (2017); Laderman (2014); Westwick and Neushul (2013) and Walker (2011). As part of this process, expert watermen were employed as ambassadors of surfing and as

exemplars of an authentic Hawaiian culture. The two most famous of these are George Freeth, who first went to southern California in 1907, and later, Olympic swimmer Duke Kahanamoku who came to be known as "the father of modern surfing", credited with first introducing stand-up surfing to Australia in 1915. From the early demonstrations given by the likes of Freeth and Kahanamoku, a slow growth in the popularity of surfing occurred.

2.3.2 **A Californian vision**

In the United States, developments in water safety, forwarded by Freeth and his proactive lifesaving techniques, and the emergence of leisure resorts such as Huntington and Venice beaches in coastal California began the creation of what Westwick and Neuschul term "surfurbia" (2013). In attempting to showcase Hawaii as a destination to the people of California, Freeth's appointment had also confirmed that surfing at home was possible. From this point, surfing in California began to take hold. A small number of wave riders, predominantly white men, braved the cold waters and heavy boards of the day to carve out the early stages of a subcultural community which would sit at the fringes of coastal society for many years as its reach and uptake grew.

Surfing's boom came in the post war era as technological and societal changes opened up a space which was eagerly filled by thrill seeking youths. Technological advances made surfing more accessible; the wetsuit, a fitted neoprene suit, protected surfers from colder water temperatures, allowing them to surf all year round and in a wider geographical area. The leash, or leg rope safely linked the surfer to their board, and meant that more surfing, and less swimming for wayward boards, was possible as boards could be safely pulled back and surfers could paddle back out following a wipe out (falling off a wave). Boards themselves were evolving, becoming lighter, faster and, with the addition of fins, more controllable. Material developments aside, societal conditions also proved to be, for some, ideal for the growth of surfing. Throughout this time, surfing remained almost exclusively for the white male, their image forming a key aspect of the emerging surfing narrative. As Wheaton describes,

> "Since the 1950s, the quintessential image of the surfing body has been "phenotypically White", specifically, a young, white, male subject, slim, toned, tanned- but not dark skinned- with a mop of sun-bleached hair" (Wheaton 2017 p177).

In the US, middle-class post-war youth had free time and monetary flexibility, which opened

up opportunities to buy equipment and spend time learning how to use it. For many, this represented a shunning of a more traditional career and life path, and imagery of the rebellious, maverick act of chasing, and catching waves perpetuated. This further marginalised surfing from swathes of society, but it also enticed and captured the imaginations of those who sought a salt encrusted alternative, and so the subculture of surfing gained traction throughout the 1950s. The point which is often portrayed as the turning point for surfing came in 1959, with the release of Hollywood movie 'Gidget'. The popular film about a teenage girl learning to surf at Malibu beach, Los Angeles, one summer is often cited as being the cause of the surfing explosion in California. Westwick and Neuschul argue however that it was as much as an effect as a cause of it, as evidenced by the fact it was based on the real events which occurred in the life of the authors' daughter in the summer of 1957 (2013 p 103.). Nevertheless, the movie marks the entry of surfing into a more broadly mainstream arena, engaging inland as well as coastal audiences, with multiple sequels (Gidget Goes Hawaiian 1961, Gidget Goes to Rome 1963) and spin offs which included, for example, a TV series (1965-1966), and a cartoon TV movie (Gidget Makes the Wrong Connection 1972). The original movie shows a young white woman attempting to navigate her way into the masculine world of surfing, and through the disparate identities of its participants. The contrast between the work shy 'surf bum', and the wholesome, outdoor recreationist characters are stark, yet both groups are intimately linked to the littoral zone, their surf-shore identity being keenly formed around the beach, and the waves (see Comer 2010, Laderman 2014, and Stedman 1997 for further discussions on the movie in regard to its gender portrayals and implications, and its contribution to surfing history.)

Further highlighting the growing cultural importance of surfing, and indicative of a reach beyond the beach, is music, and in another split, two sub genres of "surf music" emerged. Also from the Los Angeles area in 1961, epitomized by the beach boys and their harmonies, and Dick Dales' instrumental guitar rock, this again brought surfing into the spotlight. This is significant, Cooley argues, as,

> "though not the first, most important, or necessarily best music associated with surfing, it did mark a key moment in the history of surfing as a global cultural practice: the shift of the cultural centre of surfing from Hawaii to California." (2014 p44)

This shift saw surfing become commoditised, its 'cool' image underpinning a burgeoning global industry, and this was not confined to California. Different manifestations of the

activity had also emerged around the world at this time, with surfing practice being transferred and translated into various local contexts. In Australia, since the visit from Duke Kahanamoku in 1915, surfing had grown as an institutionalized entity based on the skills, strength, and knowledge required for surf lifesaving. This formalized version resulted in the foundation of highly regarded, competitive clubs whose focus was on the discipline of lifesaving, as opposed to the riding of waves as a hedonistic pursuit (Booth 2001). Both forms were the domain of the white male, and though many women did participate in the two activities they were heavily marginalised. Highlighting this plight is the fact that only in July 1980 were women permitted to be full members of surf lifesaving clubs (Jaggard 2002). Recreational surfing in Australia, for men and women, represented a discouraged sub sector of the accepted sport. As in California, surfing was viewed as a rebellious, self-indulgent activity which, in being broadly perceived as a lesser virtue than its institutionalised counterpart, was kept on the margins of coastal society. Somewhat subversive in both of these key locations, surfing's popularity however continued to grow, influencing fashion, vocabulary, behaviour and even automobiles. Surfing has become so ingrained in the imagery of certain locations that the place and the practice are synonymous, as for example, in California.

> "Nothing represents the California Dream better than surfing – riding the waves and living in harmony with the beautiful beaches and ocean of our Golden State. Surfing in California has a rich history and culture." (California State Assembly member Al Muratsuchi, in Jenkins 2018)

This popularity meant more people in the water. Crowds, and a yearning for better waves and new experiences, combined with the emergence in the 1960s of more affordable air travel, saw the advent of the international surf trip. On these trips white, middle class male surfers would seek out new, uncrowded places to surf, away from the hordes who now frequented the beaches of California and Australia's East Coast. These "backpackers with boards" attempted, not without controversy, to embrace new cultures, waves and the 'search' (for surf) itself (Laderman 2014). A famous example of such a journey is documented in Bruce Brown's movie, the Endless summer. The 1966 production follows the expedition of Californian surfers Robert August and Mike Hynson, as they seek out waves in Australia, South Africa, Tahiti and other far-flung destinations (Ormrod 2005). The outstanding imagery and entertaining (albeit inaccurate) narration complemented the surfing action, and

the film became a huge success, grossing over $30 million, and inspiring further generations of surfers to find their own adventure (Laderman 2014 p49).

2.3.3 **A global, mobile, surfing culture**

The movement of surfers around the world facilitated the transfer and evolution of surfing equipment, styles and ideas. The common thread of surfing forged relationships and networks which would not only take surfing to 6 continents, but also spawn an international industry, a competitive circuit, and, despite its claims of neutrality, political action. Surfers have impacted surfing spaces globally, both directly and indirectly, as visitors and residents. Often imposed with little to no regard for local custom, tradition or land ownership, western surfing practice has been criticised as a form of neo-colonialism, carrying a range of inherent social and environmental challenges (Gilio-Whitaker 2017; Ruttenberg & Brosius 2017). Attempts to critically analyse these impacts have begun to emerge, though for the most part, travel remains integral to the surfing lifestyle. Research into surf tourism and its impacts is well established (Martin and Assenov 2012). Topics covered now include sustainability (Buckley 2002; Ponting & O'Brien 2014); community participation (Towner 2016(a), Ponting & McDonald 2013); visitor profiles (Portugal et al 2017; Towner 2016(b)); localism (Usher & Gomez 2016); and economic impact (Hritz & Franzidis 2018). Surf tourism today represents an industry which has fanned out far from the original go to destination of Hawaii, incorporating places which, to the non-surfer, may seem obscure. Surfing is now highly mobile, and truly global.

As with all surf zones, each destination comes with its own array of physical and social variations, and while surf-shore similarities are plentiful, each location develops its own surf identity and culture, as local ways of life combine with the global surf machine. Often constituting a mix of local and visiting surfers, there are place specific attachments and relationships which have been explored by the likes of Usher, for example, who looks at the experiences of both groups of surfers in Costa Rica (2017). To the east, Evers (2017) and Guibert and Tanuay (2014) look at the attempts to promote surfing to a Chinese market, while on a more political level, Laderman (2014), and Thompson (2011) have explored surfing in South Africa; the role of apartheid, and its associated impacts for local, and visiting surfers.

The vast global presence of surfing, and its continued popularity has resulted in significant pressures on finite wave resources and coastal infrastructure, and has generated social

tensions among and between surfers and other water users (See Beaumont & Brown 2016; Olivier 2010; Scheibel 1995). As a common pool resource, waves are subject to overuse, congestion and even potential destruction (from for example, erosion or pollution) (Rider 1999). Some surf spots, particularly those in or near substantial urban populations experience extremely high levels of participation, resulting in heavy crowds. Still heavily dominated by the white male, surfing is however becoming increasingly heterogenous. Among the crowded line ups, marginalised groups; surfers of colour, women surfers and adaptive surfers are for example becoming more visible, and much work is being undertaken to increase the space available for these groups and diversify surfing line ups (Comley 2016; Comer 2017; lisahunter 2017; Nemani 2015; Olive et al 2015, 2019; Schumacher 2017; Thorpe & Olive 2016; Wheaton 2017).

As wave resources become increasingly scarce, as a result of the threats outlined in Section 2.2.2, or as demand exceeds supply, surfers have developed strategies which attempt to secure their access to the contested space. There is a widely accepted, self-managing etiquette protocol which aims to keep the line up relatively safe (Rider 1999). This, for example, discourages surfers from 'dropping in'; attempting to surf a wave somebody else is already surfing. In some instances, surfers take more direct approaches to 'protecting' their surfing experience. Often referred to as 'localism', this is where surfers claim a form of ownership to a particular surf spot. This concept manifests in various contexts and can be a community building notion, with local labels being carried with pride (Beaumont & Brown 2016). They can however also be highly problematic, as surfers act in a territorial manner, intimidating those who are deemed to be non-local. Well known examples of this include the Palo Verdes neighbourhood in California, where wealthy property owners block access for others and police the water themselves for perceived intruders. The 'Bra boys', from Australia's Maroubra Beach are a notorious surf gang, famous for violence in and out of the water (Westwick & Neushul 2013). In Hawaii, the Hui 'O He'e Nalu, the black shorts surf club, regulate their local surfing lineups for safety reasons, and in doing so demonstrate a specific form of anti-colonial protest (Walker 2005). Smaller scale local conflicts can be seen through aggression in the water, blocking waves and heckling, graffiti near access points, and damage to cars and surfboards. In addition to tensions between surfers, conflict can occur with other water users, such as kayakers, and stand up paddleboarders, who also vie for access to the water and waves.

The rationale for some surfers to behave in this way rests on their perception of being local to an area, and as such holding more rights to access than others. This demonstrates significant place-based relationships, though raises further questions around what it actually means to be local, who decides this, and what it means for surfing spaces; many which are sites of colonisation where Indigenous populations have been previously displaced (Gilio-Whitaker 2017; McGloin 2006, 2017; Olive 2019).

The connections that surfers have for particular surf spots can be significant in their response to external threats. In their study on place attachment, which boasts a sample of 1000+ Californian surfers, Reineman and Ardoin state that for the majority of participants, "their" surf breaks hold meaning, and that this meaning "may help address why surfers increasingly are acting protectively in the face of place-specific threats."(2018 p337). As well as place, surfers' connection to their practice is often profound. It has been argued that surfers experience a compulsive need to engage in the sport, and form strong connections to both specific breaks and the act of surfing in itself, which, when threatened, prompts reactions to protect (Anderson and Stoodley, 2018).

There are various motivations for surfers to surf; to compete for, and protect wave resources, and forge their identities. Having explored surfing history, the rise of surf tourism, and placed based connectivity, this section now looks to the practice of surfing itself. Moving to explore these motivations, the following paragraphs present the reasons why surfers are so enamoured with their practice, and lead to a discussion on the values that can be attributed to surfing spaces, and the resulting mobilisation to protect them.

2.3.4 **Motivations to surf**

> "Though most people might find the activity somewhat insane and void of meaning, to the surfer, it is a very meaningful activity. Surfing is not a fad that was confined to the 1960s but an activity that has persisted in American society" (Farmer 1992 p248).

For some surfers, their practice is their work. Emerging in the 1970s, alongside increasing commercialisation, professional surfing is now well established, with top surfers monetising their talents through means such as competitive surfing tours and brand sponsorships. These surfers function as elite athletes, engaging in high level, often high-tech training programmes (Farley et al 2012 & 2018; Mendez-Villanueva et al 2006; Redd & Fukuda 2016). Many professional surfers have enjoyed lucrative careers and celebrity status, contributing to brand

authenticity aims and bringing surf spots into the public imagination (Laderman2014; Westwick & Neushul 2013). Others have professionalised their surfing by forging careers as surf guides, coaches, or instructors (Beaumont &Brown 2016).

For most surfers however, those who consume the material generated and services offered by industry professionals, engagement with wave riding is recreational. In his analysis of the motivations of surfers, Farmer (1992) presents a range of further reasons for participation, beyond fiscal. He argues that surfing can be defined as sport, if extrinsic rewards are available, in the form of a competition win for example. If competitive, but without any material reward, such as informal competition between friends, then it can be considered a game. As a voluntary endeavour, surfing for fun or other intrinsic rewards can, according to Callois' definitions of play and games, also be recognised as a form of play. Farmer also found that surfers' motivations align with Kenyon's (1968) model for the reasons to participate in physical activity: aesthetic, ascetic, catharsis, competition, health and fitness, social, vertigo. Of particular resonance among surfers were aesthetic, catharsis, social and vertigo motives. Vertigo is, in this interpretation, the feeling that comes from a physical experience which involves risk or a thrill and was also documented clearly in Farmer's study. This feeling is what surfers refer to as 'stoke', or "the relational sensibility experienced through the act of riding a wave" (Anderson 2014a p30). The oft talked about buzz that surfers experience when they catch a wave; stoke, or the search for stoke, is for many surfers the goal and glue of their involvement with surfing. The catharsis that comes about when surfing, is also found to be a valuable incentive for immersing in the water, offering a space for escape from the stresses of daily life. The body of work surrounding the potential health and wellbeing benefits of surfing, and other immersive 'blue space' activities such as wild swimming is expanding rapidly (see, for example, Britton et al 2018; Foley 2015; Foley & Kistemann 2015; Gascon et al 2017; Moles 2020; Pitt 2018; Wheaton et al 2020), and the sentiments of much of this work are moving beyond paper. Some organisations such as the Wave Project (UK), and One Wave (Australia and UK) are using surfing now as a means through which effective therapy can take place, increasing confidence and strength among vulnerable children, and improving the mental health of adults (Godfrey et al 2015; Hignett et al 2018; Sarkisian et al 2020)

As a sport, game, and play therefore, surfing can bring different challenges and incentives to those who choose to participate. Scholars Barbieri and Sotomayor have turned to Stebbins' serious leisure perspective to understand various aspects of surfing's appeal (2013). For

some, surfing is more than leisure, and instead represents an artistic, spiritual or even quasi-religious endeavour, which can result in compulsive engagement (Anderson and Stoodley 2018).

> "Surfing fits into all categories. It's an ART by the way you express yourself on a wave. It's a SPORT because you compete with it, and it's SPIRITUAL because it's just you and Mother Nature (Moriarity and Gallagher 2001 p10)

From the fun and sense of achievement that comes from going surfing for recreation, health and lifestyle benefits, right through to professionalization, or to the fulfilment and spirituality that can be associated when considering surfing as an 'aquatic nature religion' (Taylor 2007), surfing means many things to many people. The values placed on each of these aspects, whether in the form of personal wellbeing, financial gain, or athletic satisfaction, for example, go some way to highlight the various ways in which individuals may be motivated to protect them. The following section now turns to look to these values, before focussing on the ways in which surfers have mobilised to secure their prized assets.

2.3.5 **Values of a surf break**

As a natural habitat and structural element of the marine ecosystem, surf breaks entail range of eco and biocentric values. Though these are important aspects, which can in certain circumstances be used to validate protection claims, focus here will remain on the anthropocentric economic valuations which have been explored through discourse and literature. (An example of a biocentric approach being taken can be found in the case of the Maalaea Harbour project in Hawaii, where proposals to construct a breakwater was halted due to the anticipated impact on the nearby reefs (Surfrider Foundation1990)).

With an estimated global value of $50billion, surf rich regions can receive substantial benefits through capital investment, visitors, and associated profits (McGregor & Wills 2017). Difficult to accurately quantify due to the dynamic, unregulated characteristics of natural surf breaks, surfing and other recreational activities have historically been excluded from conventional cost-benefit analyses which inform decision makers. Now being widely adopted as a tool for protection, however, the concept of 'surf economics' or 'surfonomics' (after Lazarow 2007) generates a monetary figure which positions surfers in a way that they can argue their cases in terms which are widely understood. Only a 'surfer knows the feeling', but everybody knows the money.

The first attempts to calculate how much a surf break is worth date back as far as the 1980s, when environmental non-profit *Surfrider Foundation*, used a "surrogate value" of a water park entrance fee to calculate a damages claim submitted to the Chevron Oil Corporation who had allegedly damaged the El Segundo surf break (Oram and Valverde 1994 p416). There is now significant quantitative evidence of surfing's economic impact (Coffman and Burnett 2009; Lazarow 2007; Lazarow and Nelsen 2007; Margules et al 2014; Mills and Cummins 2013). Broken down to a national, regional and local basis, the rewards of surfing led economic impact can be considerable. In the UK, surfing contributes between £1billion and £1.8billion to GDP each year (Mills and Cummins 2013). On a regional level, surfing on the Gold Coast in Australia brings AUD$89-164 million annually (Lazarow 2007). The famous surf spot at Uluwatu in Indonesia generates some $35million annually (Margules et al 2014), and Mavericks in the USA, where big waves are popular with both surfers and spectators, expenditure equates to $24million annually (Coffman & Burnett 2009). These figures are calculated by understanding how surfers spend when they visit an area for surfing (on accommodation, transport, food and so on). Surf spots are not valuable for just those who are able to visit however, and some carry significant 'non-use' values (Oram and Valverde 1994). Also known as existence value, this concept refers to the value that one places on something, essentially just for knowing it is there. It carries various motivations, from altruism to stewardship, and though it is even more difficult to measure than the other aspects as there are no behaviours from which to draw estimates, it can be significant, especially when considering the number of surfers and spectators around the world who may dream of one day surfing at a certain spot, or enjoy watching videos of others surfing at another. This is an important factor when considering the collaborative nature of surfbreak protection which, as will be discussed, often functions across international networks.

Whether surfers surf somewhere every day, have visited on holiday, or dream to do so one day, surf spots are valuable assets, and placing a monetary value on them is just one way that surfers have attempted to secure them. The following paragraphs look to the ways in which some surfers have mobilised to keep their surfing spaces intact, safe and accessible, and the strategies that have developed over time to do this. From disorganised, direct action campaigns to pressure groups, leading to the argument that I make throughout this work, that there is an enviro-surf community, and it can be defined as epistemic.

2.4 Environmental activism in surfing

Having established that surf spots can be meaningful, valuable, and vulnerable, I now turn to a discussion on how surfers and other coastal stakeholders have been mobilised by their person place relations to protect physical surfing spaces, and the cultures, and identities that they facilitate. Beyond the stereotype of the ambivalent thrill seeker which is dominant in most surfing narratives (see, for example, Diehm, R. and Armatas, C. 2004; Finnegan 2015; Pearson 1982; Warshaw 2010; Westwick & Neushul 2013), it is also possible to identify surfers as a wildly heterogenous group. Within this broad category of surfers can be found a number of individuals who are actively engaged in surf centred social and environmental activism. This thesis will argue that in this particular neo-tribe (after Maffesoli 1996) an epistemic community has formed which has developed the scope, means, and success of surf environmental activism, specifically through World Surfing Reserves. In this section, I dismantle the stereotypical notion of the hedonistic surfer to demonstrate that the surfing community is wide-ranging; some surfers may be ambivalent, others become reluctant environmentalists, some organise, or participate in organised activism, and some are experts. Through the following paragraphs, I outline these different groups and the trajectory of enviro-surf activism to establish the base from which the assertion that a niche, within the broader surfing community, can be considered as epistemic in nature.

2.4.1 A niche of ocean advocates

> "Why is it that scuba divers and surfers are some of the strongest advocates of ocean conservation? Because they've spent time in and around the ocean, and they've personally seen the beauty, the fragility, and even the degradation of our planet's blue heart" (Earle 2018).

For some surfers, as we have touched upon, and we will see later in this section, this statement from marine biologist Sylvia Earle, will ring true. For many surfers, however, the time spent in the planet's blue heart has not generated a drive for ocean advocacy, but a drive for the experience of stoke, and the "sense of self" that surfing brings (Anderson 2017, Booth 2020). In effect, such motivation renders the surfing environment itself as less important than the ride. If a surfer can achieve the feeling elsewhere; at another surf break or even artificial wavepool, then not only are the values attached to a surf spot significantly reduced, but they may not even realise the impact of their apathy (see Ponting 2018). Booth finds in his

exploration of surfing at Bondi Beach, Australia, that surfers demonstrated more ambivalence than activism, as "in their pursuit of hedonism, Bondi surfers expressed little interest in transforming either the environment or social conditions" (2016 p281).

In addition to a lack of interest, or even awareness from surfers, surfing also carries an array of contradictions surrounding its broader sustainability and environmental impact. Despite the notion that wave riding is in itself largely non-exploitative, the ways in which surfers access these waves, and the materials on which they surf can be problematic (Laderman 2014; Mach 2017). Surfboards, wetsuits, and other equipment are for the most part, made of toxic materials which are not currently recyclable. The carbon footprint of surfers, who drive or fly to surf spots, can be expansive, and the impact of these travelling surfers on the communities they visit bring localised challenges as infrastructure is stretched (Buckley 2002; Towner 2016a). These impacts are often overlooked as surfers, industry actors and even academics focus on the projection of positive imagery, and outcomes of surfing (see Hill and Abbot (2009) for a comprehensive critique of surfing representations). Images of warm water waves portrayed by surf media are for example often replicated by visiting surfers who forward this vision of uncrowded tropical paradises in a largely uncritical manner (Ponting 2009). This ignores the wider impacts of the effective colonisation of surfing areas, such as "trash, roads, erosion, water pollution" and so on (Barilotti 2002 p 92).

While some surfers may not realise the damage caused by surfing, or the potential threats that can be imposed on surfing environments, some have taken notice of these issues, and there is significant evidence that many engage in political activism to "keep the ocean environmentally, socially, politically and culturally healthy" (Ingersoll 2016, 75). Historically, the ways in which surfers mobilised have been locally driven, highly place specific and often out of a place of necessity (see, for example, Wheaton 2007, Evers 2019, Booth 2020). In this thesis's opening vignette, for example, Bartholomew engaged in his spontaneous, haphazard protest as a bulldozer was already situated to make the modifications which would disrupt his surfing experience. In a contemporary example, Evers' work on the polluted waters of Fukushima, Japan, describes the surfers there as reluctant activists; forced to act so that they can continue to surf safely (2019).

Increasingly, however, some surfers have taken a more deliberate approach to the ways in which they work to protect their surfing spaces. As more is known about the surf zone, and as surf resources become ever more stretched due to the ever-growing number of surfers, and

the disruption or destruction of surf spots, surfers have positioned themselves as organised, professional activists.

2.4.2 **Organised, expert, activism**

A key development in this transition is the establishment of charities which centre the issues facing the surf zone, such as pollution, development and access. *Surfrider Foundation*, established in Malibu, California in 1984, and *Surfers Against Sewage*, founded in Cornwall, England in 1990, are two of the most prolific early examples. Both were started in response to pressing issues to their surfing environments, and both have grown into significant, sophisticated organisations (Nelsen et al 2013; Borne 2018). *Surfrider Foundation* now has 80 chapters worldwide and a vast team which includes scientists, policy analysts, lawyers and more, and *Surfers Against Sewage* is one of the UKs leading marine conservation charities. Explored extensively in Chapter 5, both have an impressive track record of coastal victories, and now have been joined by a range of further organisations, including *Save the Waves*, who collectively create a dynamic environmental sub sector, capable of forwarding a range of innovative programmes, protests and policy. Academic research, particularly that on *Surfers Against Sewage*, highlights some of the key ways in which we can think about surf environmentalism. Ward, for example, used the charity as an empirical case study to explore the politicization of pollution, and the emergence of new forms of oppositional politics. In his analysis of the reflexivity of the group, he found their approach to be a response to the uncertainty and anxieties which were fostered by globalization, drawing on the work of Lash, Urry, and Giddens to imply that people were becoming less constrained by existing institutions (1996). A decade later, Wheaton looked to the importance of identity for the organisation and its associated activism, and in viewing surfing as part of the wider group of lifestyle sports, saw *Surfers Against Sewage* as part of an emerging new social movement (2007). In the decade between the two studies, the operation became more sophisticated and organised, and has continued to progress since. Borne, for instance, has utilised transition dynamics to explore how *Surfers Against Sewage* have consciously moved away from a single-issue focus, and have effectively created an environment through which "increased policy uptake of solutions at the perpetual and systemic level" has been possible (2018 p175). For example, the charity now has, since 2014, had direct access to the United Kingdom government through their Ocean Conservation All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), a

platform which, they state is both powerful and unique (*Surfers Against Sewage* no date:APPG).

In utilising a range of strategies to raise the profile of their campaigns, SAS have become recognised as a legitimate, worthwhile cause, and have integrated themselves into established decision-making circles. In maintaining their focus on the highly specialised niche, the surf zone, alternative sites of influence are seemingly being opened up. For Surfers Against Sewage, this is concisely summarised in this quotation from Wheaton:

> "we get to go into meetings instead of being locked outside with placards" (2007 p288).

This move from being locked out of meetings to not only being let in, but being invited in, is reflective of a shift of approach in surf activism; in accessing these spaces, surfers' protests have moved beyond the beach, and arguably, so too has their influence. To use the terms of Grant (1978), some groups of surfers have moved from outsider, to insider status. While this is a significant development, and a key marker of effective strategizing, the inclusion of actors such as SAS in governmental proceedings does not necessarily equate to impact. As Maloney et al state,

> "Many groups are granted access to decision makers, but few have a significant influence over substantive policy outcomes" (1994 p 25).

Indeed, there are various categories within this insider status. From those brought in to provide lawmakers with "pertinent opinions, data and analysis" (Keefe and Ogul, 1964, pp 366-367), to those included to meet consultation requirements, influence can range from a cosmetic presence to a substantial bearing on policy direction (Maloney et al 1994).

Though the insider/outsider status of pressure groups can be helpful to consider the strategic gains made in particular instances, the way in which collaboration among groups has become important cannot be effectively explored using these categories. Additionally, it is evident that surfers do not neatly fit into either side of this binary; they may now be welcome in certain new spaces, but much of their work is still carried out on the sand, and in the water.

In the area of surfbreak protection, the challenges faced are often multi-faceted, involve numerous stakeholders, and include as yet unknown threats and outcomes to both the surf zone and its shore-side cultures. As has been discussed, understandings of this dynamic environment are now more comprehensive than ever, and this has enabled activists to engage

with more proactive approaches to surfbreak protection. In this development, surfers have been able to utilise their resources, including knowledge, experience, and organisation, in attempts to protect their spaces before they necessarily have to. To be positioned to protect before the bulldozer is in place.

As will be seen throughout this thesis, the increase in organised activism has resulted in the creation of initiatives for protection which have been implemented on local, national and international scales, and take a range of statutory and non-statutory forms. Academic studies of these protections have been produced steadily through a range of disciplines and now represent a substantial body of work. This work both highlights the problems being faced, and demonstrates how scholars and activists, many of whom identify as surfers themselves, have undertaken diverse research to portray the issues and solutions at hand. Among this work, for example is the study of surfbreak protection through: legal mechanisms, (Ball 2015; Monteferri et al 2020; Oram and Valverde 1994; Reiblich 2013; Reiblich & Reineman 2018), planning systems (dos Santos 2017; Skellern et al 2013), coastal management (Edwards & Stephenson 2013; Ware 2017), the role of artificial reefs (Rendle & Rodwell 2014; Fletcher et al 2011; Scarfe et al 2003), conservation management (Scheske et al 2019; Arroyo et al 2019), place-specific attachment and strategy (Larson et al 2017; Reineman 2016; Farmer & Short 2007) and comparative studies (Orchard 2017; Martin et al 2020).

In conducting, and disseminating robust research across this niche field, a further niche (or neo tribe) within surfing has emerged; a group of experts who have used this capacity to develop the approaches to surfbreak protection further, moving to influence, adapt or design local policy to protect their surfing experience and the associated shore-side identities and cultures.

Experts, and expertise has become an increasingly important component of public policy (Weinberg 1972; de Bruijn & Gerrits 2018). The need for specialist information and guidance creates space for experts to shape debates, decisions and outcomes, potentially placing them in positions of power and influence in times of crisis (Gronvall 2001 p158). Kingdon refers to these instances as ‘windows of opportunities’, where access to the policy process can be gained by actors other than elected officials (2003). The utilisation of expertise can provide legitimacy for decision makers, and reassurance for the public (Fischer 1992), though can be problematic if left unscrutinised (Radealli 1999) or if the issues or solutions are not fully understood (Beck 1998:13). Furthermore, crisis situations can be

impacted negatively by experts who do not necessarily have consensus of opinion, thus delaying or prolonging proceedings, and causing stress and additional uncertainty for leaders when agreement cannot be reached (Gronvall 2001 and Lagadec 1993).

While decision makers will turn to the available pool of experts in times of crisis, windows of opportunity can also be created by the experts themselves. Through their knowledge and acquired information, groups are positioned to anticipate crises. In response, they seek to draw attention to the issue area that they have identified as being in need of political action. As described by Adler, this involves persuasion of the validity of ideas to other actors in the system, and as well as the creation of concepts, it requires exposure to raise public awareness of the issue, and its potential solution (Adler 2005 p164). This is evident in this surfing niche, where surf centred issues have been identified, articulated, and brought into political agendas.

I argue in this thesis that the enviro-surf community have adapted their positionality as surfing experts to gain access to decision making spaces and people, and also used their links to surfing to build support and engagement in the broader surfing community. They are neither inside, nor outside the political system, but have found their way to navigate both pathways to achieve results. Constituting an established, though evolving, network of experts I argue that the enviro-surf community represents a maturing of the surf environmentalist movement that is best understood as epistemic in nature.

This section has shown that not all surfers are engaged in the protection of their spaces; some are more driven by the thrill of the ride, the feeling of 'stoke'. Surfing itself carries an array of social and environmental contradictions, and not all of its participants are motivated to reduce its impact. In light of this ambivalence among large parts of the surfing community, and in acknowledging that "surfing culture" and "surfing community" are not single, homogenous entities, I focus in this thesis on a small niche within the broader surfing world; the enviro-surf community. Made up of a group of actors who hold both a connection to surfing, and a will to enhance the environment in which surfing can take place, the enviro-surf community, detailed in Chapter 5, has become professional and knowledgeable in their approach to surfbreak protection, and in doing so have become legitimate actors in decision making circles. Building on surfing's subcultural narrative, these surfing experts have built a knowledge base, a following, and can also be seen to be developing and instigating policy which is being adopted in surfing spaces around the world. Though the work of Wheaton,

Ward, or Grant, for example, could be furthered to study this group as a component of a new social movement, as a reflexive organisation, or as an insider pressure group, I argue that the most effective approach of analysis is to view it as an epistemic community, and it is to this concept that this chapter now turns.

2.5 The epistemic enviro-surf community

> "Epistemic communities are neither philosophers, nor kings, nor philosopher kings". (Haas 1992b p371)

They are, I argue in this case, surfers. In this section I develop this argument by critically exploring the theoretical underpinnings of the epistemic communities' framework, and relating its key characteristics back to the enviro-surf community.

The word epistemic relates to knowledge or to the degree of its validation, and stems from the Greek word epistḗmē (Oxford Dictionary). The word has formed the basis for a number of conceptual explorations; Foucault used the term in his work, declaring that:

> "in any given culture and at any given moment, there is always only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice" (Foucault 1971 p168).

Ruggie later "borrowed" this notion, using it to refer to "a dominant way of looking at social reality, a set of shared symbols and references, mutual expectations and a mutual predictability of intention" (1975 p569). The term has also been used by Knorr-Cetina, who in 1981 used 'epistemic communities' in her anthropological study of scientists. She later developed this study to explore 'epistemic cultures' (1999), and Holzer and Marx use the term epistemic community to "reference a shared faith in the truth" (1979). However, due to its role in the mobilisation of policy, the epistemic community framework that is of primary interest in this study comes from international relations. In this field, an epistemic community is defined by Haas as:

> "a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area" (1992a p3).

The domain in this instance is surfing, and I argue in this thesis that the group of surfers who make up the enviro-surf community, identified and explored in depth in Chapter 4, can be categorised as epistemic in nature. They comprise a network of professionals, who have expertise and competence in the social and environmental aspects of surfing and have claimed an authority in regard to knowledge that is relevant for effective activism in that niche. The concept of epistemic communities provides a framework through which I can explore the network, and the generation and perpetuation of its knowledge. Additionally, as will be discussed in Section 2.6, in viewing the enviro-surf community as epistemic, policy mobilities can be adopted as a framework to explore how the group have developed and mobilised World Surfing Reserves as a strategy for surfbreak protection.

As networks of experts, epistemic communities can be important features in the process of policy making, constituting a key means through which knowledge and causal connections can be applied to the formation and coordination of policy (Haas 2001 p11579). However, not all experts, nor networks of experts, constitute an epistemic community, and I now move to discuss how the latter have been studied, and how they are distinguished. To do this, I draw heavily upon the work of Peter Haas, whose conceptual framework of epistemic communities, laid out in the introduction to special edition of *International Organisation* in 1992, is widely regarded as "the keystone" text in the field (Dunlop 2012 p230).

This framework was originally intended to address the processes of decision making around complex and uncertain issue areas on an international scale, and was well received in International Relations. Now almost 30 years old, this key literature has been developed, refined and applied to a range of empirical areas by analysts within and outside of its original discipline (Haas 2014). Haas attributes its initial success to its utility, claiming that it "provided a means for focusing on the ideational component of politics, and allowed for agency in theorizing about governance, decision making and policy making" (2014 p 32). Still recognised as an effective tool for these tasks, as will be demonstrated through its application to this project, the framing power of Haas's 1992 work has generated a body of analyses which "reaches beyond novelty and uncertainty and into everyday public policy" (Dunlop 2016, p275). In spite of such acclaim, or perhaps because of its relatively broad

uptake, a range of critiques have been voiced. Early criticism came from political scientists, who called for clarity around state theory and the role of domestic politics in transnational epistemic communities, along with clearer metrics for recognition, and measurement of consensus within communities (Haas 2014; Milner 1992; Risse-Kappen 1994). Science and technology studies literature also approached the original research critically, questioning the political autonomy of epistemic communities, challenging the value of science-based arguments for public policy, and highlighting the potential for implicit bias within research and policy programmes (Litfin 1994; Jasanoff 1996; Lidskog and Sundqvist 2002; Walker 2001). In a further critical example, Toke asks whether the dominance of epistemic communities over environmental groups is exaggerated by Haas, and, in acknowledging the social context of the problems being tackled, questions the ability of epistemic communities to produce value-free conclusions (Toke 1999). As such, Toke argues for a post positivist approach to their analysis (ibid). Pieterse warns, in his work on integrated urban development in South Africa, that epistemic communities must remain aware of their position, and incorporate strategies to critique or even disband themselves, should they lose the ability to identify and produce forms of governance that are new or different (2006). As Pieterse states:

> "There will undoubtedly be the danger that an epistemic community can lose its sense of what constitutes creative alternatives that can resonate with present crises, for what is cutting edge and innovative is profoundly contextual, subjective and generational" (2006 p290).

Haas argues that many of the points raised in such critical discussions were "explicitly acknowledged in the initial formulation of the epistemic community research programme- namely, the political nature of all policy debate" (Haas 2015 p8). The programme has, however, since 1992, been refined by Haas (2001; 2007; 2014; 2015) and other analysts including Dunlop (2000, 2012), Antoniades (2003) and Davis Cross (2013). This work has responded to many of the above criticisms to provide clarification of relevant political theory, such as the role of the state as a key actor in a complex policy environment, and where information is valued but not distributed evenly between, or even within countries (Haas 2015). To defend the position of epistemic communities as conduits of knowledge-based, relatively impartial policy making, Haas has turned to the notion of 'pragmatic constructivism' (after Haas and Haas 2002), arguing that "while perceptions are socially constructed, political actors and social science experts are not subject to the same set of

influences" (Haas 2014 p35). Furthermore, hypotheses of the mechanisms, effects and variations in epistemic communities' influence have been strengthened, along with better understandings of the temporal, functional and political circumstances in which influence can be exercised (Haas 2015). As our global political context has changed so extensively, these developments have maintained the relevance of the epistemic communities research programme, and allowed for its scope to be broadened. However, while many of the specific details of the framework have been made clearer, the key definitions laid out in Haas's 1992 work have, as will be highlighted later in this section, remained consistent.

As Haas' reflection on the use and debate of his concept demonstrates, effective engagement with the epistemic communities literature requires a consideration of its more critical interpretations (Mabon et al 2019). In this spirit, I now go on to acknowledging the range of further research that has been conducted in line with Haas's framework, that both draws from and contributes to its ongoing development.

As a complex and uncertain issue area, environmental policy has been a key driver in the uptake of the epistemic communities framework, and a great deal of further work aligns with both the conceptual (epistemic communities) and empirical (environmental governance) focus of the original research. This includes Mediterranean pollution and marine policy, the discovery and understanding of ozone depletion and the role, and eventual banning, of CFC gases, and the role of bovine growth hormones for example (Haas 1989; 1990; 1992b; Dunlop 2010). Though often approached with a directly scientific gaze, epistemic communities literature has been applied in numerous ways to deal with a range of empirical areas. On an international level, drug policy, legal convergence in the EU, minority rights, and monetary policy have all been found to have associations with epistemic communities (Elvins 2003; van Waarden & Drahos 2002; Galbreath & McEvoy 2013; Verdun 1999). Nationally, the role of epistemic communities in the shaping of policies as varied as pension reform, privatisation and human development have been analysed (Orenstein 2008; Kogut & MacPherson 2008; ul Haq 1995). Additional work has also subjected epistemic communities to "conceptual stretching", where alternative/ less conventional policy actors and issue areas are analysed through its lens (Haas 2014p 39). Sandahl, for instance applies the concept of epistemic communities to her study of religious actors, with the aim of building insight into peacebuilding, meditation and violent movements or terrorism networks that justify their actions through religion (2010). In another example, Cinquegrani's 2002 work finds that futurist networks could be considered as an embryonic epistemic community, suggesting that

in order to become active, it needs to have links to traditional and democratic forms of power. These examples of conceptual stretching are particularly important for this project. In applying the principles of epistemic communities on both international and local/translocal levels, and through the empirical focus of surfbreak protection, this work presents a further stretching; an innovative adaptation of the concept, beyond the international and supranational characteristics of the fields which have typically been analysed through this lens. In doing so, it aligns with Toke's critique of Haas's work in recognising the need for a more open minded, 'post-positivist' approach to epistemic communities (1999).

Evidenced through the above examples, the actors involved in epistemic communities can be as diverse as the topics that they engage with. Epistemic communities may be comprised, according to Haas, of "professionals from a variety of disciplines" (1992a p3), such as those associated with "natural science, engineering, ecology, and even economics" (Haas 2001 p11581). Once again, I expand Haas's list of example fields to include surfing. Though many of the actors within this group (detailed in Chapter 4) fall into the already listed disciplines professionally, their surfing identities and expertise has, I argue, played an important role in both the coming together of a network focussed on this littoral niche domain, and their efficacy.

While epistemic communities literature has been critiqued, developed and utilised in various ways, for a group to be defined as epistemic, it should comprise four common features. First presented by Haas in 1992, the following criteria have come to be regarded as the 4 "standard elements" in epistemic communities (Haas 2014 p31). These are:

> (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members
>
> (2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes;
>
> (3) shared notions of validity – that is, intersubjective, internally-defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and
>
> (4) a common policy enterprise – that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of

the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence' (Haas, 1992a, p. 3).

I argue in this thesis that the enviro-surf community has these three shared components, and that the World Surfing Reserve Programme is a common policy enterprise that meets the expectations of the 4th criteria. This manifests the enviro-surf community as an epistemic entity. Members of this community have expertise, and this is being put into practice; in setting a political agenda in line with these terms, they are creating barriers which make it more difficult for people to threaten their surfing practice, and the places in which this can occur. In creating and reinforcing this expertise through shared beliefs, the enviro surf community are positioned to gain access to, and influence decision makers. The individual actors who comprise the community are of importance, and the authority and legitimacy that can be acquired is tightly linked to social capital; when presenting robust and unique knowledge,

"it matters not only what some member says, but who says it" (van Waarden and Drahos 2002 p930)

Combined, these factors shape the narrative around the specific surfers who have rights, ability and political potential to implement the World Surfing Reserve programme and further reinforce the shared beliefs and validity claims of the group.

In establishing that the enviro surf community is epistemic in nature, it is possible to engage with policy mobilities literature, which makes an assumption that it is these groups who are responsible for creating and moving policy, to frame the analysis of the transference and transformation, or movement and mutation, of World Surfing Reserves.

2.6 Policy mobilities

Policy mobilities builds on policy transfer literature to incorporate mobilities and poststructuralist approaches to government, in an attempt to critically frame the movement of policy through a combination of assemblages, mobilities and mutations (Baker & Trebenos 2015; Clarke 2012; McCann 2011; McCann and Ward 2012, 2013, 2015; Peck 2011). Policy mobilities scholars "argue for an understanding of policy making as a multiple scaled, relational and emergent social process" (McCann & Ward 2012 p328) wherein policy is

viewed as a "global-relational social and spatial process which interconnects and constitutes actors, institutions and territories" (ibid). This approach acknowledges that policy is constructed, and mobilised by certain groups from within certain spaces. Not all policy is mobilised; some is created locally to address local issues and is applicable only in that circumstance. Increasingly, however, similar problems, and ways of identifying these problems occur in multiple locations. In these instances, it may not make sense for decision makers to devise a new strategy response, but to explore those already in place elsewhere. This could be due to a lack of resources to generate bespoke policy, or perhaps a result of pressure to replicate policy perceived as 'best practice', or to maintain pace with other locations (from TNCs for example). If a suitable, tried and tested, policy solution is available to meet a problem, then its adoption can be prudent, though it's form will inevitably alter to suit its new host, as Clarke et al state, "When policy moves, it is always *translated:* that is, it is made to mean something in its new context." (2015 p 9). Translocated policies therefore do not remain exactly the same; while underlying philosophies and policy instruments are largely consistent, the implemented policy varies, or mutates, according to the political contexts and actors involved (McCann 2011; McCann and Ward 2012; Peck 2011; Peck & Theodore 2010).

A relatively new field of study, the concept of urban policy mobilities has emerged to understand this movement and has been taken to understand a broad range of policy areas including, for example, drug strategy (McCann 2008), policing (Swanson 2014), telecoms and water (Larner and Laurie 2010), business improvement districts (Cook & Ward 2012); financing (Baker et al 2016), and education (Ball 2016). I argue that it can help to understand World Surfing Reserves, and in widening this scope further to include surfbreak protection, I have been afforded the theoretical tools which have allowed for a unique exploration of the emergence and mobilisation of World Surfing Reserves and their intricacies.

Throughout this thesis I argue that the enviro-surf community is epistemic in nature. I also state that World Surfing Reserves are an example of a common policy enterprise that has become a mobile, and global response to challenges to the surf zone. Through my initial study of World Surfing Reserves, a process which is explored in depth in Chapter 3, it was found that each designated Reserve was based on broadly similar elements though were vastly different in practice. Actors shared a view that their surf break required, and was worthy of, protection and saw the World Surfing Reserve programme as a solution to the identified problem, thus presenting a policy option to be replicated. In this thesis I will argue

that in spite of a shared macro philosophy (surfbreak protection), and common policy instrument (World Surfing Reserves), each designated Reserve differed widely as a result of the varying political contexts and cultural practices that they were subjected to locally. The World Surfing Reserve model was therefore shown to be both global in its reach, and highly localised in its practice. Certain elements were being transferred directly, while others were altered, erased or elevated. Similar findings are outlined in McCann's 2011 work, in which he uses the example of Vancouver as a model city, describing the process of its exporting of urban policies to Seattle. He remarks that the two share multiple characteristics; both occupy a waterside location, and serve a similar sized population, yet there are also stark differences in, for example, the political, legislative and popular contexts of the two settings which insist that a policy programme is not directly replicated.

Though the urban policies of Vancouver may seem far removed from threatened surf spots, in moving and mutating slightly the concept of urban policy mobilities I am able to be informed by its principles, using them to explore circulations of knowledge, policy design and governance in surfbreak protection. In turn, I am contributing to the "rolling conversation" within the undefined paradigm (Peck 2011 p774), adding to its breadth of focus and demonstrating that the surrounding literature is, like the policies it seeks to understand, transferable.

To clarify this position further, the following paragraphs explore the concept of policy mobilities by looking at its foundations in policy transfer literature, before offering a critique, and a discussion on how the subject has been taken up in geography. Using key themes identified by policy mobilities scholars, I then focus on the "assemblages, mobilities and mutations" of policy, and move on to discuss the key actors, and locations in which these mobilisations occur (after McCann and Ward 2013).

2.6.1 **Policy transfer**

A starting point in policy mobilities, policy transfer is 'a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions etc. in one time and/or place is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place' (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, p. 344). Though often forwarded through governmental involvement, policy can be transferred by a range of agents, including corporations, international organisations and non-governmental organisations (Stone 2000). Dolowitz and Marsh identify 6 categories of actors who are involved in policy transfer, remarking that in

each case of transfer, it is likely that more than one of these categories are involved. The categories are: elected official, political parties, bureaucrats/civil servants, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs/experts, and supra-national institutions (1996 p345).

There are also several possible distinctions when considering what is being transferred, and why. A hard transfer for example is the transfer of a programmes or implementations, while a soft transfer would incorporate the movement of ideas or concepts (Evans and Davies 1999). These transfers can be made through a continuum between voluntary and coercive means (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000). Voluntary transfers, it is suggested, most often occur when the status quo is unsatisfactory, and a lesson in better practice is sought, yet they can also be utilised for political gain, to evidence and justify decisions that have already been made, or as Haas suggests, in times of uncertainty (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, Rose 1991, Haas 1989). In contrast to this rational importing of ideas and programmes, coercive policy transfer is the notion that, to varying degrees, policy is imposed in a new setting (Evans 2009). This includes direct coercion, where one government forces another to introduce change, often against the will of its people, as was a common feature in imperialist rule, for example (ibid p246). Coercive policy transfer can also include policies which are conditional, stipulated as part of negotiations and imposed by supranational organisations such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, or obligational, as imposed through treaties for example (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996 Evans and Davies 1999). Indirect coercive transfers can occur as a result of externalities such as atmospheric pollution, through the emergence of an international consensus or through the perception that one is 'falling behind' one's neighbours (Cairney 2019).

World Surfing Reserves have been transferred voluntarily; though the application process is competitive, designation coveted, and rivalry between communities often strong, there are no fundamentally coercive elements to the adoption of surfbreak protection programmes into policy. Individuals and communities want to be included in the programme to be recognised globally as significant. Outside of the programme itself, soft transfers of policy learning can be found, as members of the enviro-surf community develop alternative strategies for implementation (See, for example Orchard 2017 for a comparison of the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand approaches to surfbreak protection).

The extent to which a policy is transferred can also be placed on a continuum, with Rose categorising the degrees of transfer from copying to inspiration, with emulating,

hybridisation, synthesis in between (1993). These terms have since been expanded (by Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, 2000, Rose 2005, Prince 2010) to the point that Benson and Jordan state that there are so many categories and types of transfer that:

> "any form of knowledge transfer, be it negative or positive, could now be considered a form of policy transfer" (2011 p370-371).

Additionally, a number of factors have been identified as enabling or constraining policy transfer. The complexity of a programme affects its transferability, with those containing a single goal, or pertaining to a simple problem being more transferable than those with multiple aims, or complex problems. How direct the relationship is between the solution and problem, and the perception of side effects similarly play a role, as does the amount of information available about how such a solution works elsewhere. Also touted as a factor is the ease in which outcomes of a transferred programme can be predicted (Rose 1993). Dolowitz and Marsh add that prior political commitments, and economical pressures may add constraints, while common values and aligned political ideologies may enable the smoother transfer of policy (1996). Different obstacles at different phases of transfer have also been identified; cognitive prior to a decision being made, environmental during implementation, and finally the obstacle of public opinion (Evans 2009). Benson and Jordan go on to conceptualise these, and other constraints, into four types: demand side, programmatic, contextual and application. They stress that as the employment of policy transfer has increased in governance analysis, so too have the volume of questions and puzzles which can no longer be "explained solely in transfer terms" (2011 p 373).

In this study the demand for policy to be adopted comes largely from surfers. This presents a somewhat unusual example through which to study the transfer of policy, and an example that does not fit neatly into conventional understandings discussed here. Indeed, policy transfer literature has been criticised in a range of areas for failing to account for socio-spatial variations, and the relationality of specific policy making sites (Theodore & Peck 2012). Policy mobilities scholars have, in response to these shortcomings, developed an approach that is more suitable to the geographical intricacies of policy making and movement.

Until the 21st century, policy transfer research was largely limited to political science. Though the contemporary field is broader and more dynamic, embracing and being embraced by other disciplines, it maintains an overtly rationalist epistemology (Benson & Jordan 2012). Among those who have taken an alternative philosophical approach, are key protagonists in

urban policy mobilities, and social constructivist human geographers, McCann and Ward. The two authors frame key criticisms of policy transfer, which I will briefly summarise before moving to discuss how policy mobilities addresses these concerns by incorporating the notions of assemblages, mobilities and mutations. They argue that too much focus is placed on agents and the categories into which they fit, and not enough on agency, or the processes of mobilisation and the wider contexts in which this occurs. This can result in a "tendency to downplay the social practices of comparison, education, emulation, imitation and persuasion that geographers have found in their studies" (McCann and Ward 2013 p6). They suggest also that too great an emphasis is placed on the transfer of policy on a national scale, thus failing to accommodate policies that move locally, regionally, and, like World Surfing Reserves, between communities internationally. The study of policy transfer, they argue, carries an implicit literalism, and does not account for the often complex, selective and multilateral facets of its movement; to use McCann's analogy,

> "policy, models and ideas are not moved around like gifts at a birthday party, or jars on shelves, where the mobilisation does not change the character and content of the mobilised objects" (McCann 2011 p115).

These issues have been addressed in policy mobilities through the themes of assemblage, mobilities, and mutation. The bringing together of these concepts allows for a more 'geographically sensitive' approach to policy making, and it is to these themes that I now turn.

2.6.2 **Assemblages, mobilities and mutations**

> "A theory of assemblages, and of the processes that create and stabilize their historical identity, was created by the philosopher Gilles Deleuze in the last decades of the twentieth century. This theory was meant to apply to a wide variety of wholes constructed from heterogeneous parts. Entities ranging from atoms and molecules to biological organisms, species and ecosystems may be usefully treated as assemblages" DeLanda 2006 p3

Earlier in this chapter we discussed the surfed wave as an assemblage, and now, demonstrating the wide variety of constructed wholes that this theory can be applied to, we turn to the notion of policy as an assemblage. A key feature of policy mobilities is the postulation that:

> "policies and the territories they govern are not entirely local constructions, but neither are they entirely extra-local impositions. They are assemblages of parts of the near and far, of fixed and mobile pieces of expertise, regulation, institutional capacities, etc. that are brought together in particular ways for particular interests and purposes." (McCann and Ward 2013 p8)

This understanding of policy making, as a "scaled, relational and emergent social process", provides opportunity to delve into the intricacies of the policy being studied, to explore the context from which it is coming, and to where it is going, the actors involved in its inception and its adoption, how its meanings are created and mutated (McCann & Ward 2012 p328). In this case, I look to the enviro-surf community, the local communities, local government, water users, beach goers, and so on.

World Surfing Reserves are a co-constitution, made of factors which have emerged on multiple scales, in multiple spaces, influenced by multiple actors. The programme itself, as will be seen in Chapter 5, came about as a joint enterprise, a common policy goal which in itself drew upon existing programmes, such as UNESCO world heritage sites and Australian National Surfing Reserves, and has been translated into various contexts since. In understanding the programme as an assemblage, or a "bundle of knowledge and techniques purposefully gathered together for particular reasons", it opens opportunity to explore its fundamental components and the implications of its uptake (Temenos & McCann 2013 p 347).

Along with the programme itself, another important assemblage in policy mobilities is that of the spaces in which policy models move and mutate (ibid). These emergent spaces of flow, or 'globalising microspaces' (after Larner and le Heron 2002), are where actors and their ideas come together, merging "'parts' of elsewhere" into one assemblage" (Allen and Cochrane 2007 in Temenos & McCann 2013). These are important locations in the shaping of policies and policy learning (McCann 2013, p123); as "sites of encounter, persuasion and motivation", this is where networks can be developed, knowledge can be shared, and plans can be made (Temenos and McCann 2013 p346).

Spaces of persuasion can include meeting rooms, workshops or conferences, and there are a number of examples of microspaces that are relevant in this project; particularly conferences which have become well established in recent years. I suggest that The Global Wave Conference is the most significant of these microspaces, and, as will be discussed in Chapter 4 and 7, this brings together members of the epistemic enviro-surf community, and other

interested parties to forward agendas and programmes in a way that clearly demonstrates the professionalism and maturation of environmental activism in surfing. In addition to providing space for persuasion and storytelling, microspaces are key 'moorings' in systems of mobility; places where something moving, whether abstract or tangible, an idea or vehicle for example, can "touch down in one sense of another to gain fuel or traction" (Temenos and McCann 2013 p346; See also Adey 2006; England and Ward 2007; McCann 2011; Cook and Ward 2012).

An essential component in the concept of mobilities, moorings are the immobile or fixed 'transfer' points, through which movement can be facilitated (Hannam et al 2006). The airport is often used as a model example of such a notion; though itself immobile, it is a crucial node in a system which links places together, thus connecting those that are part of the network, and distancing those that are not (ibid). While moorings, and the immobile, play an important role in mobilities, the concept is inextricably bound to movement on multiple scales. As Hannam et al state,

> "the concept of mobilities encompasses both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world, as well as the more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space and the travel of material things within everyday life" (2006 p1).

According to Sheller and Urry, "the entire world seems to be on the move" (2006 p 207), and its breadth of study is such that mobility is now a key concept in human geography, constituting a vital component in the theoretical understandings of space, place and the human world (Massey 2005). Studies on mobilities now focus on a vast range of subjects, exploring for example; human mobility, through cycling (Spinney 2009, 2015), running (Cook et al 2016), trains (Bissell, 2009), planes (Lin, 2016), and mobilities of the non-human, including topics such as data (Kitchin and Dodge, 2011), disease (Lavau 2014), warfare (Merriman et al 2017), and, as explored through this thesis, the mobility of ideas and policy (McCann 2008; Peck & Theodore 2010; Phelps 2017; Prince 2017).

In an important conceptual distinction, it should be noted that mobility is not just movement. As Cresswell explains, movement between point A and B does not take into account the social meanings or power relations that are involved in the journey, whereas mobility does. He argues that mobility is to be understood as "a thoroughly social facet of life imbued with meaning and power, composed of elements of social time and social space" (Cresswell 2006 p4). These social elements, laden with power and meaning, play a significant role in the mobilisation of policy, as although circuits of knowledge may be produced by epistemic

communities and disseminated in global microspaces, this "flow" of information only becomes "productive when it is embedded or territorialized in specific social, spatial and institutional contexts (Peck and Theodore 2008 in McCann 2011 p123).
In these specific contexts, the mobilised policy will ordinarily emerge in a different way than it originated (McCann and Ward 2010). It mutates over the course of its movement, and as it becomes re-established into a new place. Policy mobilities, unlike policy transfer, takes into consideration these changes, tending to reject the notion of replication and rational diffusion, to instead "explore the politicised processes of networking and mutation across shifting social landscapes (Peck and Theodore 2010 p173). As it moves from California to Australia, for example, World Surfing Reserves mutate; the designation criteria and broad aims remain consistent, though as different threats, political and social settings emerge, those who are mobilising the policy seek to adapt it to suit its new environment. Shown in Chapter 6, this mutation has been very important in the acceptance of the programme in the Gold Coast.

While epistemic communities take up the task of identifying problems and developing policy solutions, the mobilisation of policy incorporates a range of actors. As mobilities are social practices, it is important to consider who mobilises policy, and as a guide to how to these mobilisers can be identified and classified, McCann (cautiously) offers a typology of key actors which fall into 3 broad categories, which are summarised in Table 2 (2011 p114).

As will be shown throughout this work, the enviro-surf community both draws upon, and constitutes actors from the breadth of these categories in order to pursue its aims; in turn facilitating the mobilisation and adoption of the World Surfing Reserve programme. In addition to a range of actors, the spaces in which they operate are also important features of policy mobilities, with McCann emphasising the role of site visits and conference attendance, claiming "that face to face interactions in these globalizing microspaces play a central role in shaping policies and policy learning" (McCann 2010 p123). Access to these spaces is important for both the mobilisation of policy, and for the study of it, with the researcher learning much in the same vein as the actors (through presentations and conversations for example, ibid; Wood 2016). Methodologically, policy mobilities literature has taken a number of approaches, including the forwarding of an assemblage approach, and 'follow the policy' which explore the construction of policies and as parts from elsewhere, and as components of translocal networks of expertise respectively (Baker and McGuirk 2017, McCann and Ward 2012; Peck and Theodore 2012). As this chapter comes to a close, having shown in this section that in viewing policy through assemblages, mobilities and mutations,

policy mobilities affords us with a framework through which the socio-relational complexities of the World Surfing Reserves programme can be explored, this thesis now moves to the methodological approach that I have engaged to conduct my research.

Table 2 Agents of policy mobility

	Examples	Role
Local Policy Actors	Policy professionals o Urban planners o Policy consultants Civil Society Groups Activists Non-Profit Organisations	Learn about policy models and identify examples of best practice e.g. o cities to emulate o experts to learn from Build connections through policy networks Physically bring experts to the city to inform locals about policies.
Global Consultocracy (after Saint-Martin 20	Individuals Firms Think Tanks	Incoming policy consultants o come to a city to inform and impart knowledge Outgoing policy consultants o based in one city and present its successes elsewhere Highly mobile Powerful conduits of information
Informational Infrastructure	Individuals Institutions Organisations Technologies	Interpret, frame, package and represent information about best policy practices, successful cities and cutting-edge ideas. Educators/trainers o codify information o credentialize and legitimate particular forms of expertise Professional Organisations o frame and disseminate expert policy knowledge (through conferences, awards etc) Popular media o construct narratives of good/bad policies o repeat & popularise findings from experts and organisations

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored a wide range of literature to contextualise this thesis, and present the key theoretical and empirical texts which have provided its conceptual foundations. Beginning by situating this work in the field of human geography, I discussed how the important concept of place has been interpreted by geographers in a number of ways, and paid particular attention to Casey's notion of co-constitution, which resonates with both surfing place, and surfers' identity as an assemblage of both surf and shore. I then looked to the physical and cultural aspects of the surf zone, identifying the wide range of components that combine to create a rideable wave, and the threats that are faced when these components are disrupted. From the place of surf zone, I moved to the practice of surfing, and presented a potted history which demonstrates how surfing has changed. In a contested trajectory, surfing has become a heavily represented, mainstream activity which enamours its participants around the world. The motivations to surf vary widely, and an equivalent range of values are attached to both the place and practices of surfing. When threatened, some surfers have been driven to protect these valuable assets. Section 4 explored the ways in which these surfers have gone about this, and how approaches have evolved over the last 5 decades; moving from reactive, localised protest to proactive, professional strategies. As I argue that this group has become authoritative experts in this niche domain of surfbreak protection, I explored the role of expertise in policy making, before drawing on Haas's epistemic communities framework as a way to explore and understand the functioning of the enviro-surf community. Key aspects of its origins and approach are outlined in Section 5, and Section 6 presents an overview of policy mobilities, a concept that I posit is an effective way through which the *spatial* and *social* movement of World Surfing Reserves can be analysed. Policy mobilities builds on policy transfer literature through the themes of assemblages, mobilities and mutations in a more 'geographically sensitive' approach to the innovation and mobilisation of policy as a relational, emergent social process. Involved in this process are a range of actors who operate across scales, and engage in and create 'globalising microspaces', in which policy learning and mobility can occur.

I argue that these literatures enable me to engage insightfully with the key questions of this thesis, which Chapters 4-8 will discuss in full. I now turn in Chapter 3 to explore, in depth, the methodological approach that this project has taken.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this project, epistemic communities' literature is used as a way of analysing the phenomenon of the World Surfing Reserves programme and the broader enviro-surf community. In turn, policy mobility frameworks are utilised to chart the movement and mutation of the programme itself. Having established the conceptual foundations and the central research questions in the preceding chapters, attention is now turned to the methodological processes which have shaped this work, and the relevant and robust data which have informed it.

Taking constructivist ontological and interpretivist epistemological positions, a qualitative research programme was required to understand the creation and movement of surf break protection policy, through the example of the World Surfing Reserves programme. To meet this overarching research objective, I have employed a number of methods, constructing a research design which has emerged from a hybrid grounded theory-case study framework. Following extensive desk-based content/discourse analysis, a three-phase programme of empirical fieldwork was conducted; preliminary fieldwork, case study selection, and a final focussed phase. Methods used include an online electronic survey, completed by 150 participants, ethnographic observations and 30 semi structured interviews, all of which have informed and guided this work. The data collected was analysed using a series of codes which were then interpreted in order to answer the three key research questions:

- Who or what is the enviro-surf community?
- How does the enviro-surf community demonstrate itself in practice?
- How do World Surfing Reserves work in practice?

This chapter explores the key methodological elements of this project. I begin with a brief explanation of the constructivism-interpretivist philosophical assumption that I adhere to, and which consequently underpins this research. I then reflect on the role of positionality, and describe some of the key traits which have influenced this work, such as my identity as a surfer, and a queer, white, Welsh woman. The chapter then moves on to discuss the research design framework, outlining the choices made in conjunction with the evolution of the work

and the opportunities and challenges that accompany such an approach. I then detail the practical steps taken in the 3 stages of research, before I move to focus on the methods that have been used, and how they have been used in this research. The penultimate element of this chapter looks towards the analysis of the data collected and my engagement with textual analysis, before ethical considerations are outlined.

3.2 Philosophical assumptions.

The philosophical foundations of all research projects are important as they provide the base from which the work is designed and carried out. These foundations are made up of ontology, which is the position that the researcher takes on reality, and epistemology, which is the researcher's stance on what is deemed to be acceptable forms of knowledge and knowing. Since this study is looking at surf break protection mechanisms and the opinions, interpretations and values of surfers, a constructivist ontological position has been adopted. Constructivism is a subjective approach which "describes the dynamic, contingent, and culturally based condition of the social world" (Adler, 2005 p11), and operates on the assumption that social properties emerge out of interactions between individuals. This view of the social world as a continually evolving process, is in contrast to objectivism, whereby phenomena are deemed to be 'out there' and separate from those involved in its construction" (Bryman, 2004, p. 266).

While ontological assumptions are based on researchers' and respondents' perceptions of reality, the epistemological position relates to most appropriate forms of knowledge given these ontological assumptions (Rubin and Rubin, 2011). This could be based on a positivist model of science which treats 'social facts' as existing independently of the activities of both participants and researchers" (Silverman, 2013, p.103). The alternative, adopted in this case, is an epistemological position of interpretivism. Interpretivism places emphasis on understanding the social world by examining "the interpretation of that world by its participants" and is as such more appropriate starting point from which this work can depart (Bryman 2004 p.266).

In line with these foundations, a qualitative methodological approach is in place for the majority of this study; an approach which is more suitable than a quantitative alternative, as it better allows for the generation of descriptive, largely non numerical data which is open to subjective interpretation. This constructivist-interpretivism approach results in the

assumption that the social world cannot be seen as a single reality, and that the interactions of actors play a crucial role in the understanding of the phenomena being studied. In using this theoretical underpinning, I am required, as the researcher, to acknowledge the role of both myself and participants in the shaping of results. I have attempted to balance the inherent subjectivities of such an approach to understand and interpret my own positionality, the details of which will now be explored.

3.3 Positionality

I am a surfer

I am white

I am queer

I am welsh

I am lower middle class

To use these rigid labels to identify myself seems awkward and unwelcome. Throughout this research, however, it has been of great importance to both recognize and reflect on how these characteristics have, or could have, influenced this work. Research does, after all, represent a space shared by researcher and participant, and as such, it is necessary to acknowledge the role that both play in the processes and outcomes of a projects' data collection and analysis (England, 1994).

The recognition of key identity traits such as gender, race, and class as relational positions can allow for "narrative placement for researcher objectivity and subjectivity whereby the researcher is situated within the many aspects of perspective and positionality" (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Though it may be assumed that participants and their responses will vary from case to case, it is important also to recognise that the characteristics of the researcher, whether in their role as an interviewer, writer, or conversant, can influence participant responses (Bourke, 2014, p. 1). Such influence could be perceived as positive or negative. In either instance, acknowledgement of the role that my identity has potentially played in the generation of the data, is required in order to render it valid. Additionally, positionality can be an important factor in whether access to certain spaces or actors can or cannot be gained, and in the resulting power dynamics that play out in various research settings. Every

researcher, according to Reyes, possesses an 'ethnographic toolkit' which "consists of researchers' social capital and backgrounds, among other characteristics, and shapes field access, field dynamics, and data analysis" (2018 p2).

I am a non-disabled person so faced no additional barriers when completing this work. As a white, female surfer from Wales, I suggest that I have occupied an 'in between position' in which I have been well placed to conduct research on the liminal space of the surf zone. The following paragraphs will now look to how my traits have positioned me in this way, starting with my identity as a surfer.

The surfer

At the outset of this project, I identified as a surfer. I understand the activity and have years of insight gained through time in the water and time spent poring uncritically over magazines, books and films, most of which depicted idyllic waves and water that was a world away from the cold, murky brown Bristol Channel within which I felt, and still feel, most at home. Though the same cannot be said for my practical skills, I am fluent in the language of surfing. I know the famous spots, the famous surfers, the famous movies. I can tell a good wave from a bad wave, know what it feels like to ride a variety of boards and even, when faced with a flat weekend and not much else to do, completed a course that, on paper, marked me as a qualified surf judge. My positionality as a "surfer" has been an important tool throughout this work. From the identification of research questions to the analysis of data collected, my own experience in surfing has been crucial. This characteristic has not only assisted my own understanding of the research field, but also how participants have been engaged in the project. I have found that lots of surfers love talking about surfing; a common ground created rapport quickly, and played a key role in how participants responded to questioning, particularly when discussing topics in a language and context that those without a surfing background may not be able to comprehend so smoothly.

In some ways, this identity has given me an insider status, providing a degree of credibility when attempting to ask questions and source answers, as well as in gaining access to spaces. As will be discussed later in this section however, as a welsh, female surfer, with ever dwindling time (and confidence) in the water, I remained at the margins of these spaces. It is for these reasons that I suggest that an in between position has been occupied.

The white queer woman

Over the course of this work, I became more aware of my whiteness, more aware of how white surfing is, and more aware of the explicit and implicit racism which has been, and continues to be worryingly prevalent in surfing culture. In relation to my own positionality, the privilege afforded to me as a white researcher has been significant, and I have a responsibility to both acknowledge and actively deconstruct this privilege in my work. To do this, for example, I have applied a critical lens to the study of the institutions, communities and individuals that form World Surfing Reserves. This includes the ways in which dominant narratives are perpetuated, settler colonialism is reified, and power remains in the hands of white people, particularly white men. The role of gender, linked inextricably to race, has also played a key role in this research. As a white woman, in a heavily male dominated field, I have been presented with both opportunity and limitation. I have for example, found community and support through the Institute for Women Surfers (see Comer 2019 for more on this public humanities programme), and have been approachable to a range of participants. On the one hand, as a woman I have been able to provide an opportunity for other women to feel comfortable to open up when talking to me. On the other, there are likely to have been instances where my gender might have encouraged male research participants to hide gendered or patriarchal opinions about women surfers which a male researcher may have been able to draw out.

An additional layer of complexity, when reflecting on these dynamics, of power and openness, is added, with the acknowledgement of my identity as a queer, gender non-conforming woman. This situates me in an interesting position in terms of how my research is conducted, and how I am perceived and received in the spaces in which this occurs. Though not appearing as a 'typical' surfer, I have been able to capitalise on my androgynous characteristics to adapt to varying interview and situational conditions. I can, in a largely unconscious manner, adjust my body language and language in order to effectively communicate with a wide variety of people which has been, for the most part, highly beneficial to this project (see, for example Bem 1974, Woodhill & Samuels 2004 and Cheng 2005 for more on the potential implications of psychological androgyny). A trade-off for this adaptability however is the sense that while I can effectively straddle the gender spectrum, I do not neatly fit into either side of the binary. Furthermore, I question the role of gender binaries, which adds an additional layer to the critical lens used throughout my research.

The Welsh researcher

While there are a great variety of surfing opportunities and a large number of surfers in Wales, the small nation does not often feature on the radar of surfers internationally. In terms of research positionality, this has been of importance. Being from Wales, and a woman, my identity as a surfer was often underemphasized as people were not aware of the opportunities that I had had to surf. Explanation was occasionally necessary, and was in some instances fairly patronizing (see Olive et al 2015).

Figure 6 Surfing in Wales: something for everyone.

Top: The author's brother takes on a difficult wave at a secret surf spot in West Wales (Source: Howells 2009) Bottom: The author rides a small wave at Surf Snowdonia, a commercial wavepool in North Wales (Source: Author 2015).

In conducting research far from home, I was never a 'local'; a loaded, label (see Chapter 2). While this would have been accompanied by a different set of privileges, such as established connections and a depth of knowledge of the area and its surfing community, the distance was not inherently problematic. Indeed, I suggest there were a number of positive aspects to this outsider status. A perception of prestige was seemingly attached to involvement in an international study, with participants open, and often proud to contribute to the work. Additionally, because I was not aware of them, my writing would not pose a threat to the revealing of local 'secret' spots, and as I was also unaware of existing conflicts, interests and reputations participants could talk openly, without an assumption of prior judgement. A potential negative side to such a blank slate, however, is that there were likely hidden aspects to responses and relationships, the conflicts between individuals in National Surfing Reserves and World Surfing Reserves being closed off to me initially for example (this conflict is explored in depth in Chapter 5).

Consideration of class

Though I found this to be less important than the other traits that have been covered thus far, another aspect for consideration is the role of class (Mellor et al 2014). I come from a working-class background, and would classify myself awkwardly as lower middle class as a result of my extended education, and ever supportive family. Over the course of the project, I maintained an awareness that I was in a very privileged position, as a PhD researcher, to be able to embark on the various stages of fieldwork which are outlined later in this chapter. I was able to travel to attend relevant events, meet a range of people, and spend extended periods of time in the field. As well as enhancing my understanding of the subject area and generating a rich data set, all of these factors demonstrate a level of freedom which comes as part of this privilege. On the whole, I found that my identity as a PhD researcher, was of far greater significance than any societal class label might have been. I conducted my work in a professional manner, and was responded to in a similar respect. I perceive the geographical location of the study to have been of greater significance than class due to the overt differences between my Welsh British, and the other cultures within which I found myself. These differences were more prevalent than the more subtle indicators of class, and were helpful in making conversation and in engaging participants.

Summary

As can be seen from the paragraphs above, this combination of traits, unique to me, inherently influence the research experience, data collection and analysis in this largely subjective piece of work. It has therefore been important to understand my own position, as someone who can gain access to, though does not fit neatly into, relevant spaces. Having established my positionality, I now turn to the methodological framework.

3.4 Research design

With an understanding of my philosophical foundations, and an awareness of my own positionality, I now turn to the processes involved in establishing a realistic, effective qualitative research design. Research designs, or strategies, are types of inquiry within the broader qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches, and provide a certain direction for procedures (Denzin and Lincoln 2011 p12).

The design of this research has evolved over the course of the project, with its structure being determined through two key frameworks: grounded theory and case study. These frameworks have been mutated to allow for the capitalization of research opportunities, generation of sound research questions and robust, rich data. The early stages of the work aligned closely with the principles of grounded theory; a topic area had been chosen, yet there was no preconceived theory and so it was possible to conduct analysis and develop theories after data had been collected, allowing for the open-minded exploration of the research. As the research questions were refined through this process, it became possible to apply established concepts (epistemic communities and policy mobilities) and adapt the project accordingly to conduct an in-depth analysis on the Gold Coast through a case study approach. An explanation of the rationale and practicalities behind such a strategy now follows, beginning with an overview of grounded theory and its associated opportunities and criticisms, before exploring the case study approach, and how each of these have been utilised in this project.

3.4.1 **Phase 1 - Grounded theory**

> "Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systemically gathered and analysed." (Strauss & Corbin 1994 p273)

This line of inquiry has been followed in numerous related studies (See, for example, Ponting & McDonald 2013; Usher et al 2016; Marshall et al 2019) and allows for the theory to evolve from the topic area through "through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection" (Strauss & Corbin 1998 p158). The key means of data collection in grounded theory research is interviews and observations. The opportunities presented to me in the early stages of this research provided an ideal basis from which to undertake preliminary fieldwork and practice. Subsequently, key concepts and categories emerged as a clearer picture of the subject area was gained. In keeping an open, though not blank, mind at the outset of this project, the work has been shaped in a way that has prioritised the collection of data that are "grounded in 'real world' situations" (Denscombe 2017 p111).

> "To be sure, one goes out and studies an area with a particular perspective, and with a focus, a general question or a problem in mind. But the researcher can (and we believe should) also study an area without any preconceived theory that dictates prior to the research, 'relevancies' in concepts and hypotheses" (Glaser and Strauss 1967 p33).

In line with this quotation from Glaser and Strauss, I began this project by studying a particular area with a general, generative question in mind, namely "why and how are surfers mobilising to engage in environmental activism, through the World Surfing Reserves programme?" This starting point was empirically focussed, and had a policy basis which was largely established. It did not however, have any theoretical base. Instead, I engaged in constant comparison, moving from the above generative question, to the identification of a theoretical sample, and initial analysis, and back again (Glaser 1978). This process moved through multiple iterations until it was possible to go beyond a superficial description of phenomena, and towards the generation of theory or schema (Creswell 2007 p63).

Critique of grounded theory

While such an approach was highly effective in this case, there are a number of critiques of grounded theory to be considered. The most apparent criticism surrounds the difficulty in practically setting aside theory at the outset of the work, and the resulting argument that researchers cannot conduct neutral observation. It is, after all, a requirement of bids or applications that this has been taken into consideration. In this instance, at the earliest stages of my work, I had a very superficial understanding of what theories might be engaged with and as such I found it straightforward to enter into the preliminary stages of this research. As my reading developed, and my understandings improved I became to appreciate this critique on a more practical level, and at this point, as will be seen in the next section, the research design began to evolve. It should be clarified however that a grounded theory approach can incorporate existing theories into the later stages of research (Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Glaser 1978).

Other critiques surrounding grounded theory come from philosophical divisions within the field itself. Charmaz for example, argues that the versions of grounded theory presented by the likes of Glaser and Strauss and Corbin are too positivist in their approach, taking phenomena as existing and as ready to be 'discovered' (2006). This is in contrast to her own view, as a constructivist, that we construct our world, and that the exploration of these constructions, by both the researcher, and participants, are key aspects of grounded theory research. As outlined in Section 3.2, I have also taken a constructivist approach and as such aligned more closely with Charmaz's interpretation of grounded theory.

A further draw back of the method is the extensive time that is required to move through the various iterations of research. I was fortunate to be afforded this time through an opportunity

to engage in a period of preliminary fieldwork. This preliminary fieldwork, conducted within a grounded theory methodological framework, made it feasible to generate multiple phases of research to a point where theory adoption and generation was possible. It was through this that I identified that an enviro-surf community existed and that, in relation to the literature, it could be considered as epistemic in nature. Also identifiable was that this group was motivated to, and capable of, mobilising surfbreak protection mechanisms. Though the language I used to describe these phenomena was different in these initial phases, and has since been refined as my knowledge in the existing fields of literature has developed, the data necessary to understand the context and identify, through initial analysis the key themes and issues of this project was produced. Additionally, it became clear that in order to illustrate how these findings played out in practice, exploration of a particular case, or cases would be required. The following paragraphs provide an overview of preliminary fieldwork, the steps taken in this first phase of the project, and lead into a discussion on the second phase of the project, and the second methodological approach used; the case study.

Preliminary Fieldwork

Defined here by Caine, Davison and Steward, preliminary fieldwork is:

> "the formative early stages of research in the field that allow for exploration, reflexivity, creativity, mutual exchange and interaction through the establishment of research relationships with local people often prior to the development of research protocols and ethics applications" (2009, p. 491).

In this case, such early stage research was completed in locations across Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and the United States. Semi structured interviews, ethnographic and auto ethnographic observations were conducted over a combined period of four months in 2017. An online survey had been made live since January 2017, and travel dates were manipulated to allow for attendance at international surfing conferences and other relevant events which I would now refer to as 'microspaces' (after Larner & Le Heron 2002; see section 2.6.2). Made possible through an award from Cardiff University's International Collaboration Seedcorn Fund, which aims to establish global university connections, the initial proposal was put together in a manner which incorporated short stays at four institutions, hosted by eminent scholars with interests in surfing, lifestyle sports, or coastal management. These scholars were selected first of all on their academic prominence, and secondly by their geographical location; universities close to World Surfing Reserves, or large surfing

populations, for example, were favourable. In addition, therefore, to meeting the aims of the collaboration project, opportunities for a programme of preliminary fieldwork, and consequential early iterations of the research design were also generated. The trip was split into two sections: Australasia from January to March, and North America from September to October 2017.

In each destination, efforts were made to engage in the local communities to establish a picture of what surfing meant to the area, and how its surfing space shaped the surfing lives of local, and visiting, water people. This was largely guided by the generative question outlined above; why and how are surfers mobilising to engage in environmental activism, through the World Surfing Reserve programme? And was explored by conducting interviews, engaging in informal conversations, attending relevant events, and conducting a range of observations. In addition to the terrestrial surf culture, a range of watery experiences were accumulated in locations where equipment could be sourced and surf conditions were suitable, enabling observations to occur in situ, and for an enhanced practical understanding of the natural and social local surfing environments. Table 3 summarises the work, and includes the locations, dates, opportunities, and outcomes achieved.

As shown in the table, a number of qualitative methods were employed to extract data from the various locations that made up the international collaboration scoping trip. This approach allowed for the piloting of a range of methods, while simultaneously identifying theoretical samples and generating data which was then analysed to identify themes and refine the research questions. This phase of the project also provided key context for the selection of the primary case study which would be explored in more detail to meet the aims of the project. Prior to the selection, it had been possible to visit 7 out of the 11 designated WSRs (10 at the time). During each visit, which ranged from 3 days to 3 weeks, observations were made in line with the generative question, and the four qualifying criteria for WSR designation set by Save the Waves. It became clear that the nature of each of these areas varied greatly; from awareness within communities to the settings themselves, little resemblance could be drawn between any two of the designated zones.

Table 3 Preliminary fieldwork

Date	Base Location	Additional Opportunities	Data Collected/Methods Used
January 2017	Centre for Coastal Management, Griffith University. Host: Professor Rodger Tomlinson	Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve Surf World Surf Museum Noosa National Park (unsuccessful WSR nominee at the time)	Interviews conducted with local council employees, surfers and WSR stewardship council members. Survey distribution. (auto)ethnography
February 2017	University of Waikato, School of Human Development and Movement Studies. Host: Associate Professor Belinda Wheaton	Surf breaks of National Significance: Raglan, Whangamata Raglan & District Museum	Interviews with members of the Surfbreak Protection Society. Survey Distribution (auto)ethnography
March 2017	Sydney (northern beaches) & Coolangatta (Gold Coast)	Manly World Surfing Reserve. International Surfing Symposium	WSR visit: informal conversations with tourist board employees, surfers and other members of the community. (auto)ethnography Surf conference hosted by Gold Coast WSR committee.
September 2017	San Diego State University, Centre for Surf Research. Host: Dr Jess Ponting	Bahía De Todos Santos World Surfing Reserve, Baja México. Malibu World Surfing Reserve, California International Surfing Museum, Huntington Beach, California & historically important surf spots of southern California.	Interview with WSR Manager in Mexico. Informal conversations with surfers, local community members and surf shop owners. (auto)ethnography Survey Distribution
October 2017	Northern California Host: Professor Krista Comer, Stanford University	Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve Santa Cruz Surf Film Festival Institute for Women Surfers, meeting 2017 Mavericks & Ocean Beach big wave spots.	(auto)ethnography IWS: Skill Shares; Critical and new surf cultures. Survey distribution Conversations with a wide range of stakeholders and community members. Tour of big surf spots by a renowned bodysurfer.
October 2017	University of Minnesota, Duluth. Department of History Host: Professor Scott Laderman	Lake Superior Surf Culture Surf History module	(auto)ethnography; alternative surfing spaces. Extensive discussions with Professor Laderman.

Figure 7 Surfing spaces of Phase 1

These photographs, all taken by the author during the preliminary fieldwork phase of this project, show the variations among surfing sites.
From left to right, Top row: Cowells Beach, Santa Cruz, CA (WSR), Malibu Beach, CA (WSR), Stoney Point, Lake Superior. Middle row: "3 Emes", Ensenada, Baja Mexico (Bahia de Todos Santos WSR); a surf contest at Avoca Beach, NSW, Australia; Bottom row. Ngarunui Beach, Raglan, Aotearoa, NZ. (Surfbreak of Special Significance) ; Manly Beach WSR, NSW, Australia; Kirra Point, QLD Australia (WSR)

The vast differences between sites, as illustrated in Figure 7, insisted that the approach taken was adapted for each location, and that each subsequently represented an additional iteration of the research project which were under constant comparison; as a new sample was identified, new data was collected and analysed. Then, as the project evolved and the induced theoretical findings became more closely aligned with the urban policy mobilities framework, it was established that a case study would be required to explore the application of such a notion.

As a response to some of the criticisms that are directed towards grounded theory, and as the potential benefits of a more focussed phase of research became clear, a hybrid approach was taken to both counter these arguments and extrapolate the opportunities which had been afforded to me. A case study approach was therefore used in the later stages of this project in order to build on initial findings and achieve the depth necessary to meet the research aims. It is to this approach that I now turn.

3.4.2 **Phase 2 - Case study approach**

Having explored some of the Reserves to experience how they function in practice, identified and established a conceptual framework through which this phenomenon can be understood, I undertook a process to select a single primary case study.

A case study approach is a widely in geography and the social sciences more broadly and is useful for researching complex socio-cultural phenomena as they allow for the provision of a holistic view of a case, along with scope for in depth exploration of particular aspects (Taylor et al 2016). The approach is appropriate when investigating the contemporary contexts and conditions of a social space, and or when an area holds distinctive features and should be selected after the research aims and hypotheses are laid out (Yin 2013). Case study research can be designed to focus on a single or multi-case basis, and can incorporate a range of methods depending on the aims that are identified (Gillham 2000). In this instance, interviews, participant observation, and a survey were used to explore the single selected case study: the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve. The following paragraphs explore how this decision was reached, and how this has impacted the research design of the overall project.

Case study selection

The selection of a case study for this project involved an assessment of the Reserves though criteria such as local engagement, local and national policy interactions, threats to the surf zone, societal conflicts, and practical considerations such my language capabilities and access to spaces. I ultimately decided that the Gold Coast would present the best opportunity to answer the research questions, and demonstrate how the WSR programme is mobile and mutative. This decision was made on the basis that there is an active local community who, for example have developed surf specific policy in conjunction with the local government. Designated in 2015, the Gold Coast was a timely choice; still emerging though fairly established.

A standout in the 2015 application process, it can be argued that the Gold Coast set a precedent, in terms of the expectations placed upon applicants towards a more sophisticated, thorough engagement with the programme and its processes. It has been an effective example through which to view the surf break protection as a movement or evolution of policy as per the policy mobilities framework. As will be explored in Chapter 5, the programme has its origins in Australia, as a National Surfing Reserve, and has been mobilised; to the USA, and back out to the world, including Australia, as World Surfing Reserves.

Prior to making this decision, a number of alternative scenarios were explored to ensure that the most appropriate case, or range of cases, were selected. I will briefly outline some of these rejected avenues of enquiry to highlight the process taken to reach this point.

An international comparison

Comparison between Reserves in the USA and Australia was considered as this would provide a clear argument that the policy programme had indeed been mobilised internationally. After visiting the Santa Cruz and Malibu sites however, it was realised that there was very little activity, particularly in the Malibu example. The difference in local engagement highlighted the importance of partnerships to the success of a World Surfing Reserve. The model of the WSR programme, as is discussed in depth in Chapter 5, requires local involvement to maintain momentum, to adapt to relevant geographical legal and political contexts, and to expand the limited resources held by *Save the Waves*. If a Reserve becomes dormant locally for example, it cannot function effectively (see Chapter 5 for more

on the importance of this multi-scalar engagement). This appears to be the case in Malibu, and is in contrast to the Gold Coast example, where the community had synergised locally and internationally. The lack of engagement and available resources therefore rendered such a comparison as less informative than a single, in depth case study.

Multi-site comparison

Another consideration that was made was to present a comparison of the 3 Australian WSRs. The 3 Australian examples demonstrate 3 different mechanisms, at 3 different stages of implementation. They share a common national policy, but differ on regional and local levels, presenting strong opportunities for analysis. All 3 have thriving surf communities, though very different in nature; Manly is a suburb of Australia's largest city; Noosa is a small, upmarket resort town; and the Gold Coast is made up of a number of towns and small cities which are dominated by the beach and ocean. Though these differences present an efficient snapshot of the differences in approach that are possible, in order to effectively chart the evolution of the WSR programme it was decided again that a single case study would allow for a more focussed, relevant, analysis. In effectively comparing the Gold Coast with the Gold Coast; its NSR and WSR, and analysing it in relation to its place in the broader network of WSRs, sufficient resources have been available, making the tracing of the policy mutation through a single location possible.

Potential practical problems

The other possible options were disregarded due to a variety of factors. My inability to speak Spanish or Portuguese was identified as a key issue for the WSRs in Peru, Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Portugal, and though an interpreter could be used, and many of the key stakeholders speak excellent English, it would be much more complex to speak to people on an ad hoc basis and it was deemed that such a lack of language skills would be detrimental to the quality of data collected. In Mexico for example, I found it difficult to find information, and even surf spots, by myself, and as I have no knowledge of the other South American sites, it would have proved too great a risk to focus on them.

One location which was considered, in spite of language barriers, was Ericeira in Portugal, due to its relatively close proximity to my home base, and the enthusiastic uptake within the community and local government. It is the most clearly marked example observed, and offered good potential as a case study. It was ultimately rejected however as the resources

available to me were relatively sparse. While there is a growing body of academic literature which is centred around Portuguese surfing (see, for example, Costa et al 2017; Machado et al 2018; Ramos et al 2019) my lack of language skills made it difficult to effectively interpret and understand both relevant policy information and empirical contexts.

USA? No way

As standalone case studies, the remaining options in the USA were ruled out. As touched upon earlier in this section, despite it being the world's first WSR, and an extremely famous, and popular surfing area there was no trace of the designation at Malibu, suggesting there was almost no engagement or even awareness locally. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5, and is highlighted by the following field note which is illustrative of a broader context in which no signs or symbols of the WSR exist, and in which those who I spoke to in the area had no knowledge of the programme or the designation in their vicinity.

Figure 8 Small surf at Surfrider Beach, Malibu

I went into a surf shop just across the road from the beach today, to see if anyone had any thoughts on the WSR, or ideas on where to find some information. The 'Surf Shack' was a classic beachside surf shop which sat atop a fish restaurant, close to Malibu's Surfrider Beach. There were (really expensive) rental boards lined up outside and the shop itself had the standard wares for sale. Boards, wetsuits, wax, leashes, some clothes. A number of men sat around talking. I approached a staff member and asked if he knew about WSRs. He looked at me blankly and said "umm, no sorry I don't". One of the other people in the shop, a young man around 20 years old then excitedly said "oh I have heard of those, there's one in Mexico!" The conversation went on, briefly about the programme, then moving to the lack of waves lately. The whole group were oblivious to the fact that they surf in one every day (Author's fieldnotes, 4th October 2017).
Image source: Author 2017

The only other WSR in the USA, in Santa Cruz, was considered as an option as it is based near to the headquarters of *Save the Waves*. This was one of the earlier Reserves to be designated and a Local Stewardship Council was not in place at its inception; the partnerships that are so important to a WSR were again, at this time, not synergised to the extent that is necessary for meaningful analysis. Though a plaque was tangible evidence of the Reserve status, observed local awareness was again limited and so the logistical benefits that may have arisen out of the proximity to the *Save the Waves* base were deemed to be inadequate.

The Gold Coast

With these factors in mind, and with the positive aspects of the Gold Coast outlined at the start of this section, the decision was made. In addition to the strong local engagement and relative sophistication of the Gold Coast WSR, the region holds strong links to academia and the enviro surf movement more broadly. The WSR committee was instrumental in bringing about the international surfing symposium in March 2017, and successfully lobbied to host the Global Wave Conference in 2020, supported by local and regional governmental and non-governmental bodies (GCWSR 2018). These conferences are important microspaces which, as discussed in Chapter 4, have played a significant role in the emergence of the enviro-surf community, and the mobilisation of its policies.

While the Gold Coast is the primary focus, observations from the other locations have been utilised where necessary, to draw comparisons and show variation between the Reserves. In addition to the other examples providing supplementary information, attention has been paid to the National Surfing Reserves (NSRs) programme, and in particular, the Gold Coast National Surfing Reserve. This has been important as the programmes are linked, and as such the varying trajectories of the each is of relevance when looking at how they have changed and evolved, as will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. In studying the Gold Coast example, it has been possible to draw on the literature of NSRs (e.g. Farmer & Short 2007; Orchard 2017; Short & Farmer 2012), and the wide range of surf and coastal management literature which has been based on and produced in Australia. In selecting this case study, my PhD has been able to both utilise, and contribute to, this growing field.

With this important decision made, it was then possible to bring together the understandings and concepts of the first phase of research, to this selected case study, and embark on the

final phase of fieldwork which would be more focussed towards reaching the project aims. It is to this phase that we now turn, as an overview of the plan is presented before the methods used are explored.

3.4.3 **Phase 3 - A focus on the Gold Coast**

Once the case study had been selected, a more focussed round of fieldwork could begin. This involved a further period of time (1 month) based in the Gold Coast WSR area, and intended to allow for a revisiting of the 2017 ethnographic observations; to chart any practical developments or changes in attitudes. Further interviews were scheduled, and I developed a more specific set of questions around which the research aims could be explored directly. This phase of the programme took place in February and March 2019.

A short period of time (2 weeks) participating in an ESRC funded Overseas Institutional Visit at Monash University preceded the fieldwork and provided an opportunity to visit The Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve. This is a protected area which has been designated by the Surf Shire Council since 1973, the first of its kind by some time. This Reserve focusses on the terrestrial aspects of the famous beach, and differs from a World Surfing Reserve in many respects. It did however set an important precedent in surfbreak protection and the opportunity to explore it and conduct an interview with 3 key stakeholders was highly beneficial (more can be found on this Reserve in Chapter 5). On this trip it was also possible to attend the first meeting of the Institute for Women Surfers Oceania, which provided good, critical insight into the surfing experience in Australia and beyond. Following the Gold Coast, I travelled to Noosa. Coinciding with the worlds 'biggest surfing event', the Noosa Festival of Surfing, further opportunities to learn more about WSRs and surfing culture in the area were made available.

This phase of fieldwork, detailed in Table 2, successfully built on the foundations that had been made previously, and, in utilising the methods outlined, produced a significant proportion of the total data collected.

Table 4 Focussed fieldwork

Date	Location	Relevant Opportunities	Data collected/methods used
January 2019	Monash University. Host: Dr lisahunter	Institute for Women Surfers Oceania Surf World Surf Museum (Torquay) Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve	Interviews conducted with local council employees Informal conversations with surfers and residents of the local area. Survey distribution. (auto)ethnography
February-March 2019	Tugun, Gold Coast	Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve Gold Coast National Surfing Reserve Hurricane swell (seeing the surf spots as good as they get) Byron Bay Surf Festival	Interviews with: o local council employees, o various water users (canoeist, surfers, bodysurfers, lifeguards), o academics o oceanographers, o activists (WSR, NSR, Surfrider) and other stakeholders. A revisiting of 3 interviews conducted in 2017. Survey Distribution (auto)ethnography
March 2019	Noosa, Sunshine Coast	Noosa World Surfing Reserve	Interviews conducted with members of local WSR stewardship committee who comprised; o the chairman, o a local government officer, o a surf club representative o Tourism Noosa chair. Survey Distribution (auto)ethnography

3.5 Methods

This chapter has, to this point, explored the philosophical and methodological foundations of this work, and charted the research design through its key three phases. The following sections now present in detail the methods of interviews, surveys and participant observation in a discussion on what they are, and how they have been used in this instance.

3.5.1 Interviews

Interviews, when conducted effectively, can "yield rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings" (May 2001, p. 121). They also allow for the exploration of complex issues, and can provide access to "privileged information" through speaking with key actors in the domain (Denscombe 2017 p203). They were therefore well suited to this project and 30 interviews have been conducted. Interviewees have come from a range of relevant backgrounds, with people from the surf industry, government and academia contributing their time and knowledge to this project. Potential participants were identified ahead of time, drawn from preparatory reading around both the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, and the broader enviro-surf community. In the case of the Gold Coast, the Local Stewardship Council, discussed in detail in Chapter 6, was the starting point for developing a sampling strategy. I ensured that I conducted interviews with actors who represented the 3 groups of representatives involved with the council: the city of Gold Coast, State and federal government agency and external stakeholder groups. I also looked outside of this structure to include stakeholders who were not represented formally; bodysurfing and kayaking club leaders, for example. I ensured that I gained insight from key actors within *Save the Waves*, and *National Surfing Reserves* so that a thorough understanding of the processes could be achieved (A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix 1).

Interviews conducted were semi structured in their nature; provision was made to ensure that relevant information was addressed in a logical order, but also allowed for the interviewee to "seek clarification and elaboration on the answers given", and for me to probe for further detail or enter a dialogue with the interviewee (May 2001 p.121).

A set of questions were drawn up, based on the research aims laid out within this project, with additional questions being added to ensure sufficient specificity was incorporated into each interview (see Appendix 2). Such an approach sought to facilitate elements of

consistency, and reduce the preparation time required for each interview, while still aiming to achieve the conditions of "accessibility, cognition and motivation", identified by Kahn and Cannell (1983), and Moser and Kalton (1983), as the requirements of a successful interview. These conditions essentially seek to ensure that the interviewee holds the information that is being asked about, that they understand what is expected of them, and that they are made to feel that their participation is valued and appreciated; that their responses constitute an important element of the research (ibid).

The timing of the international trip and early-stage research, as outlined in Section 3.4 forced that no distinct pilot study was undertaken prior to engaging with interviews. The drawing of experiences from interviews conducted in 2015 as part of data collection for an MSc thesis complimented theory-based preparation however, and allowed for a reasonable foundation from which to begin the process. With this base, a generative question, and itinerary in place, the next stage was to recruit participants. This was done primarily through email correspondence, though a number arose as a result of recommendations and personal introductions which I followed up on either in person or through email, Facebook or WhatsApp. In one example, when arriving at an interviewee's home at a scheduled time, somebody else was present. A group discussion enfolded and resulted in an additional meeting being arranged for another time with the previously unknown person who, it transpired, had been very much involved in the surfing industry for many years. This fruitful encounter demonstrates how an openness to spontaneous additions, and a generally adaptive approach to the research strategy was effective way to identify and fill unseen gaps.

Recruitment was generally successful, and my requests were largely met with gracious enthusiasm and interest in the project. Some interviews did not materialise, and others came about at a later stage of the process than anticipated. The majority of interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, allowing the questions to focus on the individual's area of expertise and interest. This was convenient in regard to organising a meeting as it was relatively easy to align diaries and allowed for a comparatively easy steering of the dialogue in instances where we strayed from the topic of enquiry. On the whole, one-to-one interviews were preferred, though in being flexible with this, it was possible to broaden the views and opinions which have shaped this work. A number of interviews were conducted with 2 participants present, and one was held with 3 members of staff from the same organisation. These interviews presented a range of different challenges and opportunities to

the one-to-one interviews. The atmosphere was often more relaxed, with more of a group dynamic coming into play, as opposed to the researcher-subject binary. Though I still channelled the focus of the discussion through questioning, open dialogue was possible between participants and presented interesting insight through agreements and conflicts of opinion. This occasionally was difficult to rein back into relevant range, though the digression often generated unexpected insight. One transgression into the perception of stand-up paddle boarders for example was not directly relevant to the emergence of a World Surfing Reserve, but did indicate that there were tensions in the water between certain users. A more direct question about this would have perhaps resulted in a more polished, positive response, though as the following quotation highlights, the way in which I was able steer the conversation back to focus was effective. In matching the tone of participants with good humour and a relaxed attitude, the light atmosphere of the interview, and rapport between all present, was maintained.

> Interviewee 1: [on Kai Lenny paddle boarding] he does. Yeah. He's just one of those surfing freaks yeah amazing, because he's trying to get a reputation now more as a surfer, then on all the other things. Yeah, and out at Jaws he's holding his own out there isn't he, like in the really big stuff? That's a great story. All right. Sorry Lyndsey, digress again.
>
> Interviewee 2: laughs. Yeah, have you got anything to do?
>
> Me: (Laughs)ahh I can link into this conversation, link straight in (laughs) Do you have representation on the Stewardship Council for stand-up paddle boards? (Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 16/02/2019)

For the most part, interviews were conducted face to face. Where necessary, video calls through Skype or WhatsApp were made and in one instance a voice only call was made. In person interviews were by far the most preferable form, as these allowed for a much more personable experience. This was particularly important in the building of rapport; "a mutual trust that allows for the free flow of information" (Spradley, 1979, p. 78). As I alluded to in the commentary on the quotation above, rapport is a crucial component in the success of all interviews conducted. To build rapport, and to conduct a good research interview, I was required to hone a number of specific skills which, though often written about, can only truly be developed in practice, through experience (Denscombe 2017; Silverman 2013; Bryman

2004). I needed to be attentive, non-judgemental and sensitive to the interviewee; comfortable in my ability to read the situation, and both tolerate silence, and use probes, prompts and checks where necessary. Over the course of the research there was a significant improvement in both the skills themselves and my personal confidence levels as the number of interviews increased. In earlier interviews I was much more nervous, and unsure of my place in the room, and wider research field. As my positionality as a credible researcher became clearer, and the project itself developed, I was able to increase my confidence, pose more articulate questions, and follow up coherently where necessary to gain as much information as possible from a response. These are factors which were often lacking in the earliest interviews, and the following two excerpts show the development of my interviewing skills. When exploring the perceptions of surfers by the council, in my very first interview the question is posed as an incomplete, barely comprehensible jumbled sentence which may have raised concern about my ability and even legitimacy as a researcher.

> LS: So, when you said it was dropped initially in that first meeting, um, how was that received like from the… (Interview. Gold Coast, 19/01/2017)

Fortunately, the question was interpreted as hoped, and the participant was forthcoming and understanding. In contrast, when conducting one of the final interviews on the Gold Coast, when dealing with a similar topic, I was able to quickly offer a light-hearted response to the previous answer. This was then linked smoothly to a concise, clear question, and followed up appropriately with the confidence that more information was indeed necessary, and that I was qualified to probe for it.

> Me: ha-ha there are plenty of Save Our somethings aren't there! Yeah, its Save the Waves in this one. So how did people in the council perceive the committees for the NSRs and WSR?
>
> Interviewee: with disdain.
>
> Me: disdain? Visible disdain, or do they tolerate you?
>
> Interviewee: they just don't you know; they don't accept the layman's view of things. They have their technical advisors… (Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 25/2/19)

Though my confidence and skills improved over the course of the project, there were other factors to take into consideration throughout. As outlined previously in this section, positionality has been of significance I was able to draw on my identity as a travelling surfer in interviews, to ask an opening question about surfing, or something relevant to the local area which helped to open up dialogue and help both parties relax into the interview. I adjusted the tone of the interview to suit the participant and the environment in which it was taking place. For example, I wore relatively smart clothes to a meeting in a local government office, and was more casual in home or beach settings. I also adapted the language and phrasing of questions. My knowledge of the subject matter was strong throughout and so it was possible to read the context of the interview and adjust the delivery to ensure that the question was understood, but also neither patronising nor intimidating.

In all cases I gave participants sufficient time to answer questions and to ask any questions that they may have had about the study. Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 3 hours, and when a time limit was discussed I ensured that this was respected. In a number of cases, it was clear that participants had a lot to say and the time to commit to achieving this. Some participants evidently found the process to be therapeutic, and I was happy to cooperate in using as much time as necessary, eventually using social prompts to gauge when to end the interview organically. In a small number of cases I was required to tackle the topic of conflict between different actors which was challenging and required careful negotiation in order to maintain participation and achieve a balanced perspective of past events and their role in shaping World Surfing Reserves (see Chapter 5).

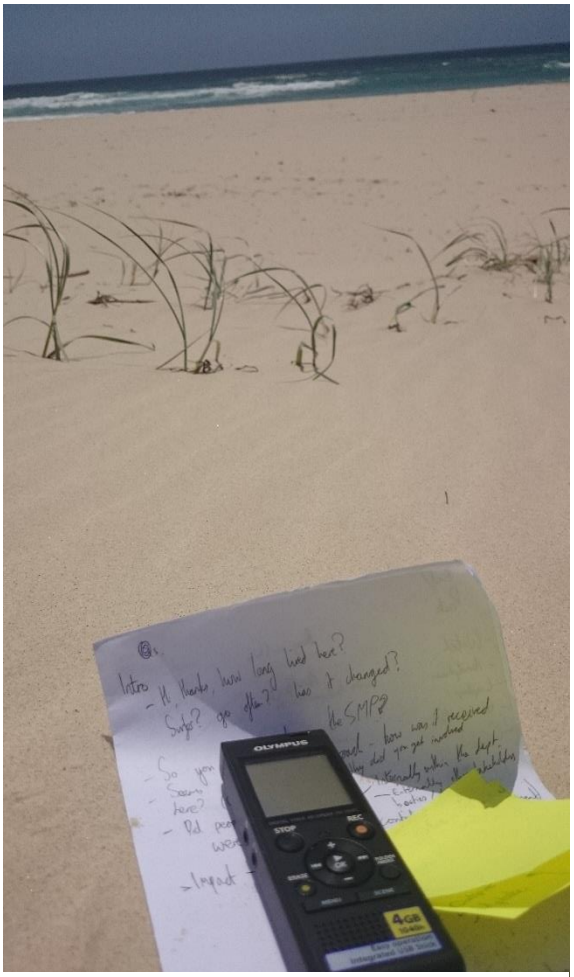


Figure 9 Interview materials

Image source: Author 2017

Where possible, interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone, and permission to do so was gained verbally at the start of the

exchange. The Dictaphone was preferred, over recording features of a mobile phone for instance, as it appeared to give an air of preparedness for the interview and was often something of an icebreaker, as it had been a long time since one had been seen. In two early cases, there were issues with this equipment which came about from slippages in my preparation. One being an unexpected depleted battery, and the other being a lack of storage space. It was possible to utilise the mobile phone back up in these situations, so that the flow of the interview was not too disrupted. Complete interviews were recorded, and lessons were learnt so neither happened twice.

In some cases, there was not an opportunity to ask for permission to record immediately. Following a greeting, the discussion began in earnest and to ask would have broken the flow, as this note at the beginning of one interview transcript describes:

> "Started talking before I could ask if its ok to record, so the first 10 minutes or so are my notes which might not be great because I was concentrating too hard on finding an opportunity to ask if I could record…" (Author 2017)

My ability to ask this confidently and quickly improved over time, though in some cases the setting and circumstances of a meeting suggested that to record would be inappropriate. In one such case, for example, I met with a participant in a coffee shop and we were joined by his 2-year-old son. I felt that the necessarily informal approach to discussion made the prospect of recording awkward, and so opted to maintain the freer flowing conversation. Where recording was not possible or preferable, some notes were taken during the exchange, and a full research note was written up straight after the interview so that key details were recorded as accurately as possible, with written contact being made to clarify any uncertainties.

Overall, the interviews were enjoyable and produced a range of rich data from which this work has taken shape. Alternative, innovative, interview approaches were explored in a bid to use the research settings to my advantage. While these were ultimately rejected as being less effective in this instance than the more traditional semi-structured interviews, the following paragraphs briefly document these experiments to show some of the processes undertaken in designing this research.

Alternatives to interviews

Figure 10 Interviews with a view; self-interviews at sea

Image source: Author 2017

Interviews are a tried and tested method, appropriate for use in both case study and grounded theory-based research designs. I was confident that they would form a major part of fieldwork for this project, though thought that it would be interesting to explore some alternative ideas in the hope of making the most of the exciting research locations that I often found myself in.

The first example of this is the development and trial of water based self-interviews. Piloted in the Summer of 2017, this method involved a GoPro™ attached to a surfboard, facing away from the participant, and a laminated question sheet. The method used the sea as an active prompt. The camera allowed for the effective recording of the audio and visual data, producing novel insights into the conscious and subconscious actions and thoughts of surfers in the surf zone. Drawing from sensory ethnography and mobile methodologies, this method built on the work of lisahunter (2019) and Clifton Evers (2015), both of whom have immersively studied their watery research area.

Insightful, thought provoking, and a lot of fun, the practicalities of such a method however, forced that it was not suitable to be used as a means through which to collect data for this project. Key limitations were the logistics of first of all being able to arrange interviews at a time when surf conditions were suitable and safe. Surfing in natural bodies of water is inherently unpredictable and surf too big, or too small would be problematic. Inconsistent surf resulted in surfers being quite protective of the time in which it was possible to catch some waves, and were therefore quite reluctant to donate a portion of this precious surf time to adjust to a new board and answer questions. For more on this method and its limitations, see Stoodley 2020 and lisahunter and Stoodley 2020.

Figure 11 Spontaneous in-situ interviewing, Kirra Point 2019

Image source: Author 2017

Another approach was piloted, whereby spontaneous interviews with strangers were sought out at beaches and surf spots in the case study area. I carried out 5 of these interviews with randomly selected people who were watching the beach/surf at a popular surf spot, near to the GCWSR plaque. I approached a person, or group of people and introduced myself and my work, and if they agreed to talk with me, I asked them some questions. These questions began with generic details about the person's relationship with the area. They then moved to discuss why they were here at this time, if they spend much time here; easy, conversational questions. This was then followed by more specific questions which asked about awareness of any threats facing the surf spaces of the area, whether they had any involvement in protection initiatives, and if they were aware of the WSR status. If they were aware, I probed further on the meanings and perceptions of this to the individual, using casual phrasing throughout. These interviews created mixed results. Some were very happy to talk to a stranger while they watched the surf, while others were tourists who felt they couldn't help at all; as shown in the following excerpt:

> "I just spoke to Gary. He's a traffic control officer who's been brought in by the city to help with the congestion and keep people off the roads and things [because of the big surf]. He didn't know that this was a Reserve, but he knew that Noosa was a Reserve. A bit of a character. He seemed, like many other Australians, very proud of the geographies and excited about learning more about it and he seemed to like learning something new about World Surfing Reserves… but he was in trouble yesterday because he made a(n inappropriate) comment about a girl's shorts. He was stood under a tree and told me he was getting paid $53 an hour. $53 an hour for doing,

> what was his words? “for doing jack, capital S,” and then he wouldn’t finish the sentence ‘cos I was a lady.
>
> I also asked an elderly couple. One of them was in a wheelchair. But they were just visiting from Victoria so they were just straightaway like “nope, we don’t know anything, we can’t help”, they were very friendly about it, but they didn’t think they couldn’t help at all” (Transcript of Author’s video diary, following a number of interactions, February 2019).

Though the 5 conversations were interesting, and quite entertaining, this method was not pursued further. There were ethical uncertainties surrounding the (literal) approach and while the answers contributed to the overall understanding of the area and how people use it, the responses themselves did not carry sufficient weight to continue. To develop a broader picture of the surfing community’s relationship to WSRs, the more effective method of surveys was employed.

3.5.2 **A surfey survey**

This project seeks to gain the opinions of various stakeholder groups, and a broader view of surfers’ perceptions of World Surfing Reserves was deemed to constitute an important facet in the overall understanding of the programme. To gain insight from the community an online survey was employed. This method has been used extensively in previous surf related studies, at a range of scales (Reineman 2016; Usher et al 2017; Roberts & Ponting 2018). According to Denscombe,

> “Surveys are used to best effect when the researcher wants factual information relating to groups of people: what they do, what they think, who they are” (2010, p12).

The group of people in this instance is made up of surfers; of any craft, ability and location. Using the generative question of “Why and how are surfers mobilising to engage in environmental activism through the World Surfing Reserves programme?” a survey was designed and made live ahead of the first phase of fieldwork which has been described previously. This aimed to allow for international dissemination of the survey, and for generation of themes and codes from responses in line with the grounded theory research design. It also presented an opportunity to compare perceptions over time. To meet these

objectives, a range of questions were included; from closed questions to gain demographic details, to more open questions asking for personal opinions on a number of issues surrounding environmentalism and more the focussed aspects of World Surfing Reserves. The survey presented opportunity for respondents to go into depth if desired, though would still provide useful insight, should responses be brief. The survey took on average 8 minutes to complete, and so this efficiency proved to be an asset and likely contributed to a higher rate of completion.

Initially created through LimeSurvey in December 2016, the survey was redeveloped through Survey Monkey in August 2017 following administrative changes within the university that resulted in the shared link failing to function. Responses gathered through LimeSurvey were manually entered into the survey monkey database to allow for continuity of analysis.

The surfing population in the UK alone was estimated to be 500000 in 2013 (Mills & Cummings), and global figures vary enormously, from the 5 million suggested by Surf Industry Manufacturers Association, to the International Surfing Associations projection of 23 million participants (Surfline, 2017). Whichever of these numbers are more accurate, it is evident that a representative survey sample would not be realistic, and so a sampling strategy is in place in order to gain an exploratory sample from a "miniature version" of the surfing population, from which generalisations and trends can be identified. A "cumulative" approach to sampling was taken. This fits neatly with the grounded theory approach, and while this means that the size of the sample is not totally predictable, a target to collect around 200 responses was set (Denscombe 2010 p51). The final number of participants was significantly lower than this, at 153. A high number of these responses were not completed fully (n=37), and appear to have stopped once the questions required more than a tick box response. Overall, the responses, presented a range of interesting findings with most of those who completed the survey providing answers which have been carefully thought out and relevant to the study. Some appear to be far more engaged than others, and whereas some responses consist of a brief sentence, others provide paragraphs of text.

A bonus question, asking "what is your favourite surf story?" was included, as a light exercise for participants and as a means through which additional data can be sourced for both this project and future endeavours. This question has been very well received and participants appear to have enjoyed reliving their fond memories, with one participant using 2600 words to tell his tale of a Moroccan surf adventure in great detail.

Figure 12 Surfing survey recruitment flyer

Image Source: Author 2017

To gain these responses, weblinks and a QR code were printed onto the back of business cards which were distributed throughout the study. Polite requests were made to individuals, asking them to complete the survey, and pass on through their own networks, if appropriate. Flyers and posters were also designed and distributed in relevant places such as surf shops, museums and hostels (see Figure 12). This aimed to create a "snowball" effect within the sampling, but has proved to be far less effective than targeted social media posts. On reflection, to take advantage of the numerous personal encounters it may have been more effective to have physical copies of the survey, or a portable device on which potential participants could complete the survey at the time of interaction. It is anticipated that a lot of business card referrals were lost, forgotten or simply ignored. Larson and Ushers use of intercept surveys for example achieved a 91% completion rate, a marked improvement on that of this survey (2017).

Posts to my personal Facebook page, and two surfing groups in November 2017 and May 2019 generated two spikes in responses, as can be seen in Figure 13. Such an outcome aligns with the argument of Brickman-Bhutta, who states that:

> "Social networking sites and online questionnaires make it possible to do survey research faster, cheaper, and with less assistance than ever before. The methods are especially well-suited for snowball sampling of elusive sub-populations" (2012 p57)

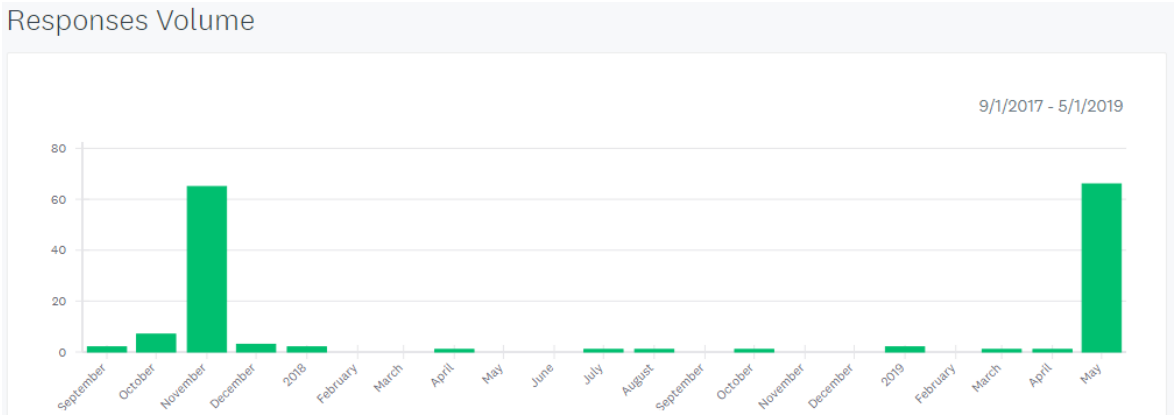


Figure 13 Survey response volume

The recruitment of participants through social media presents a range of challenges. The primary concern in this instance was that there would be too narrow a cross section of people who self-select to participate. In addition to being shared on my own page however, the survey link was shared by others, and this has been effective in broadening the reach of the study. Representation from 12 different countries was achieved.

Nonresponse bias has been identified in the survey results. This is quite clearly demonstrated though the demographic data collected. At almost 70% female, the surveyed population is disproportionate to that of the surfing population. In a more heavily quantitative study, the impacts of this could be limited through weighting. In this case however, the overrepresentation of women has been welcomed as an indication of a more diverse lineup. This shows a marked transition from Farmers 1992 study, in which "females were excluded from the research due to their lack of participation" (p248). While this may be positive in terms of gender, racial representation in surfing remains overwhelmingly white, and this is reflected in my survey results, with 84% of respondents identifying as white.

Though far below the original target, the survey has been successful in generating a layer of important insights into the broader views of environmentalism in surfing. Further strategies for recruitment were developed, though as the focus of the study evolved it was decided that the number was sufficient in serving its purpose, having reached theoretical saturation. This is when "new data seems to confirm the analysis rather than add anything new" (Denscombe 2017 p115). Accordingly, the link was closed down in June 2019 following the second social media induced spike.

3.5.3 **Auto ethnography and participant observation**

Semi structured interviews have provided detail from specific stakeholders on complex topics, and surveys broadened the area of interest and considered wider perspectives. The final methods that have been employed in this project are participant observation and (auto)ethnography. As discussed in Section 3.3, on positionality, I have been involved with surfing for over 15 years and was therefore well placed to embark on a such a programme, to gain a depth of detail through immersion in the settings and situations being studied. The following paragraphs briefly outline the methods, before showing how I utilised them in this study.

Auto ethnography is a method where one's "own embodied participation makes up the empirical material and features as the main protagonist in the text" (Larsen, 2014, p. 60). It has been suggested as a response to the exclusionary scientific discourse, and "alienating effect on both researchers and audiences of impersonal, passionless abstract claims of truth generated by such research practices" (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 450). The subjectivity and embodiment of the researcher is embraced through this method, and a distinction between analytical and evocative auto ethnography is important to consider. While the latter, according to Anderson, holds the potential to be self-indulgent, analytical auto ethnography can stand as a robust research method (Anderson 2006). This is due to the utilisation of interviews and observation in the field, and engagement with, and development of, broader theoretical foci. Auto ethnography has been a key research tool for the likes of Spinney (2009), Hockey (2006) and Wacquant (2006) who, in their work around cycling, running and boxing respectively, suggest that the only way to fully understand a sport and its intricacies is to participate and develop the embodied skills that are so difficult to visualise or articulate upon. Such sentiment is echoed by Larsen, who states that as "cycling is tied up with bodily resources, or affective capacities, the researcher will get a richer understanding with autoethnographic participation" (2014, p. 69). Indeed, as surfing is also linked closely to these aspects, the notion can be applied when exploring surfing, as demonstrated by the likes of lisahunter (2018), and Bourne (2018), for example.

Analytical auto ethnography has been utilised in this project to better understand surfing in different environments, which may be threatened or under different forms of protection. My own experiences in the field have been complemented by participant observation which has broadened the perspective and maximised opportunity for data collection. Participant observation is "an unobtrusive method of data collection that allows the researcher to gather

information about lifestyles, cultures and beliefs" (Denscombe 2017 p237). The following paragraphs describe how I have utilised these two complementary methods in this project.

Over the course of this work, my identity as an observer and a researcher was overt. Details of my identity and my project were shared with participants with whom communication was opened, and where I was observing from a distance, at a beach or in the surf zone for example, I blended in to the environment and beyond my presence, made no impact on the experience of others.

In line with the overall approach to this work, observations in the early stages were broad, aiming to achieve a general feel for the spaces and interactions within them. As the project progressed, the sites became more specific and made use of opportunities to engage in more focussed 'microspaces' of information sharing, such as conferences, meetings, film screenings, and competitive surfing events.

I began each phase of observation by attaining an overview of the area. In the Gold Coast, for example, I did this by driving a rental car from the northern Reserve boundary at Burleigh Heads, to its southern boundary at Snapper Rocks, stopping at each of the 13 surf spots listed in the WSR documentation. In covering this ground in a relatively short period of time I was able to gain an indication of the types of groups that used a particular beach, how popular they were among different groups of surfers and beach goers given that set of conditions, as well as an overview of the region's geography. Due to the fast pace of this stage of the research I utilised a video diary in place of field notes taken in situ, an approach which I will discuss later in this section.

Following this overview, I then spent extended periods of time at a range of beaches. Observations made at beaches ranged from 1 to 4 hours, and aimed to build up the picture gained in the initial traverse of the Reserve. This included seeing the surf spots under various surf conditions, observing how people used the space, and who these people were; this included surfers, but also those who were using the beach for other recreational (walking, swimming, sunbathing etc) and occasional industrious activity such as surf lessons. I would sometimes go surfing, observing the surf zone from within it, while developing my understanding of the surfing experience by engaging directly in it.

I sought to conduct these beach-based observations at a number of different beaches, on multiple (4 or more) separate occasions. When surfing, there were numerous spaces where I would not be comfortable; bigger surf, crowded or more competitive take off zones for

example were not suitable for my skill nor confidence level and so were avoided. While this influenced the type of surfer I spoke to in the water, it became clear after talking to more people on land that all surfers have a preference of where they surf- based on ability, style and a range of other factors. It was also clear that I needn't feel underequipped to conduct this research based on this preference, which was a concern at the outset.

Away from the beaches, I situated myself in a number of relevant microspaces where information surrounding various tenets of surfing was shared. This included 3 surf film festivals, 2 of which were organised by *Save the Waves*, and 3 surfing contests, one of which was the highest level of professional surfing, the Quiksilver and Roxy Pro situated within the Gold Coast WSR boundary. I also attended 5 conferences which presented the most explicit examples of epistemic enviro-surf community led microspaces. In all of these, I participated as a delegate; access was straightforward as, even prior to the development of the research questions, I held an interest in the activities of the enviro-surf community and have participated in related events since 2015. In these cases, my attention was more finely tuned, again looking to see who was in attendance, who was involved, what messaging was being projected and how networks were playing out, and being created.

To convert the findings of observations from the overview, focussed beach visits, and microspace engagement, into data which can be interpreted and analysed I made use of various techniques to record field notes. Field notes are required to be taken as soon as possible after an observation, so that that the memory, which "is not only selective, but also frail" is not lost or distorted as new thoughts overtake old (Denscombe 2017 p217).

Conventional field notes were made after the majority of events, though in spaces where it was not out of place to take notes, such as in conference presentations for example, they were taken during, with more generalised summaries generated later. Where appropriate, presentations were also recorded using a Dictaphone, and photographs were taken of key slides displayed which would serve as prompts when revisiting a time and space of interaction.

Field notes were also used widely throughout each phase of the research, though these were often in less depth due to the time and situational constraints that were in place. In order to counter this, a video diary was used as a means through which ongoing auto ethnographic reflection and observation could take place in real time.

Video diary

As described previously, in 2017 I participated in an international collaboration programme which saw me take in universities in 4 countries over a total period of 5 months. During this time, I travelled to numerous surfing communities, 4 of which were designated as World Surfing Reserves at the time, and one which would later be approved.

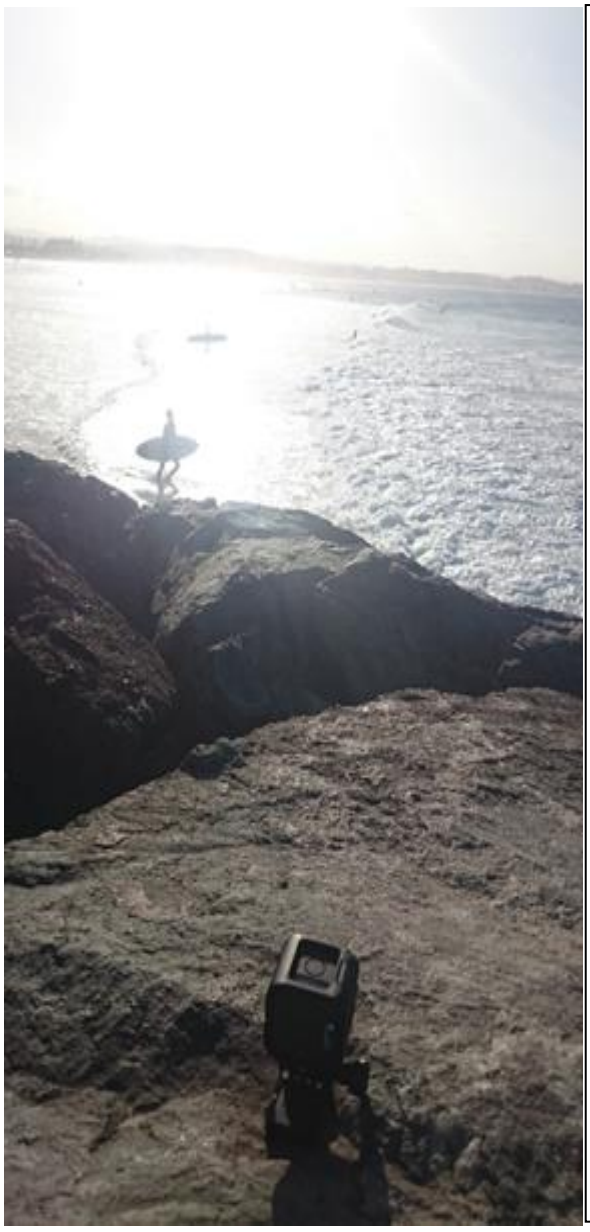
Throughout this period, I kept a field video diary to record observations and reflections. There were a number of reasons that a video diary was chosen. The first was a practical one. Working with a tight budget meant that I was required to share rooms in hostel accommodation, and though this afforded both an extended trip, and more social interactions, quiet space in which to reflect and write about a day's events was scarce. To ensure that this was not problematic I began taking a video diary, recorded in real time, in situ; at various beaches; in my rented car, shops, museums, parks, in the sea, on the sea. These videos were often accompanied by written reflections, and were transcribed for analysis upon my return to the UK.

In addition to the recording of verbal thoughts and observations, the video captures the landscape and environment, the weather, the time of day, the atmosphere. These are very rich recordings which are insightful in themselves, and also prompt memories of a time and place which has been revisited throughout the research process. My waterproof camera was also attached to various mounts and taken in the water. Again, this shows more than written observation could, and allows for a different perspective to be captured, away from our usually landlocked data collection sites. It also elicits how certain places affect me as a researcher. In one video for example, I am clearly tired of driving through windy roads with no radio signal, and then a little while later I exclaim to the camera "yayyy I went surfing".

I used the GoPro© session 5 camera, which was very small, lightweight and easy to use. To record, for instance, required just one button press. It would have been entirely possible to use a different camera type, though the size and simplicity of the GoPro meant that it was very convenient, and it's place within surfing spaces is not out of the ordinary as people attempt to document their experiences and achievements (Evers 2015; Vannini & Steward 2017).

Not all of the videos are relevant. Many are related to the trip itself, or other project ideas that were being thought about at the time. Sounds for example, were recorded at various points, with the camera stationed on a rock, on the sand, or even on a string in the surf to

gather sounds of the surf in different places. Though not intended to be directly relevant for this PhD, some of these videos are in fact very revealing, and have contributed far more to this study than I had originally anticipated. In video clips recorded on the Kirra groyne, for example, I am able to observe not only the sounds and the waves that are causing the sounds, but the different ways in which people are interacting with these waves, and the spot more generally. The description of one clip demonstrates, shown in Figure 14, this unexpected richness. No commentary accompanies this clip; there isn't any need for it. The recorded audio and visual data are far more descriptive than any language could allow.



I can see bodyboarder taking off early on the wave and ending his ride before a surfer picks it up further along the line, the surfer on the wave rides towards the beach, careful to steer past another surfer who is staying on the inside (where the wave is already broken). I can see that the sun is beginning to set, still high in the sky but having lost its intensity which in Australia is so great. There are a few people out, though this spot is not crowded. The surf is good. It is well formed and looks inviting. The standard of surfer in the water is varied, with a number of beginners enjoying their time in the shallower water.

These are not the best waves that this spot can produce by a long way, nor are the surfers who are riding them the best the area has produced, but they are being ridden by a range of people using a range of craft. It's a beautiful evening in a beautiful place (Video recorded March 2017).

Figure 14 Reflecting on a video diary entry

Image source: Author 2017

Field notes and video clips are supplemented by a reflective journal, as required through engagement with auto ethnography. Such journals can be used as a "pedagogic tool to encourage reflection, critique and self-analysis" (Anderson 2012a p.613), and provide an opportunity to "engage with our emotional responses and to challenge some of the assumptions we might be making about people and situations" (Bassot, 2013). This has been the case in this project, and the reflective journal has been complementary to other data collected. In bringing together a range of different data, the subjective nature of auto ethnography has been addressed, and a process of triangulation has been undertaken to broaden the scope and effectiveness of research. This is a process which Silverman states,

> "is the attempt to get a 'true fix' on a situation by combining different ways of looking at it or different findings" (2013, p. 288).

Having explored the range of methods used to generate data for this project, we now turn to the processes involved in making this material useful, through analysis.

3.6 Data analysis

Grounded theory "provides a set of flexible guidelines and a process for textual data analysis that is well suited to understanding human behaviour and identifying social processes and cultural norms" (Hennink, et al., 2011, p. 206), and as such has been incorporated into this research design. The procedure for analysis begins as soon as the first data emerges, and involves various phases of coding which lead to the development of concepts and categories, all of which undergo constant comparison in order to produce analytical memos and emergent theories. The following paragraphs look to how each of these phases have been completed in this project before a brief discussion on the importance of discourse brings this section to a close.

Coding, according to Charmaz is defined as "naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (2006, p.43). This marks the first step towards the moving of material from the empirical level, and provides an opportunity for the researcher to scrutinise and interact with the data collected and begin to raise analytic questions (Lapan et al 2011). The identification of unforeseen questions or themes often emerge through this process, and was the case in this instance; the

shift towards thinking of the enviro-surf as epistemic in nature for example came about as a result of initial coding.

Initial coding is the first of at least two phases that constitute the coding process of constructivist grounded theory. In it, an openness to exploration remains, and through this phase, it is possible to being to interpret the following key elements, as identified by Lapan et al: (1) the main concern or concerns of the participants—that is, what they are focused on or view as problematic; (2) the tacit assumptions of the participants; (3) explicit processes and actions; and (4) latent processes and patterns (2011).

Initial coding involves the processing of data line by line to identify codes which are significant, and or, frequent. In doing so, a very large range of codes are generated. I completed this phase using the statistical and qualitative data analysis software programme, NVivo. This allowed for the fast creation of codes, which could then be grouped conveniently to set up the next stage of the coding process; focussed coding. This phase allows for a sifting of this large volume of data (Charmaz, 2000, 2003, 2006) and is "more directed, selective, and conceptual" than initial coding (Lapan et al 2011).

Focused codes are developed through the comparison of initial codes, identifying common themes and recurring topics and grouping them together. For example, the focussed code of "threats to the surf zone from sand dredging" emerged from initial codes such as "stopped the natural flow of sand going north", "pump it back on to the beaches" and "pushed the sand offshore into a delta". I explored these codes to determine which best illustrated what was being seen from the data, and used these as a base from which to create conceptual categories. Categories further synthesise the established codes, and incorporate relevant facets into the same group, providing the base from which grounded theories can emerge. Examples of key categories identified in this project include threats and responses to surf break management, knowledge and expertise in coastal management, and network building and development.

While this process was being undertaken, I was also creating analytical memos which are "the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike" (Glaser 1978 p. 83). This allowed me to process ideas and questions as they arose, and provided opportunity for the consistent working and reworking of the various facets of the research area which were emerging throughout the coding process. In line with grounded theory, I kept an open mind throughout the various phases, building up the concepts from the data

itself, until it became clear that it was more appropriate to engage more thoroughly in the established epistemic communities and policy mobilities frameworks.

It has been noted that a drawback of coding is that it breaks up the flow of a narrative, the telling of a story and that care must be taken in the ultimate presentation of this (Atkinson and Coffey 1996). Another key aspect to be considered when analysing narratives, is the role of discourse. The way in which words, and language is used is loaded with motivations, power structures, and politics, and this has been of relevance in this work, particularly as I look towards the work of an epistemic enviro-surf community. Throughout this project I maintained an appreciation that words are not passive, but are representations that are active and open to interpretation. As I worked, therefore, to understand how surfers and other stakeholders make sense of who they are and how they fit into their respective cultural worlds, I engaged with textual analysis.

3.7 Textual analysis

Textual analysis is a methodology; "a process which attempts to understand the language, symbols and images that are used, in order to gain information about how people make sense of and communicate life and experience" (Hawkins 2018 p1754). Often combined with ethnography or interview-based methods, textual analysis can, as has been the case in this project, be utilised to explore more comprehensively the sense making phenomenon that is being studied (ibid).

Taking a post-structural approach to this process, I acknowledge that the way in which different cultures view and make sense of the world varies widely, with no single interpretation being correct (McKee 2003). A text in this context is defined as "something we make meaning from", encompassing therefore not just words and language, but anything that we draw interpretations of meaning from (ibid p10). Texts, then, can take a vast range of forms; books, websites, movies, magazines, t-shirts and so on. For surfers, who have their own culturally specific texts, this definition can extend to include surfboards and even the waves themselves.

Textual analysis, like any methodology, encompasses strengths and weaknesses. The notion in post structuralism that there is no single correct way of making sense of the world, for example, leaves it open to accusations that anything goes. McKee argues however that

contrary to insisting that anything goes or that all interpretations and representations are equally acceptable and that:

> "the reason that we analyse texts is to find out what *were* and what *are* the reasonable sense making practices of cultures: rather than just repeating our own interpretation and calling it reality" (2003 p.22 emphasis in original).

The subjectivity of the process, or its "unscientific" outputs (quantifiable or repeatable results are not produced) can also be a point of contention (ibid p92). Again, however, it is argued that this need not detract from the utility of textual analysis, and is rather a key component in its efficacy. Afterall, the conscious role of both the producer (author) and consumer (reader) insists that no two understandings of a text will ever be the same and are impacted by a number of factors. In this context, there is an implicit power of culture, as words, ideas, and discourse within texts are used in a way that perpetuates a particular ideology and way of seeing the world.

In relation to WSRs, for example, texts provide indications of what surfing is, who is the surfer, what is the surfing space, and so on. Neither neutral, nor natural, these indications are political cultural constructions and the identification and recognition as such, through textual analysis, has been important throughout this work. Uncovering this importance, Hawkins suggests that the items that influence the interpretation of texts include:

> "(a) the analyst's worldview, (b) cultural, historical, political, and social understanding of the environment within which the text was made, and (c) attempting to understand what the author or creator of the text intended at the time the text was written/created" (2018 p1756).

Consideration of these aspects is therefore necessary to recognise and acknowledge their impact in the analysis, and as such, positionality once again plays a key role (See Section 3.3). A further potential weakness arises through a lack of depth and breadth, which can lead to 'shallow observations' (Hawkins 2018). Such a scenario can be avoided through the consideration of the type of text and its context, along with the use of secondary texts- other texts in the same series, and, for texts in the public realm, the way in which they are being responded to (Bainbridge et al 2011). With an awareness of these potential challenges, textual analysis can be utilised as an effective strategy through which a text's inherent power dimensions can be explored. It also provides scope for the identification of consistencies

across texts, which contribute to the researchers understanding of how a particular culture makes sense of their world and experiences.

In this project I have conducted textual analysis on an ongoing basis to interpret surfing culture, and its associated power dimensions, through its use of language, symbols and imagery. To do this, I began once again with my generative question of "why and how are surfers mobilising to engage in environmental activism, through the World Surfing Reserves programme?" I used this question to identify texts that would enhance my understandings of sense making in this area. As shown in the table below, these texts are from a variety of sources, and take a variety of forms.

Table 5 Textual Analysis

Primary data, collected through fieldwork	Interview transcripts Fieldnotes Reflexive journal entries Plaques/ notices (at beaches/ shops etc) Museum exhibits
Online resources/ documentation from key enviro-surf community actors and organisations.	Social media posts Organisation websites Financial reports, annual reports
Relevant in print publications	Conference materials: programmes, reports, press releases etc WSR brochures WSR applications
Policy Documents	Surf Management Plan- Gold Coast City Council Coastal Beaches Strategy New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010) Crown Lands Act (New South Wales) National Register of Historic Places (U.S. National Park Service)

I have ensured that analysis was conducted with both breadth and depth in mind. For example, I analysed each of the WSR brochures, as opposed to focussing solely on the Gold Coast publication. A number of consistencies were identified, including the largely unquestioned hegemony of the shortboard surfing white male. This was a key aspect in the identification of power dynamics, which placed a particular type of surfing, and a particular type of wave at the centre of efforts to protect.

Through this process, I have gained valuable insight into how imagery and language has been used to portray ideas, ideals, and values across surfing cultures. The analysis of these texts contributed heavily to the contextual foundations of this work, and has been effectively

combined with my empirical data to enhance my understanding of sense making in the littoral zone.

How these understandings have been constructed, and indeed how the entire research design has been conducted, is subject to a range of ethical considerations, and, having outlined the processes of data analysis and textual analysis, it is to this important area that we now turn.

3.8 Ethical considerations

As this project has engaged in multiple methods to collect data, a range of procedural and practical considerations have been made in order to ensure that the research and the collection of data has been ethical.

Procedurally, this project has conformed to the guidelines set by the Social Research Association (2003) and received approval from the Cardiff University School of Geography and Planning Ethics Committee on 27th February 2017.

Participants were assured that any involvement was voluntary and that their responses would be used solely for the purpose of research and requests for anonymity were respected. I also ensured that participants were aware that they could cease or pause their involvement at any time, and that they could provide "off the record responses" if they were more comfortable doing this. Though no written consent was gained from participation, the overall project aims were clearly defined in introductory exchanges. Also in these introductions, interviewees were asked for permission to record. For those interviews where such a request was not possible, no recording was undertaken. A full record of interview recordings, transcripts and survey responses has been maintained and are available to participants on request.

Survey responses were anonymised at source, with no identifiers being attached to the results unless the participant chose to opt into the final question which asked for contact details in case of further relevant research or follow up questions.

No children under the age of 18, or people deemed as vulnerable were invited to participate. Though this exclusionary approach could have been damaging to the inclusivity aspects of the study, no people in these groups emerged as stakeholders. This has consequence in itself, and will be discussed further in Chapter 7, where we explore who a World Surfing Reserve is for.

In addition to procedural ethics, a number of practical issues were encountered, particularly in the first phase of fieldwork, whereby the research was running in concurrence to a network building objective. While this network was undoubtedly useful for this project, the balancing of the two aims (fieldwork and networking) was sometimes challenging. As a new experience, away from the more familiar professor-student or researcher-participant relationships, it was often difficult to brace the subject of an interview, soon after creating a friendly rapport with a new contact. Sometimes, when discussions were underway, it seemed unethical, or possibly simply socially awkward, to a short time later request an interview. When topics of interest were broached in conversation, it was unclear whether opinions were being shared to a researcher, or a friend. These informal talks were not recorded, as that would have certainly altered the nature of the exchange, but they provided rich insight which was touched upon in field notes. In most cases where such a situation arose, it was ensured that contact details were obtained so that follow up correspondence could be arranged in a more formal, openly academic, manner. Reflection on such navigation of these situations proved to be a very useful process, one which fortunately took place in the early stages of this work. A lot was learned from this in terms of the handling of the situations themselves, and the follow up communication.

Power dynamics were also at play throughout the research, particularly in interview settings. In the vast majority of cases I was younger than the interviewee, and many of these people held relatively powerful positions, or were highly regarded in the community. Though I was nervous on a number of occasions, I always felt that my personal safety was secure and was grateful that my participants were always welcoming and forthcoming. I feel that the power dynamics were consistently in favour of the participant, which assisted in ensuring they were comfortable and open in their responses.

In a small number of interviews, it became clear that some of the issues being discussed were of a sensitive nature due to conflicts which had occurred between different parties and presented challenges in regard to how this information would be processed. I was conscious to manage these situations carefully. I tried to reassure participants that their input would be analysed with respect in an academically rigorous manner, and made it clear that transcripts or drafts of text could be provided upon request.

In following these principles, I am confident that I have conducted an ethical research programme, and will now conclude this chapter with a brief summary before moving to the first substantive research question to be addressed.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided context and detail on the practical and theoretical elements which have shaped this research. My philosophical foundations of constructivist-interpretivism posit that the social world is under constant construction, and is open to interpretation. As such, my positionality as a white, female, queer surfer has been important to acknowledge and deconstruct.

A hybrid grounded theory-case study research design moved from a broad to narrow research area, culminating in the selection of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve as a case study. While I experimented with data collection techniques, I ultimately employed a more traditional set of methods in this project. A total of 30 semi structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, and these were supplemented by over 150 survey responses. Engagement with auto ethnography and participant observation, provided further depth and opportunity for reflection on the environments and inhabitants of the research area. In line with grounded theory, data analysis occurred on an ongoing basis. Phases of initial coding and focussed coding were undertaken, leading to the identification of themes, concepts, and categories from which theories could be drawn. Procedural and practical considerations have ensured this project has been conducted in line with ethical expectations.

Having established how and why this project has been conducted in this way, we now turn to the first product of the process; an explanation of who/what is the enviro-surf community.

Chapter 4: Who or what is the enviro-surf community?

4.1 Introduction

With its literary and methodological foundations clarified, this thesis now moves to focus on the analysis of the collected empirical data. As we have seen in the Introduction, this project has sought to critically explore the World Surfing Reserves programme, and its role in surfbreak protection. Through so doing, it initially asks: who or what is the enviro-surf community? Who is part of it, and why? How did it start, and how has it developed?

The enviro-surf community, as has been introduced, is a group made up of actors (including surfers, scientists, lawyers, engineers, businesspeople and so on) who hold both a connection to surfing, and a will to, as they see it, enhance the environment in which surfing can take place. This chapter addresses this first research question by depicting key actors and exploring the groups' emergence, from a loose band of organisations including *Surfers Against Sewage*, *Surfrider Foundation* and *Save the Waves Coalition (STW)* to, an identifiable, recognisable entity. Although its emergence has been neither linear nor complete, the enviro-surf community has been growing, and continues to grow, and I argue that as the ambitions and goals of these organisations have developed, so too have their capability to generate and engage in collaborative, network strengthening opportunities. This has not only established that the group meets the criteria laid out by Haas (of shared beliefs (rationale and causal), shared notions of validity, and common policy enterprise 1992a p3), and can be considered as epistemic in nature, but the communities' iterative actions provide momentum, and synergy to further reinforce its position, authority and aims.

Constituting a small niche within the heterogenous surfing population, the enviro-surf community, I argue, represents an evolutionary step in surf centred environmentalism that no longer seeks an "outsider" position in relation to conventional political spaces, but rather seeks to lobby, advise, and even take action on key coastal planning debates. This chapter elucidates the position of the enviro-surf community as 'epistemic', and explores how the community began, how it has developed, who is part of it, and begins to address how its work functions in practice. In doing so, this chapter first of all discusses the origins of the term 'enviro-surf community' itself. This is important as it highlights a key point at which a

collaborative, common effort can be identified, where organisations and individuals function as part of a larger, comprehensive and coherent network.

The chapter then looks to how the enviro-surf community emerged, moving from a series of active yet disparate organisations, through to a mutually reinforcing coalition. Key organisations such as S*urfrider Foundation* and *Surfers Against Sewage* are explored here to illustrate their evolving strategies and scope- which have been fundamental to the growth of the movement. As well as spearheading campaigns on a local and regional level, they have played an instrumental role in the creation and growth of events, or 'globalising microspaces' (Larner and le Heron 2002) which brought together a range of actors with aligning beliefs and aims. As a consequence of these actions, an identifiable network of surf environmentalism, the enviro-surf community, has become established. While its dynamism means that an exact membership roll of this network is not conceivable, this chapter presents an analysis of ethnographic engagement in a number of events, research groups and corresponding discourse to specify individuals and organisations who can be seen to the key actors and prime movers of the group.

In Section 4.6, the position of the enviro-surf community as epistemic is conferred through a reiteration of Haas's theoretical framework of epistemic communities; I go on to expand these criteria to also consider the importance of social capital in this instance, with the '*who*' aspect of the group playing a key role in its efficacy.

The chapter is then summarised before this thesis progresses to an analysis of how the community demonstrates itself in practice, moving from a global discourse to local policy action, through the example of World Surfing Reserves.

4.2 The enviro-surf community

The definitive origin of the term 'enviro-surf' community is not clear, and while it remains a relatively niche term, it has become common place in activist and academic circles. The first instance that it was encountered personally was at the Global Wave Conference in 2015. This conference was a sophisticated, professional event, with speakers and delegates descending from all over the world on the small Cornish village of Mawgan Porth. Among the professional and ex professional surfers, who were well known to me from magazines and movies, were academics, lawyers, scientists, marketeers, journalists, designers, and entrepreneurs. Although I had been involved in surfing for many years, and was broadly

aware of the environmentalism, activism, and professionalism of surf-related activities, it was at this conference that I realised that there was more to it than the hard-hitting photo campaigns or organised litter picks that had become the media-friendly, public face of surfing that my engagement to date had suggested. The hotel venue was upmarket, plastic use was minimal, the programme was well thought out and far reaching. There was commercial backing, high registration fees and organic lunches. Distinguishing features of this conference from other international gatherings of experts included a higher number of flip flops, and a final scheduled session of a group surf at the beach which served as the backdrop for the 3 days. While this surf was underway, a group, the Save the Waves World Surfing Reserves 'Vision Council' met to decide which location would become the 8th designated reserve (This selection process is detailed further in Chapter 5). Over a beer, they settled unanimously on the Gold Coast (Charles and Meidell 2015). The conference concluded the following day when *Surfers Against Sewage* hosted a meeting of the *Protect Our Waves All Parties Parliamentary Group* at the Houses of Parliament in London, attended by MPs and invited conference delegates. As CEO of *Surfers Against Sewage*, Hugo Tagholm summarised the time,

> "The Global Wave Conference provided an unprecedented platform to promote the efforts of the *enviro-surf community* to share strategies to better protect priceless marine environments and natural surf heritage" (*Surfers Against Sewage Conference Report*, 2015, my emphasis).

This event, that I now reflect upon as a 'globalising microspace' (see Section 2.6.2), brought together organisations and individuals, bound by their interest in surfing and the protection of surfing spaces. Collaboration was an overarching, recurring theme, and numerous projects were established over the course of the event, with many more in the months and years that followed (Fieldnotes 2015 & *Surfers Against Sewage* Conference Report 2015). It was here that the term 'enviro-surf community' was more than an abstract term, it was a working practice, and one that Tagholm (at least) wanted to live into reality; where conference attendees, through their potential participation, could make it happen. This played out at a level of sophistication that had previously been unseen in surf-activism. As academic and surfer Greg Bourne writes,

> "Ultimately, it felt very much like the Global Wave Conference has heralded in a new era in the relationship between surfing and sustainability. It saw a coming together of multiple sectors to work for the mutual benefit of protecting the oceans, supporting ocean communities and exploring how the surfing industry could learn from and support from a plethora of sustainable initiatives" (2018 p173).

While Bourne identifies this conference as heralding in a new era for sustainability and surfing, I see it as a pivotal point in the trajectory of the enviro-surf community towards its recognition as an epistemic entity. As will be discussed further in Section 4.4, the Global Wave Conference has, since 2015, continued to grow, involving more people across a wide geographical range, all the while bringing together disparate surf focussed organisations, projects, and programmes, whose actions, practices and enrolment are mutually reinforcing. Though in this chapter I do not argue that the epistemic enviro-surf community did not exist prior to a particular moment, I do suggest that events such as the 2015 Global Wave Conference are indicative of the burgeoning credibility and strength of the group, and are key examples of how the community is using its growing network to build momentum to claim (and gain) authority over their domain of expertise; the surfing environment.

Just as there is no definitive origin of the term enviro-surf community, there is no definitive moment of its manifestation; instead, its emergence can be seen as an ongoing process. The following section looks to the key driving forces behind this process to illustrate how the enviro-surf sector has emerged, gained power and aligned its strength.

4.2.1 **From chop to groundswell; the coming together of the enviro-surf community**

In this section, I outline the emergence of the enviro-surf community, charting the course of a number of disparate organisations towards, I argue, an identifiable epistemic community. To do this, I initially turn back to the waves. In Chapter 2 I described how waves for surfing form as a result of a magical mix of fixed and dynamic; aquatic, terrestrial and atmospheric components. They are what Butt refers to as 'packets' of energy, generated by wind, which have travelled often vast distances to break on a beach or reef or slab of rock (Butt 2014). As this energy moves it gains power and speed, building as swells which, depending on how far and how deep it travels, can take two forms deep it travels, can take two forms.

Figure 15 Windswell *Image source: Surfer Today, n.d*

The first, windswell (also known as wind chop, or just chop), covers a relatively short distance, is largely on the surface, and as such holds less power and is disorganised. As Figure 15 shows, the waves are breaking at various heights, at seemingly random points.

Figure 16 Groundswell *Image source: Surfer Today, n.d.*

The second, shown in Figure 16, is groundswell. Revered by surfers, groundswells are formed in distant storm systems, at least 2000km away from the coast where they ultimately break. As this energy moves over these greater distances, it builds momentum, becomes organised and gains power. (This is a very basic overview of wind and groundswells; for more see Butt (2014)).

Both of these types of swell produce waves which can be ridden, though when the forces become organised and aligned, the momentum gained creates much more powerful, concentrated waves. I posit that this analogy, which has previously been used by lisahunter in their work on gender, sex and surfing (2018), can be applied when exploring the development of the enviro-surf community from an array of disparate, disassembled organisations to an aligned, increasingly powerful, ambitious, epistemic community. To explain this position, this section presents an overview of the recent history of surf environmentalism; moving from single issue, protest led initiatives, towards the contemporary landscape of an organised, managed, professional, collaborative, and collegiate set of working, with high aims and ambitions that become synergised and strengthened as its momentum builds.

I draw here upon three key organisations. First, I address the work of early, and key drivers of the enviro-surf movement, *Surfers Against Sewage*, and *Surfrider Foundation*; both of which have played a significant role in coastal advocacy over the past 30+ years. I then focus on *Save the Waves Coalition* to show how a change in the scale of surf activism has been possible through the intentional development of international networks. The three organisations are linked through common fundamental aims and while their work overlaps in numerous areas, there exists just as many differences in their approaches, geographical scope and organisational structure.

4.3 Enviro-surf organisation(s)

Both *Surfrider Foundation* and *Surfers Against Sewage* were established in response to a threat to a local surfing experience. Overdevelopment in Malibu prompted action in the case of *Surfrider Foundation* in 1984 (Westwick and Neushul 2013), while *Surfers Against Sewage* was established in 1990, in response to ongoing poor water quality and resulting sickness (Wheaton 2007). These prompts to protect specific surfing sites, which, as we have seen in Chapter 2, are complex, vulnerable and meaningful, soon spread beyond the local, into the regional, national and even international realm. No longer the single-issue pressure groups that they originated as, both have grown into substantial organisations, with a greatly increased breadth of focus, and with many significant victories being directly attributed to their work (Bourne 2018). The following pages present concise reviews of the organisational structures, and the approaches that are taken in response to threats to the surfing experience by these organisations, and provide the basis for the following discussion which both charts the trajectory of the movement and contextualises *Save the Waves Coalition* and World Surfing Reserves into the broader enviro-surf community.

4.3.1 **Surfers Against Sewage**

"One of surfing's most successful NGO's" (Borne 2018 p174)

- Founded: 1990
- Headquarters: St Agnes, Cornwall, UK
- CEO: Hugo Tagholm
- Revenue: £1.5million (2018)

- Focus areas: Water quality, plastic pollution, wave protection, climate change

- Actions
  - Beach cleans: over 30,000 volunteers each year
  - Schools program to engage and inspire environmental champions
  - Campaigning
  - All parties Parliamentary group

- 22 members of staff
  - Jobs encompass a range of roles including; science, policy, education, fundraising and communication.

- >200 regional representatives (Reps) cover specific areas across 10 regions of the UK.
  - Reps spearhead campaigns locally, organise events such as beach cleans.
  - Provide a grassroots outreach network which effectively dissipates the work of the broader organisation.

- Board of trustees: 11 Members
  - A variety of professional backgrounds, and include an author, journalist, fundraisers, accountant, and a solicitor.

- 6 Honorary consultants
  - a Surf scientist, environmental consultant, a solicitor, a designer and a founding member of Surfers Against Sewage.
  - Though from a range of professional backgrounds, the honorary consultants are all white, and male.

- Patron: The Prince of Wales

Figure 17 Surfers Against Sewage. Top to Bottom: Logo;an early advertising campaign; a beach clean; campaigning outside Parliament. Image sources: Surfers Against Sewage (About us n.d; & news 2019);Surfbunker 2015

(Information compiled from Surfers Against Sewage 2017 & 2018 Annual Reports, and Surfers Against Sewage: About-us)

4.3.2 **Surfrider Foundation**

"One of the world's foremost surfing not-for-profit organisations" (Borne 2018 p80)

- Founded: 1984, Malibu Beach, California
- Headquarters: San Clemente, California
- CEO: Chad Nelsen
- Revenue (2018) $8.9 million

- Focus areas: Beach access, clean water, ocean protection, coastal preservation, plastic pollution

- Actions
    - 600+ campaign victories e.g. banning of balloon releases, fighting surfing bans
    - Beach Cleans
    - Programmes: water testing, ocean friendly gardens & restaurant certifications
    - Citizen Science: Smart surfboard fins collect data on climate change

- 44 Members of Staff
    - Leadership team of 8
    - 6 further teams: marketing, legal, operations, development, environment (water quality management, policy managers and coordinators), chapters (regional managers, coordinators)
- Board of Directors: 14 members

- 80 Regional Chapters in North America
    - Cover specific areas; includes coastal and inland locations
    - Implement local level campaigns and actions
    - Key component in the broader network
- Student Club Network

- 17 Ambassadors: a range of prominent names including professional and ex professional surfers (for example Shaun Tomson, Greg Long, Carissa Moore), actors, photographers, athletes.

Figure 18 Surfrider Foundation.. Top to bottom: logo; Rise against plastic campaign; Cigarette litter campaign; Beach clean up volunteers. Image sources: Surfrider Foundation 2018c; Surfrider/Pollinate, n.d; Surfrider/gyro San Francisco 2017; Surfrider Foundation 2017

(Information compiled from Surfrider Foundation 2018a,b; surfrider.org, n.d)

The two organisations demonstrate a sophistication in their operations, and have achieved a great deal since their founding. In the US, *Surfrider Foundation* claim over 600 separate triumphs which have included legal, political and consumer led protests (Surfrider Foundation 2019). *Surfers Against Sewage* have had a similar array of successes, lobbying water companies and government to improve water quality in line with EU Bathing Water Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 1991, to the extent where 96.9% of monitored UK coastal bathing areas meet the required standard (Bourne 2018 p160 & SAS: History). Both now are leading figures in what *Surfers Against Sewage* regard as the 'new sewage', ocean plastic pollution.

Operating in very different geographical locations, both organisations now incorporate regional representation into their strategy. *Surfrider Foundation* have 80 region chapters in their North American organisation and *Surfers Against Sewage* have maintained over 200 regional reps across the UK who coordinate and mobilise activism on a local level.[1] This supra-local network has been developed through effective utilisation of imagery, and by building on a subcultural narrative that brings together surfers who face common issues (Wheaton 2007). These networks provide opportunity for surfers and other coastal advocates to be directly involved in enviro-surf activism. Beach cleans are the most prominent example of this contribution; *Surfers Against Sewage*s' Big Spring Beach Clean for example "mobilises over 30,000 authentic community volunteers" each year (Surfers Against Sewage 2019), and this involvement was reflected in survey responses, where 30 respondents stated that they participate in organised efforts to clean their local beach. Though there is a clear indication that there are significant numbers of engaged, or to use *Surfers Against Sewage's* language, 'authentic' volunteers, membership indicate that only a very small number of the estimated 5 million surfers worldwide are directly involved with environmental or social projects, and the majority of this activity occurs in the global north.

To return to the example of *Surfers Against Sewage*, £215,000 was generated from membership in 2017(Surfers Against Sewage 2018). Based on the minimum donation of £30 a year, this equates to 7128 members, many of whom are non-surfers (phone conversation 02/11/2018). The organisation claimed in a 2013 report that there were approximately

[1] In addition to Surfrider Foundation North America, Surfrider Foundation Europe and Surfrider Australia were both founded independently in 1990. These organisations function as separate entities, though are incorporated into the wider Surfrider Foundation network. I touch briefly upon Surfrider Foundation in Chapter 5, though focus on the North American arm here due to its long-standing role in surf environmentalism, and its role in the enviro-surf community.

500,000 surfers in the UK alone, so based on these numbers, less than 2% of UK surfers are active members (Mills & Cummings 2013). The limited number of those directly involved does not accurately reflect the impact of the activism being undertaken, nor the scale of its successes. The organisations have therefore been effective in utilising a range of strategies to raise the profile of their campaigns, and achieve results beyond this grassroots basis. A key aspect of this has been the engagement of the media, and as the organisations have developed, they have become increasingly media savvy, gaining traction, initially through sub cultural media, and increasingly through mainstream outlets (Wheaton 2007).

In addition to sophisticated media strategies showcasing the threats faced, the organisations became more prevalent presences in courtrooms, boardrooms and debating chambers, reflecting an increasingly white-collar approach to surf environmentalism. They also work closely with businesses from within and outside of the surfing industry to again bolster their finances and support base and broaden their opportunities. Furthermore, while both organisations continue to function on a local level, through beach cleans and threat specific campaigns, they also effectively utilise existing legislation in order to generate results on a broader scale. *Surfers against Sewage*, for example, used the leverage of European level legislation in order to lobby and push for improvements, while *Surfrider Foundation* employ an entire legal team as part of their operation.

Along with a growth in awareness and breadth of action, an increase in networking across the sector is evident. As these, and other, organisations were becoming firmly established environmental groups, having brought the issues faced into a broader sphere of awareness and influence, another organisation, *Save the Waves Coalition*, was emerging. Founded in 2001, I argue that this organisation now stands as a key example of how the early work of *Surfrider Foundation* and *Surfers Against Sewage* has been developed through the formation of an extensive network, which has brought together expertise and experience with sleek marketing and global aspirations. As the managing body of World Surfing Reserves, *STW* are an important component in this thesis, and the following pages discuss their approach and governance, before the chapter moves to explore the globalising microspaces which have provided further opportunity for collaboration, and an identifiable epistemic community.

4.3.3 **Save the Waves Coalition: a global vision**

Save the Waves Coalition is a not for profit organisation which was founded by Will Henry in 2001. Based in Davenport, near Santa Cruz, California, the organisation was originally created as a response to the threatened wave Lugar de Baixo, Madeira, an island where many surf spots have been lost through construction (Lopes & Bicudo 2017). Henry, who is from the Dana Point area, where famed point break Killer Dana was destroyed in 1966, saw the surf spot being damaged by machinery in preparation for another marina development, and was spurred to help save its fate (Save the Waves: Will Henry; Lugar de Baixo (no date))

Though sharing many common goals with *Surfers Against Sewage* and *Surfrider Foundation*, *STW* takes on a very different form. Operating on an overtly international level, by working with local organisations, and community and industry leaders, *Save the Waves* have developed a network which is drawn upon to equip local communities with the necessary tools to work towards protecting their local surf spots. This can include knowledge, branding and various forms of support. International campaigns of *Save the Waves* have ranged from crowdsourcing funds to purchase and set aside a threatened headland at renowned surf spot Punta de Lobos in Chile (dos Santos & Blackwell 2020), to the development of an app which allows surfers and other coastal stakeholders to report threats to their local surf/coastal environments.

Figure 19 Save The Waves Coalition Nature Trumps Walls Campaign; Guarda do Embau WSR Logo; Endangered wave app. Image sources: Save the Waves (n.d. & 2017)

These campaigns contribute to the overarching aim of *Save the Waves*, which is "coastal conservancy with a focus on surfing", and are grouped into 3 key, contemporary, programmes.

- World Surfing Reserves, proactive approach to protecting sites of surfing significance.
- Endangered waves; reactive campaigns in response to threats from development or degradation.
- Surfonomics: calculating a monetary value to demonstrate the economic impact of surfing on an area. (Save the Waves. n.d)

Like *Surfrider and Surfers Against Sewage, Save the Waves* has a membership roll of supporters, though this generates just 1% of its revenue and its action is proportionately limited (Save the Waves 2016 p19). The organisation's key strength can be seen in its partnerships, and this is reflected in its organisational structure, within which there is, as of 2019, a staff of just 7, led by Chief Executive Officer Nik Strong-Cvetich. Complementing this core team is a board of directors, made up of 13 members who hold backgrounds in business, finance, surfing and creative industries, many of whom have links to the northern California tech industry (Save the Waves. n.d: Board & Staff).

A 28-member advisory board, shown in Figure 20, is also in place, which includes an array of individuals, from successful surf industry figures, to influential players in surfing and environmentalism, to those who appear to have been on early surf trips with the founding members of the charity. [2] Among this group, there can be found a number of formal qualifications, impressive surfing accolades, and a broad range of expertise and influence in and outside of the surfing world including, for example, ex-Surfrider attorney Mark Massara, and Patagonia CEO Yvon Choinard (Save the Waves 2016).

[2] *To illustrate the organisational structure of Save the Waves Coalition, and, later in the chapter, the enviro-surf community, I have produced a number of diagrams. These use colour to highlight the gender disparity among the various groups of individuals. I have used pronouns from biographies listed on, for example, Save the Waves website to generate this data, and acknowledge that I have perpetuated gender binaries in order to emphasise this point.*

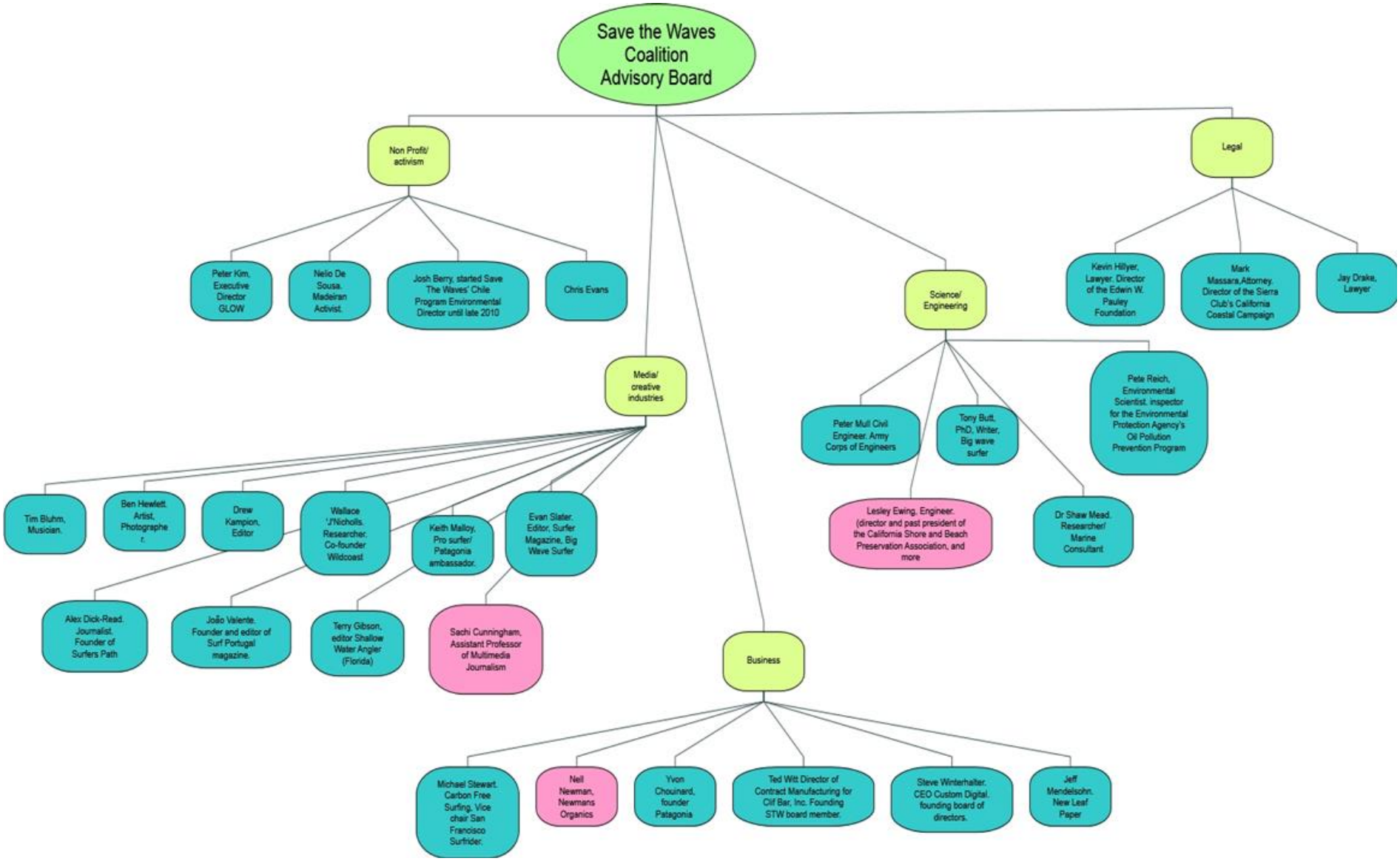


Figure 20 Save the Waves Advisory Board 2019

Made up of a range of actors from business, creative, science and engineering, legal and activist industries, the Save the Waves Advisory board is a key indicator of how its network spans the enviro-surf sector.

Over the past ten years these relationships have been developed to maintain its international scope, while still achieving results on a local level, and instead of *STW* coordinating their own volunteers, they connect with actors who are already operating in that space; to organise and strengthen their expertise, experience, and enthusiasm towards the protection of their surfing spaces. To return to the chop to groundswell analogy, local wind direction and speed holds the potential to enhance or diminish the quality of the surf; the swell may have arrived from afar, but without the alignment of local conditions, its quality is not guaranteed. This is also the case for surfbreak protection; though momentum may be strong on a global or regional level, without local engagement and support, its impact in practice will likely be lacking. As founding board member and former CEO explains in this quotation:

> "There's a lot more experts out there that know how to do this work and how to effectively garner local and state federal support for conservation of the surf zone so it's really exciting because the network idea of this work has taken off, right? So, we have a lot of experts around the world that are able to help move this work forward. So, we're in a in a different place than we were a decade ago in terms of in terms of capacity and local expertise to do this work. And so, as a result of just being in this effort for so many years, you know, we have so many alliances and relationships with a lot of experts that that can help us carry out this work and obviously know a lot more about the country and its politics and its culture than we do which is which is really important, as we are an international nonprofit. We're obviously based here. So, we really rely obviously on local experts to do the work, and we're kind of the supporting and coordinating body and provide expertise, but it's all about the Coalition" (LaTourette, D. Interview. Skype, 18/10/2019).

In addition to the extensive advisory network, a World Surfing Reserves Executive Committee is incorporated into the organizational structure, and this group are responsible for the governance of the programme. In a further example of how the Coalition draws upon those who are considered experts in their field, this group inclusion group includes the CEOs of NGOs who deal with surf and ocean conservation; *Surfrider Foundation, Wildcoast* and *Conservation International* (Chad Nelsen, Zach Plopper and Scott Atkinson), along with Dr Jess Ponting, an academic who is the director of the *Centre for Surf Research* and founder of the *International Association of Surfing Academics*.

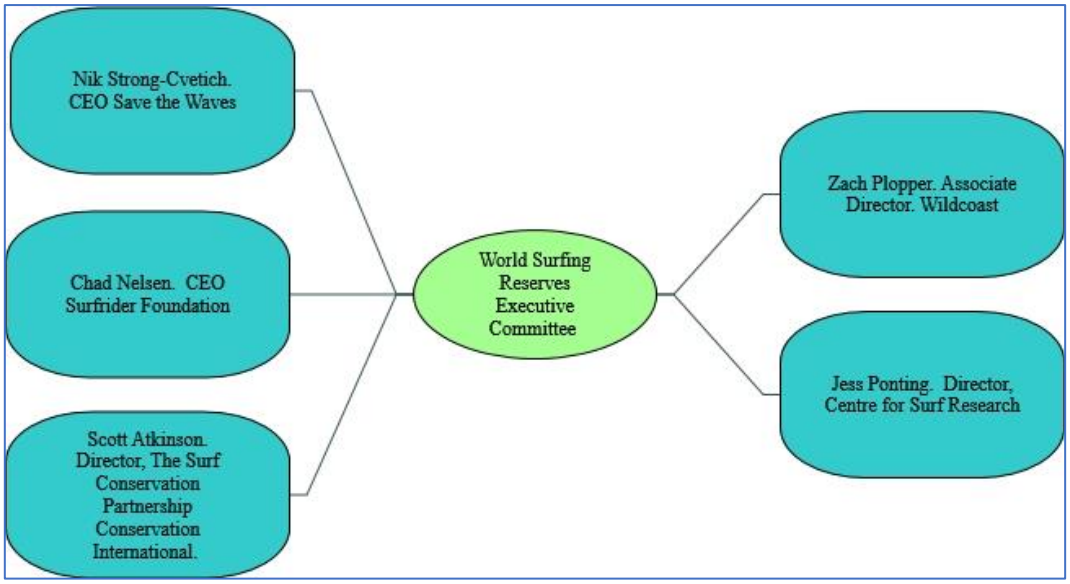


Figure 21 Save the Waves World Surfing Reserves Executive Committee (2019)

This Executive Committee is supported by a *Vision Council*, an element which is of particular interest in this thesis as it is this group which assess and approve applications submitted to be considered as World Surfing Reserves. Shown in Figure 23, the council brings together key individuals who are linked to enviro-surf movement, including leaders of enviro-surf organisations, figures from the surf industry, and creative professionals. Each member is linked to the development of knowledge or activism around surfing, whether through expertise, connectivity, or social capital. The characteristics of this group, I suggest are indicative of the epistemic enviro-surf community, identified in Section 4.5.

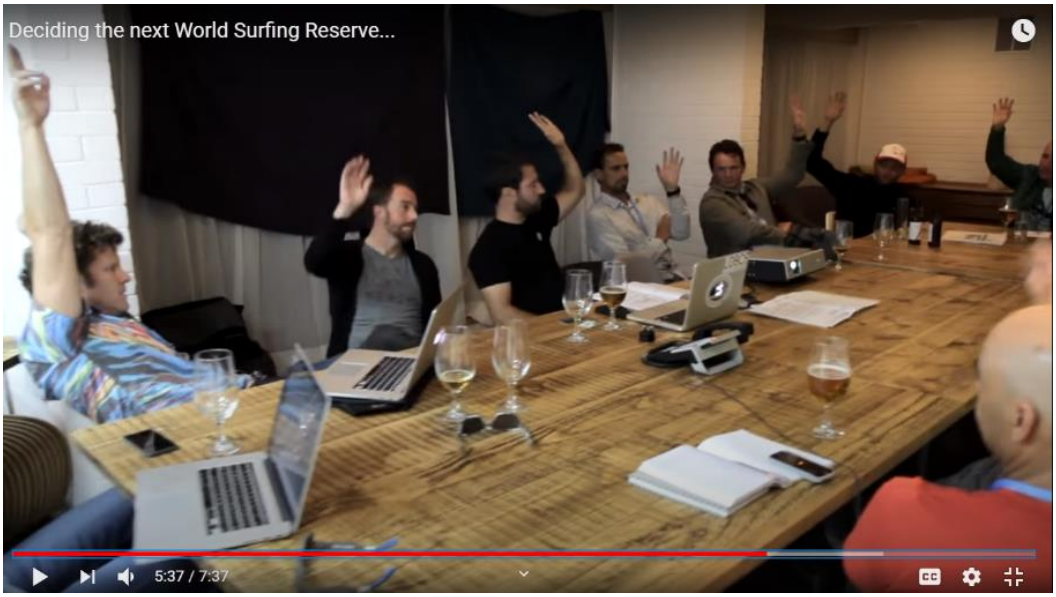


Figure 22 "Deciding the next World Surfing Reserve"

Members of the Save the Waves Vision Council meet following the Global Wave Conference 2015. Image source: Charles & Meidell (YouTube 2015)

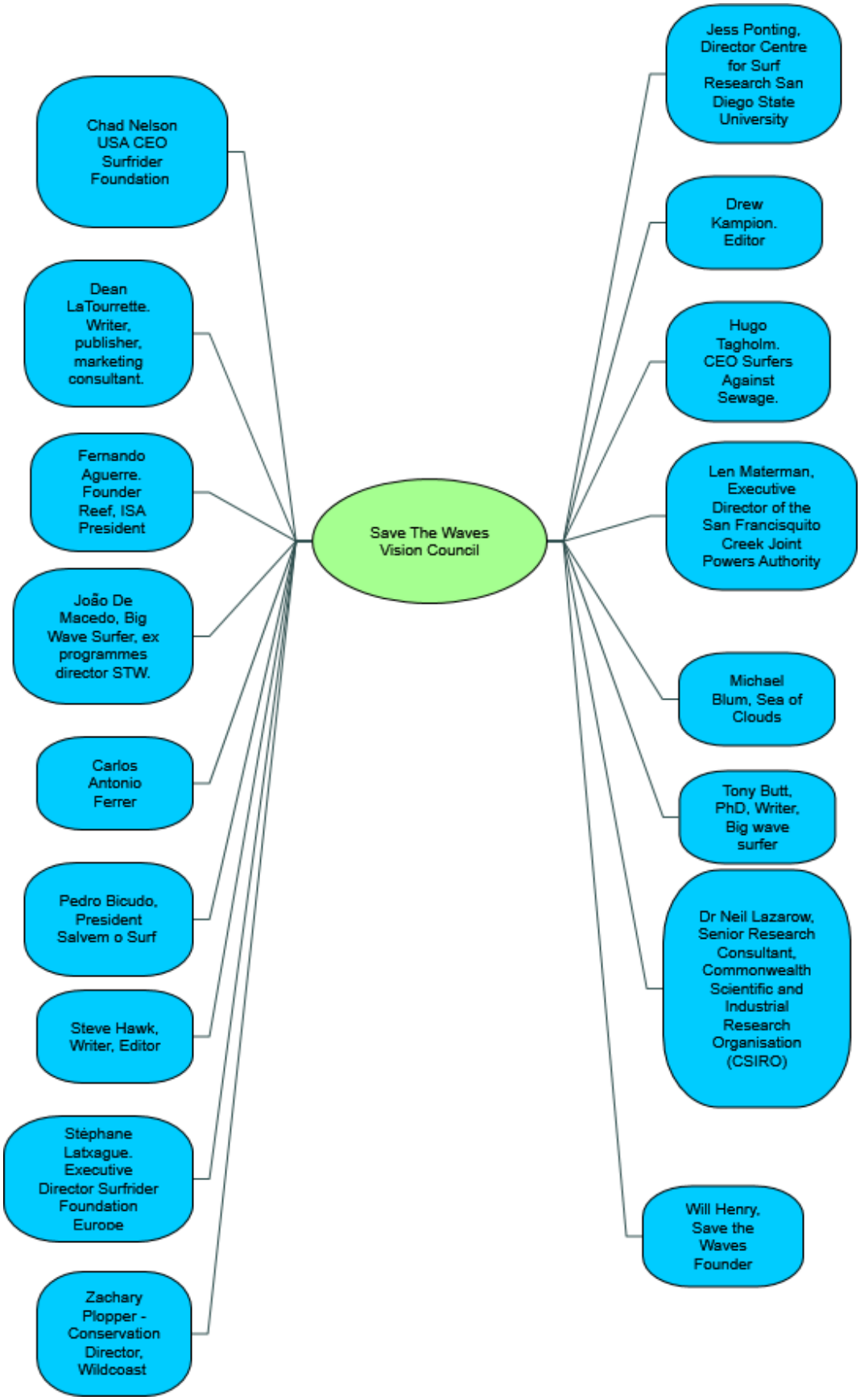


Figure 23 Save the Waves Vision Council

The structure of Save the Waves allows the organisation to function on a much wider scale than a <10 employee operation ordinarily might. There are however critiques to be made and questions to be posed in regard to how the various boards have been selected and maintained, and how its demographic make-up facilitates forms of protection which align with the hegemonic surfing types rather that the heterogenous body of participants we now know take up the activity (see Chapter 2). Though the Vision Council, for example, plays an important role in the World Surfing Reserves programme, its membership has been selected on a relatively informal basis and has some fundamental flaws in its current representation which has been noticed and scrutinised from within and outside of the organisation. As the following interview excerpt from *Save the Waves* conservation programs manager demonstrates:

> "It's like a lot of white men, you know that are that are on the vision council, and obviously that history of surfing obviously was very non-diverse for many years. And so, I think that, you know, it reflects kind of an older time period so yes, it is something that we are looking at and discussing" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

The Advisory Board, Executive Committee and Vision Council are nevertheless clear, deliberate attempts to bring together key actors in the global realm of surfing culture, industry and surfbreak protection. Though its members carry significant weight in their respective fields of expertise, neither these groups nor *Save the Waves* are equipped to enact surfbreak protection in a vacuum, and this chapter now moves to discuss some of the key spaces of persuasion in which the enviro-surf community has come together to further enable to the mobilisation of its ideas and ideals.

4.4 Globalising microspaces

As the work of the enviro-surf community has developed, so too has collaboration among the group. This has occurred through informal and formal settings such as meetings, conferences and workshops, and has provided structure, momentum and an outlet for ideas and cooperation. The most notable example of these events is the Global Wave Conference, and both *Surfers Against Sewage* and the *Surfrider Foundation* were instrumental in creating this space where:

> "similar organisations from around the world came together to forge stronger networks and share best practise on how to protect waves and represent water sports communities" (Nelsen et al 2013 p908).

The first Global Wave Conference was held in 2010 at the University of La Laguna, Tenerife and can be attributed to the ideas of university lecturer, and president of the Canary Islands Surfing Federation, Dr Angel Lobo. Invitees to this first event,

> "included experts in coastal biology, European law, Coastal Engineering and Oceanography, with representatives from *Surfers Against Sewage*, *Save the Waves* and the *Surfrider Foundation*" (Surfers Against Sewage: Conference Background 2015).

Further iterations of the gathering have since taken place; in 2011 in San Sebastien/Biarritz; 2013 in Ensenada, Mexico; 2015 in Newquay, UK; 2018 in Santa Cruz, California and the Gold Coast in 2020. At these events, representatives (usually leaders) of organisations, and individuals from academic, surf and creative industries gather to share work and ideas, with the conference "bringing together the best international minds from the surfing, conservation and innovation communities to tackle the world's most challenging ocean issues" (Save the Waves 2018). The aims of the conference have focussed on various themes, all linked to the protection of the surfing and broader ocean environment, including, for example, the understanding of waves and the environment in which they are created and break; the value of waves for the local economy, energy and tourism; ways to protect waves through law, and ways to "intervene in the coastal environment without destroying the waves" (Surfers Against Sewage Conference Background 2015)

Figure 24 Global Wave Conference 2018

With Cowells Beach in the background, Professor Krista Comer of Rice University and the Institute for Women Surfers, presents a paper on "Women's Access and Questions of Value at Mavericks" (Mavericks is a big wave surf spot in northern California where, until 2018, women had been prohibited from competing.). Image: Author 2018.

Since its inauguration in 2010, the (roughly) biennial event has grown in size and scope, with the 2018 edition attracting around 300 attendees to a beachside hotel in Santa Cruz, California. Overlooking the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and set within a designated World Surfing Reserve, the conference addressed a broad range of topics. These were delivered in line with the conference themes which were "the land to sea connection, protected areas and surf, climate change and innovation" (Save the Waves: Agenda 2018). Presentations, from an international line-up, were polished and thoughtful, covering policy and legislative ground, scientific findings and innovative social and environmental solutions to pressing questions and issues related to the themes.

Figure 25 Santa Cruz surf history walking tour

At the end of the first day, a walking tour took us along the clifftop, past some statues and plaques and onto the quaint surf museum, housed in a lighthouse, from which famed surf spot Steamer Lane can be clearly seen from above. Here, local high school students were having a mid-week surfing PE lesson. With one ear on the story of three Hawaiian princes who were the first to stand up surf in Santa Cruz in 1885, conference delegates were keenly watching the waves, calculating when their schedule would allow for a practical engagement with the local surfing opportunities (Author's Fieldnotes March 2018). Image Source: Author 2018

The selected physical location of these conferences is of importance; just as Santa Cruz is globally renowned for its surf, the earlier iterations of the conference were all held in the vicinity of highly regarded surf spots. A professional event in such a setting is an obvious draw for delegates, whose common interests lie in the ocean, but these locations also highlight the international scope of the events, and the mobility of those who attend them. Furthermore, in line with McCann's thinking, these locations are "significant in that they serve to anoint certain cities and certain policies as worthy of attention" (2011 p114). Indeed,

Ensenada (Bahia de Todos Santos), Santa Cruz and the Gold Coast are all designated World Surfing Reserves. During the 2018 event, Andrew McKinnon, a key figure in the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve (see Chapter 6), pitched to the audience and in particular the conference organisers, that the Gold Coast would be the best host for the 2020 gathering (GCWSR 2018). The bid was successful, and with approval from rights owners *Save the Waves*, *Surfrider Foundation* USA & Europe, *Surfers Against Sewage* (UK) and *Wild Coast California*, the 2020 event, discussed in Chapter 7, was hosted in conjunction with the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve. This further demonstrates how the conference has grown, and evidences the direct links between the international and local organisations who are developing and initiating surfbreak protection strategies while mutually reinforcing the epistemic enviro-surf community.

While I suggest that the Global Wave Conference is the most sophisticated and wide reaching of the enviro-surf 'globalising microspaces', it is not the only one, and numerous other spaces of persuasion through which ideas can be critiqued, disseminated and mobilised have been identified. These include, for example, the International Surfing Symposium, held in Currumbin, Gold Coast Australia in 2017, which worked in conjunction with the Global Wave Conference, and an academic conference, organised through the centre for surf research at San Diego State University in 2019; "Impact Zones and Liminal Spaces: The Culture and History of Surfing."

Along with the enviro-surf organisations detailed earlier in this chapter, the involvement of academics and universities has been important in the legitimisation of both the events and the initiatives that come out of them. The conferences provide an opportunity for the dissemination of research beyond academia, and, in another example of mutual reinforcement, bolster the work of the group through the provision of formal, peer reviewed research, by complementing the embodied and lay knowledges that many of the community members possess. As Chapter 2 highlighted, the body of surf focussed literature is now substantial, and as the field has grown, so too have networks which have brought these interdisciplinary groups together. Along with conferences such as those listed above, there are now research groups, centres and networks, all of which contribute to the expertise and authority of the enviro-surf community. These include the Plymouth Sustainability and Surfing Research Group (UK), Centre for Surf Research at San Diego State University (US), and SandS Surf and Sustainability Research Group, Federal University of Santa Catarina, (Brazil).

The presence of a range of professionals such as lawyers, and engineers, as well as local political actors, surf industry stakeholders and a number of surfers also broaden the scope of these events and provide an indication of how the enviro-surf operates through and within the broader surfing, political and coastal community.

This chapter has so far demonstrated that the enviro-surf sector has broadened its focus, capabilities and ambitions. It suggests also that its emergence has been, and continues to be, an ongoing, dynamic and mutually reinforcing process, making the task of identifying the enviro-surf community a complex one. I suggest that a number of key microspaces have played a fundamental role in the development and legitimacy of the enviro-surf community, and have provided key 'moorings' where ideas, goals and policy learning can occur. These events have been driven by organisations, yet incorporate a range of actors who come together in carefully selected locations to impart and engage with relevant surf-centred knowledge. I argue throughout this thesis that the way in which the enviro-surf community now functions, can be effectively understood as epistemic in nature, and I now move to identify key actors within this group, before returning to the criteria laid out by Haas to extrapolate this argument based on the findings presented thus far.

4.5 Identifying the enviro-surf community

As a part of the wider surfing community, the enviro-surf community consists of a group of actors who hold both a connection to surfing, and a will to enhance the environment in which surfing can take place. Incorporating a broad range of social and environmental issues, foci of the group include both the wave resource itself, and associated factors such as water quality and access. In recent years this has broadened further, and many of those involved are now at the forefront of the fight against ocean plastics pollution, for example. The emergence of the group has been, and continues to be an ongoing process, though has reached a point, I argue that it can be recognised as an epistemic community. Outlined in Chapter 2, an epistemic community is

> "a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area" (Haas, 1992a p3).

The gatherings listed above, I suggest, are a selection of examples whereby such a network came together, reflective of a professionalised knowledge sharing and creation phenomena that is now a regular feature in surf environmentalism, and which has played an important role in the mobilisation and implementation of World Surfing Reserves. The identification of specific actors in an epistemic community can be complex. As Adler has observed, this task may:

> "...suffer from vagueness as to the nature, shape, and extent of the communities under study. This problem is complicated by the notion that people simultaneously participate in various overlapping communities whose boundaries are sometimes indistinct" (2005 p6).

Indeed, in relation to the enviro-surf community, there is no formal membership structure. As Figure 26 shows, actors have nonetheless been identified in a number of ways. This includes, for example, ethnographic observations made through attendance at relevant events such as the Global Wave Conference in 2015 and 2018, the International Surfing Symposium in 2017, and *"*Impact Zones and Liminal Space*"* in 2019, and extensive analysis of online and printed discourse from within and around the community. Orders of proceedings have provided a sound overview of some of the identifiable actors involved in the movement, and with many names recurring across a number of these events, it has been possible to recognise a pattern of involvement. Additionally, discourse surrounding previous events, and emerging projects has been utilised to identify the contemporary enviro-surf community. The identified actors comprise a range of areas of expertise as well as notable surfing credentials and significant social capital. I do not claim that this list is comprehensive or fixed. The community is dynamic, and continues to grow and evolve, broadening and narrowing its focus as threats emerge and recede. I do, however, claim that the actors listed here are representative of the actors and fields who are fundamental to the workings of the enviro-surf movement, whose actions, status, and engagement render them recognisable as key drivers in a group that collectively constitutes an epistemic community. For clarity, and to illustrate the breath of involved actors, I have used five categories: academics/researchers; organisation representatives; professional surfers; creative and surf industries. Demonstrating the interconnectivity of the group, a number of actors fall into multiple categories; Easkey Britton and Clif Kapono are, for example, professional surfers, though are also academics in their own right, while academic Pedro Bicudo is also a representative of Portuguese Enviro-Surf organisation Salvem o Surf.

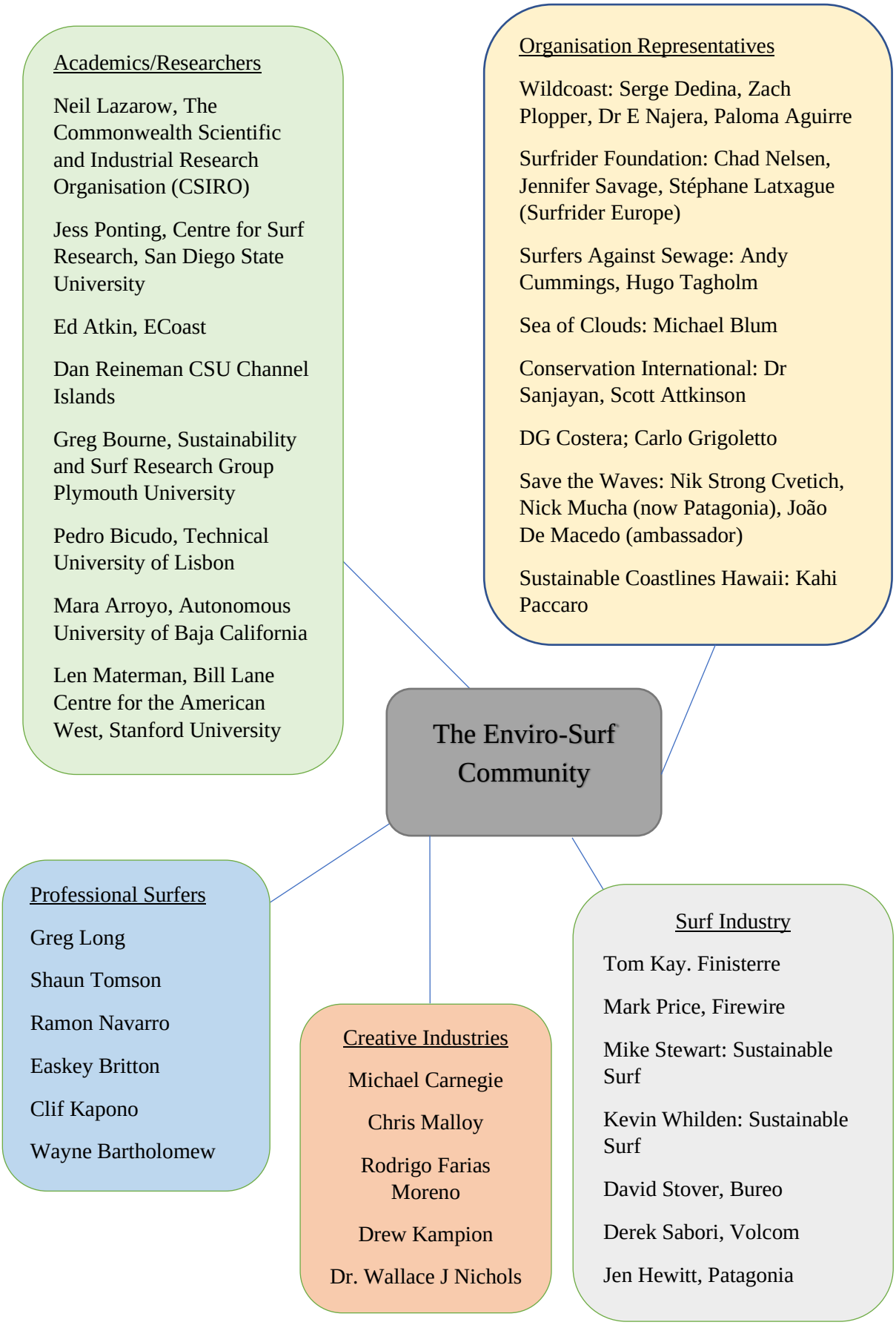


Figure 26 The Enviro-Surf Community

4.6 Enviro-surf as epistemic community

Having identified the enviro-surf community, I now return to the theoretical framework laid out by Haas to reassert my argument that this group can now be seen to meet the necessary criteria to be regarded as an epistemic community. To utilise the epistemic communities framework when looking towards the enviro-surf community, it has been necessary to scale down its elements, in order to make it applicable on a more local and trans local level, as opposed to the international and supranational characteristics of the fields which, as described in Chapter 2, have traditionally been analysed through this lens. Though operating on this alternate scale, the framework has been a useful means through which to explore the enviro-surf community and its role in forwarding surfbreak protection mechanisms. The following paragraphs refer to the four common characteristics in epistemic communities, as identified by Haas, to synthesise the theoretical foundations of the concept with the empirical data collected (1992a, p.3). This clarifies the position of the enviro-surf community as epistemic, and in doing so, establishes the foundations on which the remaining empirical chapters are based.

The first of the criteria is that epistemic communities have

> "(1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members;"

As touched upon in Chapter 2, surf breaks carry significant value for surfers, other coastal stakeholders, and for the wider coastal environment. Part of the co-constitution of a surfers' identity, and the very place where their embodied surfing experience occurs, surf breaks are crucial components in the surfing assemblage, and surfers recognise the economic, social and cultural value of these spaces. As the following survey response emphasises, a surf zone can be far more than a breaking wave; "It is a place of healing, of peacefulness, self-reflection, and inspiration" (Survey Respondent 2019).

Surfers are aware that without surf breaks, they would not be able to surf, thus rendering their surf shore identity impossible. Beyond this, the surfing environment is valuable for more than surfing and some surfers, such as those who are active constituents of the enviro-surf community, I suggest, have begun to work based on these beliefs, towards the protection of these spaces. The values attached to these places, and to the experience which occurs within them, are the basis from which the normative and principled beliefs of the enviro-surf

community can be identified, and provide the impetus and rationale for action; surf breaks are important and when threatened, are worthy of protection. These threats bring us to the second of Haas's criteria, which consists of;

> "(2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes."

The shared causal beliefs outlined in this instance surround the threats being faced by surf zones. Though these threats manifest in different forms, and at different times, their commonality lies in a shared outcome of a disruption to the surfing experience. Whether resulting, for example, in the destruction of the wave itself, through development or environmental degradation, or physical or social barriers to access as a result of blocked access or poor water quality, the threats have been identified, and can be understood across the enviro-surfing community. The common goal of ensuring safe accessible surf spots into the future is largely agreed upon, and the various programmes which have been instigated by this group work towards the objective of long-term protection against these threats. This agreement is bolstered by what can be described as the third criteria for categorisation:

> "(3) shared notions of validity—that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise;"

As explored in Chapter 2, the embodied experience of surfing presents the opportunity for a shared understanding of the validity of surf break protection through common experience, and while this feeling may be difficult to articulate to the non-surfer, there is now a great deal of literature that attempts to do just that. In addition to explorations of the importance of the experience of surfing, a vast amount of work has been undertaken to develop the knowledge and understandings of surfing, the surf zone and its relation to broader coastal management. Chapter 2 went some way to describe a range of this literature, demonstrating the extent of knowledge and expertise which can now be found within and around the surfing community. Importantly, for a community to be considered as epistemic, these notions of validity require impartiality and accuracy, something which Haas suggests is dependent on the publication of works in peer-reviewed journals, and the commitment of internal "truth tests" by community members (Haas 2001 p11581). Relevant in this instance are a number of research papers that have been co-authored by high level staff of organisations within surf environmentalism

(Nelsen et al 2013). Additionally, widely published academics are integral to the movement through their involvement in advisory boards that, as we will see, assist in steering the aims of the group. As has been touched upon, conferences and other microspaces bring together academics and activists which provide space for critique and discussion from within the group. From these spaces, a network has emerged which has been developed into an active research group, *the International Association of Surfing Researchers,* presenting further capacity in the production and distribution of surf related knowledge.

Anecdotal and experiential knowledge which has circulated among and between surfers is therefore now bolstered through engagement with scientific and policy-based knowledge. The formalisation of this knowledge has, I argue, contributed to the ability of surfers to present their views in a way in which it can be transferrable and relevant to decision makers and other stakeholders. This presentation has been vital in the forwarding of the world surfing reserves programme, which brings us to the fourth and final criteria,

> "(4) a common policy enterprise—that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence."

A number of overlapping policy enterprises can be identified in the realm of surf break protection (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 4), and although these different initiatives are advanced by different organisations, in different locations, the aims largely align. A greater focus on collaboration than competition is apparent in the forwarding of a common set of practices which are geared towards the protection of the surfing environment and experience. These encompass a range of strategies, as touched upon in Section 4.3. I argue that while it is not the absolute goal of the enviro-surf community, due to the support from across the enviro-surf spectrum and its effective leverage of the international network, World Surfing Reserves presents itself as a succinct example of the enviro-surf community working towards a common policy enterprise. The *Save the Waves* Vision Council and World Surfing Reserves Executive Committee bring together what can be viewed as a cross section of the enviro-surf community. In demonstrating their support for the programme, through these governance mechanisms, the programme is effectively endorsed by the breadth of the community and as such, carries significant social capital as well as legitimacy from its expert strategists.

The knowledge that surfers possess, as coastal stakeholders, and as self-proclaimed "canaries in the coal mine" of surf zone pressures and climate change, is growing and becoming

increasingly legitimised. The range of initiatives being put forward by the community to enhance this knowledge further, from academic studies to citizen science driven projects shows this is being taken seriously, and entering new spaces (see for example, Bresnahan et al 2017; Brewin et al 2015; Leonard et al 2018). Collaboration between these projects is overarching, as the common bond ensures that this collaboration is seemingly more effective and important than competition. These groups work internationally towards their common goals and as such, the criteria presented are met. I suggest however that these components can be augmented in this instance to include the authority and the social capital that is provided to different degrees by members of this community.

The co-constitution of expertise and cultural 'cool', I argue, plays a vital role in the enviro-surf epistemic community. The surf-shore identity of a surfer, as described in Chapter 2 is meaningful and significant. When combined with the expertise and knowledge outlined above, this identity can elevate the cultural status of the group and strengthen its position; both within the broader surfing community (thus gaining important grassroots support, as discussed in Section 4.3), and in the wider political environment.

Many of the actors involved are highly respected athletes or former athletes, and their credentials complement those of the other members of the group. Furthermore, as Figure 27 shows, many prominent enviro-surf community members fall into both categories, and are highly competent surfers, as well as established activists.

The *'who'* aspect of this community is therefore very important to its functionality, as will be shown as this thesis moves to explore how this community demonstrates itself in practice.

Figure 27 Enviro-Surf(ers)

Top to bottom: Surfrider Foundation CEO Chad Nelsen, Wildcoast Associate Director Zach Plopper; Ex-Save the Waves Programs Manager and current ambassador João De Macedo. (Image sources: SurferToday 2014; Twitter: @zplopper.n.d; WSL Big Wave Awards 2017)

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the enviro-surf community has emerged as a nonlinear, dynamic process, made possible through the evolution of environmentalism in surfing. Led by key organisations Surfrider Foundation and Surfers Against Sewage, the enviro-surf community is now bolstered by further organisations, and professional actors whose fundamental beliefs and values align in such a way that momentum has been gained, and a resulting authority claimed. Though its exact membership cannot be defined, key actors have been identified, and the collective characteristics of the group have met the criteria outlined by Haas to be considered as epistemic. This thesis now looks to how the group can be seen to work in practice; beyond the conference podiums and meeting rooms, and into policy through the example of World Surfing Reserves.

Figure 28 The closing of the 2018 Global Wave Conference

Delegates gather on the beach before marking the end of the conference with a group paddle out; a ritual that is deeply ingrained in surfing culture. This celebration involved around 40 people, forming a circle at sea. A Hawaiian participant shared a traditional song, and this was followed with splashing and shouting from the group. Image source: Author 2018

Chapter 5: How does the enviro-surf community demonstrate itself in practice?

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 I addressed the question of who or what is the enviro-surf community, and in doing so, explored its origins, the actors who comprise it, and how it has developed. I argue that the enviro-surf community is a niche within the heterogenous surfing population, and that it represents an evolutionary step in surf centred environmentalism; now taking up space in conventional political spaces, where they lobby, advise and take action on key coastal planning debates. To understand this development, I turned to the epistemic communities framework, as laid out by Haas (1992), presenting an analysis of how the enviro-surf community's shared beliefs, and aims align to mutually reinforce the work of the group and its position in surfbreak protection internationally. I suggest that, in addition to sharing and moulding common ideas, this epistemic community create specific policy frameworks which are mobilised, and implemented into practice to create new worlds of surfing, (b)ordered in their image. This chapter develops this notion, and delves into the example of World Surfing Reserves, as it addresses the second research question; How does the enviro-surf community demonstrate itself in practice? What are World Surfing Reserves, and what do they seek to do?

As has been introduced, World Surfing Reserves were launched by Californian non-profit *Save The Waves Coalition* in 2009 and there are now 11 designated reserves in 8 countries. The programme is one of a number of proactive and preventative initiatives to have emerged from the enviro-surf community in recent years, and one which works in close partnerships with local community groups who have become organised to work towards protection of their prized surf spots (Nelsen et al 2013 p908). As stated in Chapter 4, I do not claim WSRs to necessarily be the end goal of the enviro-surf community. I do suggest however, that the programme is exemplary in its demonstration of the way in which a global discourse has become established as local practice through effective utilisation of multi-scalar networks. The principles of the epistemic community outlined in the previous chapter, of shared beliefs, values, notions of validity, and a common policy enterprise manifest clearly through the World Surfing Reserve example; a resultant, dynamic assemblage of actors, ideas and impact made possible as a result of collaboration and development across the breadth of the enviro-

surf community. As an identifiable common policy enterprise, the WSR programme has mobilised, and as it has moved, it has mutated into specific local contexts, again drawing upon networks of expertise and social capital to encourage its adoption.

This chapter analyses World Surfing Reserves through key policy mobilities concepts of assemblages, mobilities, and mutation to address the question of how the enviro-surf community demonstrates itself in practice. It does this by first exploring first how the enviro-surf community have advanced their capability, and ambition to such a degree that they have necessarily broadened their campaigning strategies, beyond reactive protest. Now including a range of proactive strategies for surfbreak protection and preservation (See for example Arroyo et al 2020; Edwards & Stephenson 2013; Nelsen et al 2007; Orchard 2017), I argue that WSRs are the best example of an international policy enterprise and one which starkly demonstrates the development of the enviro-surf community from an array of disparate organisations to an epistemic entity. In Section 5.4, I chart its emergence and mobilisation through an exploration of why and how WSRs have been selected by *Save The Waves*, and supported by the broader enviro-surf community, as a strategy to forward their overarching aims. The transition from a discussion on a beach to a coherent international programme has involved partnerships, conflict and learning. This chapter depicts key points in this journey through a discussion on the development of surfing reserves across scales, from a single site to a national initiative in Australia, and into the international programme upon which this thesis is focussed. In doing so, I explore what this means for the nature of surfing culture, as envisaged by proponents of World Surfing Reserves.

To show how this programme is a demonstration of the functioning of the enviro-surf community in practice, I present an analysis of the WSR as an assemblage of global and local governance, illustrating how networks span scales and geographies to effectively mobilise and emplace this particular strategy for surfbreak protection. I argue that while the *Save The Waves* Vision Council constitutes in effect a practical manifestation of the global epistemic enviro-surf community, the Local Stewardship Council, as required in WSR procedure, reflects this community on a local level. Again, a range of expertise and social capital are brought together, and this group of local policy actors contribute embodied, place specific knowledge, and focussed engagement which provides the necessary capacity for the mobilised WSR programme to be mutated and adopted in an appropriate local form. I then discuss the way in which the programme has mutated into different contexts, before moving to focus in Chapter 6 on the specific example of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve.

5.2 Towards proactive protection

In Chapter 4, I detailed the trajectory of the enviro-surf movement. Building on its subcultural foundations, I argue that while reactive activism still constitutes a significant component of the groups' work, the range of strategies have now broadened and encompass more collaborative, sophisticated opportunities to protect and preserve the surfing environment, the embodied experience, and the shore side cultures it facilitates. Among these strategies are a number of proactive responses which have emerged in various coastal locations as attempts to secure, or at least strengthen, the future of specific surfing environments against any real or potential threats. This shift to incorporate proactive approaches is important as it reflects the development of the enviro-surf community; the knowledge that has been generated to understand the threats and identify potential solutions, along with heightened recognition and representation, has enabled the innovation and adoption of such strategy as viable policy options. Encompassing both statutory and non-statutory approaches, the responses draw upon the expertise and authority of the epistemic enviro-surf community to challenge the limited representation that surfing has historically had in coastal planning, management and legislation (See Arroyo et al 2019 & 2020; Ball 2015; Blum 2015; Edwards & Stephenson 2013; Farmer & Short 2007; Orchard 2017; Reiblich & Reinemann 2018). These protections include for example, the Ley de Rompientes, the law of the breakers in Peru, the recognition of sites of surfing significance in the Aotearoa New Zealand Coastal Policy statement, and the use of existing heritage mechanisms such as the National Register of Historic places in the USA. As Nelsen et al remark, each of these "proactive and preventative tools… offers its own unique objectives, establishment, jurisdiction and legal authorities. Each model will also have differing levels of protection" (2013 p908). While summaries of these strategies can be found in the appendix of this work, this chapter focusses on another example of proactive surfbreak protection, managed by Californian NGO *Save the Waves Coalition*; World Surfing Reserves.

For *Save The Waves*, a shift from reactive campaigning was deemed necessary to amplify its impact; its original aim was to raise alarm and increase public awareness of threats to surf spots (Hodges, T. 2019. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019). It was realised by the organization however that this approach was not sustainable because of intensive resource needs. Nor was it an effective strategy for surfbreak protection due to the time sensitive nature of the threats. The following quotation from founding *Save The Waves* board member highlights the

frustration felt within the small organisation and the limited efficacy of reactive campaigning that was capable of drawing attention to threatened surf spots, though presented little in the way of tangible support for communities.

> "Inevitably we'd sound the alarm, and the place would get destroyed or we'd sound the alarm, and then the communities would be like, that's it? That's all you can do? You know some of them had this idea that we could fly in and be the, you know, come in on a white horse and save the day or whatever like yeah, sorry, we're a three-person non-profit. And so, it was very frustrating in that beginning part and for me on the operational level. I wanted to be a lot more impactful than that and we started to think more in terms of what could we do more proactively. And so that was really the big switch. It was like to go from reactive to proactive." (LaTourette, D. Interview. Skype, 18/10/2019)

In addition to demand from within the organisation to enhance their offering, this quotation shows that there was demand, and indeed almost an expectation, among communities that more substantial actions should be available for them to engage when facing their particular threat. After all, intensive and unpredictable reactive campaigning often becomes unsustainable for local communities, who form and reform activist groups to mobilise on the ground as threats arise. In the case of Kirra point for example, the bulldozer in 1973 was not stopped by Bartholomew. In 2009, the community campaigned with success to restore the Kirra groyne, and the waves that it shaped, yet were called upon once again in 2014 to protest a proposed ocean terminal. Though successful in raising awareness of the issue and proving to be largely effective, they did not result in any long-term protection of the space and so an alternative approach was sought. Such a sentiment is summarised in the following interview excerpt from Gold Coast WSR leaders Andrew and Megan McKinnon:

> AM: "So I said to everybody okay, we can protest all we like, and we will but we need to come up with something that we think that can protect.
>
> MM: "Yeah and you said we can't keep coming back every ten years when the threat comes back (McKinnon, A & M. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 16/02/2019).

This switch, from primarily reactive to proactive campaigning in both instances ultimately manifested in the form of the World Surfing Reserves, a programme which, as detailed in the introduction of this thesis, "proactively identifies, designates and preserves outstanding waves, surf zones and surrounding environments around the world" (Save the Waves, n.d. World Surfing Reserves).

For the enviro-surf community, *Save The Waves*, and local communities of surfers, World Surfing Reserves present a proactive opportunity to strengthen the position of surfing and surfers against potential, and possibly as yet unknown threats. In each instance, the success of a WSR requires both the NGO, with its global aspirations and network of expertise, and its associated claim to authority over the programme, and local communities who adapt and adopt the strategy into a specific context. This mutual reliance and reinforcement, discussed further in Section 5.5, highlights how multiple scales of influence and action have been brought into play, and presents a clear image of how the enviro-surf community demonstrates itself in practice.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of how WSRs were selected as the preferred approach in the Gold Coast example, and I now turn to chart the emergence of the WSR programme itself, as an assemblage that crosses geographies, scales and expectations. I begin with a discussion on how *STW* brought together actors and resources to develop a programme, and then explore the surfing reserve concept through its scaling from local, to national to global reach.

5.3 Generating momentum

> *"*We needed to be bigger than what the organization was at the time." (LaTourette, D. Interview. Skype, 18/10/2019)

In an interview with founding *STW* board member Dean LaTourette, the origins of the WSR concept were outlined, starting with a seed that was planted following discussions on a "dream trip" to Chile in 2004. Invited by Yvonn Choinard, owner of popular outdoor clothing brand Patagonia, the party included among others, *Save The Waves* founder Will Henry, musician and surfer Jack Johnson, surfers Gerry Lopez, Keith Malloy and Chris Malloy, and writer Terry Gibson.

> "I just remember having conversations with Yvonn and Terry and Will and we started talking about this idea of a surfological preserve and you know, Yvonne had mentioned, I think Will got him on camera saying once, about that surfing areas should be, you know, surf areas should be world heritage sites with an early film that he did on the island of Madeira. And so, we were talking about the whole concept. Like how would you do it? Wouldn't that be great, more kind of the abstract, but that's when we started really thinking, wow, this would be really neat, and we happened to have some of those conversations at Punta de Lobos. And so we were actually on the beach there, which is really kind of neat full circle story because it ended up becoming this World Surfing Reserve" (ibid).

When LaTourrette took over as Executive Director of *Save The Waves* in 2007 the seed that had been planted in Chile began to take root, and was explored in more depth. Through this study, I have found that a focus was initially placed on the UNESCO world heritage programme, with João de Macedo being credited for much of the research on this area. Seeing the potential scope of the idea, though unsure on how best to proceed given the limited resources available, *Save The Waves* can be seen to have taken a risk, to dive in and draw upon what can be regarded as their greatest strength; their network.

> "Let's just start, the only way to try to do something was to try it and see if we can make it work. So that's how we started. We just kind of, we started leveraging our Network. We contacted a bunch of forward thinkers and thought leaders in surfing and environmentalism and business, and we said this is what we want to do. What do you think? We pulled them all together at a conference we're like how do you get this going? Okay, let's get everyone in the room. And so, we hosted a conference right there in Half Moon Bay" (ibid).

This quotation draws attention to a number of factors that can be considered when thinking of the launch of the WSR programme. Firstly, the leveraging of a network of thought leaders and forward thinkers can be seen as a bringing together of the epistemic community that was outlined in the previous chapter. The conference itself can be viewed as the deliberate creation of a 'globalising microspace'; a space in which an idea can be shaped and given momentum (McCann 2011), an opportunity for trust to be built, and for commitments to be made (Ball 2016). Just as key thinkers in urban planning are invited to share stories and present their visions of best practice, (as described by Baker and Temenos (2015) for

example), the identification and invitation of key individuals has been crucial in both the establishment of WSR as a programme, and in its ongoing governance. The gathering, which I view as the bringing together of an embryonic epistemic community, was used to expedite and strengthen a nascent proactive programme, and helped to magnify the presence of *Save The Waves* in international surfbreak protection.

Among those who were invited to attend that meeting in 2008 were the men behind a programme, National Surfing Reserves, which had been gaining momentum in Australia since 2006. Along with the *International Surfing Association*, *National Surfing Reserves* are described as being "key partners in the launch of WSRs" in 2009, with the aim of the programme being to set aside prime coastal surfing locations to protect surf culture, along with the coastline and its associated biodiversity (Save the Waves, n.d: World Surfing Reserves). In the following quotation, Trent Hodges, *Save The Waves* employee, further highlights the need for the organisation to move towards proactive conservation strategies, and the role that the model provided by National Surfing Reserves played in the early stages of the establishment of the WSR programme.

> "The idea of just setting aside places along the coast that have great waves, have a unique surf story, a unique surf culture and then of course, to protect biodiversity and the coastline itself. So Save The Waves learned a lot from that National Surfing Reserves model in Australia decided that you know, we can take that to a Global Perspective and highlight places, across the world that have these amazing characteristics of great waves, unique culture and biodiversity. So yeah that was the idea… we and the organization knew that we couldn't just continue to fight these bad coastal development projects, but needed to be more proactive and just like conservation, the most effective way is actually find big pieces of land set them aside for conservation so that they're in perpetuity. So that was the idea, taking the model of what we found from world heritage sites or big conserved areas and applying that to the coastline. You know, under the surfing banner so to speak" (Hodges, T. 2019. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

Through this meeting, the surfing reserves concept was identified as a viable means through which the elevated ambitions of *Save The Waves* could be pursued, and while such a notion was not in itself new, the global aspirations and international network of *Save The Waves* enabled a shift in scale which saw the emergence of a programme with the potential for

worldwide reach. This scaling, and the support it garnered through the involvement of key enviro-surf community actors, is important in the contextualisation of the proactive strategy, and its role in the policy process. As Dunlop states,

> "To uncover the micro-foundations of epistemic communities' influence in the policy process, we must focus on the conditions of their emergence" (2011 p14)

Furthermore, the movement of the programme, from an idea on a beach in Chile, to California, and from Australia to the world, via California and back again highlights both how World Surfing Reserves evolved, and how it demonstrates the functioning of the enviro-surf community in practice; through its collaboration and conflict. In light of this importance, this chapter now focusses on key stages in the emergence of surfing reserves, specifically in Australia, before discussing further how this has impacted the way in which *Save The Waves* have forwarded the concept. This emergence highlights how the World Surfing Reserve assemblage has been formulated on an international level, and how it continues to evolve. It also demonstrates the inherently mobile nature of the programme, with both its origins and its contemporary reach spanning a broad geographical range. I begin with an overview of the Bells Beach Surfing Recreational Reserve, a local scale initiative which presents an early example of surf activism in this area, and move to national and international models that have been adapted and adopted in different contexts.

5.4 Scaling Surfing Reserves

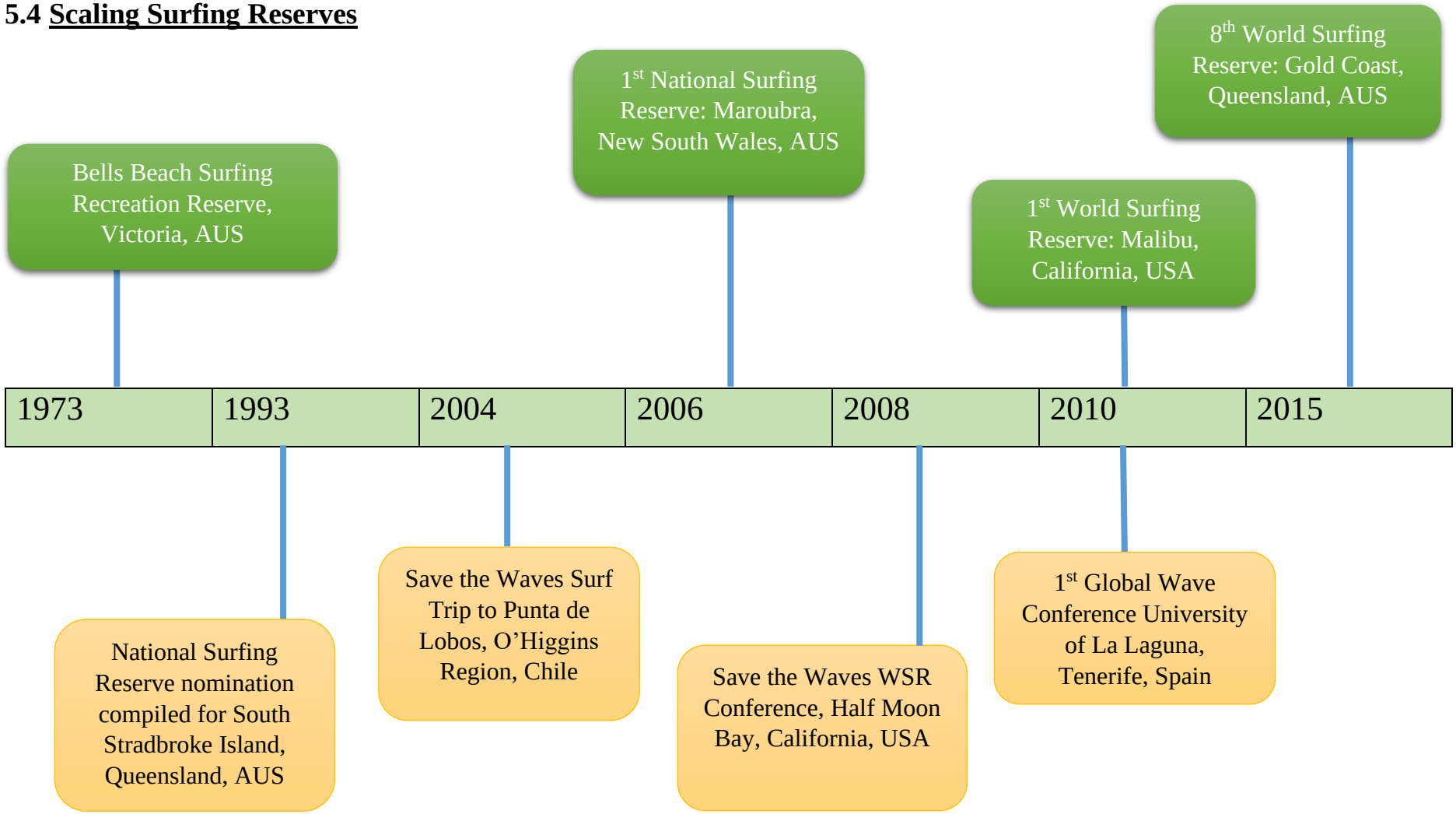


Figure 29 Scaling Surfing Reserves

5.4.1 **Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve**

Figure 30 Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve

Image Source: Author 2019

The history of surfing reserves in Australia dates back to 1973, when the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve was designated to protect the terrestrial area of the famed Victorian surf breaks at Bells Beach and neighbouring Winkipop (Skellern et al 2013). The status came about as a result of lobbying by Rod Brooks and other surfers who wanted the place to be recognised as special, and who could see that it was being destroyed by increasing crowds and a lack of proper management. As the following quotation from an interview conducted with local council officers in 2019 describes, the surf was hard to reach at that time; there were no real roads or car parks and initial developments to improve access to the surf were informal, rudimentary and gave minimal regard to the environment.

> "ST: To get to Bells you had to paddle out from Jan Juc around the headlands to get there. Yeah, it was really hard and then in the early days someone hired a bulldozer and bulldozed a track out there through the bush. And so that was the access track, you know so much for respecting the environment but that wasn't a thing in the 70s, […] before there were car parks and everything people would drive their cars out and drive and park everywhere and you know, it's sleeping in cars go surfing and yeah, it was all really cool, but there's some photos of the early days and Bells, it looks like a like a lunar landscape like yeah, just the whole cliff is completely

denuded you know there's no vegetation anywhere and there's old Combi vans like parked anywhere on the cliff, the crumbling old cliff or…

RM:…some would end up on the sand too.

ST: yeah, so these days it actually looks really green and natural but for a while there back in the seventies. It was just completely wrecked" (Loone, S & McKenzie, R. Interview. Torquay, Australia, 8/2/2019).

Figure 31 Bells Beach 2019

Bells Beach is Wada Wurrung land, and an important indigenous cultural site; the land was an Aboriginal meeting point, "where the Wathaurong people would gather to trade yarns, tools, skills and supplies" (Santarossa 2016). The reef which runs through Bells provided a plentiful food source and a shell midden that lines the surfbreak evidences this. No longer denuded, the vegetation around Bells Beach has recovered and remains "green and natural". There is now a car park, paths and two staircases down to the beach. Proposals to increase the size of the car park to match the demand for space; from tourist enterprises and professional surfing contests, have been refused and the beach retains a rugged feel with a strong sense of spirituality.

Realising that action was necessary, the lobbying surfers approached the Victorian government to provide protection. In the early 1970s surfing, and the perception of surfers was very different to that of today and so the happenings at Bells Beach were remarkable. The surfers themselves were the threat, and the surfers themselves mobilised to find a solution. As the following quote from an interviewee at the Surf Coast Shire Council describes, this would have been considered a radical act, and indeed precedes any other initiative that I cover by over 30 years. Over that time, local surfers have remained protective of the Reserve, and continue to commit time to their special place.

> "So I reckon, that would have been it was a pretty radical idea in the 70s to recognise surfing as a thing, cos it was always a bit anti-establishment, you know, well it still is, it has that anti-establishment, kind of bit of a free radical type thing. They still have that kind of nice theme to it. But to have it kind of recognized as a legitimate thing that deserves to be protected was quite a radical idea, and I think that that was around that time that the 'surfers appreciate the natural environment' saying came into existence and they, the community were the ones who, the surfing community, who had actually virtually wrecked it or were wrecking the nature reserve, were the ones who basically led its restoration and some of those people in the early, who did all that in the early days, are still involved in the nurturing of that space. I think for example Graham Stockton, he would spend probably a Sunday once a month at the reserve of the as a volunteer. He's probably done that for 30 years. It's pretty amazing the dedication that people have to the protection of it of it here" (McKenzie, R. Interview. Torquay, Australia, 8/2/2019).

The protected area covers 48 hectares of land and, as it is managed in a similar way to a terrestrial nature reserve by the local council, formalised regulation and protections are in place. In spite of its successes, Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve is the only one of its kind in the world.

For 32 years no further reserves emerged, and, with a lack of leadership from within the surfing community and associated industry that sprung up throughout this time, the rest of the Australian coastline remained "officially oblivious to its surfing status", leaving spots at risk (Farmer and Short 2007 p99). 1993 saw the preparation of a nomination and justification for an esteemed surf spot at South Stradbroke Island to be protected as a surfing reserve. The effort was spearheaded by the then president of *Surfrider Foundation Australia* Brad Farmer, and an intern who would come to be editor of one of the UKs most popular surfing magazines, Steve England (England and Farmer 1993). Though well received by the government at the time, the Reserve ultimately did not come into being and the concept was dormant once more, until 2005 when the idea was brought back to life and a committee was formed by Farmer to facilitate the identification and designation of premier surfing sites as National Surfing Reserves (Farmer and Short 2007).

5.4.2 **National Surfing Reserves (NSRs)**

Figure 32 National Surfing Reserve plaque at Merewether, New South Wales

"I found it. It's still raining, still crazy windy, but yeah, I think...here it is. [the plaque says] Merewether's waves are a surfing magnet. A unique combination of rocks, shelves and reefs provide a variety of world-class waves. You can surf Merewether's waves any time, any tide, any swell, any wind and any size. It's a proving ground for surfers and a breeding ground of champions. Merewether, country of the Awabakal people, together with their totem and protector, the sea eagle. National Surfing Reserves recognise iconic sites of cultural and historical significance in Australian surfing. Dedicated 22nd March 2009. Tony Kelly, Brad Farmer, Mark Richards. There it is... I'd say that's not really surfable is it, any weather, any tide...Well I suppose if you really wanted to" (Video diary transcript. Recorded 8/3/17) Image source: Author 2017

According to the currently defunct *National Surfing Reserve* website, "NSRs are 'iconic' places of intrinsic environmental, heritage, sporting and cultural value to a nation" (National Surfing Reserves, retrieved 2017). They recognise premier surfing sites, with set criteria for designation. In addition to high surf quality, a site should be considered 'sacred', having long term use by the local and national surfing community (ibid).

National Surfing Reserves is a non-profit, collaborative programme, established in Australia in 2007, and represents an important element in this study due to its relation to World Surfing Reserves. The first Reserve to be designated was Maroubra, in New South Wales in 2006. New South Wales would come to be a key ally in the recognition of the Reserves, seeing surfing as a recreational asset, and thus worthy of protection. In a similar approach to that taken by LaTourette two years later (see p156), the following quote from Farmer explains how the first reserve came into being; utilising existing contacts and networks to

gain access to policy circles and then building on momentum to gain legislative stature across the state through the New South Wales Crown Lands Act 1989.

> "I was living in Maroubra and I thought you know what? Let's just take this out. Bob Carr was the then NSW premier. He was someone who was a green Premier. I said, let's make Maroubra on south of Sydney, a NSR, let's try and get it through, and Peter Garrett was the federal member was a friend, Midnight Oil stain, and I thought well if I can't get a reserve through in Maroubra with two green state federal members I'll never get it through so I got the first one through but it wasn't recognized in the Crown Lands Act. So, I focussed on NSW and had a lot of discussion with the senior managers of Crown Lands NSW to canvas if they would actually create legislation to recognize surfing reserves the same as they recognised camping reserves or walking reserves or nature reserves. And they surprisingly agreed to bring amendments to the Crown Lands Act of 1989" (Farmer, B. Interview. WhatsApp, 26/02/2019).

Under this act, community-based reserve management committees were awarded funds with which they were to produce a plaque and information booklet. In addition, inclusion in the act requires that any proposal for development which may affect the reserve area to be subject to specific requirements. These include an evaluation of potential impacts and the following of a consent process in conjunction with the Crown Lands office. Planning mechanisms are also in place to involve stakeholders in enhanced consultation procedure. This allows for the voicing of objections, mitigation suggestions, and for legal challenges to be initiated (Skellern et al 2013). The Crown Lands Act has an underwater jurisdiction which extends for three nautical miles, meaning that Reserves of both land and sea are made (Blum 2015). The Crown Land Management Act 2016 (no 58) has replaced the 1989 Act, though as part of the amendments all lands already defined remain included the current iteration (NSW Legislation 2016). The first National Surfing Reserve to be designated in line with these statutory guidelines was Angourie in 2007.

The National Surfing Reserve programme currently has 20 designated Reserves, with 10 of these being in New South Wales. In other states, designation is community led and symbolic in its approach. The model has travelled internationally, and was taken up in Hawaii where a senate bill and executive order were passed in 2010. Two Reserves, at Waikiki and the North shore were designated, which aimed to grant formal recognition to the surfing value of the area, and the relationship between surfers and the ocean, and to promote the preservation

of reserves for surfing (Edwards and Stephenson 2013 p539). As well as national programmes, *NSR* also have in place frameworks for regional, and international level reserves and it is to the scaling up of this programme, in conjunction with *Save The Waves* that our focus now turns.

5.4.3 **World Surfing Reserves: contested origins**

Up to this point, a common and complementary goal of proactive surfbreak protection can be identified across the various programmes. At the time that *Save The Waves* organized their conference, when they were seeking a proactive direction, the National Surfing Reserves programme was established, growing quickly and looking to scale. A logical connection was made, and Farmer was invited to join the conversations hosted by *Save The Waves* in California. An extensive knowledge sharing process was undertaken in the formative stages and as mentioned previously, World Surfing Reserves were launched in partnership with both *National Surfing Reserves* and the *International Surfing Association*. Over the course of this project it emerged however that the relationship between *NSR* and *Save The Waves* has not remained mutually beneficial, and that the direction taken by WSRs has been contested in a way that appears to be at odds with *Save The Waves*' collaborative goals. This has presented a challenging aspect within this research, and demonstrates the importance of empirical evidence gathering to complement the discourse that is available online and in print.

I had anticipated the movement of the World Surfing Reserve programme as a truly collaborative endeavour; the common policy enterprise of the enviro-surf community that I had identified as being epistemic in nature. Though conflict in epistemic communities is neither unheard of, nor uncommon as new knowledge and iterative aims emerge and evolve, it can have a significant impact. According to Adler and Haas,

> "when an epistemic community loses its consensus, its authority is diminished, and decision makers tend to pay less attention to its advice" (1992 p385).

As I will briefly touch upon, while conflict in this instance has been prevalent, I argue that it has not been to the detriment of the programme or the overarching long term goals of the group. This policy has been mobilized, and the enviro-surf community remains active; affirming the notion that its aims are broader than its members, though raising further questions about who is included and excluded.

> "The guy who started that in Australia, Brad Farmer, he is also the founder of NSRs, and he then went to be the founder of WSRs. Then the Americans came in and…you heard the story?" (Butler, C. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 25/2/19)

The following paragraphs attempt to navigate this story, in order to generate a clear picture of the trajectory of World Surfing Reserves, culminating in the return to Australia through the Gold Coast and Noosa Reserves. According to Farmer, his invitation for a partnership to be formed was willingly received, as he explains in this interview extract:

> "So, I proposed that for them as a partner organization in America, that National Surf Reserves has been such a success, why don't they consider becoming a partner organization, in America? We will form World Surf Reserves, which again the wording was very important, and they all agreed that that was a tremendous initiative and that would be the reinvention of their little group" (Farmer, B. Interview. WhatsApp, 26/02/2019).

A network was created between the founders of *National Surfing Reserves* and key members of the *Save The Waves* directorship; a relationship which would last for 5 years. A common policy goal, World Surfing Reserves, emerged among the group, known as an international executive committee, yet the way in which this was enacted became problematic for the Australians and a shift of power, procedure and direction apparently ensued. Farmer described that there were concerns surrounding the governance of the emerging programme, tension around website domain names: that there was "a little bit of grit going on". In spite of these hurdles, and in an indication of the overarching common goal of the group, the first World Surfing Reserve was declared in Malibu, California in October 2010, having been approved by the international executive committee in December 2009. As the following quotation from LaTourette illustrates, the hurdles were not only organizational, but practical:

> "It just became clear that we had to at least nail one, you know, we had, we started with Malibu which was a disaster for a bunch of reasons. It was first one which was very, very difficult. The local community was very challenging to work with in Malibu. It's a very, we walked right into a political hot bed there with a big situation around the lagoon and Malibu and their timing couldn't have been worse. (laughs) It was just it was literally like the local surfers versus in some, a faction of the local surfers versus environmentalists, and it was very heated and so we literally

> walked into a hornet's nest and *Surfrider* was involved and it just it was it was kind of a nightmare and so we unfortunately, like of surf spots we could have chosen around the world, I'm not sure we could have chosen a worse one. I don't know how it bubbled to the top, but it Just somehow did and wow, I mean in some ways maybe it's good because we just sort of made all our mistakes on that one. (Yeah) and I'm sure it would have worked no matter how evolved or prepared we were given some of the other challenges, but we certainly made a lot of mistakes on that first one" (LaTourette, D. Interview. Skype, 18/10/2019).

Local political contexts presented significant challenges for the fledgling programme, and the first designated World Surfing Reserve was accompanied by a number of lessons. Following this, Manly-Freshwater was approved as a WSR in March 2010. Around 100 breaks were identified by the executive group as meeting the criteria for World Surfing Reserve designation. This presented issues in terms of scale, and also marked the start of significant conflict between group members as different approaches were emerging; the apparent shift suggesting that a power rebalance ensued and placed the Californians at the forefront of WSRs. As described earlier in this work, surfbreak protection has become more organized and formalized, which appears, in this case to be the cause of conflict as the two parties diverged.

> "Hitherto it had been a handshake you know, trans-pacific relationship with another similar group. You've got senior people(...)but then these Young Guns, all corporate guys who own Wineries and flash around Santa Barbara and San Francisco figured that they want to own it so they went to their lawyers and registered World Surf Reserves under *Save The Waves* without even informing us. That was the first sign that something had gone very wrong" (Farmer, B. Interview. WhatsApp, 26/02/2019).

Although symbolic of the formalisation of the programme, and likely a necessary step in the development of the initiative, the departure from the handshake agreement, to the inclusion of lawyers by the US contingent demonstrated a geographical and ideological parting of the ways. This was not the first time that Farmer had forged a partnership with an American enviro-surf organisation. He founded *Surfrider Australia* in 1991, and did so without initially consulting the existing North American arm, which as discussed in Chapter 4, had been established in 1984. This unconventional approach to international collaboration was not met

with legal proceedings for trademark infringements but instead was formalised, and *Surfrider Australia* became part of *Surfrider International*. Farmer attributes this acceptance to aligned aims, and his own character, and was instigated through a global, cultural arrangement;

> "they said oh you didn't ask us if you could use our name, but you know what, you're a nice guy and you seem to know what you're doing that's great and Glen Henning flew out said you have my blessing and (a we had a) few meetings, he reviews our logo so it made it rather than a separate entity in Australia, made it part of a global Empire if you like or a global movement…" (ibid)

Collaborating with the same good faith that was afforded to him in the 1990s, the addition of lawyers in the World Surfing Reserves process seemingly came as a shock to Farmer. This instance, I suggest, signals clearly how a white-collar approach had entered the enviro-surf strategy, in a more precise manner.

When a compromise could not be reached a change of governance followed, which ostracised Farmer and Short from the World Surfing Reserves management board. Due to the momentum being gathered through the broader network, it was possible for this to happen without negatively affecting the single voice of the programme. The loss of Farmer and Short, their expertise, and social capital, was outweighed by a coalition of vested interests.

The only contemporary link that has been identified between NSR and WSR is that for an Australian site to be designated as a World Surfing Reserve, it first needs to be recognized as a National Surfing Reserve. One interviewee spoke of the "awkward position" that he was put in as he tried to balance being on both NSR and WSR local committees, though the overarching goal of protecting the surfing space guided his willingness to volunteer in both settings. *Save The Waves* also regard the situation as amicable; the importance of the coalition, the ongoing role of National Surfing Reserves, and collaboration with multiple organisations are all acknowledged as crucial aspects of the programme's functionality.

> "World Surfing Reserves is a program that's kind of managed and is facilitated by *Save The Waves* but it's also outside *Save The Waves* as well, you know, because it's so big and we work in so many different places that we really rely on a lot of local Partners to carry out the work and you know, we kind of house a lot of the information and kind of the marketing public awareness aspects. But yeah, we do work with a lot of our partners in Australia on their National surfing reserves and some places like Noosa which is a World Surfing Reserve was dedicated this last

> year was a national Surfing Reserve before it became a World Surfing Reserve. So sometimes there could be those double distinctions which the World Surfing Reserve has this kind of a bigger more notoriety a bigger reach and kind of has a different structure and process than National Surfing Reserves. But yeah, we all work together and there's you know, there's some projects that are starting in other countries like in Latin America, Brazil kind of working with the National Surfing Reserve program and we're working with them to kind of set the process for that. So yeah, we're kind of intimately involved in like a lot of different kind of surf protections methodologies and WSRs is just one of them" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

Conflict has therefore existed, though does not inherently impact the way in which the WSR programme now functions. That both NSR and WSR still work alongside one another signals the strength of the overarching aims and principled beliefs of the enviro-surf community. While there has been conflict, which has pushed some actors out of the broader community, the knowledge consensus among the group has remained; the aspiration to protect and preserve areas for surfing has been consistent, and has continued to gain momentum in its ambition. Just as policy making is a relational and emergent social process, epistemic communities are also more than the ideas that they embody. With consideration of the actors who carry them; their personalities and goals, conflict and its impact can be effectively explored. As Haas states,

> "The ideas would be sterile without carriers, who function more or less as cognitive baggage handlers as well as gatekeepers governing the entryof new ideas into institutions" (1992a p27).

Consideration of actors is equally important when looking to how ideas are demonstrated in practice, and now, having shown in this section how surfing reserves have been scaled, I explore the concept can be helpful in understanding the multi-scalar networks of the enviro-surf community.

5.5 World Surfing Reserves as a demonstration of the enviro-surf community in practice

> "I would say that the success of a World Surfing Reserve, in the long term is just the alliances that are made between different groups and stakeholders and when we're looking at an application for a World Surfing Reserve that is extremely important is to look at not only the fact that there's community support but that the organizations that make up the Local Stewardship Council are in it for the long haul and are really dedicated and bought into the idea of long-term protection of this place and them being as the stewards. So yeah, so I think that there are some examples where that's been really effective and some examples where that's faltered a little bit and we've seen some negative results because of that" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

In this quotation, the importance of alliances, stewardship, and long-term engagement in the programme, and its aim of preserving wave breaks and their surrounding areas are emphasised. I posit that a combination of local and international networks make WSRs both an effective strategy in practice, and a prime example through which the functioning of a relational, and territorial enviro-surf community can be demonstrated; illustrating how the global enviro-surf community can effectively create a "flow" of knowledge around the world, that can only become "actionable" when it becomes embedded into a particular context (McCann 2011 p123). To better understand how the mobile, relational programme becomes a territorial fixity which orders and borders particular surfing spaces, this section looks to the governance structure of the World Surfing Reserve programme. In doing so, it further highlights the importance of multi-scalar cooperation in forwarding the broader aims of the enviro-surf community and its actors.

5.5.1 Governance structure of World Surfing Reserves

The governance structure of World Surfing Reserves, as of 2019, consists of an executive committee of five members who hold key roles in instrumental conservation and surfing which is assisted by a Vision Council of 17 who again carry a wide range of enviro-surf expertise and social capital (See Section 4.3.3). For the programme to be adopted on the ground, in addition to leading experts in the international realm, there is a need for local engagement and enthusiasm to provide the scope and support for it to be implemented in a

way that is suitable in a specific context. In the case of the WSR programme, a Local Stewardship Council takes on this role, holding responsibility for the ongoing management of selected sites. A Local Stewardship Council, and the stewardship plan that they develop are key to the functioning of a reserve, and, as with the global *Save The Waves* Vision Council, allow for a range of local stakeholders to be involved in the World Surfing Reserve process.

The Vision Council, I argue, is in effect a manifestation of the epistemic enviro-surf community, an element in the 'global consultocracy' that operates in practice on an international level to forward the overarching goal to maintain and improve the surfing environment and experience (McCann 2011). It is this group that is responsible for deciding which surf community can be approved as a World Surfing Reserve and as experts in their field, a collective authority is claimed in the domain of surfbreak protection, making the group instrumental in the effective mobilisation of the WSR programme. As the following quotation indicates:

> "…they meet once a year, and essentially they look over our applications for World Surfing Reserves, and ultimately weigh in with a vote on naming a World Surfing Reserve so, the Vision Council are, a body of people that are experts in the field that have a lot of experience in whether it's conservation or surfing come from all different aspects of the surf conservation world. So yeah, I mean they are instrumental in providing that expertise and guidance as we review applications because a lot of them know these places very well or have a lot of expertise and what works and what doesn't work in terms of community conservation models" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

World Surfing Reserves Eligibility Criteria and Application Process

1) Quality and Consistency of the wave(s)

- Quality of Wave(S)
- Surfable Days / Year
- Site of Pro Contest
- Wave Variety

2) Environmental characteristics

- Recognized Biodiversity Hotspot
- Threatened Species Present
- Connected to Water Resources
- Past/Present Wave Threat Likely to Be Mitigated
- Protected Designations
- Undeveloped Area
- Key Issue Identified
- Clear Avenue for Legal Protection Locally
- Provides Key Ecosystem Services

3) Culture and Surf History

- Site of National Cultural Significance
- Importance in Surf History
- Site of Regional Significance

4) Governance Capacity and Local Support

- Sustainable Financing Opportunities
- Legal or Policy Frameworks Available for Protection And/or Long-Term Support
- Clearly Identified Reserve Ambassador
- Capable Community Leaders and Established Institutions Dedicated to The Ongoing WSR Management and

Figure 33 World Surfing Reserves eligibility criteria and application process

In order to be considered for acceptance as a WSR, a complex and demanding series of tasks must be undertaken to demonstrate the eligibility of a location. This is an important element of the programme; the 4 criteria set by Save the Waves, listed left, are specific and cover a number of different aspects of an area's surfing environment and culture. This includes the physical features; surf spots and waves themselves and the environmental characteristics of the spot and its surroundings, and also the cultural and community aspects of a prospective reserve. Evaluations can allow for a mix in scores across the criteria and further information may be requested by Save the Waves.

In addition to demonstrating how an area meets these criteria, supporting materials are required. This includes letters of support from stakeholders; surfing governing bodies, local government officials, those with tourism/business interests for example. A provisional local stewardship council is also a necessary element, as is an explanation of how a WSR designation is envisaged to assist an area.

Completion of the application packet, which is available only in English, requires significant resources. The complexity of the criteria insists that access to financial, scientific and institutional resources are required in order to present a formal overview of the nominated reserve area.

The application process takes the following steps;

1. Letter of inquiry submitted
2. Letter of inquiry reviewed (applicant notified if criteria not met)
3. Applicant invited to submit full proposal
4. Vision Council vote on application
5. Site Approved or not approved
6. Designation ceremony

(Information compiled from Save the Waves, n.d: WSRs; The process)

In the early stages of the programme, this leadership not only selected from submitted applications, but identified sites for selection in a more top-down approach that focussed on ceremonial aspects over conservation. As the opening quotation of Section 5.5 implies, the involvement of local actors has proven to be key to the success of a Reserve. The adaptation of the application process highlights this importance, having evolved to focus much more on the engagement of the local community, and a thorough, competitive cycle now exists whereby communities demonstrate their eligibility for recognition through the scheme (see Figure 33).

In overseeing this cycle, *Save The Waves* set out the criteria for selection and manage the process, from initial enquiry, through to designation. This development can be seen as an important step in the strengthening of the programme in line with the ongoing, mutually reinforcing nature of the enviro-surf community that was discussed in Chapter 4.

> "The process was different, you know, we've learned every year what really makes a successful WSR. And so I think when we look at applications [from] now and then, when we do our follow-up process, we have a very detailed way that we approach the work, and we have a step-by-step process once an application is accepted: the nomination, to the dedication, and we've learned that you know doing that very diligent process results in great outcomes. So yeah, I definitely think that that the WSRs throughout the year have gotten better because our process got better" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

As part of this development, a Local Stewardship Council is now a requirement of the application process, and involves the identification of potential members who would be appropriate for, and willing to serve in such a role. Once a WSR is approved, the Local Stewardship Council is created, and they work to develop a site-specific stewardship plan, through which the reserve can be implemented and managed. The Stewardship Council are integral to the success of a reserve and are responsible for the guiding of the aims of the programme on a local level, in line with the international network. Without alignment across these scales, the efficacy of a World Surfing Reserve becomes compromised, and the aims of the enviro-surf community cannot be met. This is illustrated in the following quotation, as we return to the example of the largely ineffective Malibu World Surfing Reserve.

> "I'll give you an example Malibu which is a World Surfing Reserve in California. Obviously, very famous surfing spot, very coveted by Surfers. Also just a lot of people are very interested in protecting that place and there's a lot of different interests, from the community to non-profits to business, and we have had some frustrations there because there have been some kind of lately, it's some coastal protection structures put in; they've dropped boulders on the beach there without warning and under what, we call it an Emergency Coastal Development Permit. And, unfortunately because that Local Stewardship Council didn't have a lot of regular, weren't meeting regularly, there wasn't this really… not everybody buys into the process…different factions came about so there's a lot of contention in that area now about next steps and how to how to proceed under this coastal threat" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

As discussed in Section 5.4.3, Malibu was the first World Surfing Reserve. Designated prior to the implementation of the more comprehensive application process detailed above, its failures highlight the need for a coordinated local approach to potential threats that are faced. An aligned, engaged Local Stewardship Council presents real opportunity to shape surfbreak protection locally, and in doing so, strengthen the aims of the enviro-surf community on both local and global levels. Indeed, the Local Stewardship Council, when selected appropriately can, as will be seen in Chapter 6, be viewed as a localised and specialised version of the WSR Vision Council. The group is after all made up of leaders or management level stakeholders from a range of areas with a breadth of expertise, and social capital, coming together to instigate a policy goal on a local scale. In bridging the gap between the global and local enviro-surf communities, and their overall aim to protect surfing environments and experiences, the two overlapping entities draw strength from one another which further reinforces their position as a viable component in the broader policy making environment.

5.6 A mobile, mutating approach to surfbreak protection

WSRs therefore effectively demonstrate how mutually reinforcing global/local networks, which are based on common beliefs and values, provide strength and momentum across geographical scales to bolster claims of authority and forward the common aims of the groups. The movement of the World Surfing Reserves programme from Australia to the

world, via California is clearly contested in origin. It is also evident, however, that the concept has been mobilised and adopted internationally, as shown in Table 5.

Table 6 World Surfing Reserves: approval and dedication dates

Name	**Date Approved**	**Date Dedicated**
Malibu, USA	December 2009	October 2010
Ericeira, Portugal	February 2011	October 2011
Manly, Australia	March 2010	March 2012
Santa Cruz, USA	February 2011	April 2012
Huanchaco, Peru	January 2013	October 2013
Bahia de Todos Santos, Mexico	February 2013	June 2014
Punta de Lobos, Chile	October 2013	November 2017
Gold Coast, Australia	October 2015	March 2016
Guarda do Embau, Brazil	October 2016	October 2019
Noosa, Australia	November 2017	February 2020
Punta Borinquen, Puerto Rico	October 2018	tbc

Each of these Reserves function in necessarily very different ways as a result of varying assemblage of actors, environmental and political contexts. They all meet the criteria laid out by *Save The Waves* (see Figure 34); they carry significance in the local and global surfing past and present, and facilitate the surf-shore identities of surfers who live and visit the high quality waves which break there. In each instance, however, the World Surfing Reserve exists in a mutated form, allowing it to be both adopted by local coastal stakeholders and decision makers, and implemented in conjunction with existing coastal management policy. To demonstrate this variation, the following pages present brief profiles of 3 World Surfing Reserves that I visited through my fieldwork: Malibu (approved 2010), Bahia Todos Santos (approved 2013), and Ericeira (approved 2011). These profiles highlight the very different environments in which these Reserves are situated, and the consequential variation in approach and impact that can be identified.

Figure 34 Malibu World Surfing Reserve

Images: Author 2017

Malibu World Surfing Reserve

Approved: December 2009

Dedicated: October 2010

Location: Malibu, Los Angeles County, California, USA

Population: ≈12,500

Surf: 3 spots across Surfrider Beach (Point breaks)

Surf industry: Malibu is an extremely famous surf spot, and has featured extensively in surf and mainstream media e.g. Gidget (see chapter 2). The area itself houses just a couple of surf shops, but the place is integral to the broader commodification of surfing.

WSR visibility: I found no trace of the World Surfing Reserve on my visit, and those I spoke to in the area were unaware of its designation.

Stakeholder engagement: Malibu is among the most crowded surfbreaks in the world. Its consistency and form along with its close proximity to the Los Angeles metropolis makes it a convenient and appealing option for surfers. The area is renowned for its wealth, and there are a range of competing interests which, as has been discussed in this chapter, makes for a turbulent political environment. Though the WSR itself is largely unsuccessful, leader of local NGO Sea of Clouds, Michael Blum has successfully campaigned for the point breaks to be the first surf spots to be included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Figure 35 Bahia Todos Santos World Surfing Reserve

Images: Author 2017

Bahia Todos Santos WSR
Approved: February 2013

Designated: June 2014

Location: Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico

Surf: 5 spots, (cobble point and reef, including a big wave spot at Todos Santos Island)

Surf Industry: Remarkable as the site of the original surf trips, where surfers from southern California would venture south for good, uncrowded waves. The contemporary presence of the surf industry is overshadowed by a tourism industry which caters to the frequent cruise ships which dock in the busy port town. There is a surf shop, and surf school, and there is a thriving local surfing scene.

Stakeholder engagement: There appears to be a resurgence in interest in this reserve, with reserve manager Mara Arroyo taking an active role, working closely with Save the Waves to mobilise the community and put pressure on the local government to acknowledge the value of the surfing resource. The surf spots in this reserve are all very different in their situations. One spot, 3 M's was in a busy post area, with industrial canning facilities onshore. Proposed expansion of this port is a threat to the surfing here. Another spot, San Miguel, is heavily dependent on a watershed, and this has formed the basis of campaigning in the area, with WSR working with local organisation PRONATURA to create a state natural reserve and park that covers 4km of the beach and riparian zone.

Figure 36 Ericeira World Surfing Reserve

Images: Author 2016

Ericeira World Surfing Reserve
Approved: February 2011

Dedicated: October 2011

Location: Ericeira, Mafra Municipality, Portugal (35 miles from Lisbon, on the west coast)

Population: 10,000

Surf: 7 spots over 8km (beach and reef breaks)

Surf industry: well established with an abundance of surf schools, camps and surf shops, including flagship stores of brands such as Quiksilver.

WSR visibility: extremely high, with signage throughout the reserve. Businesses advertise their location within the reserve e.g. “Catch perfect waves at the World Surfing Reserve”, “Learn to Surf in a World Surfing Reserve”. A World Surfing Reserve interpretation centre located above the Ericeira tourist information centre provides information about the regions surfing in an innovative, interactive setting, with 3D maps and multimedia displays.

Stakeholder engagement: The regional government has demonstrated, through its funding of the signage and interpretation centre, significant support of the designation, and have forwarded the image of the area based on its credentials as a World Surfing Reserve. Tensions are apparent, with concerns that the government had taken over what was initially a community led initiative, to the extent that local enviro-surf organisation Salvem o Surf having explored the possibility of having the reserve status revoked by Save the Waves, should the government fail to work in alignment with the programme aims. Graffiti on one of the signs also shows discontent with the growing number of visiting surfers.

As shown in these brief descriptions, when territorialised, World Surfing Reserves take on myriad forms and functions. Levels of engagement and impact fluctuate, and can on occasion, deviate from the aims of the programme and the enviro-surf community. As discussed in Chapter 3, these sites all present an array of opportunities to explore the way in which the WSR programme has become mobilised as a policy enterprise of the enviro-surf community. I argue, however, that the Gold Coast presents the best example through which to explore how multi-scalar networks and a mobile, mutative programme have been utilised to serve as a mechanism for surfbreak protection, and I now conclude this chapter to move to focus on this specific example.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that as the knowledge and authority of the enviro-surf community has developed, proactive strategies to protect surfing environments have been innovated and implemented. Among these strategies are surfing reserves, and this, I argue, represents a viable, scalable policy option which clearly demonstrates how the enviro-surf community functions in practice. To illustrate this argument, I detailed in this chapter how the concept has grown, from the examples of Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve, National Surfing Reserves and onto its global form. This emergence has involved a range of actors across a range of locations, and is a journey that has involved conflict, learning, mistakes and successes. The contemporary governance structure of World Surfing Reserves, analysed in Section 5.5, suggests that the group of actors who have the final vote on which nominated Reserve is approved, the Vision Council, is a practical manifestation of the enviro-surf community, that brings together leaders in the surfbreak and coastal management field. The application process for acceptance into as a WSR has developed over time and now requires explicit support from a range of local stakeholders. This insists that a localised network of expertise and social capital, reflective of their global counterparts, is incorporated into the structure of each designated WSR. When mobilised, WSRs are translated into an appropriate local form, depending on the site-specific assemblage of actors, environment and political context.

Chapter 4 depicted who and what the enviro-surf community is. This chapter has shown how the epistemic entity move beyond ideas and beliefs to implement policy through the WSR example. I now move in Chapter 6 to explore how the programme itself is demonstrated in practice, through a focussed analysis of the Gold Coast WSR.

Chapter 6: Contextualising surfing place, protection and policy in the Gold Coast.

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have argued that an international enviro-surf community exists, and that it effectively demonstrates itself in practice through World Surfing Reserves. In Chapter 5, I detailed the development of proactive mechanisms to protect surfing environments, and documented the scaling of surfing reserves, from a local initiative (Bells Beach surfing Recreation Reserve), to the international WSR programme which is managed by Californian NGO Save the Waves Coalition, and through its governance structure draws support from the breadth of the enviro-surf community (detailed in Chapter 4). While this network has provided the expertise and authority for the programme to mobilise, engaged local communities are found to be vital components in the WSR assemblage. Without place specific epistemologies, and relevant social capital in the local context, the emplacement of the WSR and its associated policies would not be possible. I concluded Chapter 5 by discussing the mutation of the programme as it moves; becoming fixed in different locations in different forms, and emphasised how the various contexts produced unique strategies for surfbreak protection under the WSR banner. Shifting focus from the international enviro-surf community and its aims, to a specific local context, this thesis now moves to further develop the established theoretical and empirical arguments, in particular illustrating how key aspects of knowledge and networks have played out in practice. This is achieved through a critical investigation of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve (GCWSR), and forms the second part of my empirical investigation. In this chapter, I present an analysis of how the programme came to be adopted in the region; where Chapter 5 looked to the relational mobilisation of the WSR, Chapter 6 focuses on its territorial emplacement, informed- as stated in Chapter 3- by fieldwork conducted in the region over five months between January 2017 and March 2019.

This chapter is necessarily the most substantial empirical component of this work. In contextualising the place, protections and policies of the Gold Coast surf zone, the processes, and eventual product of the GCWSR are established and evaluated. Bringing together a discussion on how local and international assemblages interact, this chapter also provides the basis from which the evaluations in Chapters 7 and 8 are drawn.

The chapter first introduces the region, its environment and its relationship to surfing. Describing an area of many dimensions, Section 6.2 presents a discussion on the paradoxical array of iconic coastline, lush hinterland, and high-rise development wherein surfing constitutes a central component in its imagery and lifestyle projections. The chapter then moves to analyse specifically the region's "Surf Management Plan" (SMP). Produced by the Gold Coast City Council, the plan, which I posit is the most comprehensive surf specific management plan that has been produced to date, acknowledges the importance of surfing for the Gold Coast, demonstrates a specific Gold Coast surf epistemology, and also provides the guiding documentation for the WSR application and designation. Through this plan, I explore the threats that are being faced in the Gold Coast (namely sand pumping, overcrowding and development) and present an analysis of the way in which the SMP created opportunities for both the formal recognition of what is termed the 'surfing amenity', and the creation of a 'space of persuasion' in which WSR leadership could access decision makers.

I then chart the emergence of the WSR as a policy option on the Gold Coast. In response to continuing threats to the surf zone, local community activists, led by Andrew McKinnon, attempted to achieve designation as a Reserve to secure long-term protection for the southern Gold Coast surf breaks. With the goal set, I look to the way in which the region meets the qualifying criteria set by Save the Waves coalition, of surf quality, environmental characteristics, cultural and historical significance, and local support and capacity. The final category is of particular relevance here as the leadership of the programme has been fundamental in achieving the designation, and in furthering the mutually beneficial relationships between the international enviro-surf community, and their Gold Coast counterparts. In bringing together a range of expertise and social capital, the Local Stewardship Committee highlights the local dimension of the multi-scalar enviro-surf community.

The final section of this chapter explores how and why the WSR has been mobilised and mutated in order to be implemented in the Gold Coast. I argue that the relative simplicity of WSRs, along with the opportunity for local communities to present a place appropriate version of the programme has been crucial in garnering support at both the local and international level. The manipulation of the reserve boundaries is used as an example in this instance, showing how this has reduced potential barriers to acceptance; by avoiding key sites of contestation and confining the designated area to one local authority. Additionally, the GCWSR was approved subject to a number of conditions, which placed substantial

restrictions on its scope, and insist that the designation is limited to a symbolic layer of protection. This chapter concludes with a brief summary, before moving in Chapter 7 to explore the impacts which, in spite of these restrictions, can be attributed to the GCWSR.

6.2 The Gold Coast

The Gold Coast is located in south east Queensland, sandwiched between the state capital Brisbane to the north, and the New South Wales border to the south. The traditional custodians of the region are the Indigenous Yugambeh, Minjungbai and Bundjalung people.

Figure 37 Gold Coast map

Divided into 14 divisions, it is a city of multiple identities; from the bright lights tourism of Surfers Paradise, to the subtropical rainforest of its hinterland, and to the 'village' like surf-suburbs to the southern end which provide the focus for this work. As can be seen in Figure 37, the Gold Coast is a relatively narrow region of approximately 160km2. The population as of 2016 was around 500,000, with the coastal regions seeing the highest levels of population density (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016).

Described as “providing the green behind the Gold”, the mountainous hinterland area of the gold coast consists of ancient, unspoilt Gondwana Rainforest, quaint villages and a very different feel to the city’s coastal suburbs. These coastal suburbs also present a range of differences, though their common features include the somewhat contradictory combination of heavy development and beautiful beaches.

Figure 38 Gold Coast hinterland *Image source: Author 2017*

The city is surrounded by water; in addition to the ocean fringe, there are a complex series of inland canals and waterways. These watery spaces bustle with tourist, recreationist and industrial activity. The chair of the city council is located in the paradoxically named Surfers Paradise, where the shadows of high-rise residential blocks loom over the beach in the afternoon sun.

Figure 39 Main Beach at dusk *Image source: Author 2017*

The surf at Surfers Paradise is not the best on the coast, but as in the rest of the city, surfing imagery, history and industry is all around. The Gold Coast has a proud surfing history, is home to numerous world champions and thousands of keen surfers who take advantage of the warm water and consistent surf year-round. Beyond the act of surfing itself, the surf imagery and its associations are important to the region; its residents, its business owners, and its visitors. As Nardini states,

> "Surfing, surfers and the related 'lifestyle' have become ubiquitous in representations of the Gold Coast. Moreover, images of surfing and surf culture are a staple of the tourist industry and in advertisements – as well as among the local residents trying to convey their feelings and understandings of being Gold Coasters" (2019 p4)

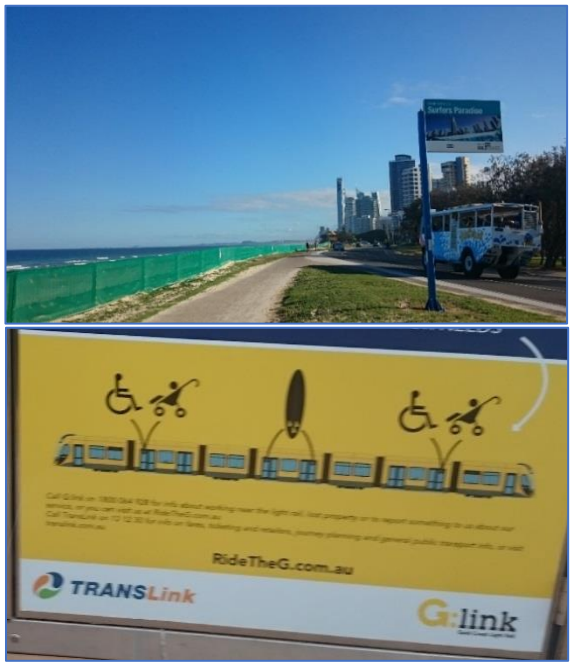


Figure 40 Accessing the Gold Coast

Image Source: Author 2017

Along the coast, barely a balcony can be seen without a board or two, and the city is generally very accommodating to surfers. It is not uncommon to see people running to the surf from their homes, and some cycle with boards attached. Surfboards are welcome on the public trams, parking at the beaches is free, and access is relatively straightforward, with accessible footpaths running parallel to most beaches.

Figure 41 Commonwealth Games: Gold Coast 2018

Image source: Author 2017

While surfing is heavily represented on the Gold Coast, it is far from being the only activity that inhabitants have chosen to embrace. The city proudly hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2018, and is "buoyed" by its legacy (Young 2019). The games brought positive attention and a range of improvements to the sporting facilities in the region and though not officially on the schedule of competition, surfing was ingrained into the backdrop and the marketing of the Games.

The Gold Coast is an active city- the council provide yoga on the beaches, running, cycling and swimming are all very popular, as is recreational boating, fishing, stand up paddle boarding and much more. As in much of coastal Australia, thriving surf lifesaving clubs operate along the coast. Their club houses are now open to all who wish to enjoy the view from their beachfront restaurants, and the longstanding rivalry between surfers and surfies (lifesavers), documented by the likes of Booth (2001) and Jaggard (2014), has largely subsided as surfing has become more integrated into the mainstream, and the gap between the militaristic, and hedonistic beach activities has narrowed.

Figure 42 Crowds in and outside the Rainbow Bay Surf Club

Image source: Author 2017

The natural amenity provided by the coast is utilised in numerous different ways and is in high demand. The pressure placed on the finite resources have presented a number of challenges for management by a number of statutory bodies, but also for stakeholder groups who want to ensure that their activity (and opinion) is taken into consideration. From my research, the key threats to surfing on the Gold Coast, which present challenges to both the physical aspects of the surf, and the social and cultural elements of the experience have been identified as sand pumping, development and overcrowding. As outlined in Chapter 2, the vast combination of factors that impact how a wave breaks mean that the surf zone is particularly vulnerable to external threats. Resultingly, the surfing community can be seen to have mobilised to protect and preserve their prized resource and in the case of the Gold Coast, this has included the approval of the region as a WSR in 2015. The designation,

which covers the southern end of the Gold Coast, from Burleigh Heads to Snapper Rock makes the Gold Coast Australia's second WSR, and the 8th Worldwide. Approved in October 2015, and declared in March 2016, the Reserve incorporates 13 different surf spots which are spread over approximately 16 km, of the Gold Coasts 57km coastline.

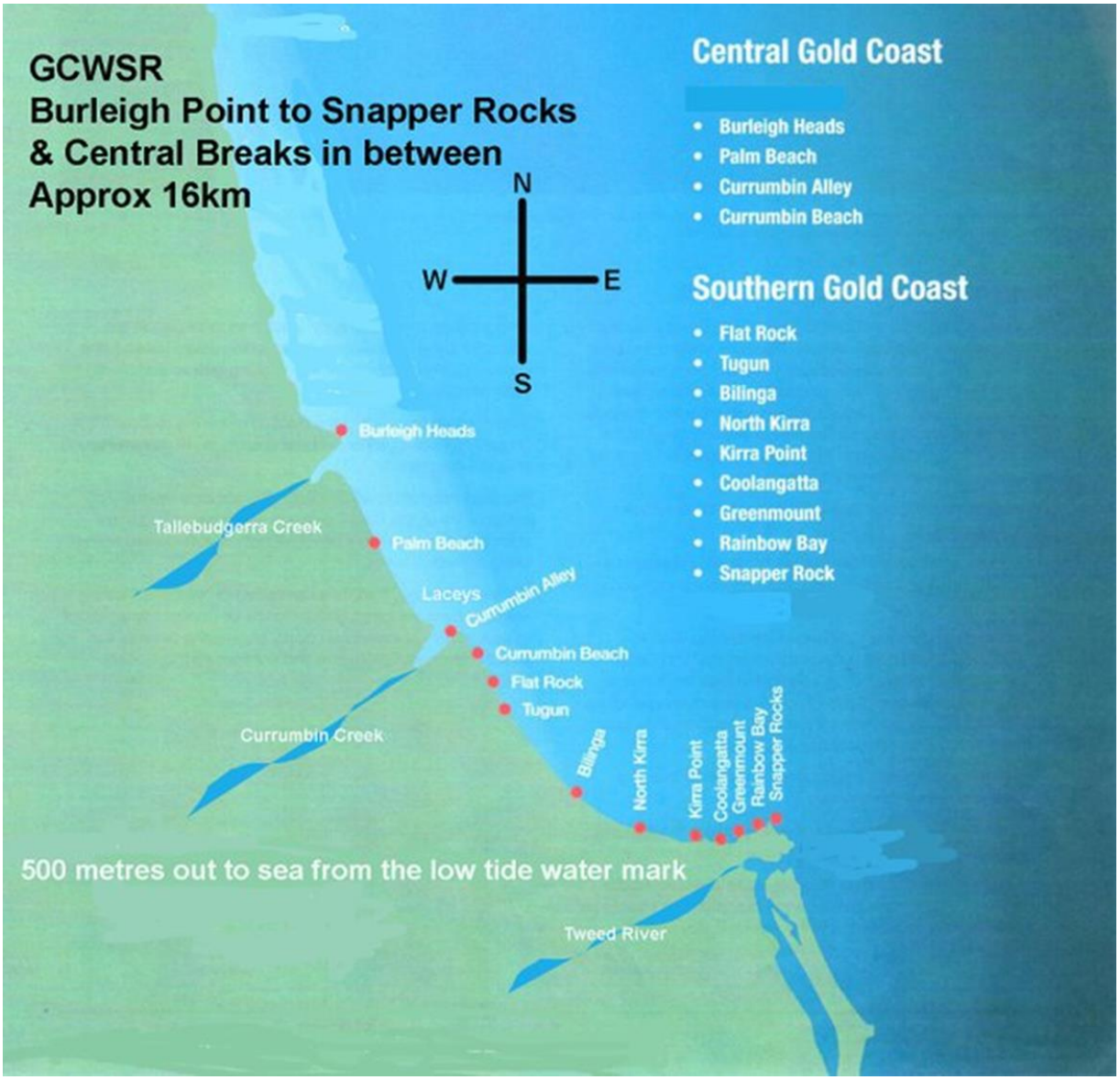


Figure 43 Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve map Image Source: Save the Waves. n.d GCWSR Map)

As detailed in Chapter 3, the Gold coast has been selected as the case study in this thesis due to the high level of engagement locally, and clear interaction across the multi-scalar enviro-surf assemblage. Surfing is a mainstream activity on the Gold Coast, though has historically been marginalised in decision making. As such, it presents an excellent example to explore how the enviro-surf community, and the WSR programme have become established in this specific context. Now, having introduced the Gold Coast region, this chapter now moves to

explore the emergence of the GCWSR. I do this by first presenting an analysis of a key component in the development of the local Gold Coast enviro-surf movement, and a foundation of the GCWSR: The Surf Management Plan.

Produced by the council in conjunction with local stakeholders from within and outside of the surfing community, the Surf Management Plan is an example of how surfing knowledge has been formalised and neutralised into broader Gold Coast city politics. This Plan is of particular importance when considering the GCWSR and its context, in part because this thesis seeks to understand the formalisation, and the associated professionalism of enviro-surf activism, and also to highlight how local scientific and embodied knowledge has been combined and presented to an intended audience beyond the beach. Therefore, before delving into a discussion of how the GCWSR came to be; how it meets the criteria laid out by Save the Waves, and how the community mobilized to seek and secure designation, we turn to the Surf Management Plan.

6.3 Surf Management Plan

The Surf Management Plan was the idea of Dan Ware, board member of Surfrider Foundation Australia, and academic at the Griffith University Centre for Coastal Management, who saw that while there were lots of arguments about what shouldn't be done on the coast, there was little in the way of answers. Prior to the creation of the Surf Management Plan in 2015, there was a plethora of activity in the surfing community which aimed to enhance and protect the surfing environment on the Gold Coast. Reflecting the work being conducted among international enviro-surf community actors, and in line with the arguments made in Chapter 4, this activity was largely through reactive, relatively disorganised protest. Examples include a range of protests underway in response to development threats such as Protect the Spit (from development), at the northern end of the coast, and Save Kirra (from an ocean cruise terminal) in the South. As Ware states in the following quotation:

> "Surfers were kind of opposing many things, but they weren't actually advocating for what they need, and what they wanted to see, and I felt in order to get the outcome that you need, it's better to articulate what you want rather than continually saying what you don't want" (Ware, D. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 21/02/2019).

Even if an articulation of what was wanted might have been possible, the disparity, identified by Ware, between the power held by surfers and other interest groups on the coast meant that they were poorly placed to act. Through his own research he understood that opportunities for power creation came from the same institutions which respond to said power. In finding a mechanism through which the surfers and councils work together, the position of the surfers could therefore be strengthened.

> "I mean… what's the problem here on the Gold Coast? The problem is that the surfers don't have as much power as other interests in the coast, and so my idea was all the research I was doing at the time and said that you know, the structure of institutions is a key way that, obviously it responds to power, but it also creates power" (ibid).

One area in which surfers had been able to present a case for protection was in economics. A surfonomics study had been carried out which placed the value of recreational surfing on the Gold Coast at between $AUD126 – $233 million, a sum which would increase significantly, should non-market values, multipliers and externalities be included in the complex calculations (Lazarow 2009). The enormous value that was ascertained to be directly associated with surfing was without management, a phenomenon which Ware believes would not be left to chance in other areas of business or resource management.

> "If you've got an asset worth 4 billion dollars… or a company that's generating 4 billion dollars, you've got to have some plan of management, right? It's kind of futile. So, there's a really strong economic argument" (Ware, D. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 21/02/2019).

Such management is a world away from the popular clichés that surround surfing and surfing culture. The comprehension and assertion of the economic impact of surfing, along with Ware's understanding of power, is indicative of the shift in the surfing caricature towards, as discussed in Chapter 4, the authoritative expert, the knowledgeable and professional community stakeholder. This shift, from wetsuit to white collar analysis, displays a great deal of social capital, and demonstrates how this professionalisation is prompting a rethinking of the role surfing and surfers within and outside of the surfing community.

As well as a lack of management of the resource from an economic perspective, there were significant concerns over safety and overcrowding in surf zones which provided further impetus for action, particularly at the crowded Currumbin Alley where numerous different

users operate in a limited space. In a stark example, a surfer was tragically killed while surfing at this spot following a collision with a recreational fishing vessel (Office of the State Coroner Queensland Courts 2011).

The Surf Management Plan therefore arose out of concerns surrounding the economic and social issues which had become prevalent in and around surfing on the Gold Coast as its popularity soared. The Plan set out a course of management and research with the aim of supporting the preservation of the surf amenity into the future, and also to enhance it through management initiatives and increased understanding of the science behind the surf (City of Gold Coast 2015 p53).

Figure 44 Surfing at Currumbin Alley Image Source: Author 2017

It was like surfing in a theme park, the water was warm and perfectly clear. The waves were small and easily approached. There were a few different surf schools in the water, as well as loads of beginners. A good proportion of the surfers had a parent to push them into the waves; that was the kind of crowd at Currumbin today (Author's Fieldnotes March 2017).

Consultation for the plan was undertaken through the Surf Management Plan Advisory Committee, which aimed to include, and provide opportunity for input from, key stakeholders such as surfers, engineers, planners and oceanographers. Essentially, this opened an information sharing channel, where collective knowledge from this range of stakeholders was brought together to capture "fundamental information about Gold Coast Surf amenity and stakeholder requirements" (City of Gold Coast 2015 p16).

The output from the process was a surf specific policy document which has been produced by local government in conjunction with the advisory board. In its 53 pages, the Plan provides the context and background, defining the key concept of surf amenity" as:

> "A series of surf breaks along the coast that afford exceptional experiences for people who ride the waves in all forms and disciplines. These experiences enhance the lifestyle of the user" (ibid p18).

This definition thus acknowledges the value of surfing to the region and its people, and insists that the SMP is intended to be open and democratic in its inclusion of all wave riders. Focus rests on the enhancing qualities of the asset, and no mention of potential negative aspects is made. In asserting that the surf amenity is linked to lifestyle, the notion discussed in Chapter 2, of the surfers' co-constituted surf-shore identity is reinforced, and implies that the value being acknowledged goes beyond a monetary sum. Though open in its attempt to incorporate the wide variety of surfing that is practiced, the imagery throughout the plan is centred entirely around elite stand up (shortboard) surfing. Furthermore, the conditions described as optimum are geared towards this specific type of surfing. I would, as an intermediate longboarder for example, not enjoy the prospect of paddling out into the heaving, barrelling waves that are depicted in the Surf Management Plan. How effectively it depicts surf amenity for other groups, surfers or otherwise, is therefore questionable, and is indicative of the persistent dominance of certain type of wave for a certain type of surfer; the (white, male) shortboarder.

Though lacking in scope for types of surfing, it presents the broad range of information relevant to the management of that version of the amenity. The legislative framework of the coast, the management of which is subservient to measures set at the commonwealth, state and local government levels, is laid out, along with the natural processes that affect and create the Gold Coast surf. These include, but are not limited to, the wave climate, wind, seasons, orientation, and sediment movement. The Plan then describes the location specific surf conditions, detailing the way in which each of the coast's waves break when conditions such as swell wind and other features are optimum (for shortboard surfing). The final sections of the Plan look to the management of the beaches, and the impact that this can have on the surf amenity. It also details the existing coastal city projects which take the surf amenity into account, and how the coast is monitored. A summary of key actions concludes the document, and these include raising awareness of surf etiquette and safety, recognition of

management of the surf amenity as best practice through investment in research, and the joint stewardship in the management of the Gold Coast surf amenity. There are no time scales linked to the actions, nor are there specific details on how the initiatives will be funded or led.

The Surf Management Plan is arguably the most sophisticated attempt to bring together surf specific information about the coastline and the processes that affect and shape it, as well as the legislative framework which is applied to it. It has brought together both formal and embodied epistemologies to generate space for surfing in local government, opening opportunities for communication and persuasion for surfers, in line with council expectations and, importantly, limitations. While the production and existence of the SMP is in itself significant, it:

> "has no legislative standing and is subservient to current and future Federal, State and Local legislation and policy and the wider management needs of the city take precedence over the Surf Management Plan" (City of Gold Coast 2015 p 20).

Stipulations surrounding the city endorsement of the WSR application and ultimate dedication are also incorporated into the SMP. These conditions clearly render the title as ceremonial, and largely dependent on ongoing council involvement and approval. Included in the requirements, for example, is for the Local Stewardship Committee for the WSR to be determined by Council, and a requirement that the status not be used to lobby for any legislative changes at any level.

This section has summarised the Surf Management Plan, analysing its origins in the lack of formal recognition of the surfing amenity and through safety concerns. Key points of the plan, including its definition of surf amenity and the types of waves which are considered optimum have been discussed, along with its limitations. Despite these restrictions, the Surf Management Plan has provided a crucial basis from which the WSR has sprung. This chapter now moves to explore how the regional Surf Management Plan came to be incorporated into the WSR.

6.4 From a Surf Management Plan to a World Surfing Reserve: regional to global aspirations

The WSR is mentioned in the SMP, primarily to outline its restrictions and subservience to the SMP and other coastal management components. The SMP however has played a noteworthy role in the WSR in large part due to its opening up of communication streams between surfers and council. This was particularly significant in the case of the WSR chairman Andrew McKinnon, who gained access to the discussions which were taking place through the advisory committee. This enabled him to stay abreast of the Surf Management Plan and surrounding issues, and understand that the document could be used to guide the WSR. In doing so, council approval was ultimately secured. The following quote from McKinnon explains how the SMP was integrated into the WSR and vice versa:

> "When I first went in to create the World Surfing Reserve, you know there weren't, there was a conservative element that were really worried thinking that I was going to stop everything and restrict everything and regulate everything right? They didn't understand it. So they didn't... they wouldn't... they tried to keep me out of it.
>
> But when Rabbit Bartholomew put it to the vote that I should be on the committee as a local (…) that's how it started. And so, I saw straight away that they were trying to develop a Surf Management Plan. This had come through Surfrider Foundation. And so when I put the proposal there for WSR I thought wow the Surf Management Plan can be the perfect strategy to underpin the WSR, it can be the management document. It's perfect…to me it was a no brainer, and I said "oh what, you're happy with the surf management plan being the manager of the WSR? Oh, absolutely." Why wouldn't it be? Yeah. It's a perfect arrangement." (McKinnon, A. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia 16/02/2019).

There are a number of points to be drawn from this passage. Firstly, McKinnon remarks that the conservative element of the government were worried that, through the WSR, he was going to have the potential to stop, restrict and regulate many practices and developments. Secondly, McKinnon gained access to the process through a referral from member of the order of Australia, Bartholomew. This foot in the bureaucratic door, resulting in direct

communication with decision makers, is a privilege that was not previously afforded to the charismatic local surf media figure. Bartholomew and other members of the committee had not only created this space but were in a position to influence who else could join it; determining which other actors could be brought into the local surfbreak protection assemblage. This again demonstrates how some surfers have established themselves as possessors of power, and a further indication of the importance of networks and relationships within the local context. The "perfect arrangement" laid out in this scenario ultimately gained approval from Council.

In addition to a consensus among local policy actors, approval is also required from the international enviro-surf community, specifically the Save the Waves Vision Council. As part of this process, there are a number of criteria that are required to be met in order to be accepted as a WSR. There are also a number of other potential avenues that local activists could have taken in their pursuit to improve the state of surfing in the region, as touched upon in Chapter 5.

This chapter now looks to how the GCWSR came to be; first, by establishing why this model was chosen, and subsequently how the criteria for approval are met.

6.5 Engineered threats to the surf zone.

> "We (local surfers and protesters) want to protect the beach and surf amenity, and this sounds like a great idea to do it" (McKinnon, A. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia 16/02/2019).

In line with the broader enviro-surf movement, it became apparent that reactive campaigning on the Gold Coast was not sustainable in the long term due to high resource demands, and limited scope for success in a heavily contested, closely managed environment (See Section 5.2). Though appearing to abound with natural splendour, the Gold Coast is intensely managed by a wide range of statutory bodies who are responsible for dealing with natural and human challenges. This management has resulted in the unintended creation, and manipulation of numerous surf spots, to the extent that all but 2 of the waves on the Gold Coast can be considered as artificial. At the time of writing, the Gold Coast Ocean Beaches Strategy and the Gold Coast Shoreline Management Plan are the guiding documents for the day to day and long-term management of the coast. Widely researched and often critiqued (see Orchard 2017 and Ware 2017), this management has been necessary in order to maintain a safe, accessible resource for residents and tourists, recreation and industry. Utilising

innovative policies, technologies and beach management techniques, summarised in Table 6, coastal engineering has been undertaken on the Gold Coast for over 50 years, and many of its strategies have been adopted as best practice internationally (City of Gold Coast 2015 p46).

Table 7 Coastal Management on the Gold Coast

A Summary of Coastal Management on the Gold Coast.

- Beach nourishment; pumping or dumping of sand from an external source to the active beach system. This intends to increase the width of the beach and associated surf zone. Having taken place since the early 1970s, beach nourishment projects often occur following extended periods of erosion, or after cyclones impact the beaches. The sand, which is typically placed offshore, is moved towards shore by wave energy over time.
- Seawall construction; Another response to coastal erosion, the city is delivering a continuous seawall along the gold coast with a long-term aim of maintaining a healthy dune system,
- Dune management; provide a natural buffer to storm and erosion events. Managed through a range of activities such as re-vegetation and track improvements.
- Basement Sand Excavation; returning clean (sieved) marine sand that is excavated as part of new development to the beach system. Enforced through the City's Planning Scheme.
- Tidal Works Approvals; the city is responsible for obtaining and maintaining the necessary approvals for beach nourishment and beach sand storage.
- Annual dredging of Tallebudgera Creek and Currumbin Creek Entrances; provide sand to adjacent beaches and assist in maintaining tidal flushing by keeping the creek entrances open

Adapted from the Surf Management Plan (City of Gold Coast 2015).

Any measures to manage the coast can affect the surf amenity, though just a few existing projects consider that in their execution and planning. A key example where this occurs is the ongoing Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project (TRESCP) which involves both the New South Wales and Queensland governments. Established in 1994, the project dredges and transports sand to keep the waterway navigable, and to nourish the beaches to the north.

The way in which this sand is transported has been of great interest to surfers as it affects how the sand bars (which shape the waves) are formed. One surfer heavily involved in this project, is Wayne 'Rabbit' Bartholomew. The following quotation depicts why he chooses to take on the role of community advisor for the project:

> "I stay involved with the Project because I feel I am representing the unspoken majority – the young surfers, who have been by default the main beneficiaries of the Project and as a result are living in a free surfing version of Disneyland. They love life – they don't agitate, they don't write letters, they don't ring the local politician, and they don't go to meetings, so I feel they need to be represented" (Department of Industry NSW 2017 p24).

This statement maintains the argument made in Chapter 4, that the enviro-surf community is a niche element of the broader surfing body, many of whom remain unaware or indifferent to the environmental and political situations that play a fundamental role in their surfing experience. In taking on this responsibility as an agitator and mediator, Rabbit has been influential in opening up dialogue on how the sand pumping programme can accommodate surfers and enhance the amenity.

Sand and its movement were recurring themes in interviews, presented as important elements in both the creation of, and impetus to protect, the waves that break in the region. The way in which sand is managed can be cause for contention, and while coastal management on the Gold Coast is lauded as best practice by some, others see it as generating short term gains which in turn create a requirement for further intervention. As one interviewee states:

> "…it all went wrong on the coast when they put the two training walls on the Tweed River, d bah (Duranbah). That was in 1962, and from there it's just been catch up by putting groynes at Kirra, groynes at Palm Beach, and it just changed the whole movement of sand up the East Coast of South East Queensland. See there's about 500000cm^3 of sand transported up the east coast of Australia every year. Alright? A lot of sand moving. 10 years ago, we said you've got to start back pumping. Just keep using the sand. Rather than sending it further north, use it. So, they back pumped it for the first time last year" (Butler, C. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 25/2/19).

This excerpt shows the discontent with the actions taken, and the role of artificial structures on the coast. It also suggests that local surf-based knowledge has been disregarded, a

scenario which holds implications for the development of proactive, inherently political enviro-surf endeavours, such as the World Surfing Reserve. While consultation and communication may have improved, there remains scope and demand for more comprehensive, cohesive action. Such action is deemed necessary as sand movement has a direct impact on the surf amenity. In changing the dynamics of a wave, alterations are made to both how the wave itself breaks and as a result, who is willing, and or able to ride it. Using the example of Kirra Point, the following passage shows how sand has affected the way this specific break works and how opinions on the changes, from within the surfing community, vary.

> "Even before the cruise ship terminal threat we've got a threat, it's called pumping sand on to the beach, right? At first it looked okay, you know it fixed the erosion and it created the Superbank from Snapper through to Coolangatta but then this magical Point Break called Kirra suddenly, it went over the top of the reefs and everything and it turned it into a close-out beach break, no longer a point break, and for a lot of people a lot of younger surfers they'd never even seen Kirra work properly, you know, they loved the Superbank. So some people were sort of saying oh, well, we lost Kirra but we've got Superbank, and then when the swell was really big when Superbank was too big for Superbank, Kirra would then have these freight train waves, 8-10ft, but you had to be pulled in on a jet ski. You had to surf like Joel Parkinson or Mick Fanning to be able to make those sorts of waves, not everyone can surf them (McKinnon, A. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia 16/02/2019).

On the Gold Coast therefore, and particularly at Kirra, who controls the sand, controls the surf.

Along with these changes to the marine environment, there have been a number of terrestrial and littoral development proposals which have posed existential threats to the renowned break. The activism that was spurred by these development proposals can be regarded as the catalyst for the establishment of the WSR.

> "AM…and the Superbank would just get longer and longer and Kirra was turning into the Sahara Desert, as Megan said, so we said, well nothing's working here so, I you know, I just turned into an activist over it and yeah…

MM: … It consumed our lives" (McKinnon, A & M. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia 16/02/2019).

The following paragraphs look to how this activism played out, resulting in the perceived need for the WSR. An assemblage of local policy actors, and stakeholders secured a stronger position for surfbreak protection activism, supported, and effectively reinforced by the international enviro-surf community.

6.6 WSRs as a proactive opportunity to protect and preserve Gold Coast Surfing

Figure 45 National Surfing Reserve plaque, Snapper Rocks Surfers Paradise looms in the background. Image source: Author 2017.

As demonstrated in the previous section, prior to the WSR designation, measures were in place to quantify and secure the surfing amenity. The Surf Management Plan was in progress, and the area had been designated as a National Surfing Reserve since 2012. A dissatisfaction with both the SMP and NSR however, coupled with ongoing threats and

resulting reactive campaigning, saw an additional layer of protection being sought. The NSR was seen as purely symbolic, and a lack of follow up meant that it had, according to McKinnon, very limited scope to protect.

> "I was aware of the NSR. Yeah, National Surfing Reserve, but I didn't think that it went far enough (…) it was just a plaque. It was just, you know, cut the ribbon shake the hand, put the plaque on a rock and go away. There's no follow-up. There's no Local Stewardship Committee. There's no engagement with council after getting that endorsement of an NSR. That is the difference between the NSR and the WSR" (McKinnon, A. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia 16/02/2019).

WSRs, for McKinnon, therefore presented an opportunity to further the work of the NSR, particularly through its capacity to develop ongoing relationships and engagement with council. According to the glossy booklet published to coincide with designation, there were 3 significant events in the evolution of the GCWSR, culminating in the approval and designation of the Reserve by Save the Waves Vision Council in 2015. The first event, a rally organised by the Save Our Southern Beaches Alliance, was held in 2009 to 'lament' the lost wave at Kirra Point, and marked the entry into activism for McKinnon. The rally brought together 1500 surfers. A second rally, held in 2014 and again spearheaded by McKinnon, gained even more momentum. A reported 4000 people gathered on the sand at Kirra Beach, this time to create the letters 'WSR' in protest against the proposed development of an ocean terminal. Though the WSR was what was deemed necessary, McKinnon did not realise at this time that WSRs were linked to Save the Waves at all, and went ahead with the campaign independently of the Californian non-profit. It was only when he was contacted by Nick Mucha, the programme manager at the time, that he was made aware of the connection, and its resulting international component. As the following excerpt, which also highlights the role of international reach describes:

> MM: so the WSR was done in the sand and that went global. That was, friends of ours are Scottish, and they, their family saw it in Scotland, so it went everywhere. So STW obviously picked up on it and…
>
> AM: …and Nick Mucha got in touch with us and said oh we can help you
>
> MM: yeah Nick Mucha goes so we can help you and I said, yeah, okay cos I didn't even know who they were either (laughs).

AM: We didn't realise they were WSR

MM: We had no idea

AM: we were already branding them everywhere before we approached them (McKinnon, A & M. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia 16/02/2019).

This isn't the only instance of do first ask later in Australian enviro-surf activism. As touched upon in Chapter 5, Brad Farmer started Surfrider Australia without consulting the already established US branch, gaining endorsement later. In both instances, an agreement was found to allow for a mutually beneficial progression of the initiatives; common goals seemingly smoothing out potential conflict between parties.

With the WSR focus being determined, communication with Save the Waves opened, and aims aligned across enviro-surf scales, McKinnon and his team were able to produce an application for submission. This multi-level backing is the third key factor described in the emergence of the GCWSR, and this chapter now moves to develop this point; through an exploration of the WSR as an assemblage of local conditions and actors, and its interaction with the international enviro-surf community.

6.7 Meeting the criteria

This chapter has so far presented the Gold Coast as a multi-faceted, growing city where surfing is a key activity and industry. In its analysis of the Surf Management Plan, it has depicted the formalisation of surfing epistemologies, and recognition of its worth as an amenity. The previous section has explored how demand for proactive protective surfbreak protection strategies resulted in the drive to become a WSR. It now looks to how the region has gained support across scales, framed by the WSR selection criteria of quality of waves, environmental characteristics, history and surf culture, and local capacity (see Figure 33).

6.7.1 A globally significant surf location or outstanding series of surf breaks

The Gold Coast meets the criteria for outstanding surf breaks. 13 distinct spots are listed in the 16km reserve, including several beach breaks, such as Tugun and Palm Beach, and famed point breaks of Snapper Rocks, Kirra, and Burleigh Heads. The range of breaks present options for surfers of all craft, though the shortboard is the most ubiquitous and certainly the most widely represented form in surrounding imagery. The standard of recreational surfing on the Gold Coast is very high, and there are suitable places for beginner, intermediate and

advanced surfers. With a particularly large swell, from a typhoon for example, the breaks are largely off limits to all but the best of surfers, many of whom are towed into big waves on jet skis. On these days, the surf becomes a spectacle, with crowds lining the beachfront streets to see and feel the power of the ocean unfolding. In smaller surf, Gold Coast line ups are among the most crowded in the world and draw in large numbers of local and travelling surfers. Hosting the first stop on the professional World Surf League (WSL) tour, currently known as the Quiksilver and Roxy Pro, and high-profile professional surfing events since the 1970s, the Gold Coast has a significant competitive surfing history. The, now standard, one on one competitive format for example, was first used at The Stubbies Pro in Burleigh Heads in 1977 (Brisick 2015). The WSL regional office is located within the reserve boundaries, at Coolangatta, though in 2017 there was no trace or mention of the WSR at the WSL contest.

6.7.2 **Environmental characteristics**

Figure 46 Quiksilver Pro 2017

Crowds watch champion surfer Kelly Slater in the last heat of the day's competition. Image Source: Author 2017

Prior to visiting a number of World and National surfing reserves, the associations I made with the term 'reserve' were of an unspoilt wilderness; rugged and far more than human. Though these connotations are appropriate in certain areas of the Gold Coast city limits, the coastline is heavily developed, with the beaches fringed by medium rise buildings jostling for a view of the Pacific. The area's original vegetation has been almost totally stripped, drastically changing the eco-systems and environmental characteristics of the coastal zone.

Dunes, creeks and rivers have been replaced by flattened land for luxury beachfront developments, canal estates and other impervious infrastructure (Hundloe, et al., 2015).

This development has had a severe impact on the flora and fauna of the region; the prime example being the native Koala. Once visible in the side streets at Burleigh Heads, the population has been all but decimated on the coast. In spite of such losses, the Gold Coast, buoyed by the preservation of hinterland and island National Parks, represents one of the most biodiverse cities in Australia with over 600 species of native animals and over 1700 species of native plants (City of Gold Coast 2019).

On the coast, prehistoric looking bush turkeys and lizards are commonplace on coastal paths, bird life is abundant, and migrating humpback whales can be seen from the headlands during the winter months. Water quality is excellent, with visibility stretching for up to 30 metres, providing an ideal habitat for all sorts of marine life, including fish, turtles, rays, dolphins, jellyfish, and sharks. In a controversial wildlife management approach, the area has in place shark nets and drum lines which are intended to target predatory sharks and minimise the threat of human attack. This contentious method has been in use since 1962 at 85 beaches throughout Queensland. In addition to 'target species', the nets and lines also catch large amounts of bycatch such as turtles, rays and dolphins (Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries 2019). To preserve some of the region's environmental characteristics, Burleigh Heads is designated as a small National Park, and the hill at Kirra, and the lookout point over Greenmount Bay are largely protected from further Development (Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve 2016).

Figure 47 Kirra Hill Lookout

Image Source: Author 2019

6.7.3 **Culture and surf history**

Though this work is focussed on the comparatively brief western surfing history, a holistic view of culture on the Gold Coast requires acknowledgement and consideration of the impact of settler colonialism on Indigenous populations. The traditional custodians of the designated WSR area are the Yugambeh, Minjungbai and Bundjalung people. Following European settlement in 1824, the local Indigenous people were, within just 3 generations, overwhelmed by "timber-getters, land clearing farmers and pioneering tourists" (Hundloe 2015 p 36). The extent of this can be seen in the 2016 census, where Aboriginal and Torres strait islanders made up just 1.7% of the Gold Coasts 555,721 strong population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016) . Prior to colonisation, Indigenous people were tightly connected to the ocean and beaches for over 40000 years. Many retain this connection, and while modern surfing narratives are overpoweringly dominated by white people, Indigenous surfing is becoming more visible through initiatives such as the film Surfing the Healing wave, and Indigenous surfing clubs and contests (McGloin 2006).

With such a vast history, wave riding on the Gold Coast undoubtedly stretches far further back in time than the arrival of Hawaiian waterman Duke Kahanamoku in 1915. It is to this point, however, that the history of modern surfing can be traced, and it is on this little more than a century history that the WSR application is largely based. First seen at Greenmount Bay in 1915 and boosted by military postings in nearby Southport during the second world war, surfing on the Gold Coast really began to take off in the 1950s. This was in parallel to its development into a tourist destination and city.

From then, surfing and the Gold Coast have become synonymous, with the activity being well integrated to the mainstream. Surfing is culturally significant to the Gold Coast, and the Gold Coast is significant to surfing culture in Australia and beyond.

Figure 48 Surf World Gold Coast Image Source: Author 2017

A volunteer run surf museum, one of only 2 in Australia, houses boards, trophies and images of Gold Coast surfing through the past decades.

6.7.4 **Governance capacity and local support**

The fourth criteria is that of governance capacity and local support. Given the approach of this project and the importance of expertise, social capital and networks, this element is pivotal in understanding both how the WSR came to be in the Gold Coast, and how it relates to the theoretical foundations of this thesis. As such, a brief overview of how the criteria is met is offered, before the section delves deeper into an analysis of the GCWSR assemblage; its leadership and Local Stewardship Council, and how their roles function in practice.

Outlined already in this chapter, the Gold Coast proffers a range of management tools with which the city's coast is monitored and maintained. The Surf Management Plan is an example of a bringing together of the surfing community and demonstrates that there is both a long-term framework within which the WSR can sit, and also that local support has been gained. Through this, it has also been evidenced that there is ample capacity for governance locally (see Section 6.3 or Ware 2017 for more on the SMP). Leaders and key community actors held a significant role in gaining this support, and provide the basis upon which future engagement through the local stewardship plan can be upheld.

Leadership

> "What's his name, Andy McKinnon, yeah he's a character" (Employee, Gold Coast Waterways. Interview. Gold Coast, 19/01/2017).

McKinnon's charisma and his enthusiasm for the WSR, along with "good support people and a very, very, very tolerant wife (Megan)" have been crucial in the territorialisation of the programme on the Gold Coast (Young, P. Interview. Gold Coast, 13/02/2019). Despite an initial lack of understanding on the global governance of the programme (see Section 6.6), it appears that McKinnon pulled the application over the line with a combination of dogged determination and a network built on a lifetime of surfing.

> "He's such a go getter. He really does just take the bull by the horns, and says "yep we're going to do this" and he gets people on side by doing that. He gets things done" (Butler, C. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 25/2/19).

> "Enthusiasm like that is wonderful to have, and I think he manages to harness some of the others to make sure that it's a holistic group" (Young, P. Interview. Gold Coast, 13/02/2019).

McKinnon exudes enthusiasm for WSRs; his passion for the Gold Coast beaches and waves, and his ability to engage an audience are all clearly apparent. For over 25 years McKinnon voiced radio surf reports and wrote surfing columns for local newspapers, making him a mainstay in local surf media, and a well-known figure throughout the Gold Coast.

As with the initial approach towards WSR designation, McKinnon's strategy for gaining approval was unorthodox, and demonstrated a clash with standard council procedure.

> "I think it was at the very first meeting, Andrew McKinnon decided he was going to stand up at the end of the meeting and go "I want everyone to approve that… uh we want uh this is going to back a World Surfing Reserve for the Gold Coast". And that threw *everything* out the window because everything had to start again because it was like well, it's not what this [meeting] was aimed at doing. So he didn't understand process, you know, he's a surfer" (Employee, Gold Coast Waterways. Interview. Gold Coast, 19/01/2017).

As this quotation suggests, the way in which the WSR was tabled created space for conflict. The emergence of unexpected, additional expectations could have delayed or changed the intended original process. It also highlights the new space that had been entered into by McKinnon; "he's a surfer". Despite being invited to the meeting, which was focussed on the management of surfing amenity on the Gold Coast, this statement gives a sense that the space, and the processes which occur in it, are not ordinarily open nor accommodating to lay members of the surfing community. The quotation below, from an employee of the Gold Coast Tourism Corporation, shows that through working with various partners who supported the notion of a GCWSR, McKinnon was able to navigate the system and have his aim integrated into the Surf Management Plan.

> "I would speak with Andy on and off the record about what I may have heard from different parts of council, and what they need to hear to be comfortable with things." (Employee, Gold Coast Tourism. Interview. Gold Coast, 03/02/2017)

As well as drawing on and developing strong networks locally, McKinnon and his team have

been instrumental in building connections throughout the World Surfing Reserve network and international enviro-surf assemblage. This has been evidenced by their organisation of the 2017 International Surfing Symposium and the 2020 Global Wave Conference. Both of these events brought together industry, academic and environmental actors, and contributed to the knowledge creation and sharing opportunities for the epistemic enviro-surf community (see Chapter 4). In doing so, the position of the GCWSR and its actors within the global enviro-surf community was solidified.

The characteristics displayed by McKinnon are common among a number of the other WSR leaders around the world; older members of the surfing community who have strong connections to the surfing life that their local breaks have allowed them to lead. Exhibiting similar charisma and drive, many are coming to the end of careers related to surfing or are already retired. Such circumstances allow for resources; of time, experience and connections for example, to be utilised and channelled into the preservation/protection of beloved surfing spaces. These leaders play a vital role in the process, as a component in an assemblage that brings together an aligned international enviro-surf community, with a network of local actors, positioned to bring their site-specific knowledge and engagement into the effort to mobilise and embed a WSR. An important element in this assemblage are the Local Stewardship Councils who broaden representation and capacity for a reserve to function. In the Gold Coast this council is also referred to as the Local Stewardship Committee, and it is to the role of this group that we now turn.

6.7.5 **Local Stewardship Committee**

> "Epistemic communities must persuade decision-makers, and successfully navigate the machinery of government by insinuating themselves into bureaucratic positions, if their consensual knowledge is to inform policy choices" (Dunlop 2012, p230).

For the enviro-surf community, a way in which a bureaucratic position has been gained is through the Local Stewardship Committee. This, as argued in Chapter 5, is important both for a WSR application to be successful, and for effective ongoing engagement with enviro-surf community aims. I suggest that it can be viewed as a localised, and specialised version of the WSR Vision Council. Both are made up of leaders or management level stakeholders from a range of areas with a breadth of expertise, and are working towards a common policy goal. Figure 49 shows the Gold Coast WSR Local Stewardship Council and demonstrates this breadth.

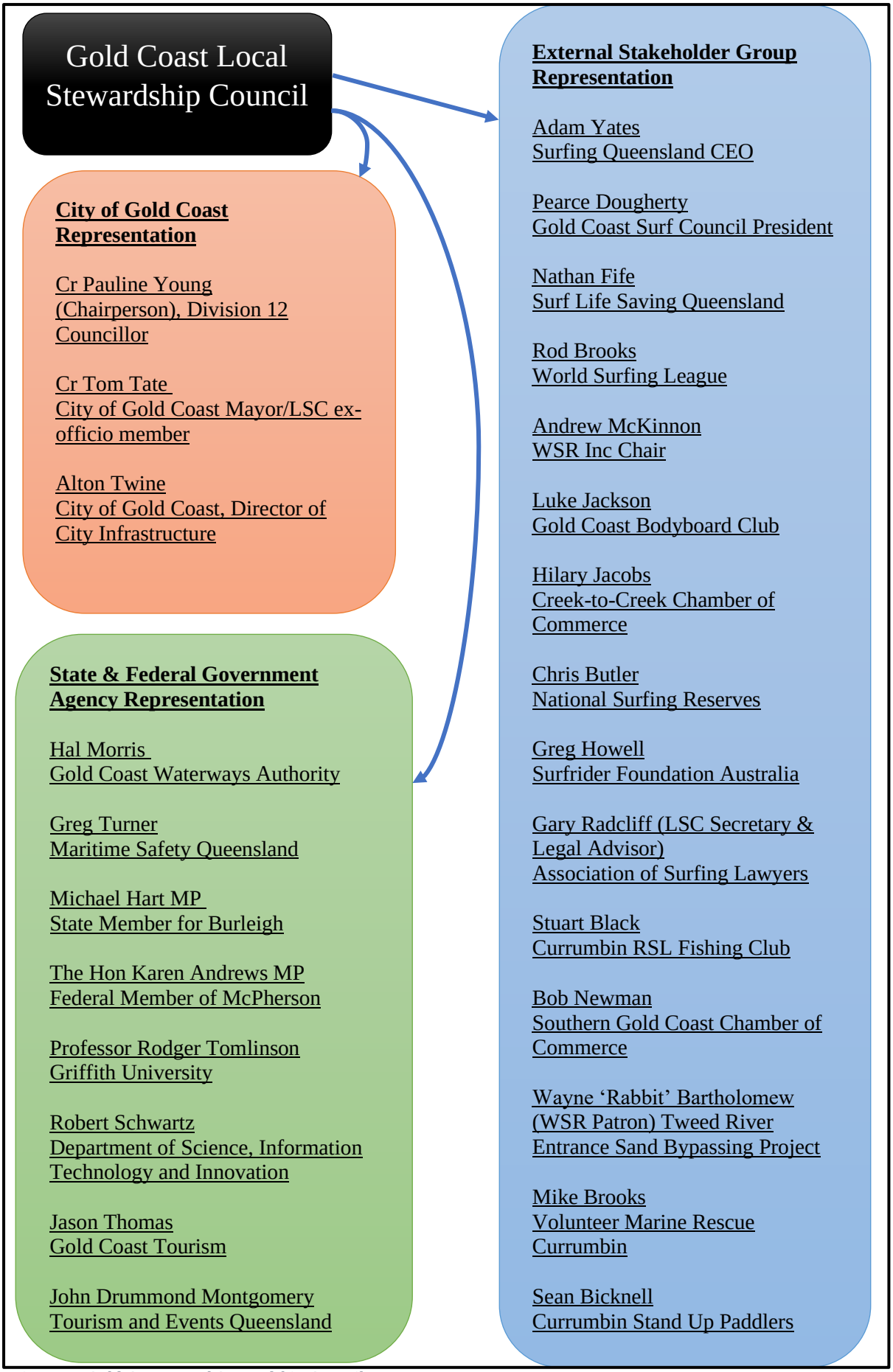


Figure 49 Gold Coast Local Stewardship Council

Chaired by Councillor Pauline Young, the committee has representation from the City of Gold Coast, State and Federal Government Agencies, and external stakeholders from different interest groups. Among this group are surfers, bodyboarders and fishers, along with representatives from land-based activity, such as the Chamber of Commerce.

While a range of institutions and interests are accommodated, there is, as in the case in the broader enviro-surf community, very little diversity within the group. No representation comes from Indigenous people, and the limited female presence comes from non-surfers, again centring the opinions and interests of the white male. Though such a demographic has implications, which are explored further in Chapter 7, the lack of representation does not appear to reflect negatively on the scope of the committee. Interviewed actors, from within and outside of this group, did not report any dissatisfaction with the range of people involved. The committee chair, Councillor Young, remarked that despite women's surfing coming a long way, it is, like lifesaving, very male dominated and this is reflected in the demographic make-up of the group. It is a space, she comments, where "if we (the committee) allowed it to it could become a bit of a boys club" (Interview, Gold Coast 13/02/2019). Her tone suggests that this is not a concern for her, and is quite comfortable in asserting her leadership effectively.

Though very narrow demographically, the inclusion of a range of groups proved to be an important element in establishing the scope and perceived reliability of the committee, providing credibility and a platform from which a surfing voice could be projected. As the quotation below highlights, these factors generate an additional level of power; a means to access and potentially influence decision makers, that has not been seen before.

> "(On the WSR committee) It actually gave them the power to give advice, that is going to be taken seriously, to Council and then Council would make can make informed decisions based off what this committee who has the who has the interest of the entire amenity at heart and are not just for a surf amenity, not just for a fishing amenity but for every use across the board. So, it actually, now it does have some real credibility, one of the councillors sits as the chair of the of the World Surfing Reserve stewardship committee. So, it does have a direct input from Council by that way, but the mayor's chief of staff is heavily involved with the community as well. So, there's some proper governance going on- it's

> probably one of the first of its kind in the world (Employee, Gold Coast Tourism. Interview. Gold Coast, 03/02/2017).

When given the opportunity to engage, the Gold Coast LSC take it, and show high levels of interest. As Councillor Young remarks:

> "I can go to school meetings where there's 3000 kids and you might get 10 people at a meeting, you go to these WSR meetings and you can get 20 people without having to send out an invitation, it's just the interest is there" (Young, P. Interview. Gold Coast, 13/02/2019).

In addition to attendance at WSR meetings, efforts to incorporate the WSR into wider decision-making processes are also made. This allows for multi-directional flows of information, improving the communication and cooperation between stakeholders. As a key function of a stewardship council, this information flow opens up space, for previously unattainable discussion, and creates opportunities for persuasion.

Local Stewardship Councils are generally determined by the community actors involved in the WSR application process. The GCLSC, as a condition of council approval, is also the Surf Management Plan advisory committee. As a result, its members are selected at the discretion of the council, rather than the surfing community. The crossover in interest makes this a logical association, though demonstrates a withholding of authority by the council. The willingness of the WSR team to accommodate this stipulation, however, is an example of how their flexibility has created scope for acceptance in the region, an aspect which will be discussed further in the following section.

6.8 Localising the WSR; movement and mutation

This chapter has so far established the context surrounding surfbreak protection on the Gold Coast, and how it meets the criteria set out by Save the Waves to be accepted as a WSR. It has outlined the characteristics of the Gold Coast; as a contested, surfing place, of social, cultural and environmental significance, with a growing appreciation of the economic implications of its amenity. The focus here on the involved actors again demonstrates how a network of engaged experts can provide power, and influence in decision making. A policy assemblage spanning local, regional and now global scales has been brought together under the World Surfing Reserve banner to pursue the goal of protecting and preserving the Gold

Coast surfing environment, and the experience and identity that it facilitates. The actors have created a space of persuasion, where access to decision makers is more direct that has been possible in the past, providing an opportunity to present a policy option, World Surfing Reserves, for consideration. This chapter now moves to analyse how and why a WSR has become accepted in the coastal management structure, and in doing so, looks to how it has been translated, or mutated, into this particular context. I suggest in this section that through its simplicity and flexibility, the GCWSR has gained support through a process of persuasion, negotiation, and concessions. In maintaining the simplicity through a willingness to compromise, the GCWSR has effectively mutated in such a way that it became acceptable and accepted in the region. I develop this argument by looking to how the Reserve boundaries were set strategically to reduce the complexity of the WSR assemblage, and how extensive restrictions, imposed by local government have moulded the designation into a form that is deemed viable for the area. I argue that the amenability of the WSR has been crucial in its adoption and implementation in the Gold Coast, though turn first to address the importance of its simplicity.

The current WSR application process is comprehensive and complex (See Section 5.5.1), though the notion of a surfing reserve itself can be relatively simple; a characteristic which is often preferred by decision makers. As Haas states:

> "Simple ideas that have perceived practical utility will be chosen over more complex approaches. In either case, new ideas will only endure if they are loosely commensurate with deeper-seated beliefs and do not endanger strategic political alliances" (Haas 2001 p11582).

Indeed, on paper and in its symbolic form the WSR needs to be little more than a plaque. Once approved, the demands placed on local governments could be minimal, but still produce positive results politically, as this insight from the National Surfing Reserve process suggests:

> "The minister at the time, Mr. Kelly, would give $5,000 and he could get a cutting ribbon and a national media opportunity. So as a former political adviser he got a big bang for his buck. He looked good, and so people voted for that party because he was behind National Surf Reserves so all he had to do was just rock up on the day and myself and the committees would do all the work. He'd just rock up and say, "I'm

> great". All for putting $5,000 in for a plaque" (Farmer, B. Interview. WhatsApp, 26/02/2019).

The extent to which Mr Kelly's involvement with National Surfing Reserves affected the votes received is undetermined. It is evident however that for a small investment, the minister gained a photo opportunity, and looked to be friendly towards surfers and the surfing environment, while delegating the rest of the work (and risk) to the National Surfing Reserves Team. In a similar vein, the GCWSR presented a political opportunity that was taken up by Mayor Tom Tate. Tate had, in the past, rather famously asserted that surfers were not seen as stakeholders who 'matter', unlike 'high profile people like the CEO of a cruise ship company" for example (LiquifyTeam 2015). In spite of such sentiment, Tate featured in the GCWSR designation ceremony along with Save The Waves CEO Nik Cvetich-Strong and other invited dignitaries. The occasion, held in February 2016, celebrated the completion of the application process. In a television interview, a beaming Tate stated that:

> "We recognize that our beautiful beaches are one of our most precious natural assets for residents and visitors alike, we are so proud of this special dedication" (Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve: Dedication Ceremony, 2016).

While the reasoning for this change of heart is uncertain, that Tate approved the designation and appeared publicly to support it, is noteworthy in, and of itself. The acceptance of WSRs to an area in this way is something that STW staff member Trent Hodges sees as being a result of increasing awareness of the importance of the surf zone, in particular, the economic benefits which can be exemplified through the WSR label.

> "I think now when we talk to governments about the importance of protecting the surf zone because of surfing, there's a much greater understanding what that means because the sport of surfing has grown, as more and more people that are finding enjoyment in getting out on the water and spending their money to go do that. So I think that obviously for politicians it's really important to make the economic argument and that has only gotten stronger throughout the years. So yeah, I think there's a greater understanding and then I think, because World Surfing Reserves has become a prestigious program, there's a level of honour that comes with the badge. Local governments are really interested in having a World Surfing

> Reserve in their country or in their in their place because it's a stamp on beautiful, amazing places and so they appreciate that kind of notoriety" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

Such notoriety implies that an area is attractive, and if visitor numbers increase, then this can raise prices, an aspect that I return to in Chapter 7. This recognition is reliant on the development of trust and understanding within and outside of the enviro-surf community. When nurtured, multiple allies can be secured, including government actors and bodies across scales. As Hodges goes on to explain:

> "(you) have to build trust and relationships to make this work happen, but I think that because the program had now has over ten years of being in operation, and a lot of success, we see that local governments and even federal governments can be great allies at work as well." (ibid)

Government support for the WSR is evident on the Gold Coast. Along with letters of support from the Queensland Premier and numerous state agencies, the chair of the Local Stewardship Council is Councillor Pauline Young (see Section 6.7.5), and there are a number of other council employees involved within the committee. Operating with varying degrees of enthusiasm, the support of the bid to host Global Wave Conference 2020, and the approval of "World Surfing Reserve" highway billboards are indicators of engagement in the programme beyond the initial designation.

These indicators again do not require significant resources, and generate symbolism with minimal disturbance to other aspects of local governance. In a further example of how the WSR has been tailored to reduce disruption, and therefore conflict, is in its boundaries, which have been set strategically.

The WSR incorporates a 16km stretch at the southern end of the Gold Coast, yet the surfing environment to the south, and north of the designated area also meet the criteria for WSR status, with excellent surf and thriving surf communities in both directions. One beach south of Snapper Rock, for example, is Duranbah; a famed beach break that has not been included in the WSR, as it is across the state border and is therefore located in New South Wales. Though on the same peninsula as Snapper, and impacted by Gold Coast coastal management such as the TRESCP (see Section 6.5), to include Duranbah would be to enlist the support of two separate administrative bodies, vastly increasingly the complexity of the process.

To the northern end, TOS (the Other Side) is another highly regarded surf spot, not included due to anticipated political tensions surrounding the busy Gold Coast Seaway. The following quotation explains this strategy, and touches upon how political uncertainty created a window of opportunity for the WSR to be adopted into Gold Coast policy.

> "Now these guys, Andy Mac, very effectively lobbied the State government at a critical time of uncertainty and got them signed up, the Premier. Then all he had to deal with was Gold Coast City Council. And then by stopping it at Burleigh, made it easier to deal with the only other statutory body which is the Gold Coast Waterways Authority because it didn't affect our primary resource, which is the seaway, TOS…If they'd have tried to bring it up to TOS, I'm pretty sure my organisation would have violently opposed it" (Engineer; Gold Coast Waterways & Griffith University. Interview. Gold Coast 01/03/2017).

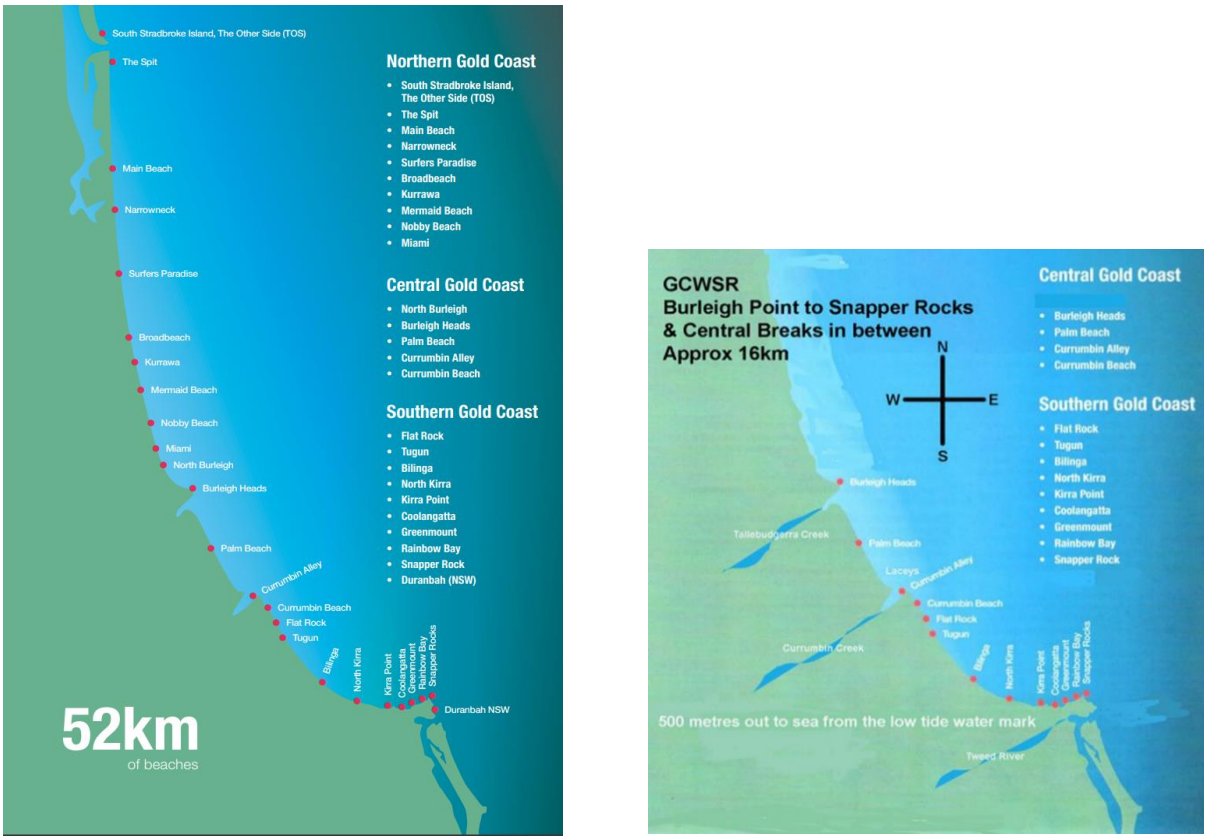


Figure 50 GCWSR boundaries

The Surf Management Plan (left) covers all 53km of Gold Coast Beaches, while the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve (right) spans approximately 16km. Image Sources: City of Gold Coast 2015 p9; Save the Waves. n.d GCWSR Map

As explored in Chapter 2, times of uncertainly are often important for epistemic communities to gain status and influence, and was an important factor in this instance. Additionally, though the restricting of the reserve boundaries reduced the number of statutory bodies that

needed to be ‘dealt’ with, this quotation indicates that a range of these bodies have necessarily been incorporated into the GCWSR assemblage. State government, City Council and Gold Coast Waterways are, for example, all involved in the management of the amphibious designated area. Furthermore, though the reserve does not impinge on the key seaway, its approval in the given area is contingent on the meeting of certain conditions. The initial nomination for the Gold Coast WSR was, for instance, supported by the local council providing that the following seven conditions are met:

> a) That the City of Gold Coast Surf Management Plan is the endorsed strategy for the management of the City’s ocean beaches.
>
> b) That the World Surfing Reserve status does not fetter the rights and obligations of the City of Gold Coast in exercising its responsibilities.
>
> c) That the World Surfing Reserve status does not impinge upon the rights of other users of the beaches including swimming, surf lifesaving, fishing, recreational boating, and other watercraft.
>
> d) That the Local Stewardship Committee for the World Surfing Reserve is to be determined by Council and involving members of the City’s Surf Management Plan Advisory Committee.
>
> e) That the World Surfing Reserve status will not be used to lobby for any changes in legislation, local, state or federal.
>
> f) That the City’s endorsement of the World Surfing Reserve nomination is on the basis that the title is purely ceremonial only in nature.
>
> g) That the City reserves the right and discretion to withdraw its support for the World Surfing Reserve status if any of the above criteria are not met or maintained to its satisfaction (City of Gold Coast 2015 p46).

These conditions are comprehensive, and effectively remove any statutory power that the reserve might carry. Subservient to various other Gold Coast Policies, it is explicit that the WSR title is purely ceremonial. In agreeing to these conditions, support, including that of the reluctant mayor was gained, as indicated in the following quotation:

> “The mayor had, he had the ability to pretty much keep shutting it down and not voting for it. But he, in the end, I think he ran out of things to say-

> well they pulled the teeth out of it enough to realise, that declaring that stretch the World Surfing Reserve, that was not going to have any legal right to stop anything whatsoever, but it is going to be recognised as a World Surfing Reserve. So there was no, there wasn't going to be any real legislation behind it with the declaration of being the 8th World Surfing Reserve. It was just recognising it as an asset" (Employee, Gold Coast Tourism. Interview. Gold Coast, 03/02/2017).

The agreement facilitated the acceptance of a WSR in the Gold Coast, demonstrating that in embracing the potential flexibility of the framework, mutation that is appropriate for the local political environment is possible. However, with no formal power, it is uncertain how effective or credible a World Surfing Reserve designation can be, and as such raises significant questions of its worth. Constrained by process and conditions, and without any guarantee of substantive protection, WSR proponents nonetheless remain committed to its potential, and absorb this risk to their credibility and their surfing environment as their engagement with the programme continues. Indeed, Save the Waves do not attempt to attach any specific form of protection to the designation; allowing the local community to take the lead in generating outcomes which are appropriate in the given context. As Hodges states:

> "We see that World Surfing Reserves as a program is like a designation, an honouring, a ceremony, of a place and a stick in the ground saying this is a place we're going to protect and show the world that. And then because of that, and because of the structure we put together with the local community with the Local Stewardship Council, and just setting up the correct ingredients for conservation, we actually end up seeing actual conservation outcomes as a result" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

Without stipulating *how* the designation will protect a place, the rhetoric remains that a WSR *is* going to do this. Aligning with this aim and belief, local communities then forward this goal in a way that is acceptable to a particular area. In the case of the Gold Coast, this protection lies in its symbolism.

WSRs can be simple, malleable and adaptable policy options. These characteristics, I argue, allow for its effective localisation and have been very important in the Gold Coast context. In taking the teeth out of the programme, it has become embedded in this local context and

though it is yet to be truly tested, it has had an impact. I now conclude this chapter before evaluating these impacts in Chapter 7.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has contextualised the place, protections and policies of the Gold Coast surf zone. Introducing the various dimensions of the south-east Queensland city, it then moved to an analysis of the Surf Management Plan, a comprehensive surf specific document produced by the Gold Coast City Council. This Plan acknowledges the importance of surfing for the Gold Coast, demonstrates a place specific surf epistemology and, importantly, provided the guiding documentation for the WSR application and designation. The SMP outlines optimum conditions for surfing breaks in the region and depicts the range of legislation and policy which affect its management.

As a heavily contested space, the surf zone is subjected to recurring threats, and in Section 6.5 the chapter looks to the emergence of WSRs as a proactive response, and viable policy option, to address these challenges. With its outstanding surf quality, unique environmental characteristics, cultural and historical significance, and local support and capacity, the Gold Coast meets the criteria for acceptance from *Save the Waves*. Keen engagement from local actors played an important role in achieving the designation, and highlights the significance of the site specific, localised dimension of the multi-scalar enviro-surf community. The WSR assemblage both spans, and draws power and momentum, from these across these scales, and in bringing together a range of experts, I suggest that the Local Stewardship Committee embodies its international counterpart, the *Save the Waves* Vision Council.

The final section of this chapter explored how and why a WSR has become accepted and implemented in the Gold Coast. I argue that the relative simplicity of the programme, along with the ability for local communities to present individualised versions of a reserve to stakeholders has been crucial in garnering support at both the local and international level. The amenability of the programme, and the willingness of its proponents to agree to the imposition of significant restrictions, facilitated its acceptance by decision makers. This has dictated that no formal protections are incorporated into its mandate, though has not detracted enthusiasm for its acceptance. Though symbolic, the designation of the Gold Coast as WSR has affected the region and this thesis now moves to evaluate its impact through the themes of dialogue and symbolism, representation and reinforcement.

Chapter 7: Evaluating the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has argued that World Surfing Reserves have been adopted by both local communities who choose to apply for designation, such as the Gold Coast, and by the broader enviro-surf movement. The way in which a WSR can offer protection varies according to specific existing and emerging threats, frameworks and actors. In Chapter 6 I presented the context in which the WSR has been emplaced on the Gold Coast, analysing the process and product to explore how the epistemic enviro-surf community is working; its power, purpose and beneficiaries. Though this, I illustrated how local surf activism fits in with the global, and established the importance of a coherent local assemblage. Meeting the criteria for acceptance into the programme, I argue that World Surfing Reserves became a viable policy option in the Gold Coast due to its simplicity and amenability, which facilitated its acceptance among decision makers and the broader community. The willingness of WSR proponents to compromise was a key element in its adoption, though resulted in a range of restrictions being imposed by local council. In this chapter I explore how, in spite of these restrictions, the WSR has impacted the area. To do this I draw again on fieldwork data, as detailed in Chapter 3, to move through the key emergent themes of dialogue and symbolism. I also engage with questions of who a WSR is for, what it is that it seeks to protect, and how it interacts and reinforces the international enviro-surf community.

Following this introduction, this chapter briefly returns to the marine analogy used in Chapter 4, of the wave transition from wind chop to groundswell, to suggest how the mobilised WSR has interacted with a specific local context, and how conditions have aligned sufficiently to channel the momentum gained into an embedded surfbreak protection policy. I then turn to the implications of this policy territorialisation, and first discuss the emergence of organised communication channels between stakeholders. The dialogue that occurs in the region is a key feature of the WSR process, providing access to decision makers, and other stakeholders in the region, allowing for the creation of, and engagement with, previously unattainable spaces of persuasion, and learning. The creation of these spaces of dialogue reinforces the argument that a niche within a broader local and international surfing culture has emerged, with experts internally and externally identified as capable of advising and influencing specific local policy matters. However, with such wide-reaching restrictions written into the

GCWSR, the extent of this influence remains uncertain. The enthusiasm and confidence that its proponents continue to carry suggests that there is a form of soft power at play. I look in Section 7.4 to the symbolism of the WSR designation on the Gold Coast, and what this means for the area and surfbreak protection more broadly. Although its authority has not yet been tested, a range of potential consequences have been identified. The designation could, for example, engage the community and hold local government to account. Its lack of formal assurances however may pose a threat to the credibility of the both epistemic enviro-surf community, and local politicians who have supported the notion and its implicit protective characteristics.

Asserting that the symbolism and dialogue of the WSR is significant, the chapter then moves to analyse *who* the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve is for, and *what* is being protected. I address, in Section 7.5, the contrast between the heterogenous surfing population, and the largely homogenous group of local and international enviro-surf actors who have been identified as having mobilised and emplaced the WSR as a strategy. This lack of representation, I suggest, maintains the hegemony of white, male, shortboard surfers, and perpetuates their dominance in both surfing line-ups, and in discussions around issues that affect it. This facilitates in turn the protection and preservation of a particular surfing culture.

The final section of this chapter explores, through the example of the 2020 Global Wave Conference, how the iterative actions of the GCWSR and the international epistemic enviro-surf community create mutual reinforcement. A key microspace, and mooring for the mobilisation of WSRs, the event created space and opportunity for the furthering of the aims and connectivity of the enviro-surf community. Queensland Premier Anastasia Palaszczuk MP announced, in the early stages of the conference, that the government would be "actively looking at legislation regarding the Reserve" (Palaszczuk 2020). I suggest that this is a profound indication of the power that the WSR could have in shaping Gold Coast (and Queensland) politics, standing to strengthen the authority of the enviro-surf community and impacting the wider realm of surfbreak protection. A brief conclusion brings this chapter to a close before I move in the final chapter to discuss the significance of these findings and outline directions for future research.

7.2 Grooming the groundswell: creating space for surfing, persuasion and learning

In Chapter 4 I used the analogy of wave formation, the movement of wind energy from chop to groundswell, to describe how the enviro-surf community has become organised and aligned through its goals, gaining momentum and power as a result. I return to it here to frame how local conditions affect a WSR once territorialised.

When a wave interacts with land, its energy shifts and the wave breaks. When the mobilised WSR becomes localised, it too changes, dependent on the unique assemblage of actors, politics and environment of a given area. In the case of the Gold Coast, the international and local WSR assemblages have aligned; the swell (international enviro-surf community) and sandbars (local policy actors) are formed, and the local wind (opposition) is light.

The restrictions that have been imposed as conditions for acceptance have dictated that there is minimal disruption to the broader Gold Coast political land- and sea-scape in one direction or another. The support gained, through the simplicity and flexibility outlined in Chapter 6, nonetheless insists that the GCWSR been accepted; the programme, and the aims of the multi-scalar enviro-surf community have been upheld. The wave has not closed out, but its power has been constrained.

While there is no legislative or formalised power attached to the GCWSR, local participation is strong, and the restrictions imposed have not diminished the enthusiasm of its proponents, many of whom see its acceptance as a positive step towards enhanced representation for surfing in the region's contested coastal politics. A key component of this representation has been the creation of dialogue between local surf activists and decision makers, made possible through the WSR and its stewardship committee (LSC).

Now afforded opportunities to communicate directly with Council, a previously unattainable channel has been opened through which concerns, opinions and embodied knowledges can be shared. The extent to which this communication will be effective is yet to be seen, though as WSR chairman Andrew McKinnon optimistically states, the engagement with Council is significant, and further indication of the marked transition of surfers from the margins to insider positions within local governmental operations:

> "…at least we've got a body of people that we can all talk about and we can create subcommittees on these issues, and we can raise them, and then we can get advice on

> it. So, we're engaging with council. Yeah, which is really important because in the old days surfers had no chance of doing this they would not even listen to us if we'd started protesting, or we didn't like rock walls being built on the beach or you know certain things happening, they'd just say go away. They wouldn't even talk to us, so suddenly, we've got this mechanism to talk to council and we can really push for certain things" (McKinnon, A. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia 16/02/2019).

The WSR, and the LSC present an opportunity for formalised information sharing to occur, and for the various areas of expertise incorporated in the group to be brought into the wider political discussion. Perceived as positive by the surfers and other stakeholders who were invited into the room, this also enhanced the consultation processes for council who had historically been unable to appease the surfing community, as a result of their differing opinions. As one LSC member states:

> "So, who becomes your lobby group, you see what I mean? you get 21 surfers in the room, and you'll have 25 different opinions about what makes a good break, you know, it's one of those problems. But now they're sort of getting more organised and the WSR steering committee has now provided a vehicle for a single point of contact for the surfing stakeholders, and I suspect that could be why council has been quite happy to move down that path. Cos, I mean in regards it simplifies their discussions" (Engineer; Gold Coast Waterways & Griffith University. Interview. Gold Coast 01/03/2017).

The following interview excerpt from the executive coordinator for beaches (Gold Coast City Council), affirms this notion, remarking on the openness of the meetings and the importance of this information, along with and education, for the future of the GCWSR:

> "When the meetings happen with the group (LSC)…people are very receptive to what other people from different interest groups have to say. I think that they also recognise that this person has very good knowledge of this part of the World Surfing Reserve and so it's been, I think it's been a very good exchange of ideas, information and opinions…" (Hunt, S. Interview. Gold Coast 13/02/2019).

This mechanism to talk to council, along with a perceived increase in their willingness to listen, can be linked to the professionalisation and organisation of the enviro-surf community, which was discussed in Chapter 4. As surfing increasingly becomes acknowledged as an asset, and surfers as knowledge makers and keepers, further evidence that the westernised

sport has moved towards maturity emerges; again, moving this niche further from the margins as their influence and reach becomes more established.

> " this is evolution of the sport of surfing, but also the world's perception of surfing as a sport and I think, if you would have, 20 years ago, tried to convince a local or state government to protect the coastline because of surfing, they would have just looked at you with a blank face, because there wasn't a great understanding of the fact that surfing recreation, first of all is a great boon to an economy; there's 30 plus million surfers worldwide that travel all over that spend money to go to all these places" (Hodges, T. Interview. Skype, 15/07/2019).

It is significant that access has been gained, yet the way in which the meetings proceed does not necessarily result in the surfers' aims being met, or their advice taken. The authority of the Council is maintained through the power dynamics of the WSR assemblage, and while information shared is acknowledged as valuable, it is just one component in the much broader remit of city politics. The Council are required to not favour one group of stakeholders over another, and conform to their processes to ensure consistency. As this is a relatively new space for many of those in the LSC, this requires learning and adaptation. As Councillor Young states:

> "There are times where they think that they would like to have a bigger voice, and I think we established our guidelines here… to ensure that it didn't get out of hand, where it took precedent over other things or amenity within the city… We have to educate them into how far reaching it is, so we do regular meetings and they go back to full council. They [the meeting's minutes and actions] go back to our committee; the transport and infrastructure committee and the committee discusses it and the outcomes and recommendations and then that is taken through to our full council, so with the mayor and the 14 councillors (Young, P. Interview. Gold Coast, 13/02/2019).

Surfers being involved in, and having a greater awareness of these processes has been an important element in the development of the GCWSR. Gaining an understanding of the function and responsibility of the Council, other user groups, and the broader aims and responsibilities within the policy environment, it has been possible for the aspirations of Gold Coast enviro-surf representatives to be tempered, in line with the expectations of council and those who serve it. The following exchange, between Councillor Young, and Shannon Hunt, describes how a clear WSR governance system was an important element in the facilitation of

productive meetings. In these meetings opportunities for information flows to be initiated and utilised in the wider decision-making system have been created.

> "SH: I think one of the key challenges has been to have a governance system set up at the start of the whole process because that's really important to get value out of the process, because otherwise it's just a bunch of people all expressing an opinion at each other…
>
> PY: Or telling their life story!
>
> SH: That's correct. That doesn't seem to ultimately result in anything, but it also allows, and it puts in context how the WSR meetings then what they have to do. And it's a group. It's not a bunch of individuals; again they have to resolve something, but that has to then go through transport and infrastructure committee, then to council and it helps, I think, over time as the group is more aware of the process that there is a decision making process that you know and the group doesn't have the ability to...
>
> PY: To override anything that the city, that is not in the city's interests. (Hunt, S & Young, P. Interview. Gold Coast, 13/02/2019)

While keeping the interests of the city at the centre of discussions, the World Surfing Reserve has allowed for involvement in forums where the ideas and opinions of members of the local enviro-surf community can be voiced and integrated, where appropriate, into the various layers of local government procedure. When considering the mutation of the World Surfing Reserves between different places, this training and conformity represents an important feature, with the willingness of the group to adapt to local conditions having been identified as a vital component of its acceptance and efficacy.

Through collaborative engagement, spaces of persuasion, where the machinery of government can be navigated have been created (Dunlop 2012). The surfers have been able to share their culture, and in turn have further developed their understanding of the local political culture. With the learning evidently moving in two directions, these spaces can be seen as a further example of aims aligning and efforts being mutually reinforced across networks. The creation of these opportunities, and the dialogue they facilitate, are key outputs of the WSR, and supports the argument that a niche with the surfing community have taken up space inside the political system. With constraints, their knowledge and aspirations have been brought into the coastal management conversation. Though it is too soon to fully

grasp the impact of such communication, it carries significance, particularly when considering the symbolic nature of the GCWSR, and what this can mean for the Gold Coast, and the enviro-surf community. This chapter now moves to explore the WSR beyond these spaces, through a discussion on the symbolism that has been generated around the designation, and its implications for surf activism in the area.

7.3 WSR symbolism: protection or precarity?

As has been shown throughout the course of this work, what a WSR can mean or can be, is highly variable and depends on local political and legislative conditions. While this mutability is a quality that allows for the mobilisation of WSRs, as shown in Chapter 6, it presents challenges in neatly defining the programme and its role in surfbreak protection. This is particularly resonant in cases such as the Gold Coast where its impact rests almost entirely on symbolism. This section looks to the role of this symbolism, first through an analysis of perceptions and meanings that are attached to the designation, by those not directly involved in the programme. I then move to discuss its potential power, and the role the label may have in increasing tourism revenues, and on surfing crowds and safety in the region.

As shown in Figure 51, awareness of the GCWSR was found to increase over time, as tangible symbols of its presence were created. This includes highways billboards, and a plaque at Kirra Point as well as a cumulative increase in media exposure and events organised by GCWSR leaders. While general awareness rose, the meanings that were attached to the designation on the Gold Coast remained highly variable across the same time period. This was reflected in perceptions of WSRs more broadly. Responses to the question of "what does a WSR mean for an area", posed in the distributed survey, spanned a range of possibilities. For some, such as those below, the connotations were confident and hopeful:

> "That it is protected from pollution, overcrowding, and more" (Survey respondent, 2019).
>
> "Protection of waves and the coastal environment from development" (Survey respondent, 2017).
>
> "Low amount of buildings surrounding the coast. Better water quality" (Survey respondent, 2017).

> "It creates awareness and educates local community and visitors" (Survey respondent, 2017)

Some were more balanced, commenting on the symbolic nature, while also highlighting its potential in the longer term, and for others, WSRs were perceived to create more problems than they are able to solve:

> "Means it gets really, really crowded. Lots of "surf" tourists and Germans in campervans" (Survey Respondent 2017).

> "Raises awareness for some people but predominantly a business move that has many internal politics to 'save' a wave for particular people long term" (Survey Respondent 2019).

Figure 51 GCWSR highway sign

When I first arrived, in 2017, I noticed quickly that surfing was everywhere, but any evidence of the World Surfing Reserve was not. I found a number of National Surfing Reserve Plaques, in prominent places at Snapper Rocks, Currumbin and Burleigh Heads, but it took me an additional range of exploring to find the WSR plaque at Kirra Point. People I approached did not know what I was referring to when I mentioned the WSR, and even staff the local tourist information office were oblivious to what I had perceived to be an internationally famous title. This time, highway billboards detail the reserve boundaries- complete with associated exits and a photo of great surf at the southern point breaks. This signage was tangible evidence that the reserve had become more visible in the region, and as I have approached people, there has been a general increase in awareness, though understandings of what it means are really different (Author's Fieldnotes February 2019). *Image Source: Gold Coast Bulletin 2017*

The localisation of WSRs present a range of unique outcomes, and as such none of the responses given are inherently incorrect. The variation in expectations does however have implications for the way in which a WSR functions, and for the credibility of those who have forwarded it as a strategy. With no actual jurisdiction over the surfing environment, how the symbolic WSR works in practice will only be determined if/when it becomes truly tested. Without formal assurances, the capacity of the GCWSR to serve its community is unclear, as one council employee states:

> "World Surfing Reserve doesn't mean anything- it's only a name but then they go out the other side and say "but this'll stop any development, it'll stop this and stop that", but how's it going to stop all this stuff if it's nothing and it's just a name plate? And [they say] "it's not going to add to bureaucracy and blah blah blah", nah it's just that. "But it'll stop this, and it'll stop that, and it'll make the waves perfect…" How's it going to do that? (Employee, Gold Coast Waterways. Interview. Gold Coast, 19/01/2017).

The lack of clarity around exactly *how* the WSR will protect and preserve surfing environments on the Gold Coast is an important aspect to consider. Legislation is largely fixed, documented with specific detail of what is and is not incorporated into law. Conversely, a symbol is subject to interpretation and can, as has been shown in the comments above, represent a range of meanings. This can lead to confusion, and also, potentially to complacency. If people assume that an area is protected as a result of designation, they may be less engaged in future activism, reassured of improvements and no longer worried that the resource is threatened. One survey respondent, for example, expects a WSR status to incorporate guarantees around water quality and development:

> "Positive as it stops certain development plus water must be kept clean surely for this status" (Survey Respondent 2017).

Again, how this development is stopped, or water quality is assured is unclear, though an expectation has been set, without question.

While complacency may be an issue for some, support for the designation may energise others to act if a threat arises. Engaging people in the process of protection, however arbitrary the outcome may be, can be seen as a positive outcome. Gold Coasters are proud of their beaches, and in a number of interviews it was found that those involved in the WSR were particularly proud of the recognition gained; it reinforced the notion, already well

known by them, that their beaches and surfbreaks are world class, and thus worthy of international recognition, and protection. For some, this sense of pride is accompanied by a sense of stewardship and a will to protect. Through the GCWSR, surfers, and supporters can become active in a community endeavour; one that may be particularly appealing to those, such as young surfers, who might ordinarily be less involved in environmentalism or local politics. This has provided space for a shift within surf culture, towards environmentalism.

The WSR provides a platform; a local and international network and a base from which a defence could be initiated should a threat arise. This holds power, and for some, symbolism which generates a "social cultural declaration" such as a surfing reserve, has the potential to be as effective as formal protections. NSR founder Farmer, suggests for example, that a symbolic form of protection potentially holds greater longevity and relevance, stating that laws can be changed, or removed more easily than entrenched cultural arrangements:

> "I still have concerns about having areas legislated because legislature amendments can always be repealed and mended and tinkered. Having Reserves declared by the people, the Aboriginal people, the surfing communities, is a social cultural declaration that has no legislation. So, there's arguments to and from" (Farmer, B. Interview. WhatsApp, 26/02/2019).

The confidence and belief in the designation, and its capacity to stop development therefore carries significance despite its lack of formal substance. The impact here can be attributed not to policy on paper, but through the access to meetings, the raising of private social capital and the building of external pressure through pride, photo ops and soft power.

In accepting the wide-reaching restrictions, the enviro-surf community are exposing themselves to risk; should a threat to the surf zone be realised there is a possibility that the designation will be shown to be little more than a plaque and an ambition. However, in gaining the support of decision makers and other stakeholders they have leverage for accountability; reminding politicians for example that they have put their names to this initiative which the public expects to ensure protection. The political credibility of local government actors, and the social credibility of the enviro-surf community are therefore both vulnerable in such a scenario. How this power and risk dynamic impacts the long-term preservation of the surf zone will be an important area of study as the Reserve becomes more established, though it is too early to draw any definitive conclusions in this work.

This chapter has so far explored the spaces of persuasion and learning which have been created and utilised through the GCWSR, and how the symbolic layer of protection afforded by the designation may impact surfbreak protection in the region. I have argued that in gaining access to specific political spaces, Gold Coast enviro-surf actors have established an insider position to inform and advise on areas within their niche of expertise. This shift, from the beach to the boardroom is evident therefore on the Gold Coast, as it is in the broader international enviro-surf community.

7.4 Who are WSRs for, and what is being protected?

Having asserted that the dialogue and symbolism created through the GCWSR is meaningful, this section now grapples with the question of *who* the GCWSR is for, and *what* is being protected. There are a range of potential beneficiaries of the designation: it could, for example serve tourists and the tourism industry. The popularity of the programme, discussed in Chapter 6, makes surf spots in the WSR network attractive, and in attracting visitors, demand for tourism services could increase, and encourage higher prices. Well supported by tourism stakeholders (evidenced through letters of support and financial backing for GCWSR organised events), the WSR is however a minor component in the visitor market. Gold Coast tourism is built upon more than surfing, as councillor Young states:

> "The people don't just come here to surf, because if they did, we'd be fairly broke" (Young, P. Interview. Gold Coast, 13/02/2019).

For local surfers too the designation may be appealing, generating pride and forging connections with other, similar surfing areas around the world. However, any scheme which may attract more surfers to an already heavily congested space will likely be met with opposition. This is an issue that Ware depicts as a major problem:

> "…the main problem for Surfers on the Gold Coast is not the cruise ship terminal. The main problem is just ourselves, right and now we've got these amazing (GCWSR) signs on the motorway of just like kind of Greenmount cranking! What are we doing? Yeah, come in, come one, come all. So, we're just creating a rod for our back. I think. (Ware, D. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia, 21/02/2019).

Overcrowding has been a significant problem for the surfing experience on the Gold Coast for many years, and the issue has not been caused, nor fixed, by the WSR. One response to the crowds, and an output of the WSR process is the establishment of a sub-committee for safety, made up of members of the Local Stewardship Council. Though generally leaving management to the community following designation, Save the Waves has contributed a layer of accountability in this instance, providing leverage for engaged community members to maintain momentum and continue the dialogue with the Council and other stakeholders.

Outlined in the SMP, safety initiatives on the Gold Coast are centred around education, and are unlikely to present any significant change to the surfing experience, particularly in the short term. Tourism, crowding and safety are touched upon by the WSR, yet have minimal impact in a broader Gold Coast vision. The question remains therefore of who a WSR is for, and what it seeks to do.

On paper, Surfing Reserves are inclusive. The use of 'surfing' in the designation name implies their focus, though it is made explicit that other water users are not excluded from the protected spaces. As Farmer and Short state:

> "A surfing reserve does not however attempt to exclude any user group and no statutory provisions are attached therein" (2007 p100).

The range of stakeholders in the LSC, and the assertion in the SMP that the amenity is for all reflect this sentiment. I argue that in practice, a small culture is being generated that is reinstalling and perpetuating the codes and borders that have been prominent in western surf culture throughout its history. This culture, created through protected areas or the networks that facilitate designations as such, continues to favour a particular surfer who fits a particular image.

The demographic makeup in Gold Coast surfing line-ups, particularly in the more popular surf spots, such as Snapper Rocks for example, are heavily skewed towards Wheaton' s description of quintessential surfers as "a young, white, male subject , slim, toned, tanned- but not dark skinned- with a mop of sun-bleached hair" (2017 p177). As discussed in Chapter 2, while dominated by this group, surfing is heterogeneous and can no longer be seen as an activity reserved for the youthful male. Surfing is not limited by board type, expertise, gender, race, ethnicity or disability. There are however a range of societal and cultural barriers that restrict all surfers from accessing, and being accepted into, all surfing environments. Institutionally, this demographic imbalance continues to empower the white,

male, shortboard, surfer. The Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve is not an exception to this pattern, and I argue that it best serves those who fit, or once fitted, the above description.

All of the groups of stakeholders that have been identified throughout this work have been comprised, overwhelmingly, of white men. The identified enviro-surf community, *Save The Waves* Advisory Board, Executive Committee, Vision Council, and the Gold Coast Local Stewardship Committee. Among these groups, there are a number who consist *exclusively* of white men. People of colour, women, Indigenous groups and people with disabilities are largely excluded.

As touched upon in Chapter 6, there is no formal inclusion, nor representation of Indigenous surfers in the Gold Coast Local Stewardship Committee, and the women involved are not engaged due to their role as surfers, but as prominent community leaders. This lack of representation inevitably has consequences, including the continued marginalisation of those who do not fit neatly into the quintessential image of a surfer. While the development of the enviro-surf community, and the WSR programme, can be seen as a step forward for the representation of the surfing community in coastal management, I suggest that in its current form, it gives voice to those who are already more likely to be heard.

This echoes the findings of Olive, in stating that:

> "In the case of Australian surfing, it is white as well as male surfers who feel most at home, with rights to stay and act and speak for surfing spaces" (2019 p46).

In addressing the question of *who* a WSR is for, further questions around *what* it is that is being protected emerge. Through my research, I have found the WSR seeks to protect and project a particular version of Gold Coast Surfing, which again is narrow in its scope and favours a dominant surfing narrative, supported by nostalgia and ego.

The formal recognition of surfers as stakeholders and policy influencers marks a transition from the hedonistic stereotypes of the past, and bears similarities to the early Australian surf lifesaving movement. As Booth states,

> "By organising themselves into formally constituted clubs, surfbathers aimed to forge a beach culture and protect their political interests" (2001 p65).

I posit that the GCWSR is reflective of an attempt by some surfers to protect their political (and surfing) interests, and preserve, rather than forge, a specific beach culture. A culture

that is bound by the dominant (gendered, western centred) surfing narratives (Evers 2009; Ford & Brown 2006; Olive 2015). Figure 52 uses the example of the Surf World Gold Coast museum to highlight one way in which such a culture is shaped, and how the WSR networks stands to influence this.

Culture creation and the building of international networks- the Surf World Museum.

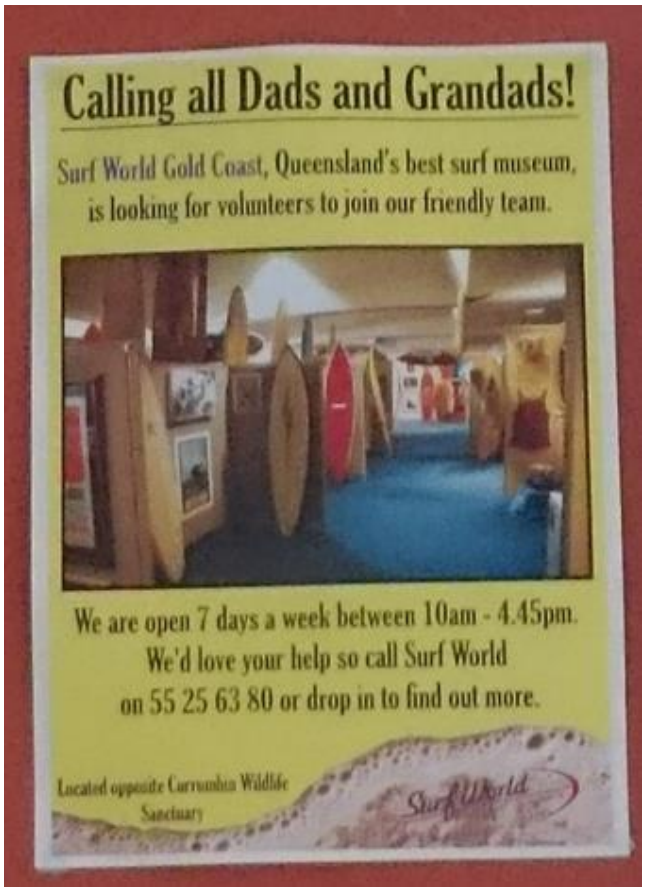


Figure 52 Surf World Gold Coast volunteer recruitment poster 2017

Retelling the same story: an indication of who is encouraged to shape and retell the story of Gold Coast Surfing. Source: Author 2017

The cultural history of surfing on the Gold Coast has been dominated by the white male and the evolutionary path towards shortboard riding. The museum setting provides power to create narratives; to perpetuate this dominant surf culture, or illuminate a more inclusive history that is actively deconstructed and decolonised.

GCWSR chairman Andrew McKinnon took on the role of Vice President of the Surf World Museum in 2019; an opportunity to shape how surfing history and culture on the Gold Coast is presented and remembered in line with WSR and enviro-surf community aims. How McKinnon takes this opportunity remains to be seen. Identified already however is how the museum and its future curation are an example of a sharing of ideas, strategies and an adoption of "parts of elsewhere" that has occurred through the international network of WSRs (Allen & Cochrane 2007). McKinnon remarked in an interview that he has plans to modernise and incorporate the WSR more explicitly into the museum structure, in line with what he saw in Santa Cruz when visiting for the Global Wave Conference:

> "It would also be part of the charter for the surf museum, like Santa Cruz, the Surf museum embraced the (Santa Cruz) World Surfing Reserve" (McKinnon, A. Interview. Gold Coast, Australia 16/02/2019).

7.5 Mutual reinforcement of the enviro-surf community

In this thesis I have identified the enviro-surf community as an epistemic entity, and explored how it demonstrates itself in practice through the World Surfing Reserve programme. I have analysed how this plays out in the specific Gold Coast context, and I now bring these arguments together in a demonstration of how the enviro-surf community is effective in mutually reinforcing itself across scales and geographies. To do this, I return to the Global Wave Conference. Detailed in Chapter 4, the conference is a key example of a "globalising microspace" (after Larner and le Heron 2002); an emergent space of flow, and a "site(s) of encounter, persuasion and motivation" (Temenos and McCann 2013 p346).

Figure 53 Global Wave Conference 2020 poster

The conference fell across a week where the devastating Australian bushfires were declared as being 'contained', and the rain that put out the last of the blazes was causing flash flooding across South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales. A swell generated by ex-tropical cyclone Uesi brought huge waves to the Gold Coast and a number of the 400 delegates, from 19 different countries, were able to embrace the best of the Gold Coast's surf offerings before attending the conference each morning. Image source: Adrian Bort/Adrenaline Shots Photography

Hosted by GCWSR in conjunction with key enviro-surf organisations, the 2020 Global Wave Conference brought together individuals from the breadth of McCann's typology of policy mobility actors, detailed in Chapter 2. This includes local policy actors such as representatives of the State Government, Gold Coast Councillors, and local branches of enviro-surf organisations, and members of the 'global consultocracy'; enviro-surf organisation leaders, coastal management consultants, and representatives from a range of 'sustainable' surf ventures. Key components of the 'informational infrastructure' were also identified; this includes institutional backing from Southern Cross and Griffith Universities, a host of academics and educators from around the world, and a strong media presence which generated narratives and repeated and popularised particular findings.

A cultural team ensured that respects were paid to Indigenous traditions, and the programme consisted of a broad range of talks from across the enviro-surf spectrum, in line with the broad theme of "International Ocean Conservation and Seeking Sustainable Solutions" (GWC 2020). Yoga sessions, film screenings and a photography exhibition were also curated as part of the weeks' offerings. The most remarkable point of the conference however came at its commencement, when a 'surprise' announcement was made by the Queensland State Premier:

> "What I've been hearing from people is that they would like a bit more security around the Reserve. My government is now going to actively look at legislating regarding the Surfing Reserve here in Queensland… I don't want to see it disturbed in 20-, 30-, 40-, or 50-years' time. I want to make sure that this area of the coast is absolutely protected as a surf reserve" (Annastacia Palaszczuk MP, in Carroll 2020).

For the Premier, whose State level government oversees the regional and city bureaucracies, to make such a statement is an important development for the WSR which, as has been discussed, rests on symbolism and soft power. I argue that this announcement is indicative of the efficacy of the enviro-surf community in creating, through its iterative actions, positive outcomes for surfbreak protection. The enviro-surf community created a space of encounter, persuasion and motivation which drew attention to their cause, and further strengthened the networks and expertise that provide its power and momentum. Simultaneously, Queensland and The Gold Coast positioned itself as an example of best practice, showcasing both its 'natural' capital and its willingness to act to protect and preserve this asset. The delivery of the announcement, at the start of an international conference, served to highlight and

extrapolate this position; a clear acknowledgement of the potential role of a WSR, and recognition of those who worked on a local and international level to achieve the designation. For the international, epistemic enviro-surf community, which I have argued demonstrates itself in practice through World Surfing Reserves, this result is important. In effectively persuading the Queensland government of the need for a protected World Surfing Reserve, the common beliefs, aims and aspirations can be seen to have been communicated to decision makers who have been convinced of its importance. This is significant for both the authority of the collective group, and its longevity. As Adler and Haas state, for an epistemic community,

> "…a success is likely to bolster the ideas. Of course, epistemic communities which prove themselves right are probably likely to last longer than those which prove wrong" (1992 p385).

Lacking detail at the time of writing, it is too early to fully evaluate the consequences of the announcement. It nonetheless sends a clear message that the WSR has become established on the Gold Coast. Subsequently, the status of Save the Waves, who can incorporate the successes of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve into its own narrative and marketing, is also boosted. Due to the connectivity of the international enviro-surf community, this development also stands to have impact beyond Australia. As McKinnon states in the conference report:

> "Preserving and protecting beach and surf amenity is foremost, and as a global movement, we can achieve so much and inspire so many with our next generation carrying the baton to combat these many challenges. Together we can achieve anything" (2020).

In Chapter 6 I described how Andrew and Megan McKinnon did not know what a WSR was before they were striving to have their home breaks designated as one. In becoming a part of this global movement, they have created an opportunity which stands to provide some form of long term, statutory protection for the GCWSR. Such an occurrence is important for surfbreak protection on the Gold Coast, and carries significance for the wider surfing and enviro-surf community.

Having explored the impacts on the Gold Coast I now conclude this chapter with a brief summary, before moving to present a concluding analysis of this significance; for the enviro-surf community, the World Surfing Reserves programme, and the Gold Coast WSR.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis of the key impacts and implications of the GCWSR, exploring key questions around the creation of dialogue and symbolism, and of who the reserve is for, what it protects, and how it fits into and reinforces the broader international enviro-surf community.

I have argued that dialogue between stakeholders and decision makers that occurs in the region is a key output of the WSR process, and provides access to previously unreachable spaces of persuasion, where multi-directional learning can occur. In adapting to these opportunities, a niche has been created where local surf activists have gained recognition as experts, capable of advising and influencing on specific local policy matters within council processes. Though the restrictions imposed on the WSR maintain an uncertainty on how far this influence can go, the enthusiasm and confidence of its supporters insist that it carries a form of soft power. The GCWSR is an as yet untested symbolic designation which holds the potential to encourage both complacency, and action. Awareness of its presence has increased, though what it means and how it stands to protect, should a threat arise, remain unclear. Such an approach raises significant questions for future research, as the impact on the credibility of the enviro-surf community, and those who have publicly supported the designation begins to emerge.

Also argued in this chapter, is the focus of the WSR on the already hegemonic group of surfers; the white male. Representation from other groups is lacking across the enviro-surf community, and this is reflected in the Gold Coast, perpetuating their marginalisation. This focus results in the protection and preservation of the dominant surfing narrative, buoyed by the growing social capital and increasing organisation of its proponents.

The Global Wave Conference, and specifically the announcement made by Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, that her government would be seeking legislative protection for the GCWSR, is clear demonstration of how the multi-scalar enviro-surf community generate connectivity and momentum through the development of networks and knowledge.

Having evaluated the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, this thesis now moves into its final chapter to present key conclusions and a discussion on the broader significance of the enviro-surf community, World Surfing Reserves, and the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, for surf activism.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has sought to identify and understand the evolution of surfbreak protection and the consequential ordering and bordering of surf zones. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of epistemic communities and policy mobilities, it has argued that the key mobilisers of people and policy are those who make up the 'enviro-surf community'. Focussing on World Surfing Reserves, and in particular, the case study of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, this thesis has explored the policies that are innovated, and mobilised, and how these work in practice. Utilising a range of primary and secondary data, these aims have been met through an exploration of the following research questions:

- Who or what is the enviro-surf community?
  - Who is part of it, and why? How did it start and how has it developed?
- How does the enviro-surf community demonstrate itself in practice?
  - What are World Surfing Reserves and what do they seek to do?
- How do World Surfing Reserves work in practice?
  - Critically investigating the localisation of World Surfing Reserves: A case study of The Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve.

Having addressed these questions in the preceding chapters, I now move on to reflect on the findings presented, concluding this thesis with a summary of its key arguments, a discussion on the significance of this work and by raising questions for future research on surf activism.

The first section of this chapter outlines the key points, and main arguments, of Chapters 4-7. Here, I reiterate that the enviro-surf community can be effectively defined as epistemic, comprising a small niche within surfing that has become recognised as an expert entity, motivated to, and capable of, devising and mobilising surfbreak protection policy. A way in which these actions can be demonstrated is through the World Surfing Reserves programme, the *spatial* and *social* movement of which reflects the movement of ideas through the broader enviro-surf community. Comprising a multi-scalar network, the alignment of aims, from the international enviro-surf community, to local surf policy actors is crucial for the uptake and embedding of WSRs. Shown clearly in the Gold Coast example, the interaction between these scales, and cultures, has been made possible through the connectivity of key actors, and

has created space for dialogue, symbolism, and potentially legislative protection in the Gold Coast.

The findings of this thesis carry significance for the Gold Coast, and for the broader enviro-surf community, surfbreak protection and coastal management. As such, this work has contributed to the field of study in a range of ways. I turn to these contributions in Section 8.3, with a discussion on the methodological, theoretical, and empirical importance of this thesis, along with a reflection on the policy and politics which have shaped these conclusions. The chapter then outlines the limitations of this project before focussing on how it can be developed through further research, an agenda for which has emerged from the analysis conducted over the course of this project. A brief summary then concludes this final Chapter.

8.2 Defining the enviro-surf community as epistemic: the development of the World Surfing Reserve phenomenon

This thesis has defined the enviro-surf community as epistemic; a small group of experts who are capable of moving and shaping surf break protection policy. The emergence of the group has been traced from a loose band of organisations, including *Surfers Against Sewage*, *Surfrider Foundation* and *Save the Waves*, to an identifiable entity. This emergence has been closely tied to the generation of and engagement in collaborative, network strengthening opportunities. *Save the Waves* in particular draw upon these networks to enhance their impact and broaden their reach. It has been demonstrated that a Vision Council and Advisory Board, for example, formally bring together the expertise and connections of established enviro-surf actors along with legal, science, engineering and communications professionals. Opportunities to broaden this network incorporate a range of 'microspaces', specifically conferences, meetings and workshops, where beliefs and aims of attendees align, and their collective activism gains momentum as a result. The Global Wave Conference represents the most sophisticated example of such a microspace, operating as an increasingly professional, international event where knowledge is gained and shared by various stakeholders. While I have suggested that a definitive membership roll of the enviro-surf community is not possible due to its dynamic nature, there are a number of key actors who have been identified as prime movers of the group. This includes leaders of a number of enviro-surf organisations, surf industry actors, professional surfers, and academics. I have argued that this group hold

shared beliefs (rationale), shared causal beliefs, shared notions of validity and also pursue a common policy enterprise (of surfbreak protection), and as such can be classified as epistemic, in line with the criteria set out by Haas (1992). I have expanded these criteria to consider the importance of social capital for the group, and demonstrated how the individuals involved play a key role in its efficacy. Overall, I suggest that the communities' iterative actions provide momentum and synergy which mutually reinforces the group's position, authority, and aims on an international level.

To explore how these actions are demonstrated in practice, I turned to World Surfing Reserves. While World Surfing Reserves are not necessarily the end goal of the enviro-surf community, they are exemplary in their demonstration of how, through effective utilisation of multi-scalar networks, a global discourse can become established as local practice. As such, I argue that the *spatial* and *social* movement of World Surfing Reserves is indicative of the broader movement of ideas through the enviro-surf community.

To reach this conclusion, I demonstrated in Chapter 5 how the maturation of the enviro-surf community has both facilitated, and necessitated the innovation of proactive strategies. A range of statutory, and non-statutory approaches have been embedded in surfing spaces globally. This includes World Surfing Reserves, which represent the development of the enviro-surf community as a collaborative, authoritative enterprise. Having been mobilised across scales and geographies, World Surfing Reserves have emerged through an ongoing process involving partnership, conflict, learning and collaboration. The scaling of the Surfing Reserve concept is demonstrated clearly through the Australian example, where its scope has broadened, from the Bells Beach Recreation Reserve in Victoria, to National Surfing Reserves, through to the global World Surfing Reserves programme. On this global level, support from the breadth of the enviro-surf community is identified, along with backing on a local level in communities. In viewing the World Surfing Reserves as an assemblage of global, and local governance, the Save the Waves 'Vision Council' (those who have the final vote on which nominated reserve is approved) can be seen as constituting, in effect, a practical manifestation of the global epistemic enviro-surf community. Local Stewardship Councils, groups of stakeholders who represent a reserve and its management, embody this community on a local level.

Local Stewardship Councils are a key component in the territorialisation of World Surfing Reserves. Their focussed engagement and expertise provide the necessary capacity for the

relational, global programme to become fixed in a particular place. The formalised engagement of local policy actors in these committees contribute embodied, place specific knowledge and social capital which are fundamental in the development and adoption of an approach which is appropriate within particular surfing, environmental and political contexts. Determined by these contextual factors, and by the actors who pursue the label of WSR, the way in which a reserve does become fixed is highly variable. When mobilised, WSRs mutate in order to become embedded in a location, and this results in no two reserves looking or functioning alike. The Ericeira World Surfing Reserve, for example has been adopted as a tool for tourism in the region, while in some cases, such as in the first designated WSR Malibu, California, a lack of meaningful engagement, and a complex local environment has meant that the programme has been largely ineffectual. Aligned multi-scalar networks, are therefore very important to the success of WSRs.

A scenario where these networks have aligned is in the Gold Coast, Australia, and this WSR has been explored in depth in order to answer the third research question: 'How do World Surfing Reserves work in practice? Critically investigating the localisation of World Surfing Reserves: A case study of The Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve'.

The Gold Coast is a multi-faceted region in South East Queensland, where surfing is hugely popular, and well established as a mainstream activity. Surfbreaks are crowded, and have been affected by coastal development - which has historically failed to take into account the potential impact on what is known now as its 'surf amenity'. Surf amenity has become recognised as a key asset for the region, as documented in the 2015 Surf Management Plan. This comprehensive, surf specific document was produced by the Gold Coast City Council, in conjunction with a range of local stakeholders. The Plan acknowledges the importance of surfing for the Gold Coast, its residents and its visitors, and portrays a place specific epistemology. Its creation formalised the region's deep surfing knowledge, opened dialogue between the council and surfers, and also provided a foundation for the GCWSR application and subsequent management.

Faced with recurring threats to the surf zone and the surfing experience, Gold Coast surf activists sought a long-term solution to protect and preserve the surfing environmental and experience. A World Surfing Reserve was identified as a viable, proactive, policy option for serving this purpose. Meeting the criteria for acceptance into the programme, as set by Save the Waves; of surf quality, environmental characteristics, cultural and historical significance,

and local support and capacity, the Gold Coast was well placed to apply for designation. This application was upheld by highly active leadership, and an engaged Local Stewardship Council.

While the Gold Coast was an eligible candidate for selection, to become a fixture in the Gold Coast political land and sea scape, acceptance from the broader community, and local decision makers was required; possible in part because of the relative simplicity of the programme, which allows for local communities to present localised, place appropriate versions of a reserve to stakeholders. This has been fundamental in gaining support at both the local and international level. The flexibility and amenability of the WSR programme, along with the willingness of its proponents on the Gold Coast to use this flexibility has enabled it to be accepted and implemented in a form that was deemed appropriate by decision makers. That form was bound by substantial restrictions on its scope, yet with local support secured, the Gold Coast was selected by the Save the Waves Vision Council, at the Global Wave Conference in October 2015, to be the 10th World Surfing Reserve.

Though constrained, the territorialisation of the WSR in the Gold Coast is significant, and in Chapter 7 I explore its implications through a discussion on dialogue, symbolism, representation and reinforcement. A key feature of the WSR process, is an ongoing formal communication channel which has facilitated access to stakeholders, including decision makers, in the region. Creating space and opportunities for engagement in a previously inaccessible domain, members of the local enviro-surf community have been able to generate windows of opportunities to persuade others and learn for themselves. The occupation of this space in local surf-space governance, reinforces the notion that some surfers - a niche within the niche - have emerged as experts who are deemed capable of advising and influencing on specific local policy matters, albeit within the constraints of the wider Gold Coast political environment.

The imposed restrictions limit the WSR to symbolic protection. The enthusiasm and confidence of its proponents that it carries weight is, however, of note, and has consequence for surfbreak protection in the Gold Coast and beyond. In this example the authority of the WSR has not been tested, though its designation stands to impact surf activism in the region in a number of ways. This could include increased complacency, as people assume protective measures are securely in place, or on the other hand, it could further engage people to hold the local government to account and maintain their prized places. Without formal assurances,

the WSR creates a vulnerability for both the epistemic enviro-surf community and local politicians who have supported the notion, and its implicit protective characteristics, and as such have social and political credibility at stake.

While the impact of the symbolism cannot be fully ascertained, it is clear already that the representation of the local and international enviro-surf actors, who have been identified as having mobilised and emplaced the WSR as a strategy, does not reflect the heterogeneous nature of the surfing population as a whole. This raises questions surrounding *who* a WSR is for, and the lack of representation, I argue, perpetuates the dominance of white, male, shortboard surfers in the surf and in the efforts to protect it. Resultingly, the GCWSR forwards protection and preservation of a particular surfing culture; one bound by nostalgia and ego, that continues to marginalise those who do not fit into the hegemonic group.

Another key feature of the GCWSR is its connectivity and consequential role in the international enviro-surf community which demonstrates clearly the mutual reinforcement across scales, as explored in Chapter 4. This is evidenced through the 2020 Global Wave Conference. At this event, the potential impact of the groups' iterative action became apparent when an announcement was made by Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, who stated that her government would be seeking legislative protection for the GCWSR. What this legislation will mean for the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, and the other Queensland WSR in Noosa, remains to be seen. Regardless of how (or if) this legislation functions, it is evident that WSRs have generated cultural interest at a number of scales. Building networks of support and solidarity, this mutually reinforcing interaction between scales, actors, and cultures is key to the success of 'saving the waves'.

8.3 What significance does this have for surf activism now?

The conclusions drawn through this study have shown that the enviro-surf community can be defined as epistemic, and that World Surfing Reserves represent a multi-scalar approach to surfbreak protection. The findings outlined above carry significance for our understandings of surf activism; for the communities in which WSRs become emplaced, for the surfing and enviro-surf community, and in wider debates in surf and coastal resource management. This chapter now moves to discuss the contributions this work has made, from methodological, conceptual, empirical, policy and political perspectives.

As shown in the previous chapters, this work has generated a rich set of data from which the above conclusions have been drawn. I have primarily utilised traditional research methods, though my positionality, methodological approach and research method innovation have been fundamental to the production of a unique, robust research project.

As detailed in Chapter 3, I am white, Welsh, female, queer, and I can surf. This very particular set of identity traits has meant that I have been uniquely placed to conduct this work. My identity has facilitated access to certain spaces, and has excluded me from others. Occupying this in-between space- my own littoral zone- has provided an opportunity to conduct this research from a position of difference, which stands apart from much of the existing research in the empirical area. As a queer woman operating in a space dominated by cisgender men, my experiences are valuable, and my social demographic is significant in both this project, and in the wider field.

While my positionality is unique to me, the novel approach that I have taken methodologically is, in contrast, a template that others could follow. When forming the projects research design for example, I experimented with data collection techniques and in an attempt to utilise the sea as an active prompt, and in doing so, developed an 'interview with a view' method. Detailed in Section 3.5, this method has not played a significant role in this thesis. It has however, been set forward through it and has since been well received as a methodological innovation in human geography, and bluespaces research (Stoodley 2020 & lisahunter & Stoodley 2020). Additionally, in framing this research through the hybrid grounded theory-case study approach I have created an opportunity to explore the phenomena of surfbreak protection in an innovative, insightful way. This strategy enabled the extrapolation of data from the various opportunities afforded to me over the duration of this project; emerging myself in the field early, I have seen first-hand the later stages of the evolution within the enviro-surf community and gained valuable awareness as a result. The transition from a broad to narrow focus in the empirical area has been highly effective in this instance, and the theoretical framing that I ultimately adopted was timely, appropriate, and facilitated a fruitful analysis of contemporary surf activism.

Detailed in Chapter 2, this thesis is underpinned by the key concepts of place, land-sea connectivity, surfing, epistemic communities and policy mobilities. Engagement with this particular combination of literatures has provided a unique theoretical framework from which the conclusions outlined above have been generated. Importantly, the application of these

concepts has also provided the capacity to reflect on my findings, and to further examine the case study and wider research area. In taking these conceptual discussions through my research objectives this thesis presents a range of contributions that extend beyond its methodological innovation, and empirical insight.

As a key concept in human geography, place has been an important component in this work. In Section 2.1, I described how place has been extensively theorised, and how different senses of place can create different reactions when threatened; from reactive/protectionist notions that form from a fixed or sedentary sense of place, to a more mobile processual sense of place that is more open or global in its outlook. In this context, it has been possible to explore how (/if) WSRs present a disruption to surfing place. As such, I have questioned whether they can be interpreted as a strategy to ease the tensions between surfers' wishes to act in a protectionist manner and still travel to surf, or rather, that through a new form of networked localism, they have reinforced existing (b)orders. I argue here that while a global network has indeed been developed, the connectivity between particular surfing places is currently limited to those directly involved with the programme, and that established hierarchies in the surf zone remain largely unaffected by WSR designation. The extent to which the network may impact different notions of localism ('mine'/'yours'/or indeed 'our' surfing reserve) remains to be determined, and presents as an ongoing, and necessary discussion. A closely related aspect that can be addressed at this point, however, is the role of power in surfing place.

It has been found through this project, that while the dominance of local surfers is maintained in surfing lineups, power to protect/make decisions about this space has broadened from the directly local, to now incorporate transnational and global actors, as evidenced by the multiscalar networks that have been identified as necessary in the effective emplacement of WSRs. I suggest that in recognising the potential benefits of an international support system, dominant local surfers retain their power and dominance by drawing upon the network to further strengthen their position, as opposed to being subsumed by STW or the international enviro-surf community. Discussed later in this section, surfing place is inherently political, and loaded with power that is held disproportionately by the white male shortboarder in both the local and international dimensions of surfing and surfbreak protection. The identified power networks present a paradox between the promoted notions of open, progressive international cooperation in surfbreak protection, and the reproduction of hegemonic power

structures in the surf zone that foster a closed, exclusive sense of place. (B)orders in the surf zone and its surrounding cultures were found to be more sedentary than progressive, leading to defined boundaries of what (or who) is in or out of place.

Through engagement with various conceptualisations of place, this project has explored not only the sedentary nature of surfing space, but also the construction and maintenance of what is considered appropriate within them. In doing so, it has raised the possibility to ask further questions. Future work around theorisations of surfing place could provide the scope to reinterpret the evolution of surfing identities (for example, from surf bum to white collar governor), along with the purposes and politics of WSRs (for example, the extension of cultural dominance of a new class of surf rider), and thus furnish insights about their role in the governance of land, sea and surfing place.

While (b)orders in the surf zone can be viewed as relatively fixed, the physical surfing environment, surfing, and indeed WSRs, all emerged as examples of foci where boundaries are not clear. Situated in the littoral zone; the waves, beaches, and now boardrooms are all in a state of flux and represent a dynamic environment where human and non-human assemblages interact, impact and exceed. Whether physical/cultural, or land/sea, these spaces and phenomena insist that we think in a way that moves beyond a binary perspective, to blur (or dissolve) the way we study water, surfing and protected areas. As such, they serve as excellent vehicles through which conceptual debates around human geographies of more than land can be continued.

This project has developed understandings of human-sea relations, particularly the connectivity and motivations that are generated as a result of the co-composition of surf-shore identities of surfers. Furthermore, the nature of surfing as inherently both cultural and geographical (see Anderson forthcoming), and the nature of the littoral, liminal space of the surf zone has meant that WSRs, whose aim to protect span these realms, have had to explicitly incorporate all of these aspects into its structure. Just as the ocean can be seen to exceed itself (Peters and Steinberg 2019), WSRs are necessarily more than a strategy to save just the waves. Encompassing surfing culture as well as the physical environment, the beach, the watersheds, local politics and multi-scalar networks, and so on, WSRs are more than land, but they are also more than water. They are dependent, for example, on international conferences and distant storm systems, stoke and sand, wind and windows of opportunities. Blurring the boundary between land/sea, physical/cultural, the complex WSR assemblage can

be acknowledged as a potential model for future protected area initiatives, wherein it is not enough (or possible) to separate any one of these aspects from the other. Thinking beyond these various binaries creates opportunities to redefine how governance in protected spaces can be theorised, and, as in the case of WSRs, can create opportunities to enact strategies to protect.

This thesis has contributed to the ongoing discussions around place and the land-sea connectivity, and has done this in a unique way that was made possible through further conceptual engagement with literatures of epistemic communities and policy mobilities. Drawing upon these concepts to explore the organisation, mobilisation and territorialisation of WSRs, I have presented the notion of a shared epistemology, and a mobilised surfbreak protection strategy, both as manifestations of the enviro-surf community. This view of the phenomena has brought to light how a community has formed and gained authority in a particular niche, through shared beliefs and aims. Those included are then defining what is acceptable as good knowledge, and what approaches are appropriate in forwarding their mutual goals. In framing the enviro-surf community through the criteria laid out by Haas in 1992, which has remained the standard definition of an epistemic community, and by combining these conceptual insights with that of policy mobilities, this project represents an example of further 'conceptual stretching' (Haas 2014). In demonstrating how these literatures can be applied effectively in non-conventional knowledge and policy realms, I have expanded the remit of both epistemic communities and policy mobilities.

In this case, the common bond between actors has been built around the surf zone and the embodied experience of surfing, made possible by the breaking of waves in these spaces. This bond could equally be formed through different foci or experiences, and just as these concepts have combined to be illuminating in this thesis, the approach presents a transferrable and scalable model to be used across other areas of research; as a bold, post-colonial way of framing questions around power and influence in socio-environmental activism. In using this framework to study the empirical area of surfing, I have expanded the remit of both epistemic communities and policy mobilities, contributing to the literature through this demonstration of their effective application in non-conventional knowledge and policy realms.

In addition to its theoretical application and its relevance to contemporary geographical debates, this thesis presents a significant contribution to the growing, inter disciplinary field

of surfing studies. The methodological and theoretical approach taken has ensured an opportune analysis of the actors and agency of surfbreak protection.

This thesis has highlighted how, with confidence and a willingness to take risks, the enviro-surf community are generating real impact. From Surfrider Australia to WSRs, to the GCWSR, all have involved some form of "just go for it", an attitude of do now and ask later. Without any guarantees of success, or indeed without a full understanding of what it is that is being pursued, actors have claimed authority over a strategy and effectively persuaded those in their networks and communities to support them and their work. They have 'imagineered' (after Routledge et al 2007) solutions for the preservation and protection of the surfing environment and experience as they see it. These risks into the unknown can be viewed as an alternate form of hedonism, different from a search for undiscovered spots or the paddling into an unpredictable wave, but with parallels. As a new area of access to potential thrills and recognition, some surfers are 'busting down' different doors (After Bartholomew & Baker 1996), into activism, conservation, and politics.[3] The victories sought are reflective of new a measure of 'stoke', and exemplify the male bonding and exclusivity that has been present in surfing's modern history.

Using policy mobilities concepts to interpret WSRs as a relational policy, it has been possible to identify and analyse the assemblages, movement and mutation that are integral to its territorialisation. Supported and forwarded by the epistemic enviro-surf community, the WSR is a highly mobile, transferable and translatable policy option. The variation between different sites, and the willingness to compromise, as demonstrated in the Gold Coast, is indicative of their malleability and this has been important in their emplacement. Such a characteristic presents a challenge for defining exactly what a WSR means, and what it can do for an area. Indeed, communication and messaging from Save the Waves could be improved to create a better understanding of what a WSR entails, and what resources it might protect or produce. The differences between each World Surfing Reserve need not, however, be seen as a fragmentation of the goal of the policy, nor a failure to meet the aims of the

[3] 'Bustin' Down the Door' is Bartholomew's biography (Bartholomew & Baker 1996). It is also a well-known surf film that documents the rise of professional surfing in the 1970's (Gosch 2008). In the film, surfers from Australia (including Bartholomew), and South Africa travel to Hawaii where they are out of place; unwelcome and antagonistic towards local surfers and their culture. The men 'bust down' doors; the (b)orders to a potential career in surfing. The language of this film is suggestive of a violent, male, almost military/colonial approach, echoing the work of Anderson (2014) Evers (2010), and Laderman (2014). Relying on negotiation and politics, World Surfing Reserves take on a very different approach. However, in suggesting that the enviro-surf community are entering new spaces, of persuasion and policy, it can be seen that they are continuing to 'bust down' doors, but now in a white-collar fashion.

enviro-surf community. In providing a flexible, adaptable framework, support network and epistemic backing, World Surfing Reserves create opportunity for communities. It allows a degree of leverage that wouldn't have otherwise been possible, and can be interpreted at different local levels to reveal that the policy has been indigenised. For [some] surfers.

In the case of the Gold Coast, the restrictions imposed on the WSR as conditions of approval may have suggested that the label is not worth pursuing, as its function is so limited. The announcement at the Global Wave Conference that legislation is a valid prospect, now reinforces the importance of its acceptance in any form. The international and regional support has since bolstered the symbolic designation and asserted the authority of its proponents, who now stand to leapfrog local bureaucracy as their aims become incorporated into legislation on a state level. The GCWSR is not the product of just the epistemic enviro-surf community, therefore, but testament to their ability to bring together people, and to present their knowledge, beliefs, image and cause to generate epistemic obedience among decision makers who acknowledge this, and demonstrate their support of a seemingly united vision. I argue however, that the surfing community is not a unified entity, instead encompassing of a wide variety of groups and individuals who compete for and share finite wave resources. The 'surfing life' that is being protected for future generations may look very different depending on the surfer who is describing it. For example, for some, surfing involves being towed into bigger waves by jet skis, while others would vehemently oppose the machinery in the vicinity of surf breaks. Elite shortboarders favour different breaks to longboarders, and as discussed, many groups are excluded from the surfing spaces, and ongoing narratives of what a surfing life can be. The surf zone is heavily contested from both within surfing and outside of it. World Surfing Reserves present an opportunity to align these diverging opinions to a degree, as shown through the actors involved in the Local Stewardship Councils. In their current form however, the almost homogenous representation limits how far this will go, and while WSRs are a way to protect the commons, questions must be raised about whether the surf zone really is common.

Surfing and WSRs are thus inherently political, bound by privilege and power. Contrary to the popular narrative of the beach, and the waves, being open and free for all, access to these spaces, and therefore to surfing, is a privilege. The opportunity to speak for, and protect these spaces is a further privilege, and this work has demonstrated that it is white men who get to bestow this, often in a way that limits its scope to those who are like them, and who surf like them. The emergence of WSRs and their presence in coastal communities therefore

has significance for the politics of the places in which it becomes embedded, and, through its connectivity, in the broader enviro-surf and surfing communities. This thesis has shown that the epistemic enviro-surf community has established itself as an authoritative force in surfbreak protection. Who is included, and excluded, from this entity is again significant as the knowledges that are being forwarded, reinforced, and accepted as good remain in line with dominant narratives and surfing bodies; this niche is comprised overwhelmingly of white men with an abundance of social, and surfing capital.

Over the course of this study I have witnessed, and experienced to a lesser extent, this exclusion, and observed how some are beginning to address this issue while others remain uncritical of this narrow demographic. The most striking example comes from a microspace, a conference, held on the Gold Coast, in 2017. At this event, two women took to the podium to present an academic paper on the marginalisation of women in surf management boards. Shortly after introducing their work, the women were interrupted by a conference organiser who had stood up to stop them, and voice his disagreement of their chosen approach and argument. The research being presented had been conducted in line with scholarly expectations; this interruption therefore appeared to be on the grounds of gender rather than rigour. They continued, shaken but collected, to present their rather damning findings before being met with a number of dismissive questions and comments from male, and female, audience members. In contrast, at a 2019 surf centred conference in San Diego, a shift in tone was apparent, particularly when a large number of delegates participated in a workshop to discuss future collaborative research opportunities. Among some of the researchers present, there was an almost panicked sense of realisation that they had not been doing enough to critically scrutinise their work, nor the privilege and power which was integral to its production. Others meanwhile could not grasp that what the epistemic community were perpetuating was problematic, uncritically maintaining theirs was an apolitical, objective stance inclusive of all voices and positionalities. This divide is further indication of the various factions within surfing, though suggests that key (micro)spaces in the enviro-surf movement are evolving; debate is no longer restricted to white cisgender males, whose work and intentions in turn are no longer unchallenged. In sum, surfing academics are now more representative of the wider surfing population, although the epistemic enviro-surf community may not be. There has, however, been a degree of acknowledgement of a silencing, and some intention to address that silencing among enviro-surf organisations and individuals.

This acknowledgment, has, to this point however, not been reflected in practice, evidenced by the composition of the various leadership committees of the enviro-surf community (see Figures 20, 21, 23 and 49). It remains to be seen therefore, whether the welcoming of alternative voices, and people actively addressing their role in silencing them, has been politically appropriate, superficial messaging, or if such rhetoric will be developed to promote the sustainable, systemic change that is needed to support marginalised groups.

In its current form, it can be argued that the process of dedicating a World Surfing Reserve is a form of re-colonisation, as a dominant group assert themselves on an area with a lack of consultation and engagement with the people who stand to be affected by it. There is great potential however, for the recently acquired leverage of the enviro-surf community, as an epistemic entity, to utilise their networks, and momentum to raise the voices of those more commonly marginalised in coastal management. In effect, the World Surfing Reserves designation *could* be a powerful tool for the indigenisation and decolonisation of surfing spaces, promoting a more post-colonial, libertarian, open and demographic surf space. Without substantive change however, WSRs could stand to fossilise an inherently racist, misogynist surf culture in the 21st century.

How the governance structures of WSRs, and the enviro-surf communities evolve presents itself as an important avenue to be explored in future research, and now, having presented a summary of the key conclusions drawn through this work, and a discussion on its significance, this chapter turns to outline further directions for future research.

8.4 New questions of research on surf activism: limitations and future directions

The analysis undertaken through this project has enabled the set of research questions to be addressed, and has in turn created an agenda for further questions around surfing as a social movement and its creation of protected areas. Over the course of this project I have been able to follow closely the fast-paced evolution of the enviro-surf community. From the decision made at the 2015 Global Wave Conference, that the Gold Coast would become the 8th World Surfing Reserve, to the announcement at the 2020 event, the Gold Coast has been closely connected to its trajectory, contributing and drawing from the international enviro-surf community. Over this time, the expertise and authority of a number of actors has become

recognised, and the alignment of aims and resources across the community has provided momentum and results. As challenges to the surf zone and the surfing experience evolves, so too do the strategies of those who seek to protect it. I anticipate therefore that the next five years and more will continue to involve change to the enviro-surf assemblage; its actors, geography, scale and approach. This section now moves to explore some of the potential research directions that could be taken to further understandings in this niche field. To do this, I first look to the limitations of this project, before suggesting additional courses of enquiry.

The empirical, theoretical and methodological foundations of this work are sound, there are however limitations which, given further opportunity, I would address. For example, though I conducted interviews with a range of stakeholders from within and outside the surfing community, further diversification of participants would be valuable in future research in this area. In focussing on those who are involved in surf activism; the enviro-surf community and the Gold Coast local policy actors, I have contributed to the amplification of an already dominant voice within surfing, and as such, I acknowledge a lack of representation from marginalised groups within this work, reflective of the enviro-surf community and the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve. The theoretical framing of this thesis has necessitated that focus is placed on agents and agency in surfbreak protection. While this approach has continued to place the white male at its centre, it has done so critically, highlighting the processes and power dynamics at play. This has drawn attention to both the potential strengths, and problems of the work being undertaken to protect and preserve surfing spaces, and raised key questions surrounding its inclusivity. In defining the enviro-surf community as epistemic through this process, I have created space for further work in this area to develop the understandings of those who are not included, or whose agency is restricted.

A key indicator of how agency is distributed in the niche is through narratives, and as WSRs continue to develop, an important area of focus will the potential impact on the creation, manipulation and projection of surfing narratives. In turn, the disparity or alignment between discourse and practice will be of significance. As outlined above, with its limited representation, WSRs currently serve a very small niche among coastal populations, small even within the surfing population. Research into whether WSRs *can* or *will* influence narratives would therefore be enlightening and allow for the development of understandings of the (re)installation or perpetuation of codes and borders in surfing culture.

This work has established that the structure and function of the GCWSR has created space for dialogue in local politics, and gained recognition from state government. A further course of study would be to focus on the progression of legislative protection on the Gold Coast and in Noosa; whether this prospect comes to fruition, and if so, how it was determined, how it will work, and how it will scale are all important questions for surfbreak protection on the Gold Coast and in other surfing spaces globally. Should the legislation cover designated WSRs only, Californian NGO *Save the Waves* would in essence have a say in Australian domestic law-making. Such a scenario raises issues around sovereignty, and the way that this is managed will be of significance; will WSRs remain contingent on approval from an international body of experts, or will Australia recentre the surfing reserves phenomenon and take control within its borders; will Farmer perhaps be reintroduced to the WSR assemblage?

If no agreement on what this legislation will include can be reached before a change in governance (QLD state elections 21/10/20), then the opportunity may be missed should less surf sympathetic politicians be elected. This would have further consequences for the credibility of the GCWSR and those who have supported it. Among these actors, Wayne Bartholomew once more stands out as key individual as he is himself now a candidate for election in the Burleigh constituency. That he is standing for office is of itself significant and worthy of further attention. With a broader lens, the result here will have an impact on the enviro-surf community, legislative opportunities and stands as a further step in the overt politicisation of surfers and surfing spaces on the Gold Coast.

Beyond the actors, the interpretation of the WSR as a mobilised policy has presented a range of further opportunities for research, including expanding this analytical framing to other sites, and comparisons between them. The GCWSR has been presented by the city as an example of best practice, and reached this point via a somewhat unconventional approach; an approach that stands to impact other WSRs and the further mobilisation of surfbreak protection strategy. Accepted into the community on the basis on minimal disruption, the potential legislation could revoke this passive position, an outcome which would be deemed a success by some, though certainly not by others. When considering the mobilisation of a particular policy strategy, this is of note. Questions emerge around whether decision makers in other places will interpret the GCWSR as best practice, with its replication considered desirable, or whether its skirting of procedure will generate wariness around its acceptance, for fear of it taking precedent (again), thus inhibiting future territorialisation.

In addition to developing the understandings of existing WSRs, this research has provided a foundation from which questions around the future of the programme can be based. Whether, for example, *STW* will continue to grow the programme, or focus the development of its networks of people and places in different ways, and how this might affect the rhetoric of Local Stewardship Committees and the broader enviro-surf community. In line with this, what happens when the function of a reserve no longer aligns with the aims of the enviro-surf community is of interest; once designated, are WSRs a permanent label, or can this be reversed following action from the local community or Save the Waves?

A further area of interest is the geographical spread of the programme. Currently in 8 countries, there are no reserves in Africa or Asia, and research into why this is the case would be valuable; is this because local communities do not want the designation, do not have the resources or connections to gain approval, or is it not in the interests of the enviro-surf community or *Save the Waves* to venture into these spaces. Finally, research into 'failed' WSRs; communities which applied for acceptance into the programme but were not accepted would be insightful; tracing how they have moved forward without designation, and comparing results accordingly.

8.5 Conclusion

This Chapter has summarised the key arguments made in this thesis, discussed its significance, and presented a range of directions for future research. Defining the enviro-surf community as epistemic, I have demonstrated how World Surfing Reserves reflect how this community works in practice. The example of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve has been used to highlight the mobilisation of the programme, and the assemblages that are incorporated into its effective territorialisation. On the Gold Coast, significant restrictions were imposed on the reserve prior to its acceptance by decision makers, yet the WSR has impacted the area and gained support from the international enviro-surf community and state government. The risks taken to gain access to new spaces of persuasion have resulted in explicit entry into the political domain, first through policy (WSRs) and now potentially through politicians, and represent a further development in the evolution of the enviro-surf community on the Gold Coast and beyond. This presents a range of potential for future surf activism, and the development of the enviro-surf community, and their strategies and

successes stand to be an important example in leisure centred environmentalism and active policy making and moving. In answering its research questions, this thesis has generated a wide-ranging agenda for future research, including that which deals with representation, legislation, policy and range.

Utilising an innovative theoretical and methodological approach, this work has analysed the agents of surfbreak protection, their expertise, social capital and resulting agency. In doing so, I have highlighted how this niche within the surfing niche is not reflective of the wider surfing community, nor does it yet actively seek to elevate the position of those who are marginalized in surfing and coastal spaces. While the enviro-surf community is a small group within surfing, it serves to support and perpetuate a majority; the dominant identities, bodies and narratives that are produced in and around the surf zone. Until the disparity in access to these spaces is addressed, surfbreak protection will remain focussed, whether intentionally or not, on the preservation of a hegemonic subsection which is inherently sexist, racist and ableist. The WSR can therefore be acknowledged as a way to protect the surf zone and the surfing experience, though in its current form, a lack of representation means that it does so in a way that continues to serve a dominant culture within surfing. I suggest that bringing in a range of voices would strengthen the offering of the programme and enhance its understanding of the surfing space and place that it is trying to protect.

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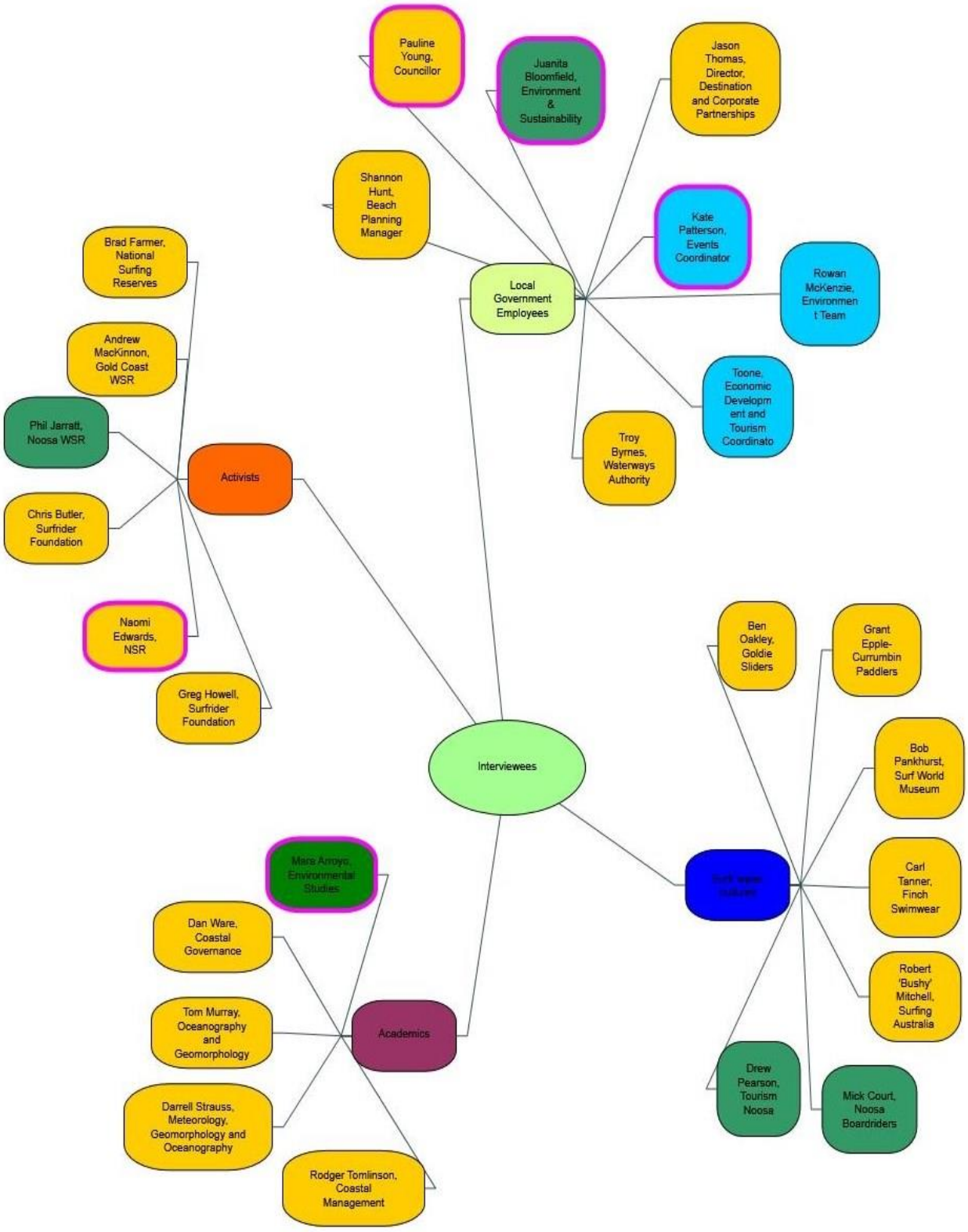
Appendices

1. Interviewees



2. Interview preparation example

Research interviewee and their role in the community- surfing or other.

Be as clear about their background as possible- use this to frame questions (including language and tone of voice.

Be concise with questioning

Keep broader research questions in mind

- Who/what is the enviro-surf community
- What are the aims of this community (protected spaces, for who, why, what?)
- What strategies are in use and how effective can this be. (Gold Coast WSR in practice.

Does interviewee have any knowledge that can contribute specifically to one or more of these areas?

E.g. would they be considered a member of the enviro-surf community/work with organisations who are. If not, what are impressions of those who would be considered/ "in"…

Have they been involved with threats to or initiatives to protect surfing spaces- e.g. artificial reefs , NSRs, WSRs. Thoughts on any of the initiatives that are relevant locally. Or aspirational and further afield.

The final section looks to the WSR, specifically the Gold Coast WSR. This is expected to be the most relevant section for the interviewees of this phase (q1. Discourse analysis. q.2= more interviews in san diego/skype)

General structure (to be adapted accordingly)

Introduce myself and structure the interview for interviewee. Purpose of the interview- talk about my PhD and state aims of talking to them. Thank them for their time and input. request permission to record using the Dictaphone. **Ask if they have any questions before we start**

Warm Up questions- these will likely be about surfing, or the water more generally. I won't plan these, but will ensure that I ease the interviewee (and myself) into the process and start the rapport building.

Background.

I think in this circumstance it is important to gain a good idea of the background of the interviewee- this includes their sporting/water background, education, profession and links to the local area, or particular surf spots as well as their role in wsr/whatever activism they are involved in.

Probe on aspects of this which are relevant/interesting…either straight away or make a note and ask a little later if more appropriate.

By now we should both be a little more relaxed, familiar with accents and the tone of the interview and this is where we'll get more specific.

Body- get into the heavier, directly relevant topics. Depending on the interviewee the order may change from the 1.2.3. outlined above. In some instances it will likely be better to start with the place specific elements.

- Who/what is the enviro-surf community
  Explore interviewees role within this, their perceptions of it, and how they feel its perceived in the wider a) community b) policy making circles.
  Have they heard of the term? What does it involve?
  Are you an expert? In what sense?

- What are the aims of this community (protected spaces, for who, why, what?)

  Aware of any threats to surfing (or whatever activity they are involved with) spaces locally?

  Aware of anything that is being done to protect them?

  If involved in any, probe on motivations for involvement, plans and aims.

What strategies are in use and how effective can this be. (Gold Coast WSR in practice)

World Surfing Reserves & National Surfing Reserves

If not directly involved, are they aware of it? If so, what do they think it is? Difference between 2?

If involved, what does it mean to them?

This is where the interview plans will vary widely. If a stakeholder such as a surfer/bodyboarder/kayaker, questions will focus on their use of the space, inclusion/exclusion and opinions of the programme. For others, will look at the development of the WSR (barriers then and now, perceptions from broader community- objections, critiques etc).

Key things to remember= focus on transfer of policy from national to world surfing reserves. Different iterations of these programmes within the gold coast context and broader programme.

Wrap up

Revisit any points that are unclear/ need developing

Ask if there's anything else that they feel I should know

Any questions for me?

Anyone else in their network who might be interested in talking to me?

Close

Reiterate the purpose of interview and recording

Offer to send a copy of the interview transcript.

3. Surf Survey: World Surfing Reserves

The Surf Study is part of a project undertaken by Cardiff University (UK) to explore surfers' attitudes towards World Surfing Reserves.

About You:

1. Please indicate your age group:

☐ Under 15 ☐ 15-19
☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54
☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+

2. Please indicate your gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐ Prefer Not to Say

3. Do you consider yourself a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender (LGBT) community?

☐ Yes ☐No ☐ Prefer Not to Say

4. Please indicate your ethnic origin:

☐ White ☐ Black/Black British
☐ Asian/Asian British ☐ Chinese
☐ Mixed ☐ Other

Participation in surfing: We would like to know about your surfing biography:

5. How long have you participated in surfing?

☐ Less than 1 yr. ☐ 1-3 years
☐ 4-5 years ☐ 6-10 years
☐ 11-15 years ☐ 16+ years

6. How would you describe your level of surfing ability?

☐ Beginner ☐ Intermediate
☐ Advanced ☐ Other

7. What types of surfing activity do you participate in? [tick as many as you like]

☐ Body surfing ☐ Bodyboarding
☐ Shortboarding ☐ Longboarding
☐ Stand Up Surf ☐ Sit on Top
☐ Kayak Surfing ☐ Other

8. Why do you participate in Surfing?

☐ Enjoyment ☐ Health benefits
☐ Camaraderie ☐ Interaction with waves/sea/water
Kudos
Female ☐ Escapism Risk Female
Other- Money/Employment
_____

☐ Other ☐ Prefer Not to Say

Please elaborate on why you participate in surfing:

_____
_____
_____

9. What is your local surf beach?

_____

10. Do any of the following issues affect your local break?

☐ Overcrowding
☐ Localism
☐ Conflict

☐ Environmental degradation (e.g. dredging/development)
☐ Poor water quality
☐ Access restrictions
☐ Other_____

Please elaborate on your answer

_____

11. Where is your favourite place to surf, and why?

_____

_____

12. Have you been involved with any surfing charities/local projects to protect your beach? If yes, please provide a brief description.

_____

_____

13. Have you heard of World Surfing Reserves?
Yes No [please go to qn 23 i.e. bonus questions]

14. Have you visited a World Surfing Reserve
Yes No

Which one? _____

15. In your own words, what do you think that designation as a WSR means for an area?

_____

_____

16. Do you think that WSR designation will have an impact on the surfing culture in its area?

Yes, No

Please explain your answer

17. Do you think that WSR designation will impact the local economy in its area?
Yes No

Please explain your answer

18. Do you think that WSR designation will have an environmental impact on the local area?
Yes, No

Please explain your answer

19. How do you think that other groups (not surfers) might view the designation of an area as a WSR?

_____

_____

21. Any other comments?

_____

_____

Bonus Question

What is your best surf story/most memorable surf?

_____

_____

Many thanks for taking the time to participate in this study. If you would not mind being contacted in future for further information, please leave your details below.

Name

Email

Phone

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

4. Alternative surfbreak protection mechanisms

Programme	Location(s)	Summary
National Surfing Reserves	20 across Australia; New South Wales (11), Queensland (4), Western Australia (3), South Australia (3) Victoria(1)	"NSRs are 'iconic' places of intrinsic environmental, heritage, sporting and cultural value to a nation". Criteria for designation; surf quality, site considered "sacred", long term use by local and national surfing community. Also operate a regional surfing reserve programme.
New Zealand Coastal Polic Statement 2010 New Zealand Regional planning authorities	26 surf breaks of national significance throughout New Zealand; 17 discrete sites; Northland (2), Waikato (4), Taranaki (2), Gisborn (3), Canterbury (2), Otago(4)	"The world's preeminent example of a statutory approach to surf resource management NZCPS "provides a definition for 'surf break', a schedule of surf breaks of 'national significance', and policies and objectives that directly reference surf breaks and the need for their protection" (Orchard 2017 p105). Regional variation in approach to including policy in planning guideline; inconsistent in its effectiveness.
National Register of Histor Places United States National Par Service	USA wide program. Over 90,000 individual listings h First surfing specific registered place; Malibu, February 2018	NRHP is a list of places deemed worthy of protection. "Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resource". The listing of the Malibu surfing area, "serves as a qualifying step for additional state protections based on historical significance."
Ley de Rompientes "Law of the Breakers" Peruvian legislative authority	All quality surfing resources in Peru. (surfing areas qualify for protection via a complex application process. Huanchaco (WSR) protected 20.04.2016.	Signed into law on December 8th 2013 by then president Ollanta Humala, the law of the breakers makes Peru the first country to provide legal protection to its quality surfing resources. Once a location is recognised as a "quality" surfing resource, it is protected by the countrys Navy, from development, and have "been designated as "inalienable property of the state" in order to remain available for surfing. (Gray in Ball p 385 2015) This legislation sets a precedent for comprehensive protection, though little information is available in regard to the number of communities who have successfully gained such a status.

5. Surf related charitable organisations

Organisation	Founded	Sector	Location
Surfrider Foundation USA	1984	Environmental	USA
WSL Pure	2016	Environmental	International
Waves of Wellness		Health	Australia
The Surf Project	2013	Religion	Ireland
Surfing the Nations	1997	Humanitarian	Hawaii/ International
Surf Action	2009	Health	UK
Surf Aid	2000	Humanitarian	Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia
Surfers Not Street Children	2012	Humanitarian	UK,South Africa, Mozambique
Sustainable Surf	2011	Environmental	USA
Surfers Healing	1996	Health	USA
The Wave Project	2010	Health	UK
Save the Waves	2001	Environmental	USA/ International
Surfers Against Sewage	1990	Environmental	UK
Surfrider Foundation Europe	1990	Environmental	Europe
Waves for Water	2009	Humanitarian	International
Waves for Change	2009	Health	South Africa
Positive Vibe Warriors		Youth	USA
Walking on Water	2012	Health	USA
WAVES International	2007	Social	International
Kind Surf	2012	Health	Spain/France
Surfing Medicine International	2011	Medical Association	International
Wildcoast	2000	Environmental	USA/Mexico/Cuba
1%for the Planet	2002	Environmental	International
Surfers Against Suicide	2013	Health	Australia/USA
Reef Check	1997	Environmental	International
Sea Shepherd Conservation Society	1977	Environmental	International
Surfers For Cetaceans	2004	Environmental	Australia/International
Mauli Ola	2007	Health	USA
Sea of Clouds	2018	Historical/Cultural	USA
DG COSTERA		Environmental	Peru
5 Gyres Institute	2008	Environmental	USA/International
Waves of Freedom		Social	International
Sustainable Coastlines Hawaii	2010	Environmental	Hawaii
Parley for the Ocean	2012	Environmental	USA
Salvem o Surf	2002	Environmental	Portugal
Conservation International	1987	Environmental	International
Hazla por to ola	2015	Environmental	Peru
Ocean Champions	2004	Political	USA