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DOES THE NEW TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATED
WITH SURFING HAVE AN EFFECT ON
SURFERS IDENTITIES?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABSTRACT	ii

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction	Page 1
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CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Identity	Page 3
2.2 Sports Identities	Page 4
2.3 Identity in Extreme Sports	Page 6
2.4 Identity in Surfing	Page 7
2.5 Technology in Sport	Page 8
2.6 Technology in Surfing	Page 11

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Introduction	Page 12
3.2 Choosing a Qualitative Approach	Page 12
3.3 Interviews	Page 14
3.4 Sampling and Access	Page 15
3.5 Data Collection	Page 16
3.6 Data Analysis	Page 17
3.7 Representation Issues	Page 18

3.8 Judgement Criteria Page 18

3.9 Ethical issues Page 19

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

4.1 Identity and Being a Surfer Page 21

4.2 Surfing Cannot be Simulated Page 22

4.3 Technology as a Separate Activity Page 24

4.4 Technology in Surfing Good or Bad? Page 27

4.5 Technologies increasing Participation? Page 29

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

5.1 Opportunities Page 31

5.2 Surfing Cannot be Simulated Page 32

5.3 Surfers Reactions to Technology Page 34

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Conclusion Page 37

6.2 Limitations Page 37

6.3 Recommendations Page 37

References

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	Informed Consent Letter
APPENDIX B	Informed Consent Form
APPENDIX C	Interview guide
APPENDIX D	Example of Interview Transcripts
APPENDIX E	Example of Research notes

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the following study was to develop an insight into the way surfers react to the new simulators associated with surfing. Would it have an affect on their identities? Would they engage or disengage with it? The literature review was used to gain an insight into literature surrounding this topic area, then through interviews and an ethnography with myself as a dedicated surfer, data was collected. The findings were collected by spending a length of time submerged within the subculture. Research notes and interview transcripts were analysed and used to create the final findings. Literature was then applied to the findings to develop a discussion.

It was seen that surfers disengage with the technologies as they feel it is completely different to surfing itself. It was seen that surfing is more than just a sport, it is about the lifestyle. This desirable lifestyle has nothing rational or calculated. It is about self expression, road trips and being in the ocean experiencing 'riding' different waves and the 'energy' whilst doing this. However, different generations of surfers had different reactions to the technology.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Surfing is well known for its idyllic lifestyle, the idea of being at one with nature, its laid back style and 'cool' appearance. As a surfer myself this is what is appealing and key to participating. I enjoy searching for waves, the feeling you get when you successfully 'ride' the board and drop down the face of the wave as it comes crashing down beside you. Personally, there is no better feeling than being in that moment in time.

This is echoed by Brown and Ford (2006, p 149) 'the core of surfing has always been the embodied, raw and immediate glide or slide along a wave of energy passing through the water.'

However, there has been a recent development of surfing simulators. Whilst at a swimming pool I came across one of these simulators and it made me reflect on my experiences as a surfer. At first I thought it would be quite fun to have a go, but after standing back and watching it I felt a bit of annoyance. This wasn't surfing. It was promoting surfing as something it had never been to me.

I decided to carry out this study and see what other surfers thought of this equipment. If this equipment became popular, could it form new surfer identities? Could it persuade more people to get into the 'real' surfing and form new identities that way? How would the surfers relate to this if it occurred and would they use the technology?

Within sociology, identities have been a topic of interest. Identity is interesting as they are complex and ever changing. There are many different identities and sporting identities are of interest as sport can provide an environment for these identities to be expressed, change and develop (Tomlinson, 2007). Donnelly and Young (1988) developed a model that suggested the stages that people go through in sports participation to construct and confirm a particular identity to be accepted within that sport's subculture.

Within surfing, there are many different surfers and subcultures. The identity they have can depend on the board they have, how dedicated they are and why they participate. If surfers are going to engage with the technology how will they be seen within the subculture and if other people are now using the technology is a new identity going to be formed?

There is no previous research in this area of surfing and this study aims to answer some of these questions and see if these simulators are in fact going to have an affect on surfer's identities or the possibility of developing a new one.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Identity

Researchers have recently begun to take an interest in people's identities. Identity can be used to describe the beliefs shared by a group of people that can demonstrate both their likeness and differences (Macguire et al. (2002) in Harris and Parker 2009).

Woodward (1997) gives a similar definition suggesting that identity is marked by both similarity of people like us and by difference by people who are not. It is suggested that Identity is demonstrated to others by using symbols.

Similarly, Harris and Parker (2009, p.1) suggest that social identity is 'a term used to denote a variety of ideas regarding the relationship between individuals and the societies in which they live, the process of identification which take place via everyday interaction. It is neither fixed nor static, but fluid and ever changing.'

These definitions demonstrate that Identity is ever changing and can be confirmed by being alike or different from others.

Identities can be demonstrated and confirmed in a number of ways. Identity is the idea that you can be recognised as part of a group or subculture by a member of another group. Being able to recognise this is vital to enable a self-identity to develop. Being judged wrongly and being misinterpreted can cause damage to a persons self identity (Jarvie, 2006).

Bourdieu suggested that the bodies can be used as a way to demonstrate and give other people information about you. He uses the idea that the social class someone is in can be identified by simply looking at someone's 'habitus' (Jarvie, 2006). For example, the working class male body is seen as a machine, they have a different habitus to a middle class male. The class can be identified by the way someone walks and their body shape. Similarly in sport, a gymnast is easily recognisable from a rugby player even in the same clothes and without speaking to them, their habitus tells us what type of sportsperson they are.

A way of Identity being reinforced and therefore being recognised by others is done in symbols such as clothing, the people we choose to associate with, and our body habitus.

2.2 Sports Identities

A subculture is a group within society who share collective meanings and values. (Tomlinson, 2007) These can be symbolised by such things as behaviours, language or even a simple item of clothing. Sporting subcultures are particularly interesting as sport is often used as a way of expressing both personal and cultural identity. (Tomlinson, 2007)

Donnelly and Young (1988) suggest that by using model of 'Construction and Confirmation of Identity' that sport provides a place where identities are able to be constructed and also confirmed. Similarly, Macguire et al. (2002, in Harris and Parker) state that the sporting environment is a place where identity can be reinforced.

Donnelly and Young (1988) developed a three stage identity construction model. Their study was ethnographic and focused on two different sub cultures. It focused on Rock climbers and Rugby players. They found that there were four stages that individually contribute a significant part in the construction of identities, and then confirming it once accepted into the group. These four stages are:

Presocialisation. This is the knowledge that participant may have gained prior to the sport. It is made up of stereotypical views and ideas,

Selection and Recruitment. This occurs when the participant is actually engaged in the sport. It depends on life chances and opportunities. In relation to extreme sports, people who live in an area that has an abundance of snow are more likely to participate in snowboarding and people living on the coast will be more likely to participate in surfing. This is because these are easily accessible and the environment and the equipment available are suited to specific sports. Brown and Ford (2006) discuss how young people who live near a beach or surf break, have surfing easily accessible and are more likely to be socialised into surfing from a young age as it is seen as the natural thing to do.

The socialisation stage is split into four critical elements to construct the identity. This is the stage where the appropriate identity construction begins. The first element is the accuracy of pre socialisation. This is how accurate their stereotypical views were at the start. This is not always applicable to all sports as in the study a climber

suggested that every climber has to experience their own first climb. Climbers are unable to make assumptions about their first climb it is something that has to be experienced first hand (Donnelly and Young, 1988).

The second element is impression management. This is where the participant has to have a certain amount of control over their feelings. They do not want to let other members of the sub culture know their true feelings as this may jeopardise their chances of being accepted. This is often seen in extreme sports and Donnelly and Young (1988) suggest within this study that the climbers cannot demonstrate their fear to other climbers as they will not be accepted if they demonstrate a weakness within the first couple of climbs.

The third element of socialisation is Anticipatory Socialisation. This is where participants will demonstrate and perform roles that they think are necessary to show the other members of the sub culture that they are not novice or as Donnelly and Young describe them 'Rookies.' Similarly in most sports this is seen by wearing specific equipment all the time. This can be seen in surfers. Brown and Ford (2006) discuss the development of a 'pseudo – surfer' this is someone who fashion is more important than the sport itself. In reality, the true 'hardcore' surfers rarely engage with the surfing brands but for the 'pseudo-surfer' they think that this demonstrates their commitment and identity as a surfer.

The final part of this stage is resolving contradictions. Donnelly and Young suggest that this is the most important stage in constructing the identity in the socialisation stage. This involves the participant accepting the contradictions that the sport may have. For example, in university sports especially there is a lot of emphasis on consuming large amounts of alcohol after a game, initiations where the idea is to get the new members as drunk as possible and socials where the general aim is to get as drunk as possible. This could be seen as contradictory as the idea of being a sports person is that you are fit and healthy. The participant needs to learn to live with and be a part of these contradictions in order to be accepted.

The fourth part of Donnelly and Young's (1988) model of identity construction is the Confirmation of Identity. They suggest that this is an ongoing process and can occur immediately or gradually. The faster and better the socialisation stage happens then the quicker this can occur.

It is clear to see from Donnelly and Young's (1988) model that the construction and confirmation of identities within a sporting environment is a complex and ever changing thing. More research has been taking place into sporting identities.

Jarvie (2006) states that "Sporting identity is relational and differences are established by symbolic marking in and around sport. Sport contributes to both the social and symbolic processes involved with the forging of identities." (p284)

Sport is an environment and part of society that can demonstrate the construction and confirmation of identities.

"Sport simply reflects the changes that have accompanied the age of identity and in this sense identity in sport refers to a period or phase in history." (Jarvie, pg 284)

Researchers are beginning to take an interest into extreme sports and the identities constructed within them. These sports are becoming more popular because of the lifestyle that they portray.

2.3 Identity in Extreme Sports

Extreme sports such as snowboarding, skateboarding and surfing are becoming more popular. They are seen as 'lifestyle' sports. The sport becomes part of the participant's life. The clothes they wear and the subculture they identify with have an impact on identifying with that sport and confirming the identity of being a 'surfer' or 'skateboarder.' In a study into the skateboarding culture Beal (1999) stated that the skateboarders that were being studied referred to themselves as a 'skater' and spoke of the sport as 'skating'. It was also found that the attraction of the sport was the idea that their self expression could be used in ways that other sports don't allow. Each skateboarder will have a unique style. They can be creative and be credited for it unlike other more controlled sports.

It is seen that this is similar to a lot of extreme sports. It is the lifestyle that encourages the participants, the idea that it is not just about competing and having correct technique it is about being individual but at the same time being able to identify with others in that culture.

Wheaton (2000) stated that with the emergence of these new individual lifestyle sports, consumers of all ages and sex seek a certain desirable lifestyle. Midol (1993, in Wheaton (2000), p256) suggested that

'When a sociologically circumscribed group has no other aim in life apart from to live in a world of waves and snow, when an entire life is devoted to one moment of ecstasy, it is time to consider the most intimate ways by which human beings build their own cultural landmarks and make them meaningful.'

Wheaton's study examined the meanings, experiences and pleasures of people within the windsurfing subculture, how they create identities and challenge the belief that 'image is everything'. She states that participation within that lifestyle is displayed in clothes, speech and other symbols but she suggests that the dedicated windsurfers are simply looking for the self expression and freedom in their life.

Brown and Ford (2006) also demonstrate this in their book on surfing. They talk about different identities within the sub culture, different identities depend on how dedication, the language the surfers use and the clothes that they wear. They talk of 'soul surfers' who similarly to Wheaton's (2000) study they are in it for the self expression and freedom of being at one with the ocean.

2.4 Identity in Surfing.

A subculture is a group within society who share collective meanings and values. (Tomlinson, 2007) These can be symbolised by such things as behaviours, language or even a simple item of clothing. Sporting subcultures are particularly interesting as sport is often used as a way of expressing both personal and cultural identity. (Tomlinson, 2007)

Brown and Ford (2006) examine the surfer image and identity and also the identities within the subculture. They state that the surfing culture is not just a matter of surfing, it is a lifestyle and it can be expressed in ways such as language, clothing and musical taste. It is stated that there has been a development of the 'pseudo' surfer. This is someone who is more interested in looking like a surfer through fashion than actually participating in the surfing activity. The make of clothes surfers wear can demonstrate what type of surfer they are to other surfers. Dress style and

fashion is often secondary to the action of wave riding for the majority of surfers. (Brown and Ford, 2006)

Within the surf culture there are many different identities that can be constructed. It is seen that depending on the level of commitment and personal aspiration someone has, affects the type of surfing identity they develop.

Within surfing, the effect of risk taking is seen to have an effect on a surfer's identity and how they are perceived by other members of the sub culture. Stranger (1999) conducted an ethnographic study on Australian surfers. Through spending time submerged in the culture and being a surfer himself he was able to find that surfers enjoy surfing for the 'thrill'. The feeling of successfully riding on a huge wave is what makes surfers want to continue to seek bigger and faster waves. More risk is involved in catching bigger waves and Booth (2004) states that when riding the big waves, surfers demonstrate elements of skill and strength, endurance and most of all, courage. It was also found that surfers who used equipment such as jet skis to aid them taking off on a wave, even though the waves were much bigger than the average surf break these surfers were less respected and labelled as 'cheats.' The Jet Ski was aiding them to avoid the two most dangerous part of a 'ride'. The other side of the argument is that in fact the jet skis are helping surfers to increase performance and helping them to catch more waves in a session. These surfers have a different identity to the surfers who use a board to get out to the 25-30ft waves and risk more when they take off without any help from extra equipment. This identity is more respected by other members of the subculture as it is much more 'extreme.'

Interestingly, the surfers that use technology other than a board are seen as having a different identity to the surfers who do not.

2.5 Technology in Sport

Researchers are beginning to take an interest in technology advancements in sport. It is seen that technology can have a large impact on an athlete's identity. Butryn and Masucci (2003) conducted a study into Lance Armstrong's journey through his athletic career. They 'interrogate his ongoing process of cyborgification' (p.125). They suggest that the bicycle has always been a piece of equipment that has had

lots of developments made by technology. However, they state the 'cyborgification has moved well beyond the bike to the body itself' (p.129). It was found that Armstrong saw himself as a piece of equipment to constantly be measured and altered. This had an affect on his identity. Armstrong developed a relationship with his body and the technology that was used to maintain and heal it. He suggests that aspects of his life that he had never had to calculate before became mathematical, such as eating. Through these processes he had to go through, he viewed his body both 'subjectively and objectively' (p.130) and saw it as something that had to be monitored and highly disciplined. When Armstrong developed cancer it was suggested that because of the way he had always had high levels of discipline in his life and constant technology advancements, the treatment he received he approached differently to others, eventually leading him to recover from the disease. He saw his identity as 'a conglomeration of chemicals to be monitored, and again tweaked' (p.132). To conclude the article Butryn and Masucci (2003) suggest that Armstrong's experiences are just a 'paradigmatic example of the transgressive, postmodern self and the tenuous state of agency in contemporary technocultures.' (p132) They suggest that sports fans have had to come to terms with the fact that elite performances are aided by technology and the more technology develops, the more they have to accept that that's the way it is. This study has shown that technology can have a dramatic impact on someone's self identity. However, because of the way Armstrong had worked with it through his career, when his identity was damaged by an illness he was able to fight his way through it and work well with the technology helping him.

Another similar paper that on 'cyborg identities' was also conducted by Butryn (2003). This study similarly examines the ways athletes react and approach technology. It is suggested that humans should now be known as 'post humans' or 'cyborgs' (p.17) due to the idea that it is impossible to avoid certain technological advancements. Butryn (2000, 2002, in Butryn 2003, p.24) suggests that there are five types of technologies. The first type of technology identified is 'self (physical and psychological) technologies', it is suggested that these are the most disrupting type due to the idea that they can alter the athletes physical and psychological self. A key example of this type of technology is drugs.

The second type of technology examined is 'landscape technologies.' As suggested by the name these are used to describe the environment that the athlete participates/competes in. An example of this is the new sports complexes being built. In relation to surfing this can be seen with the development of a surf simulator, that provides a constant artificial wave.

'Implement technologies' are the third technology suggested. These include the instruments and equipment used. Booth (2004) study into surfers demonstrated that jet skis were rejected by other surfers. Jet skis can be seen an example of an implement technology. They are used to aid surfers performance, by enhancing their ability to reach the bigger waves.

The fourth technology is 'rehabilitative technologies' these are used by injured athletes to speed up recovery.

The fifth and final technology Butryn (2000,2002 in Butryn 2003, p.25) suggests is 'movement/evaluative technologies'. These are evident in most sports as they are the equipment used to measure athletes' performance and allow them to improve.

Butryn (2003) suggests that even the most subtle technology advancements have the ability to cause a reshaping of society. This can be seen as being a negative as Butryn (2003) also states that 'advancements in protective technology have led to incidences of chronic, lifelong injuries.' Although unintentional, it is seen that advancements in technology are not necessarily a positive. Through interviewing athletes this point is also demonstrated in various instances. One athlete states that he would prefer to train without the technology as would feel greater reward once he had succeeded. The athletes seemed reluctant to approach and intervene with the technologies when they became the 'driving force of the sport.' (p.28)

It can be seen that technology can have a lot of meaning and effect athlete's identities. Brown and Ford (2006) suggest that surfboards in surfing have a lot of meaning to surfers. They suggest that the type of board, the size of the board, who made it and how they ride it all have a significant impact on how they are seen by others. 'As surfboards are developed, new identities can be forged from interaction with them' (p.136).

2.6 Technology in Surfing

Previous research has shown that constructing an identity is a process. Donnelly and Young's (1988) model can be used to illustrate processes that athletes can go through to construct an athletic identity in a particular sport.

Extreme sports have been examined and found that the lifestyle that comes with them have a lot to do with the participants identity as well as how they approach the sport. The board they have, the waves they choose, and even the board maker can all have an impact on how they are related to by people both in and out of the subculture. Studies conducted by Butryn and Masucci (2003) and Butryn (2003) demonstrate that technology has an affect on a participants identity. Some reject it and some embrace it but everyone has a different reaction to it. In relation to surfing it has been shown that even a development of a jet ski to enable surfers to reach bigger waves can be rejected as it isn't seen as dangerous enough. 'Surfing culture bestows the greatest prestige and honours on big wave riders, those who risk life and limb in violent masses of water that break with ferocious intent' (Booth, 2004,p 94). Similarly, Brown and Ford (2006, p.69) state that 'Rather than seeking to articulate contradictions in the advanced capitalist system, surfing culture primarily revolved around the thrilling, embodied practice of wave riding itself.'

Butryn (2003, p, 19) stated that 'there has been little attempt on the part of sport sociologists to investigate athletes' interactions with and perceptions of technology.' The idea of this research is to see the impact that recent technological advancements in relation to the surf culture are affecting surfer's identities. The technology being examined will be artificial wave simulators and land based board activities. Will surfers reject the equipment as it is not seen as dangerous enough or will they engage with it and see it simply as a tool to help their performance?

No other research has identified these technologies and conducted research into the effect they have on surfer's identities.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to gain an insight into and better understand how the new technologies based on surfing are affecting surfer's identities.

A paradigm is a set of lenses through which we see society. 'A paradigm has come to mean a set of overarching and interconnected assumptions about the nature of society' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p 4).

The paradigm I will be using throughout this study is a qualitative, interpretive view. This is the idea that nothing is ever real or true. It always has to go through the researcher as the tool. Through using ethnography and interviews I feel I have been able to demonstrate the findings as real as possible. Mason, (2002, p64) suggests that 'using qualitative interviews means you should have an epistemological position which allows that a legitimate or meaningful way to generate data on these ontological properties is to talk interactively with people, ask questions, listen to them, analyse their language'

3.2 Choosing a qualitative approach.

My research will be carried out by using a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative approach, as stated by Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p.2) 'Qualitative research generally examines people's words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants.' The aim of my study is to gain an insight into the ideas and opinions of surfers towards technology within the sport. Quantitative research would not give me enough in depth detail to analyse the data and achieve the aim of my study. In my study I am looking at identities and how these are formed and demonstrated, this is not something that can be measured or calculated.

Due to the aims of my study I have chosen to use ethnography and interviews to get the most truth in my findings. Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 69) state that when conducting an ethnography, 'the task is one of listening hard and keenly observing what is going on among people in a given situation to organisation or culture in an effort to more deeply understand it and them.' The reason I chose ethnography as

the most appropriate method is because I felt that I needed to observe surfers in the environment and observe the way the technology was being used and by whom. As a surfer I am already submerged within the subculture and it forms a major part of my identity. This meant that I was able to have conversations with other surfers about what they thought and how they approached the technology. This is similar to Wheaton (2002) study into female windsurfers. It is stated that being an 'active windsurfer, not one of the spectator beach babes became central to the theoretical and methodological development of the research' (p241). I was already submerged within the subculture and intended on continuing to be, similar to Wheaton this was vital in order for me to get the most of the research.

During the research period which was during the summer of 2009 to present, I chose to conduct two semi structured, in depth interviews and I chose to do these with the younger generation of surfers. Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p 78) suggest that 'In the field, it is sometimes possible to arrange interviews with people whom the researcher believes may add to her or his understanding of the phenomenon being studied.' Conducting Qualitative interviews can be used alongside other methods if the researcher wants to add depth and meaning. (Mason, 2002) I felt these were important as through observation and spending time within the subculture and asking questions to various surfers, I needed to gain more of an insight and understand more how surfers are approaching the technologies. The time frame allowed resulted in my choice of interviewees. Within this time I was able to conduct a small number of in depth interviews. The interviewees chosen were the most open minded about the technology. Although different ideas, the older generation didn't seem very interested in talking about it and associating with it. This is what Mason (2002, p 122) describes as 'Strategic sampling.' I chose these two participants as I felt that I could represent the younger generation and illuminate their opinions and ideas. I felt that I could use these two interviewees in order to investigate the research question properly and create some true representative findings. The research design had to be emergent as I could not fully plan for how my research was going to go. I had to be able to adapt as I was unable to anticipate where the research was going to lead me. I had originally planned to get data just using ethnography and observation. However, I decided to conduct interviews as the research progressed as I felt it was important to interview these two participants. I felt it would enable me to get a deeper

understanding of their thoughts into and how the technologies are perceived through different eyes. I also chose to conduct these interviews as it gave upcoming surfers a chance to say what they felt. They are the future generation of surfers and through interviewing them it allowed me to see how they see the technology compared to older generations. The research question asks how it is affecting surfer's identities and these are the surfers who's identities are most likely to change through using it. These surfers have grown up with technology and have a different approach to it than older surfers. These seemed the best surfers to interview in relation to my research question and the method of using interviews and an ethnography were the most appropriate to enable me to get what I wanted to out of the research project.

3.3 Interviews

Before the interviews were conducted I had to construct a participant cover letter (Appendix A), an informed consent form (Appendix B) and an interview guide (Appendix C). The participants signed the informed consent form and received the letter before the interview began. The interview guide consisted of questions and sub questions under each heading. These questions were formed using my literature review to pick out key points that I thought necessary to get an insight into their views on the technology and their identity as a surfer. To begin with the questions were very open and about the participants' past surfing experiences, these were to build rapport and to get the participants used to being interviewed and in the mind set of discussing surfing. The interview guide had to be easily adaptable as the interviewee could talk freely and often answered questions before they were asked. The guide however did have a rough guide of topics to cover in a certain order. This was to make sure that the interview covered all the areas that I felt important to discuss in order to understand their opinions. Mason (2002, p63) suggests interviews are often good to use in qualitative research as the 'ontological position suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences are meaningful properties of the social reality which your research questions are designed to explore.' The aim of my research question is to understand and explore surfer's interpretations and experiences of surf simulators and similar technologies. Mason (2002, p 83) also suggests that qualitative interviewing is considered to be

the most efficient way of getting data on what 'researchers see as the central ontological components of social reality.'

3.4 Sampling and Access

Mason (2002, p 124) states that through sampling, you should be able to 'cover a relative range of contexts and phenomena, which will enable you to make strategic and possibly cross contextual comparisons, and hence build a well founded argument.' I selected the two interview participants as I wanted to compare their ideas and felt that they would enable me to construct an answer to my research question. The other ethnography participants observed and included in my field notes were sampled using maximum variation sampling. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) suggest that this is often the most beneficial strategy to use. This involves the researcher selecting participants that will show the greatest amount of difference in the results. Therefore, this demonstrates the largest range of views within the area of study. Within my study this is important as the aim of my study is to gather information that represents surfer's viewpoints. By observing and talking to a variety of surfers of a range of ages and sex enables me to gain an insight into opinions from all angles rather than just generalising.

Being a surfer myself I am already submerged within the subculture. This means that through contacts and friends I am able to easily access various types of surfers. I was able to look at possible interviewees and the final sample consisted of two surfers with very different experience levels and experiences within surfing.

Participant one (Holly):

Participant one is a 21 year old female who graduated from a British University with a sports related degree. She is going on to do a masters course and has a background in a variety of sports. She has been surfing for a few years and still refers to herself as a novice. She lives an hour and a half from any good surf breaks but makes the journey when possible.

Participant two (Charlie):

Participant two is a 21 year old male who has been sponsored since the age of 16. He has travelled all over the world surfing some of the worlds best surf breaks with a group of male surfers, meeting a lot of professionals on his way. He spent a number of years in Ireland as a surf instructor and is intending to go back. His whole life revolves around surfing and he is constantly saving to go on his next surf trip around the world.

My relationship to the participants:

My relationship to participant one is as follows, I was at school with participant one from the age of 4-16. We remain good friends and are associated in the same subculture. When possible we go surfing together and have attended surf festivals together. We are both keen surfers and have similar interests within the culture. I chose her as an interviewee as I feel it is important to have a representation of the younger generation of surfers and as important to have a female representation. Similarly, I wanted to understand the views of someone who has to have dedication in finding surf and as a result having to travel to participate. I thought it would be interesting to see how a novice surfer approached the technology. My relationship to participant two is that I was at secondary school with him but he went on to travel the world after, whilst I stayed in education. We keep in touch and share similar interests in surfing. I wanted to interview him as he is one of the surfers who live and breathe surfing. He has tried out some of the technologies and thought it would be interesting to see how a serious surfer, who is submerged in a subculture of a variety of ages and surfing abilities, approached the technology and if he felt it affected his identity.

The interviewees have been given pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity throughout the study.

3.5 Data Collection

The participants were contacted in January by telephone and email. An appointment was then made for later on in the month to conduct a one on one interview. The interviews took place in a relaxed, comfortable environment for the interviewees.

Participant one was interviewed in their living room. Participant two was interviewed in my own living room at his request. Interviewees were given a cover letter on the study and reasons for conducting it. They were also asked to fill in and sign an informed consent form before the interview began. The interviews lasted approximately three quarters of an hour each. Mason (2002, p 67) states that interviewers need to be able to create an interview that 'feels like a conversation with purpose.' Maykut and Morehouse (1994) state that most in depth interviews should last between an hour and a half to two hours. This is so that the interviewer can gain trust and build rapport. However, as the participants were already familiar with myself as the interviewer as a member of the same subculture, it was easier to build rapport and get truthful opinions out of the interviewees. Therefore the interviews are shorter (about forty five minutes long), than if the participants had not been familiar with the interviewer. The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone and transcribed by myself shortly after.

3.6 Data Analysis

Once the interviews had been conducted they were transcribed and I was able to start analysing the data. This involved examining the interview transcripts and examining the interviewees feelings and opinions in order to gain an in depth insight into how the technology is affecting them. 'The process of qualitative data analysis takes many forms, but it is fundamentally a nonmathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people's words and actions' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p 121). This is once again an emergent process. Each time the transcripts are viewed other meanings and interpretations will be found. As well as examining each transcript carefully, I highlighted key themes and compared them (See Appendix D). Along with analysing the interview transcripts I also analysed the notes I had produced through my ethnography. As a surfer I was able to interpret meaning and analyse these from a surfer's point of view. Data analysis in qualitative studies is often an ongoing process (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). The interviews were conducted as early on in the study as possible so that I had enough time to reflect back on the interviews. Through repeatedly reflecting back I was able to pick out more key things and see things differently each time.

3.7 Representation issues

Sparkes (2002, p.9) discusses a 'crisis of representation.' This is based on the idea that we can never really speak for the other. No matter how much time is spent within the subculture, an ethnographer cannot write up a neutral report due to the process of the data having to go through the researcher and the researcher being the tool. For example, with the interviews, as they are semi structured it is hard to stay completely neutral. Without realising it I will have some sort of affect on how the interviewees answer. It is suggested by Mason (2002) that you cannot completely separate facts and contexts. It is suggested that instead, the interviewer should try to understand how social interactions work. I use the form of 'realist tales' (Sparkes,2002, p.40) to represent the participants views discovered through dialogue. I will be absent from most of the finished text and the words, actions and thoughts of the participants will make up the majority. As a surfer and a member of the subculture when it was appropriate I use my own experiences to illuminate findings. This enabled the interviews to have a more conversational feel as I was able to share in similar stories and they asked me questions. This has enabled me to understand the participant's views more than a non-surfer would. However, I will be using the realist tales to discuss the participants own experiences and reactions towards technology in surfing. With abstracts of their dialogue and theory I will use some notes I have made throughout the research project to provide explanation.

3.8 Judgement Criteria

Sparkes (2002) constructs a list of areas that may be used when passing judgement on a piece of qualitative research. The main ones that are important are credibility or trustworthiness. The data needs to be 'truthful'. I had an advantage over a non surfer as I was already accepted within the culture. I was able to demonstrate that I was a dedicated surfer and that I was genuinely interested in the sport. This allowed them to relate to me and my experiences and talk more openly, making my data more trustworthy. The credibility of my research is that I spent a prolonged period of time within the subculture before conducting the study and have been submerged in the culture whilst researching since July 2009 and is still ongoing until completing the write up in March 2010. My research would be more credible if I had a longer period

of time and more finance to travel and spend time with other surf cultures apart from the ones in Devon.

An issue with qualitative research is that every person that reads this bit of research will have a different opinion. It will affect each person differently and others may see explanations I have overlooked. I am however, confident that I have presented the data as truthfully as I feel possible and I have also highlighted areas that are often unavoidable within this research design.

3.9 Ethical issues.

Prior to conducting the study ethical clearance had to be given in order for the study to continue. In May 2009 an ethics form was completed with details of my study and then had to go through the Cardiff School of Sport Ethical Committee and full clearance was given to proceed.

Silverman (2006) suggests that there are four main goals that should be achieved in ethical research. The first one of these is that people participate voluntarily. During observation and ethnography this is sometimes unavoidable. If the participants knew they were being observed their behaviour would change and so the results wouldn't be reliable. However, surfers spoken to were informed of my study, why I was interested in their thoughts and asked if they minded me using it as data. For the interviews, participants were asked, given a cover letter and asked to fill in an informed consent form. They were given the opportunity to withdraw at any time. The second point Silverman (2006) suggests is that people's comments and behaviour remain confidential. No participant from the observation, ethnography or interviews will be named throughout the study, pseudonyms are used when needed. Full anonymity will occur and the participants were informed of this before continuing with the study. The third point from Silverman (2006) is protecting people from harm. As this was a sociological study, no physical harm would come to the participants. However, with interviews and ethnographical conversations there is always a risk of crossing an uncomfortable topic. Every effort was made for the researcher not to make the participant feel uncomfortable and the participants were informed that if they didn't want to answer a question they didn't have to. It is unrealistic to say that I

would leave the interviewees feeling the same as they did before. The questions would have made them think about things they hadn't beforehand but every effort was made to avoid any harm coming to the participants.

The final point Silverman (2006) makes is to ensure trust between the researcher and group of people under study. As a member of the subculture the trust was already a lot easier to gain than if I was a non-surfer. As the interviewees were known to me personally, they knew that should they have any queries, they were free to ask without any consequences. They were free to ask questions and withdraw at any time and knew this from the start.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1 Identity and being a surfer.

Both interviewees demonstrated that being a surfer was more than just about doing the sport. It was about being part of a lifestyle and subculture. Holly, when asked how she demonstrated that she was a surfer replied:

'.....well I have a sticker on my car.....saying Animal.' (Surf brand)

Similarly, a more experienced and dedicated surfer, Charlie, was asked if he would describe himself as a surfer and if it was a part of his identity, he replied:

'Yeah definitely, I talk like a surfer, dress like a surfer...'

Towards the end of the interview, he also states that:

'You look at a person and you either know if they're a surfer or.... You can know just by looking at them.... 'cos of their hair literally. You can ask them anything and they'll tell you.'

These are examples of the symbols that the surfers use to demonstrate their identity, using a longboard is another symbol, as Charlie suggests that:

'Every surfer I know, all my mates has a longboard, 'cos when there's no swell around that's the next best thing to do.'

The longboard is a type of skateboard designed to feel like riding a wave out of the water. By seeing someone on a longboard the participant can identify them as a surfer.

From the interviewees it is clear to see that being a surfer is demonstrated in a variety of ways, from the conversation you have with someone and the type of language they use to the type of skateboard they use. However, Holly says:

'I don't do it for other people, I just like the brand, I like the make and....I like being identified as part of it. Mainly for personal....like, reasons.'

This is interesting as although she says she does it for personal reasons, socialisation and society has a big effect on why she wants to do it for personal reasons.

Similarly, Charlie says that:

'I actually don't think it necessarily matters to look like a surfer or anything like that. Surfing's a wicked sport where you can all fit in and give it a go.....I don't think showing what you look like matters too much unless you're a quite competitive surfer and people want you to look like a surfer as well..... maybe it's important then.'

This quote demonstrates that it is possible that the level of participation can have an affect on how you portray your identity. It is suggested by this surfer that it is more important for high level surfers to dress like a surfer and use other symbols to demonstrate that they are one.

The interviewees demonstrated that they were surfers by using symbols such as Car stickers, skateboards and hair style. However, they didn't think that in the sport of surfing it was necessarily important to show you were. This can be seen that to be part of the surfing culture it is important to not look like you are trying too hard to look like a surfer and show to others that you are, It was about how you are when you're in the water and the lifestyle itself rather than how you demonstrate it to others.

4.2 Surfing cannot be simulated.

Both interviewees participated in surfing because of the lifestyle not just because of participating itself. When reminiscing about his travels, Charlie said:

'yeah, it's a lifestyle..... It actually is, like when I was out in Barley it was literally surfing in the morning, getting out and having your breakfast, egg and noodles on top, jarva tea.... It was absolutely wicked, and then you'd lie there on the beach. It literally is a lifestyle. I met so many pro's out there, and they're just lazing around and ...having a bit of a laugh and then when the swell picks back up you just run back on in.... it's a lifestyle definitely.'

It is seen that being carefree and in the sea with no worries is all part of the identity and lifestyle.

The second interviewee said that the reason they enjoyed participating in surfing was:

'It's more the lifestyle, the easy going-ness.....It's a way of life isn't it. It's just easy... your just... it's just usually the people who surf are chilled out... like enjoy certain aspects of life than other people do.'

It is seen that surfer's are at one with nature, they don't have to calculate or rationalise anything about their lives.

When the interviewees were asked if the travelling was a major part of surfing and something that they enjoyed they both has similar replies. Charlie stated:

'Big time, I mean I wouldn't have been able to tell, like I think their wicked stories, I mean I absolutely love it... I absolutely love... I think travelling is the main thing about surfing.... I have no money left but it's definitely the whole part of it.'

Travelling is seen as important as the surfing and this makes it opposed to leisure. Interestingly he then goes on to suggest that:

'If it didn't consist of travelling I don't think I'd do it actually.'

Travelling around the world finding the best surf spots is clearly the main interest of this interviewee. However, Holly who is a less dedicated, novice surfer also described travelling as being a major part of participating. When asked if she thought that travelling was a fun aspect of being a surfer her reply was:

'yeah definitely, I think that's the whole thing. Especially putting my new roof rack on... I think that's all part of it. I think it makes it more fun, you have other people to go with... but it is all the fun of the whole trip the day trip down there.... It's definitely a social with us, we're living this far away, it's definitely, I would never go down on my own. So it's definitely a social thing...all involved and goin' to have fun.'

The reason these participants choose to surf is more than just the activity itself. Charlie describes the feeling of riding a wave as 'energy.' He discusses the different waves:

'I mean each wave is different, completely different so you're going to get a different feeling off each one... I mean in Indonesia, you're above that much water, about a foot water and a six foot wave but out in North Devon you ain't. So.... Yeah definitely a different feeling wherever you go.'

Surfers see that nothing in surfing is measured and compared. Each wave has a different feel but they are in no way compared to each other.

Holly, when interviewed and asked what she enjoyed most about surfing she replied:

'um... the achievement of it all I think. Like, obviously I like the look and things, and the camping trips and everything like that but the achievement of actually, like teaching yourself and having other people help you and the achievement of standing up. It makes you wanna carry on and like try and get up again and that's what I love. Especially in the summer, the waves might not be that massive but you get to have a go on quite a few, and you're just like....whoohoo.'

For Charlie and Holly, both completely different experience levels, it seems that one of the most important things about participating is the 'energy' and feelings they get whilst on a wave and out in the sea.

Holly also states:

'I see for extreme sports, I don't think it is important at all [competitions], 'cos those types of people aren't in it for that, they're doing it for showing their kind of identity.'

Surfing for this interviewee is seen as a way of expressing their identity.

4.3 Technology as a separate activity,

The participants were asked about what they thought of the new technologies associated with surfing. These are the surf simulators that are described as a 'never ending wave with a landing cushion of water' (www.thelcswansea.com). The other technology discussed is known as brushboarding, 'a revolutionary new multi-board sport X-training activity' (www.brushboarding.co.uk).

Charlie had participated in brushboarding and Holly had heard about both activities but never been on them. Both interviewees had similar reactions to the technology. Holly suggested that:

'I don't think it's a way to practice, I think it's just...it's an activity more so than something.... Like you wouldn't see a... I don't think...a surfer go and practice on that. They're more likely to go and practice in the real elements... it's not as

realistic...it's just a hobby that like anybody will have a try 'cos it looks fun....I think it's more of a game... sort of a fun aspect... kind of just a game....'

She described them as a game and nothing to be related to surfers and surfing, it is seen that surfers are disengaging with the technology. She also described them as:

'When you're younger you get those, outside Tesco's you have like Noddy and stuff, like the little cars, kind of a grown up version of them, or something like that... I don't think it's anything serious and...anything to be related.'

When asked to sum up what she thought about the equipment she stated:

'I don't think it has any affect on me...I think it's a good harmless activity that's a fun thing for people to do and attraction to see... yeah it doesn't bother me and I think I suppose, it's kind of good 'cos it's trying to, it's trying to um... promote, yeah it's trying to promote surfing but I don't think it's actually doing what it wants to do.'

Charlie has participated in brushboarding and he stated:

'yeah, I tried one of the brush things, they're really good, they are so similar to actually riding a wave, 'cos obviously you don't get the energy but, yeah, yeah, I mean not so much with your edge but it feels really nice and carve-y... Like riding a longboard, I'd love one in my back garden.'

However, he then suggested:

'It is completely different to actually doing it....when you're actually on the beach and you got people around you. It's a nice feeling, especially when your sitting out in the back and the swell is riding in...and you're not even catching a wave, just sitting on your board... than sitting on a bench chair watching your mum have a go at this wave thing with her little helmet and elbow pads...'

The interviewees clearly see the activities as something completely separate to surfing and don't engage with it on the level they engage with actual surfing.

'It's probably just used as a tool, I don't think it has any affect on actual surfing.'

(Holly)

It is seen as instrumental and this is not seen as part of the lifestyle and reasons for surfing.

Both interviewees commented on how expensive the activities were:

'Its well expensive, I was like....what.... I bought one of my old boards for fifteen quid. It will make money, it always will 'cos people from little towns and that, and not near the coast and even if it is near the coast, even people that have tried surfing will wanna try this, because they'll be laughing their heads off. It will always make money, surfing as a whole, I think all the new equipment and that is just gunna get bigger and bigger.' (Charlie)

'I would probably do it if it was few [pounds]. But I wouldn't because I'm not really, I would like to have a go but I'm not interested enough to pay for it. Like I'm not, it's not something that you could sustain, it's not something you could get into. Its something you have to pay for every time you want a go so no I probably wouldn't pay for it' (Holly)

The surfers see the surf simulators as being expensive as you have to pay to go each time. They don't acknowledge the fact that surfing is very expensive to get started. Board and wetsuit prices can vary and are usually hundreds of pounds. The surfers don't acknowledge this, they just see that they wouldn't pay five pounds each time to go on something that doesn't resemble surfing in the same way as being in the sea.

Holly stated that she would rather pay more for the petrol to actually participate in the real thing.

'cos you can go whenever you want then. You would obviously have to pay petrol and everything to get down there and car park but, its something you can progress, whereas brushboarding you have to wait on other people for the place to be open to do it, and you're not allowed to, don't have enough space to express yourself, you've got loads of people watching you and staring at you do it. I definitely think I would rather go on my own accord.'

The reactions to the technology from a surfer's point of view, both novice and experienced were similar, they didn't like having to pay for it and would rather pay

more to experience the real thing, they are more comfortable in the sea. They also saw it as an activity that didn't really have any affect on them or their surfer identity. They didn't think that people would go on it and think that they would become surfers. It was seen that older more dedicated surfers would reject the idea.

'They probably wouldn't want anything to do with it.' (Holly)

'They're not gunna go and have a go on that when they know they can already do it. So I think they accidently missed the market. It's more the people that are novices and just look like it's a bit of fun that have a go on it.' (Holly)

'You'd probably get the odd one who'd be like yeah go on then, but, yeah I reckon...They've got their boards. I mean you see them sitting out the back for half an hour. They're proper soul surfers... they are at one with the sea the old guys, because they have been around for so long. They just do whatever they want...Then all of a sudden there's loads of people in the water, I think they'd prefer to be in the sea rather than on a brushboard.' (Charlie)

4.4 Technology in surfing good or bad?

When asked about other technology in sports and surfing it seemed that from the younger generation of surfer's views, they didn't seem to think that technology was necessarily a bad thing but it also wasn't a major part of surfing.

Charlie knows a lot more about the boards and wetsuit technology as it's his life, compared to Holly, whose surfing is secondary to her university and career. He stated:

'There's some cool stuff. Like you get hydro-fin as well, which picks you up on the wave and you just ride the swell. They look really fun, I would love to give one of them a go... I think technology won't be used in so much of the surfing aspect of it. You know... when you're actually on the waves doing stuff...'cos you get the four fins now, but 'cos it will always be as good just riding the boards...'

Holly has a background in other sports and when asked about technology in general she replied:

'I think technology is what we need. 'cos that's what we haven't had in the past so I think with how um... sports carrying on like new technology...lots of different equipment I think we need that because our society is growing so quick anyway and things are changing so we need to keep up. I think it's a good idea and I think that it's just the way that we're going. I don't think we can stop it...definitely unavoidable.'

When asked specifically about technology in relation to surfing she stated:

'I don't think you need too much technology and things to know how to do it. You just need a surfboard and things...'

She was then asked if she thought surfing would stay basic in terms of technology and she suggested:

'I think it will, for the pure reason that, when you look back when it first started, years and years ago, the only technology that has changed is that it's gone from wooden boards to plastic boards. So really, if you look back then I don't think there is much more they can change. Because, obviously the surfers like the way it is, otherwise it would have changed already.'

She said that the fact that surfing is un-technical is what she enjoys about surfing.

'...because you know you can just keep practicing and you don't need any other, any other equipment except from you the sea and a board. Its all up to you really, how well you do, so you just get in the sea, teach yourself, and keep practicing. You don't need anything else or anybody else...and it's quite good that way.'

Similarly, Charlie didn't think that surfing would evolve much more.

'I don't reckon surfing will get any more technical and more pushed into the rules or anything like that. I reckon it will stay mellow...for a long while actually. Um... some of the equipment is getting technical, but that's a good thing. I reckon, in surfing, I just don't think its gunna go past that.'

He also suggests that:

'I reckon we're a good 10 years behind yet.'

Interestingly, when Charlie was asked if he would have participated years ago when it was no where near as technical he was very unsure. He said:

'I'd like to say yes... but I don't know if I would... maybe 25years ago when sort of the first fibreglass boards...10 years ago it was absolutely wicked... but I would probably do it if it was 20 years ago but not 50.'

Similarly, Holly replied:

'It depends....if I lived here then probably no 'cos I wouldn't have the kind of money to buy a board but if I lived in North Devon I would definitely.'

Both surfers liked the idea that surfing is still relatively un-technical in terms of what you need to go surfing but both interviewees were uncertain if they would have participated before some of the technology they use now was developed.

4.5 Technologies increasing participation?

The interviewees were asked if they thought that the simulator technologies would increase participation and open opportunities for people who are not living on the coast. Both participants had similar ideas.

Charlie stated:

'I reckon it could possibly [increase participation] if it's in a big city or in the middle of nowhere, and they can't get to the sea. Maybe it will give them the opportunity. That they did have so much fun on it that they would be wanting to just jump on, get to the coast and try and give it a go.'

Although he thought that it could have the potential to increase participation he had negative ideas about this happening:

'Well I hope brushboarding and this other simulator doesn't get everyone into surfing 'cos there's not gunna be enough waves left.'

When asked who she thought it would encourage, Holly replied:

'Maybe children, I think children might be more likely to maybe have a go at surfing after having a go.'

She had a more positive attitude towards the possibility of technology encouraging other people to get into certain sports:

'I think it opens more opportunities for people such as the disabled and to have a go on things that everyone else can have a go at. I think its brilliant, this technology and I don't think it makes too much difference because that's where we are at the moment. I think it's good.'

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrated a number of key points that show how surfers are or could be affected by the technologies discussed previously. This chapter will discuss the findings and apply appropriate literature.

5.1 Opportunities.

Brown and Ford (2006, p.2) state that 'the growth of surfing is related to the emergence and growing participation of lifestyle sports.' Surfing is becoming increasingly popular and one of the things that the findings show is that the new technologies may increase participation and opportunities for those who do not have a coast nearby. It is possible that the surf simulators could encourage more people to participate but it could also introduce them to the surfing lifestyle that is associated with surfing. This could therefore form new surfer identities.

However, it was seen that surfers still want to maintain their exclusivity, waves and space for themselves.

Brown and Ford (2006, p. 68) suggest that there has been a development of the 'pseudo – surfer', this is someone who feels that being identified as a surfer through fashion is of a higher importance than actually surfing itself. It is also seen that within some serious surfing subcultures it is seen as deviant to wear surf labels. They state that to most surfers, what they wear and what brand it is less important than participating in surfing itself. The interviewees demonstrated this idea when asked about the importance of looking like a surfer they both had similar replies that suggested that it didn't matter what you looked like outside of the water. One interviewee within this study suggested that it was almost a cliché to be fully surfer now. This could be due to the increase of 'pseudo surfers,' that the real surfers feel that they need to demonstrate they're a true surfer by not trying to prove it too much. Real surfers feel that they do not need to demonstrate it through clothing although one interviewee did say that he was identified as a surfer through his long 'scruffy' hair.

Brown and Ford (2006) also discuss how identities within the subculture vary. It can depend on the dedication levels and how they prioritise actual surfing. The development of these simulators in places where there is no coast or surf may develop a new identity of surfer that isn't seen in other surf cultures. The technology

may introduce them to surfing and they may get into the sport or have it as part of their identity however, their level of commitment is going to be different to any other surfer who is able to get to the coast or participates on a different level.

5.2 Surfing cannot be simulated.

Although there is a chance that these technologies will encourage participation in surfing, it was seen that surfing itself cannot be simulated. There is more to surfing than just being able to “ride a wave”. It is about the lifestyle, personality and self identity that surfers have that make them a surfer. Brown and Ford (2006, p.74) state that ‘The objective of a surfing lifestyle is remarkably clear, simply to develop and maintain a way of living which enables a high level of involvement in wave riding.’ One interviewee demonstrated this. He had travelled all around the world for the last few years and his life revolves around where he is next going to surf and how he is going to get there. It is more than simply riding a continual wave which you can do on a simulator.

It is seen that the surfers self identity is through years of living the surfing lifestyle. It is not simply being able to stand up on the board. Developing a ‘true’ surfer identity is through dedication, travel, lifestyle and not trying too hard to look like one. Identity is central to being a surfer within the subculture, however, the surfers said that it wasn’t necessarily important to look like one and demonstrate it to others because it was about the way of life, laid back nature and being in the elements itself. As Coakley and Donnelly (1999, p63) suggest ‘developing or failing to develop an identity as an athlete is not a simple matter of interest or talent.’

One surfer described surfing as an expression of identity. ‘Sport is a significant source for the expression of personal and cultural identity.’ (Tomlinson, 2007, p 365) This is similar of Beal’s (1999) study into skateboarding that demonstrated one of the reasons people participated in the sport, was because they felt it was a form of self expression that other sports didn’t allow the participants to do. One of the surfers was asked what she felt about competition in surfing and stated that the reason people were competing was to demonstrate their identity. They’re not in it for the competition. This demonstrates that Beal’s (1999) study showing that people were participating in skateboarding to self express themselves is also true of surfing. Surfing is more than just a sport and competition. It was found that it is a way of life,

a sport where people are able to demonstrate their identity in various ways whilst participating and other aspects of the lifestyle are often more important than surfing itself.

Another topic that arose when interviewing was the feeling that they get on the wave, this is different on every wave and not something that can be replicated. Stranger (1999) gains a similar response from surfers in his risk study. He states that the participants take part in the sport primarily because of the thrills involved. With this comes risk. One of the interviewees in this study described the feeling when on a wave as 'energy'. Stranger (1999) also discusses how there are even specific terms for this feeling. In surfing subcultures this is called being 'stoked.' Brown and Ford (2006, p.66) state that these terms used within surfing subcultures are often used to demonstrate the insiders from the outsiders. Words such as 'stoked' are used to describe the feelings that Stranger (1999) suggests when 'moments of harmony with the ocean' occur (p168). Brown and Ford (2006) link the idea of surf language within subcultures to Bourdieu's ideas that certain types of vocabulary are used to assert their position within the hierarchy of the subculture. It is seen that the language used by surfers has a lot more meaning within the subculture than in maybe other sports. The words used to describe the feeling surfers get on different waves would be different to the feeling that people get on a simulator. So even if the new identities did develop and emerged they would have a different level of acceptance within the subculture as they wouldn't be able to use these words and describe similar experiences to the 'true' surfers.

These 'thrills' the surfers get is suggested to occur when they are united with the external world. It is through feeling at one with the sea and nature. It is clear from Stranger's (1999) study that surfers participate for the thrill involved with the surfing and they are constantly trying to beat this thrill by enduring in bigger surf and different breaks. Similarly of this study the surfers participated for the joy of travelling around and also the internal feeling when succeeding on a wave. It is for intrinsic reasons and it is debatable if this feeling could be felt in any other situation. Similarly, Brown and Ford (2006, p.3) state that 'The sea and its energy is obviously inherently and intimately related to the practice, culture and experience of surfing.' Although you need a board to practice surfing it is seen that the sea and its 'energy' is the most important part of it.

Both interviewees stated that if they didn't have to travel to surf, they didn't know if they would still participate. The travelling and social side of surfing is often more important to surfers than actually being recognised as a surfer and participating. The lifestyle surrounding surfing is evidently more important than actually surfing and this cannot be simulated. A wave, or similar type activity can encourage surfing but it will never be the same as actually experiencing different breaks, being at one with the ocean and having the adventure of going on a surf road trip.

5.3 Surfer's reactions to technology.

Previous research shows that extreme sports and in particular surfing are sought after for their lifestyle. So how do surfers react to these new technologies associated with surfing? The study found that the surfers observed and interviewed completely disengage with the technology. They see that it is using surfing as a way to make money but they do not feel that it affects them in any kind of way and that it will not make a difference to the surfing subcultures as they stand now.

Older surfers had a different reaction when asked about the technology to what the younger generation had. Brown and Ford (2006) suggest that the longer you have been surfing the main interests and reasons for participating change. They suggest that the older 'soul surfers' view surfing as something to demonstrate individuality and to be at one with the ocean. The ocean is fundamental to them and their participation in surfing.

Butryn (2003) discusses a number of views that are used against technology varying between positive and negative. The view that the younger surfers seemed to have towards the technology could be what Butryn (2003) describes as an instrumental view. They view the technology in a positive way however, they don't see the technology as having any values and they are just something that humans use to make things easier or to solve issues. This view is often associated with a modernist view which is why the younger generation of surfers could be more open minded about the technology. They have been socialised with technology throughout their lifestyle so it could be seen that they have a different approach to older generations where technology is still a new concept.

The older generation of surfers had a more negative attitude towards the technology and weren't really willing to discuss the technologies. They accepted that it was based on surfing but it was nothing to do with them and wasn't anything to do with surfing. This could be seen as either of Butryn's (2003) negative views, either a determinist stance or a substantive stance. Further research could interview older surfers and spend more time with the older generation and find out their reasons for disengaging with the technology. A limitation of this research is that only the younger generation of surfers were interviewed in detail and being a younger surfer myself I was able to relate to their ideas and understand them more. The older generation of surfers probably have their own reasons for disengaging with the simulators and this is an area for further research.

Interestingly the surfers interviewed didn't seem to acknowledge how expensive surfing actually is but say that they wouldn't go on the simulators as they have to pay for it. They would rather spend the money on actually going surfing even though it costs more. Brown and Ford (2006, p.76) state that 'expenditure on extensive surf travel must often require less spending on other spheres of consumption.' Although surfing equipment comes at a large expense, as Brown and Ford (2006) suggest, they often sacrifice spending money in other areas so that they are able to continue participating. This shows dedication to the sport as they are willing to go without other things in order to get a couple of hours in the surf. Both interviewees said that they would not pay to go on the simulators as they said it cost too much for what it is. They would rather put more money into going on a proper surf trip. This links back to the idea that the lifestyle is often more desirable than participating itself. These surfers say that they wouldn't pay five pounds for a short session on a simulator but they would rather spend more money on petrol and car parking to go for a proper session in the water.

A common theme that came up amongst the surfers was their reasons for disengaging with the technology and preferring to actually spend more on going surfing. These were that the technology was seen as something that was instrumental and calculated. Being monitored and watched isn't something that they see as a part of surfing. For example, on the simulators you have to wait your turn, you are watched by an instructor and a crowd, you have a time limit and you have to follow certain rules. This is all the things that surfing and its lifestyle is not. It is about

freedom, being at one with the ocean and expressing yourself and your self identity in your own way.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

This study has suggested that the new technologies associated with surfing are a chance to increase opportunities in areas where the surf is not easily accessible. If more people are participating within surfing in these areas there is a chance that a new surfer identity could be formed. However, surfing is seen as a lifestyle and something that cannot be simulated. Surfers disengage with these technologies as they see that it is not 'real' surfing. The lifestyle is the major part of their identity rather than just surfing itself.

6.2 Limitations

Overviews of the methodological limitations have been discussed in chapter three. The researcher has demonstrated the main findings and key ideas as truthfully as possible. As a surfer, the researcher has had an influence on the results as it is impossible to completely retract from being in the findings as the researcher has been the tool throughout the research and final write up. The main limitation of this study is the time frame, with more time the researcher would have been able to gain more depth and breadth within the findings.

6.3 Recommendations

The timescale and write up limitations to conduct this study was relatively short to conduct qualitative data. This study has shown that there is definitely a gap for more research to be conducted in this area. To do this:

- A wider variety of surfers from different areas and experience levels need to be spoken to in detail.
- Why do older surfers reject the technology?
- Longer time would need to be spent within the subculture and longer interviews to gain a better understanding to represent the 'truth' better.
- We could research into the aims of the technologies and if they are doing what they set out to.
- If the technology is encouraging participation then how are the 'true' surfers dealing with it?

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Dear Interviewee,

I am a third year student studying Sport and PE at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. I am carrying out a research project into the way that surfer's identities are going to be affected by recent technology advancements. I want to gain an insight into what surfers think of these technologies and value your opinion and views on these matters.

The interview will take approximately one hour, it would be beneficial to my research for you to answer all questions honestly and as truthfully as possible however, if there is anything you do not want to answer you do not have to and you may withdraw from the study at any point. All information given will be treated with full confidentiality and you will remain anonymous throughout the entire study and following write up.

Your identity and interview transcript will only be used for the purpose of the study and your identity will not be revealed at any time. You are able to review the transcript and project before it is completed if you request.

Your opinions are of great value to me and I would be very grateful for your co operation with my research.

If you have any questions at any given time please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours truly,

Rebecca Gilchrist

APPENDIX B

Name of Participant.....

Have you received a cover letter informing you of the study? Yes/No

Has the study been fully explained to you? Yes/No

Do you feel you have received enough information about the study? Yes/No

Have you been given the opportunity to ask questions about and discuss the study? Yes/No

Do you understand that at any time you may withdraw from the study? Yes/No

Without any explanation? Yes/No

Do you know and understand that the interviews will be recorded? Yes/No

That the transcripts may be used in publications? Yes/No

That you will remain anonymous at all times and your identity will not be revealed at any point? Yes/No

I agree to take part in this study.

Signed (Participant)..... Date.....

Signed (Researcher)..... Date.....

APPENDIX C

1. Can you just tell me a bit about your surfing background?
 - 1.1 How long have you been surfing for?
 - 1.2 What do you enjoy about it?
 - 1.3 How often do you go?

2. Would you say you are a surfer?
 - 2.1 Do you think that other people see you this way?
 - 2.2 How do you demonstrate this to other people?
 - 2.3 Do you think that this is important?
 - 2.4 Why?

3. Do you think there are different types of surfer?

- 3.1 How do you tell them apart?
4. Do you think surfing is more than just a sport?
 - 4.1 Why?
 - 4.2 How?
5. What board do you have?
 - 5.1 Do you think this affects how people/other surfers see you?
 - 5.2 Do you think certain boards get more respect?
6. Does the wetsuit have the same affect?
 - 6.1 Any other equipment has an affect on respect/involvement?
7. Do you think technology within surfing is a good thing or a bad thing?
 - 7.1 Why?
 - 7.2 Does it have an affect on the way the surfer is perceived by others?
 - 7.3 Does it affect the subculture?
 - 7.4 Do you think that you engage with it?
8. Do you think that in way surfers who use jet skis to get to bigger waves is cheating?
 - 8.1 Why?
 - 8.2 Can you understand why some surfers do?
9. What do you think about the surf simulators used in leisure centres?
 - 9.1 People who use these surfers?
 - 9.2 Surfers agree with these?
 - 9.3 Taking away from the fact surfing is seen as a lifestyle sport?
10. What do you think about the people working on the simulators wearing rash vests and boardies?
 - 10.1 Necessary?
 - 10.2 Trying to advertise it as something its not?
11. Any other simulators you have seen that's related to surfing?
 - 11.1 Any thoughts on this?
12. Do you think these simulators will encourage participation?
 - 12.1 For people who don't have access?
 - 12.2 Encourage females?
13. Would you say it was just a way of making money out of the popular surf culture?
 - 13.1 Similar to clothing?

14. As a surfer do you think that the surfing technology is going to have an effect on surfers in general?
 - 14.1 Agree or disagree with it?
 - 14.2 Disregard it?

15. Do you think that the world is getting too technical?
 - 15.1 Taking meaning away?
 - 15.2 Agree with the view that now everyone is turning cyborgified?

16. Do you think that surfing is a technical or non technical activity?
 - 16.1 Will it stay this way?
 - 16.2 Is that what you enjoy about it?
 - 16.3 Is that why you participate/ think other people do?

17. Is travelling to surf a part of the activity itself?
 - 17.1 Enjoyment?
 - 17.2 Searching for surf?
 - 17.3 Social?
 - 17.4 Day trip?

18. Do you think that what you wear makes surfers think differently about you?
 - 18.1 In the sea?
 - 18.2 Outside the sea?

19. What do you think about the risk aspect of surfing?
 - 19.1 More respect for higher risk takers?
 - 19.2 Part of the thrill why you participate?
 - 19.3 What is the one thing that you enjoy about surfing?

20. Do you think this is similar of all extreme sports?
 - 20.1 Lifestyle more important?

21. Do you think that because it is a popular culture that it is often used to make money?
 - 21.1 Profit making opportunities?
 - 21.2 What do you think about this?

22. Would you pay to go brush boarding?
 - 22.1 Designed by surfers for surfers?
 - 22.2 Keen surfers use it?
 - 22.3 Making money out of something they love?

23. Do you think your gender has an affect on your opinions?

23.1 Why?

23.2 How?

24. What do you think about the female equipment such as 'surf betty' boards?

25. Do you think that in future generations surfing will be much different?

26. Would you of surfed if it was 50 years previous?

26.1 Why?