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Crowd Surfing: An ethnographic exploration of the interplay between danger and power dynamics from a beginner surfer's perspective in the context of crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord

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This master thesis is made as part of the specialization in Visual Ethnography at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University.

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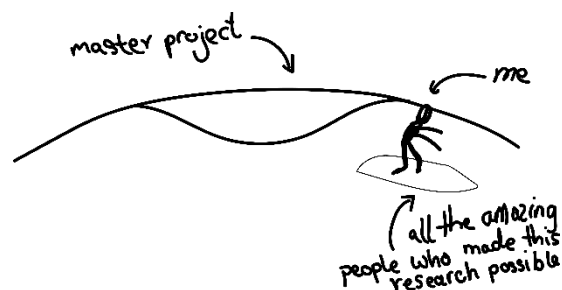
It has been one crazy ride, but we made it. And we rode it till the end.

It has been intense, both beautiful and terrifying, but it made me grow throughout the process both as a researcher, a surfer and as a person. This was only possible because of the wonderful people I met during this research period. I want to thank all of my participants who gave their trust and time to share their experiences and who have always been kind and patient. Thank you for the inspiring conversations and fun and sometimes terrifying surf sessions. In particular, I would like to thank Suzy, Mark and Sabine for allowing me into their lives. It has been great to share this adventure with you.

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Abstract:

In the Netherlands the group of people surfing has been growing considerably since the nineties, which has led to crowded line-ups at the most famous Dutch surf spot 'Scheveningen Noord'. This leads to increased competition for the same waves between people with different levels of surf skills and increases the risk of collisions. This anthropological research focuses on the interplay between danger and power dynamics within the context of crowdedness at surf spot Scheveningen Noord. The surf etiquette is used as a frame to explore this interplay. It consists of a set of social unwritten rules which prescribe how to behave in the water and who has priority over a wave. I argue that experienced surfers can use the surf etiquette to their advantage to get priority over a wave and that in this way it carries on a hierarchy between more experienced and beginner surfers. Within this surf etiquette the framing of danger becomes part of the power dynamics that are at play at crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord. For this research I conducted fieldwork of ten weeks from a beginner surfer perspective, in which the methods: participant observation, the go-pro as a participatory method and semi-structured interviews were used. This study resulted into three outputs: a 17-minute documentary film, this written text, and a 56 pages magazine. The documentary film aims to communicate embodied knowledge of the interplay between danger and power dynamics at Scheveningen Noord and shows the working of the surf etiquette amongst beginners and advanced surfers. This written text provides theoretical substantiation for my argument and in this way contributes to anthropological debates concerning crowdedness, danger and politics of space with an emphasis on surf etiquette. The magazine gives shape to my wish to activate critical thinking within the surf community about the surf aesthetic of danger and social safety in the line-up.

Keywords: Crowdedness, Danger, Power dynamics, Politics of Waves, Surf etiquette, Go-Pro, Scheveningen.

CONTENT

Introducing crowd surfing	7
<i>'Chaos'</i>	10
Chapter 1: Positionality & methodology	11
Positionality	11
Participant observation	13
Go-pro as a participatory method	14
Semi structured interviews	15
<i>'The danger zone'</i>	17
Chapter 2: Context	18
A brief history of the surf sport	18
Scheveningen	19
Surf etiquette	21
<i>'De mui' (the riptide)</i>	24
Chapter 3: Dangers of surfing	26
Theorizing danger	26
Unpacking danger at surf spot Scheveningen Noord	27
Surf etiquette and the context of danger	30
<i>'New surfboard'</i>	32
Chapter 4: Power dynamics	33
Theorizing politics of space	33
Regulations of the waves in Scheveningen	35
Problematizing the surf etiquette	35
Strategies to catch more waves	36
Conclusion	38
Bibliography	40

Introducing crowd surfing

I still remember it well. I saw a little wave coming in and I started paddling. It was crowded that summer day in Baleal (Portugal) in 2016, so I had to be careful that no one bumped into me. PADDLE PADDLE PADDLE. Yes, the wave took me and I tried to stand up. A bit clumsy, but I was able to stand up. I was euphoric. A second later an older surfer started yelling at me in Portuguese. Had he seen my wave and was he happy for me? No, he seemed to be mad, but why was he? I had not bumped into him, so I had no clue where he could possibly be mad about. Maybe it was nothing. I paddled back and waited for a bit. The yelling Portuguese man was taking wave after wave. Another little wave came in and I started paddling again. YES, the wave had me, and I stood up. Again, a feeling of euphoria went through my body. Seconds later I heard the same aggressive yelling voice, but this time louder. The Portuguese man had come up to me, looking really angry and still yelling in Portuguese. I felt confused and intimidated. What was wrong? I was just surfing like anybody else in the crowded water, why was he mad at me? My whole euphoric mood had changed and I decided to stop the surf session.

This was the first moment that I experienced that surfing was not only about ‘being in nature’, ‘harmony’ and ‘a place to feel free’, which was the image I got from surf videos I watched regularly by that time by Billabong and one of the best Hawaiian surfer John John Florence (BillabongGirlsAust 2011; John John Florence 2013). That day was my first confrontation and experience with tensions between surfers in the line-up. This same trip I heard about surf etiquette for the first time. These are social unwritten rules about how to behave and move within the water and prescribes who has priority over a wave in different situations. It is important to reduce the danger of collisions, one of the surfers told me. He emphasized that ‘dropping in’ was a sin. This means paddling for a wave that someone else is already riding or has priority on. I thought back to the angry Portuguese guy. Would that be the reason he was so angry with me? But why did that make him so upset? Why did he so aggressively yell at me instead of kindly asking if I could pay attention to the rule of ‘dropping in’? Was this surf etiquette so important to him?

My experience with regards to those tensions amongst surfers and the social rules as part of the power dynamics motivated me to do my master research about the power dynamics at the Dutch crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord. An old friend from the Dutch student surf association Plankenkoorts, Kirsten, told me the surf spot Scheveningen had become very crowded with the popularization of the surf sport¹. This popularization over the last decades has led to explosive growth of the sport worldwide (Anderson 2013: 962; Boot 2012: 12; Buckley 2002: 409; Daskalos 2007: 155; Waitt 2008: 91). Kirsten expressed her frustration towards the amount of ‘kooks’ who were surfing at the spot nowadays and who were a danger for themselves and others in the line-ups. ‘Kooks’, as she explained, are people who pretend to be a good surfer, but actually suck at it and often don’t follow the surf etiquette. She emphasized that the frustration towards these kooks had increased within the Scheveningen surf community after the incident in May 2020, when 5 Dutch

¹ Kirsten brought this up during our conversation on 19 September 2020. Names within this research have been changed, except for the names of the participants who are visible within the documentary film.

surfers died (NOS 2020; Kraaijeveld 2020; Douglas 2020; Kolirin 2020). She explained that this frustration lies within the ignorance often of beginner surfers who don't know their own limits and the dangers of the sea.

The way Kirsten talked about kooks fits within a broader public debate around beginner surfers. In a video of Stab (which is a well-established online/offline Australian magazine within the international surf scene), surfer Dane Reynolds describes beginner surfers or 'kooks' as following:

"Think about it in medieval times when guys would arrive at a city and just take over and take everything they wanted, that is like how they surf haha... They are warriors and I am... a civilian haha... a peasant." (Stab: We like to surf 2020)

This same image of clumsy and disruptive beginners is produced within the Instagram account 'Kookoftheday', which counts more than a million followers. On this account videos are shared among other things of surfers 'dropping in' on other surfers, (almost) collisions between surfers and surfers fighting. The way that people talk about 'kooks' already carries out a tension towards beginner surfers which relates to an idea of danger.

This tension between beginner and more experienced surfers can be placed within the context of the explosive growth of the surf sport, which was described by my friend Kirsten and within literature (Anderson 2013: 962; Boot 2012: 12; Buckley 2002: 409; Daskalos 2007: 155; Waitt 2008: 91). This has led to crowded line-ups where a lot of surfers with different surf experience compete for the same waves. In this context of crowdedness, the waves can be experienced as a scarce commodity, and the struggle to ride good waves is the leading cause of conflict (Uekusa 2019: 540; Surfer 2010).

Power dynamics in the line-ups and the regulations of the waves have already been examined within surf-related literature (Uekusa 2019; Usher & Gómez 2017; Comley 2011; Daskalos 2007; Olivier 2010; Anderson 2013). Also, the role that danger plays within the surf experience of surfers and the aesthetic of danger within surf films and magazines has been widely looked at within literature (Booth 2008; Ormrod 2005; Beattie 2001; Ormrod 2007; Congdon & King 2002; Stranger 2001; Canniford & Shankar 2013). However, there is no anthropological research on the interplay between danger and power dynamics.

I argue it is important to look at the interplay between these two to get a better understanding of the power dynamics that are at play, especially within the context of the explosive growth of the sport and the crowdedness as a result. Often research in the field of surfing and more specifically research on power dynamics has been conducted by researchers who were themselves experienced surfers. This study tends to contribute to the debate around the power dynamics in surfing by highlighting the perspective of a beginner surfer. My positionality as a beginner surfer, has influenced the way I could conduct my research, the data I gathered and the way I interpreted this data. This resulted in a focus on the power dynamics between beginner and experienced surfers.

I use the surf etiquette as a frame, to explore the interplay between danger and power dynamics in the context of crowdedness. More specifically, I examine how surf etiquette relates to perceptions of danger and power dynamics. By doing so, I aim to get a better understanding of the power dynamics that are at play within the crowded line-ups at Scheveningen Noord.

For this research I did ten weeks of ethnographic fieldwork from 4 January 2021 till 24 March 2021. My position as a beginner surfer influenced the way I could do research. I used the following three methods: participant observation, the go-pro as a participatory method and semi-structured interviews. I based my findings on my own experiences and on those of 20 participants, whom I will introduce shortly in the next chapter. This research consists of three outputs: a 17-minute documentary, a magazine and this written text. The documentary film and this text communicate the same argument, but they communicate this within different types of knowledge. As Willerslev & Suhr (2013) describe, observational film allows 'viewers intimate access to the filmmaker's sensuous engagement with the life portrayed', which cannot be done within text (Willerslev & Suhr 2013: 8). Because surfing is an embodied activity, I made a documentary to convey embodied knowledge about danger and power dynamics through the use of go-pro footage of the crowded line-up at Scheveningen Noord. By doing so, it includes crowdedness within the aesthetic of surfing in Scheveningen. The written text provides a theoretical substantiation for my argument and reflects on the implications of my positionality and the used methodology. Furthermore, the magazine gives shape to my wish to activate critical thinking within the surf community. I chose to use this form of output because of the role magazines play in the promotion of surf culture within the surf community (Hough-Snee & Eastman 2017: 5) (Boot 2012: 17) (Stranger 2001: 189). With this magazine I aim to activate critical thinking about the surf aesthetic and to promote a 'safe space' which goes beyond the surf etiquette and which advocates for more attention to social safety in the surf space. With this I hope to open up a conversation between surfers with different surf experience about ways of interacting with each other in the line-up which are beneficial for both experienced and beginner surfers.

Within this written text I first reflect upon the epistemological implications of my positionality and methodology. Then I will work towards my argument in the next chapters. All four chapters start with an ethnographic vignette to engage with the context in which I did my research. Chapter 1 describes the context of the research, including a brief history of the surf sport, the context of the crowdedness, Scheveningen as a research site and the surf etiquette. In chapter 2 I discuss the theoretical framework of danger and in what way danger is perceived, conceptualized and represented by surfers in Scheveningen. In chapter 3 I discuss the theoretical framework of politics of space and I advocate the use of a new term 'politics of waves' within the context of surfing. Subsequently I describe in this chapter how the 'politics of waves' are expressed within the context of crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord. I finish the text with a conclusion which will contain my argument and will further reflect upon the interplay between danger and power dynamics within the context of crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord.

Chaos

March 10, 2021, 21.00

While I am waiting for Berend to join me in the Zoom room, I go through my prepared questions one more time. A pop-up window comes up: 'Berend would like to join the meeting'. A little nervous, I say: 'Nice, you could make some time to help me with my research. I am doing research on the social aspect and the dangers of surfing, and so I talk with different surfers to hear how they think about it. And I try to be in the water myself twice a week as well'. 'You surf yourself as well?', Berend asks. 'Yes... well I am a beginner, but it is nice.' I always feel the need to mention this fact. This started when Kirsten told me to be careful of how I describe how I wanted to do this research. I should not come over as a try hard, saying that I surfed, while I didn't really do it much. People would see me as a kook then, which carries the negative associations towards the increased group of beginners. I blinked my eyes and I was back in the Zoom meeting. "And where do you surf then?", asked Berend. "Scheveningen Noord", I answer. "Ah we all know that... and do you then rent your equipment at Hartbeach or something?", Berend further questions. I hear a cynical tone in his voice. I try to keep it light and answer that I have my own gear and surfboard, but for the convenience of traveling, I rent a surfboard at Hartbeach. "Okay, and what kind of surfboard do you rent at Hartbeach?". It felt as if I was being tested. "Well now I rent a 7.6 and then just a soft top eh...", I am interrupted by a laugh which I experience as judgment. I start to feel slightly uncomfortable. "A soft top...", Berend repeats and from his voice I get a tone of disapproval. "Yes, for the safety of myself and others around me", I try to defend myself to show I do pay attention to people around me, and that it is a considered choice. I try to convince him I am not the beginner who drops in on his waves.

"At surf spot Scheveningen Noord I come sporadically," Berend continues, "it is way too crowded. And now I am going to say something bad, I don't like soft top surfboards". "And why don't you like soft tops then?", I ask. "Look, everyone has to start learning to surf, of course that's a given and I also started once and I am very grateful for that. But what has been annoying me is that it is very busy in the water. Always. And that's okay, as long as everyone has a little respect for each other and, a little distance from your leash and your board or looks around the moment you catch a wave. Beginner surfers often lie on soft tops so maybe I already associate it with the fact that they don't look around when they catch a wave. It happens to me every session that I am just surfing and then I am just standing on a wave, nicely going down the line, I am running back and forth a bit on my surfboard, and then you always have such an idiot who is going to drop in on you! Yes, then I say 'ooh beware' and then I hope they hear or see me. Yes, those are usually people on soft tops who do that", Berend says.

"Yeah OK, so you associate soft tops with beginners?", I ask. "I associate that with chaos". His way of talking about beginners reminds me of how Dane Reynolds described beginners in the video of Stab: as people from medieval times where they took everything they wanted (Stab: we like to surf 2020). I start thinking again. What is my own position here, am I also experienced or viewed as a beginner who invades the surf space and disrupts other surfer's surf experience? Are beginners or am I the bad guy who causes all the frustration? I am not aware of any harm in that sense. But maybe my ignorance is the problem?

Chapter 1: Positionality & methodology

To understand how I have come to my argument, I will firstly describe my positionality. This defines the context in which I did research and influenced the way I could conduct this research.²

My experience with surfing goes back to 2012 when I did a three days beginner course at surf school Hartbeach at Scheveningen Noord. Two summers I spent all my pocket money to travel every three weeks from Amsterdam to Scheveningen to rent a surfboard and wetsuit. When I started studying in Leiden in 2014, I immediately joined the Dutch student surf association Plankenkoorts. I spent three Christmases in Portugal surfing for a week with a group of the surf association. Four years ago, I bought my own wetsuit and a beginner surfboard from Mark, now one of my participants. In the Netherlands it came sporadically to surfing which made my progress in surfing go slow. My experience goes as far as I know the basics and I can stand up easily on broken waves on a beginner board (these are longer and have more volume, which make it easier to catch a wave and stand up) and I am now trying to take off more steadily on smaller unbroken waves.

Within the surf scene this experience is considered to be of a beginner level. However, the surf sport does not really have clearly defined levels of surf skill. This is because of the complexity and difficulty of learning how to surf whereby the improvement of the surfing skill goes with very small steps. Most surf schools make a division into three categorizations: beginner surfers, intermediate surfers and advanced surfers to be able to teach different skills. The definitions of the boundaries between these categories differ per surf school and some divide the levels of the classes even into more categories (Surflines 2018; Surfing Crowde Bay s.a.). I discuss here the most commonly used definitions of the boundaries between these three categories. This distinguishes an intermediate surfer from a beginner by being able to catch and ride unbroken waves 'down the line' and being able to do the three most basic surfing turns (Surflines 2018; Surfing Crowde Bay s.a.; Surfertoday s.a.; Swell Surf Camp 2020; Barefoot Surf Travel s.a.). An advanced surfer is able to ride the waves of his choice and do a full range of turns and tricks (Surflines 2018; Surfing Crowde Bay s.a.). Within the framework of this research, I make a distinction between beginners and experienced surfers, but as discussed above in reality this is way more complicated. I nevertheless use this simplified distinction to explore who benefits from the surf etiquette and who doesn't within the context of power dynamics at Scheveningen Noord.

With the surf skills of a beginner's level, I am considered to be part of the big group of newcomers to the sport which has grown over the last decades. This influenced the way surfers perceived me and in what way I could gather data. It also influenced my relation with participants. I sometimes felt this during conversations with more experienced surfers who expressed their frustrations towards beginner surfers (as described within the ethnographic vignette). This made me feel uncomfortable when I had the feeling my level of surf skill was being tested and/or judged. My positionality enabled me to notice tensions between beginner and experienced surfers throughout conversations. This can be placed within broader tensions within the surf community as a result of the growing sport. Furthermore, did this positioning of myself as a beginner surfer create an environment, whereby my

² Part of this chapter contains text from my research proposal.

participants took on the role of a mentor. From this position they explained to me how things worked, what the surf jargon meant, how to better control my surfboard and how I was expected to behave in the water. Within this contact with my participants, the importance of the surf etiquette was emphasized. This was insightful for my research as it gave me a better understanding of what the surf etiquette means within the context of crowded line-ups.

Throughout my fieldwork my perception of Self changed, as Kondo (1986) also experienced and described within her research to Japanese culture. Kondo (1986) describes this 'collapse of identity' as a result of the specific behavior, norms and values which were projected on her by participants who thought this represented Japanese culture (Kondo 1986). Kondo (1986) argues that there lie epistemological implications within these conflicting norms and values that she experienced in the process of adapting to the expectations of her participants and at the same time keeping a certain distance from these expectations (ibid: 75).

During my own fieldwork period I experienced a projection of norms and values on me in a similar way as Kondo (1986). This led to a changing perception of Self, when I gained more knowledge about surfing, but lacked the skill to embody this knowledge. At some point I knew what was expected from me in regards to the surf etiquette, but when being in the water I was not in control of my moving body on a surfboard. In this way I struggled with adhering to the surf etiquette. This struggle made me very aware of myself and what other surfers would think of me while surfing. Because of the struggle that I experienced, it occurred to me that the discourse of beginner surfers and kooks is often represented through the gaze of experienced surfers and it lacks a perspective of the beginner surfer who might be just struggling with embodying the surf etiquette. The discourse does not take into account this difficulty of learning how to surf.

In other words, my positionality enabled me to do research about the power dynamics in Scheveningen which focused on the tensions between beginner and more experienced surfers from a beginner perspective. To do this, I made use of three methods: participant observation, the go-pro as a participatory method and semi-structured interviews. To do this, I made use of three methods: participant observation, the go-pro as a participatory method and semi-structured interviews. I gained data through the contact with 20 participants. Four of these surfers (Suzy, Mark, Max and Kirsten) I already knew from the surf association Plankenkoorts. I came into contact with the other surfers via via. Based on the guidelines produced by surf schools and as described above, I consider 6 of them beginner surfers (Suzy, Oscar, Max, Ellis, Matteo and Kirsten). The other 14 participants I talked to I consider somewhere in between the intermediate level and the advanced level, which I consider as more experienced surfers within the frame of this research (Ben, Madelief, Mark, Pim, Sabine, Marieke, Mick, Henk, Rachel, Berend, Peter, Merel, Theo and Tim). Fourteen of these participants, I only met once to twice. With Suzy, Oscar, Mark, Pim, Sabine and Peter I met several times. Finally, I included more experienced surfer Mark and beginner surfer Suzy within my film. In this text I refer to conversations I had with several of these participants. In the next section I will discuss the implications of the methods.

Participant observation

For 10 weeks I surfed once to twice a week with different participants. Participant observation is one of the most common used methods within anthropology and as described by Bryman (2012), it enables the researcher to 'immerse him- or herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behavior, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the fieldworker, and asking questions' (Bryman 2012: 432). Evers (2006), Waitt (2008) and Wheaton (2019) discuss how by participation in the activity of surfing the researcher's body enables access to the surf scene and they argue that this is necessary for the researcher to get 'any imagination of how surfing culture works' (Evers 2006: 229, Waitt 2008, Wheaton 2019). Surfing is an embodied activity; therefore, it was insightful to gain embodied knowledge through participant observation to better understand the living world of participants.

The extent I was able to do participant observation was determined by my positionality as a beginner surfer. My experience in surfing enabled me to paddle around and stand on my surfboard when the conditions and the waves were not too rough. These basics made it possible to participate within the surf space and focus on the social interactions that happened around me and not having to focus all the time on trying to control my surfboard. Nevertheless, my experience in surfing which lacked condition and skills also limited me in entering the line-up all the time. Also, I could feel too intimidated by the crowd, to paddle out to the line-up. This limited the way I could participate and observe.

Within the context of surfing, I moreover experienced participant observation as an interplay between participation and observation. By first paddling out deeper into the water (a focus on participation), I was then able to study the social interactions more closely (a focus on observation). It also meant I gained different knowledge from participation and observation. Observation enabled me to see how surfers interacted with each other in the line-up, how they constantly moved through the space to position themselves in relation to the incoming waves and other surfers, and how they reacted to someone who was not following the surf etiquette. Through participation I better understood why positioning yourself in relation to the incoming waves and other surfers is necessary to be able to catch waves. Through participation I also experienced frustration towards other surfers who would constantly paddle for the same waves as I was paddling for and in this process did not grant any wave to me. Through this participation I also experienced frustration at times that I was finally able to catch a wave and there were surfers or swimmers in my way. This risk of a collision with these surfers or swimmers also kept me from taking the wave. This way participating in surfing was very insightful to get a better understanding of the interplay between danger and power dynamics and how this is experienced in practice by surfers at Scheveningen Noord.

To get an idea of what happened at the line-up at times that I could not enter it, I decided to use the go-pro as a participatory method.

Go-Pro camera as a participatory method

The struggle to not be able to enter the line-up at all times led me to use the go-pro as a participatory method. This entailed that I gave the go-pro camera to participants who were able to enter the line-up and, in this way, capture a glimpse of what was happening there on camera. As Evers (2015) describes, the go-pro camera 'allows others to "be, see and feel"' what happens at sea, which might be difficult to experience otherwise for example because of a 'lack of ocean skill or being from a minority or excluded subjectivity' (Evers 2015: 5). This method also enabled me to collect embodied data of different participants which led me to see how surfers with different levels of surf skill move differently through the water. This showed how experienced surfers were skillful in navigating their body on the surfboard in relation to the incoming waves and other surfers. Footage showed that they caught wave after wave. The footage of the beginner surfer, including my own go-pro, showed a struggle of getting through the surf which was indicated by heavy breathing and the violence of the waves crashing continuously against the go-pro. This go-pro footage was insightful for better understanding the role that surf experience plays within the ability to catch waves. It furthermore helped me to understand how this relates to the regulation of who gets priority over a wave which is determined within the surf etiquette. I will explain this in more detail in the next sections of this text.

I collected go-pro footage of three participants: experienced longboarder Pim, experienced shortboarder Mark and beginner surfer Suzy. I attached the HERO7 Black go-pro camera to a go-pro bite which could be held within the mouth. The go-pro action camera enables "'the point-of-view" vision when attached to parts of the body' and in this way it can become an 'extension of the human body and senses' (Evers 2015: 3, 9) (Lawrence 2020: 44). By placing the go-pro bite in the mouth, it was able to record footage from the point of view close to the eyes of the surfer holding the camera. The wide angle of the go-pro further made it possible to 'capture a wide panoramic or hemispherical image' whereby 'the surfer, wave, surfboard, and sky are all in the field of vision so it is possible to see the becoming' (Evers 2015: 10). It furthermore captured the sounds of the waves, the sound of the water smashing against the go-pro camera, and the embodied sound of the breathing of the surfer or other sounds that the surfer made.

This method nevertheless had its limits. The go-pro could only record a glimpse of what happened in the line-up and what it recorded was dependent on what the participant showed. Furthermore, sometimes drops of water on the lens of the camera blurred the images which made it more difficult to see what was happening and the sound quality of the go-pro camera could not record the voices well from surfers other than the participant holding the camera. Also, when using the go-pro camera myself, it had an influence on my presence within the surf space in a way that could be placed within representations of kooks. Within the surf scene, go-pro cameras are often used by (more experienced) surfers to record the tricks they can do on a wave. When I had the go-pro with me while surfing, it made me very self-aware, as this could be perceived by other surfers as if I was filming and posing with skills I did not have as a beginner. This made me more hesitant to go up close to other surfers.

Although both participant observation and the go-pro as a participatory method helped me in getting insights into the way danger and power dynamics interact in practice at Scheveningen Noord,

I still missed information about the way surfers talked about their perceptions of danger and power dynamics. Therefore, I made use of the third method: semi-structured interviews.

Semi structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews enabled me to get insights in the ways surfers talked and thought about perceptions of danger and the power dynamics at surf spot Scheveningen Noord. As Bryman (2012) described the value of interviews lies with the way it can provide information about: 'the interviewee's own behavior or that of others, attitudes, norms, beliefs, and values' (Bryman 2012: 209). I did thirteen semi-structured interviews with fourteen surfers (one interview was with two surfers). This semi-structured style provided some structure that was helpful in getting specific answers from my participants, but also allowed for me to ask further questions and to get more extensive answers. The following set of prepared questions helped me to gain a better understanding of the perceptions and experiences of danger and power dynamics by my participants:

- When did you start surfing and what do you like about surfing?
- Do you think surfing is more of an individual sport or a social sport?
- Have things changed in the water since you started surfing?
- Has the crowdedness led to another ambience in the line-ups?
- How do you handle the crowdedness? Do you think you can still catch enough waves?
- What is social etiquette? Do people obey these social rules?
- Do you think there is localism and if so in what ways does this come about?
- What are the dangers of surfing and are these dangers part of your surf experience?

I did six interviews³ in front of a camera and eight interviews⁴ off camera. This influenced both the way of conducting the interview and also the way I could analyze the data from the interviews. I started with recording the interviews, but I noticed I had to divide my attention both to the camera settings and to what the interviewee was saying, which disrupted the flow of the conversations sometimes. Also, I noticed that when the camera was recording participants started to answer questions in a more formal way. Snowden (2017) also explained that participants will react and perform differently when a camera is recording (Snowdon 2017: 3). Therefore, I decided to do the other interviews off camera and make notes during and after the interview, except for the participants that I might want to include within my ethnographic film.

During the process of analyzing, the recorded interviews gave me the chance to hear the whole interview again, whereby new details stood out and I was able to reflect upon my own role within the interviews. The notes from the off-camera interviews were more fragmented and reflected the bias I had during the conversation, because I had made choices of what I thought was important to write down by that time. Nevertheless, analyzing both the notes and recordings of the interviews helped me to see patterns in the answers of the participants and in this way get a better

³ These interviews were with: Suzy, Ben, Mark, Pim, Sabine and Tim.

⁴ These interviews were with: Madelief, Mick, Henk, Rachel, Berend, Peter and Merel.

understanding of how danger and power dynamics are perceived by surfers in Scheveningen Noord and how this relates to the surf etiquette.

As discussed within this chapter, my positionality as a beginner surfer enabled me to get a deep understanding of the tensions between beginner and experienced surfers, and in what way the surf etiquette relates to these power dynamics. My positionality influenced the methods I used and the relations between me and my participants. In this context I gathered and interpreted the data that led me to my argument related to the interplay between danger and power dynamics. In the next chapter I will discuss how the history and social context of the surf sport, and Scheveningen Noord as a field site have further shaped the context in which I could do this research.

The danger zone

March 27, 2021, 16.30 o'clock

'Okay Roos, if you look at the waves, you see an opening there, we should paddle that way, then we can get through the ground swell (branding)', Suzy tells me, while we take our first steps into the water. I feel the cold-water seep into my shoes. Although the water probably is around 4 degrees, my winter wetsuit does its job in keeping me more or less warm. As we walk further into the water, a broken wave tries its best to push me back to the shore. 'Go go go! That way!' Suzy supportively screams at me. Okay, here we go. I jump on my surfboard and start paddling. Another wave pushes me two meters back to the shore, I keep on paddling. In the distance I see surfers competing for a take-off on the wave, and a little later the winner is riding the wave. The line-up behind the ground swell is packed with people. A feeling of fear creeps over me and I feel a resistance in my body to paddle to the line-up. I think to myself 'I can also just stay here and have some fun with the unbroken waves that break here a little closer to the shore. They are smaller, but here is nobody'. But I promised Suzy to paddle out and be there with her in the line-up. I keep on paddling, hoping no one will surf towards us or will yell at us. It feels as if I am approaching a battlefield, where I don't feel safe and skilled enough to maneuver around the other surfers.

All of a sudden, a surfer is approaching us from the left, while he is riding a wave. He passes me, comes close to Suzy, and can just move around her. The man starts yelling at Suzy and Suzy responds 'but I am holding my surfboard'. The guy keeps on yelling and Suzy finally says 'Sorry'. She turns back to me and gives me a smile. Although our moment of interaction calms me a little, I feel quite intimidated and awkward with the situation. 'You see, this is what I thought would happen, I am not going any further, I don't want to go into the crowd', I think to myself. Suzy paddles in front of me and screams 'Come Roosje!'. I did promise her, so I regained myself and started paddling again. When finally arriving at the line-up I feel exhausted and make a few more strokes to be a little deeper into the water, where there are no surfers who can bump into me when they are catching a wave. Suzy paddles up to me: 'Yesss, we made it'.

I look around and see surfers everywhere looking eagerly at the horizon for waves. I feel very misplaced and uncomfortable, and I paddle another 5 to 10 meters deeper into the open water away from the crowd. Here I feel safer, but when I am thinking of going back to the shore, I feel trapped. The waves are not the problem, only that they push me back closer to the crowd. It is just that I have no idea how I can get through the crowd again safely, without running over someone myself or being run over by another surfer.

Chapter 2: Context

Not only my positionality and methodology have influenced this research. Also, the history and social context of the surf sport, and Scheveningen Noord as a field site have shaped the context in which I did this research.⁵ Within this chapter I discuss the context in more detail. I do so by giving a brief history of the surf sport and I describe how this has led to crowded line-ups nowadays. Furthermore, I explain how this can lead to tensions towards beginner surfers. After this I explain how this crowdedness comes about in Scheveningen and I end this chapter with describing what the surf etiquette are about in more detail and in what way I use it as a frame to research the interplay between danger and power dynamics.

A brief history of the surf sport

Nowadays when the waves are good, there can easily be 300 people surfing in Scheveningen Noord. This is ten times more than there would be in 1998 on a good day. By that time this would only be 30 people, two of my participants told me. Not only in Scheveningen, but worldwide the surf sport has grown significantly over the last decades (Anderson 2013: 962; Boot 2012: 12; Buckley 2002: 409; Daskalos 2007: 155; Waitt 2008: 91). For as far as we know, this all started in Hawaii where the sport has been practiced for an indefinite period of time, before it was discovered by British explorer James Cook in 1778, when he first set foot on the Hawaiian island Oahu (Boot 2012: 12; Hough-Snee & Eastman 2017). It was only at the beginning of the 20th century, when surfing received more attention on the mainland of America and a little later the sport expanded to other parts of the world (Boot 2012: 14). In the 50s, the sport was practiced on several continents, but still by a small group of people. This changed when Columbia Pictures released the film *Gidget* in 1959, which showed the life of a group of young people hanging out on the beach and surfing (ibid: 17). The surf culture exploded and surf films, surf music, surf clothing and surf magazines found their place within American youth culture, which also contributed to the growth of the surf sport (ibid: 17).

In the mid-1960s, the first images of surfers in Hawaii and California appeared on Dutch television (ibid: 28). This inspired small groups of people among others in Noordwijk and Scheveningen to explore the surf potential along the Dutch coast (Boot 2012: 31; Boot 2007; Campbell 2018; Tigges 2020; Surfertoday 2016). In 1973 one of the Dutch surf pioneers Go Klap opened the first Dutch surf shop in Scheveningen (Boot 2007; Boot 2012: 32; Klap s.a.). This is also the year that the Dutch pioneers from different parts of the Netherlands set up the Holland Surf Association (HSA) (Boot 2012: 31). Up till this moment surfing was still an illegal activity in Scheveningen, as being at sea with a floating object was seen as dangerous and therefore prohibited (ibid: 31). In 1974 the surf association succeeded in getting permission from the municipality for members of the surf association to be out on the water surfing before 10 a.m. and after 7 p.m. (ibid: 32). If you wanted to surf these days you needed to be a member of the Holland Surf Association, but as the founders of the association liked to keep their sport exclusive, this membership was not so easy to get and only a small group of people were being accepted (ibid: 31).

⁵ Part of this chapter contains text from my research proposal.

It was only in the 80s that surfing really took off in the Netherlands and from the 1990 till 2000 the surf sport grew from more or less 100 to 1000 practitioners (ibid: 33). From 1994 surfing has been officially legal as from then it is seen as a vessel rather than a floating object (ibid: 32). Nowadays there are numerous surf schools, surf shops and surf camps in the Netherlands and the number of surfers keeps on growing (ibid: 37). During the COVID pandemic this amount has only further increased as most Dutch people stayed in the Netherlands during holidays and surfing was one of the sports which was still allowed to practice with the COVID regulations (Tigges 2020).

This popularization and growth of the sport has led to crowded line-ups in Scheveningen. Especially the group of beginners and 'nice weather surfers' has increased in the last couple of decades, participants told me. This arrival of more and more surfers in the water led to frictions within the once-tight-knit surf community. On the one hand it provoked a 'locals-only-mentality' and on the other hand surfers saw opportunities in the commercial and economic potential of this growing sport (Boot 2012: 33). Nevertheless, within the group who has a 'locals-only-mentality' there is a fear that the sport will become too big and will lose its authenticity with mass practice, something which was also brought up by some of my participants (ibid: 34).

Tensions and a negative attitude towards this big group of newcomers who are often beginner surfers should be placed within the history of exclusion. In addition to this, the beginner surfers and more experienced surfers all compete for the same waves. This means that the newcomers are not only to be seen as a threat to the authenticity of what surfing is about, but also can be seen as extra competition for the already scarce rideable waves. Besides the scarce weather conditions that create good waves, the crowdedness further contributes to this experience of waves as a scarce resource (Anderson 2013: 962). This has led surfers to develop the surf etiquette, which is 'a complicated set of norms and rules that govern behavior in the surf and priority over the waves' (ibid: 962). I will further explain this etiquette at the end of this chapter.

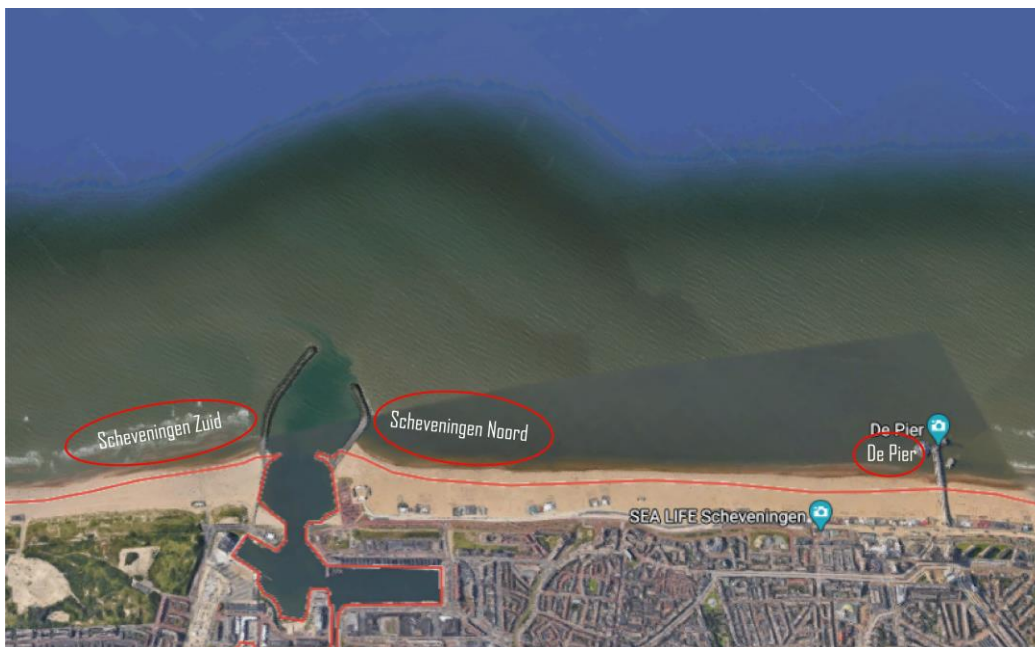
Within this context and considering I am part of this big group of beginner surfers, this influenced the way surfers in Scheveningen saw me. As already discussed earlier this has influenced my relations with participants and the way I could do research. I did this research in Scheveningen Noord, the most famous surf spot in the Netherlands. The crowdedness at this spot and the fact that surfers with all levels of surf experience surf here, made this spot very interesting for me to do my research at.

Scheveningen

'The water is brown and turbid; the sky is grey and the sand is brown. It makes the landscape look monotonous and a little bit gloomy. The only color that is added to the landscape is the red lighthouse and the surfboards that sometimes shoot in the air. The waves are sloppy and the foam of the broken waves adds some more greyish white foam to the landscape. The one-meter waves seem to break at random spots within the space. It is 6 degrees outside and the water must be around the same temperature, nevertheless it does not scare people from going surfing. In fact, it is packed with surfers and for every wave I see at least two to three surfers paddling for a takeoff. They all wear black wetsuits that cover their heads. It makes them look a bit like penguins on surfboards.' (Field notes, 2 December 2020)

This is how I described Scheveningen Noord in December 2020, just before starting my fieldwork. It is a different aesthetic than presented within the surf magazines where the water is clear blue, the waves are big and within the images the photographed surfers seem to be the only one at that spot riding the wave. Nevertheless, Scheveningen attracts a lot of surfers from all parts of the Netherlands and even Germany, participants told me⁶. As described before, in summer time there can be more than 300 people surfing at different line-ups. These line-ups are scattered over a demarcated space of 400 to 100 meters which goes from the harbor head to what is called 'het strekdammetje'. The space to the right of 'het strekdammetje' is meant for the windsurfers and kite surfers.

There are several reasons why Scheveningen is such a famous place to surf and why it is seen as the surf city of the Netherlands (Boardshortz s.a.; Boot 2007; Campbell 2018; Tigges 2020). The harbor head and the location of the sand banks at this spot often ensure that when there is a swell, the waves run well (to Dutch standards).⁷ Also the shipping traffic entering the harbor requires a deep navigation channel, which is beneficial for the power of the waves (Boot 2007). In addition, when the waves are not good at Scheveningen Noord, because of the direction of the waves or strong winds, there are two surf spots very close by. These are surf spot 'Scheveningen Zuid' on the other side of the harbor head and surf spot 'De pier', which is about 2 kilometers further on the other side of the boulevard (see image below).



Map of Scheveningen with the three surf spots Scheveningen Zuid, Scheveningen Noord and De Pier.

Besides this, Scheveningen is centrally located in the Randstad and easy to access by bus and tram from the train stations in The Hague (Boardshortz s.a.; Boot 2007). Furthermore, the surf spot

⁶ This was brought up by Pim, Henk and Mark.

⁷ This was brought up by Mark.

Scheveningen Noord has several surf shops and four surf schools which have contributed to the image of Scheveningen as the place to learn how to surf (Tigges 2020).

Hartbeach was founded in 1984 and is one of the oldest surf schools of the Netherlands (Hartbeach 2020). Besides Hartbeach, also Aloha, Surfles.nl and The Shore are well established surf schools since the 2000s. Nowadays there are also a handful of individual surfers who offer surf coaching to intermediate and advanced surfers, such as Pepijn Tigges and Daan Groeneveld.⁸

These extensive possibilities to get surf lessons still attract a lot of new beginner surfers every year. Although the Dutch waves are not known to be spectacular within the international surf scene, these relatively small waves and no dangerous surfaces also make it very accessible for beginner surfers to learn surfing (Tigges 2020; Campbell 2018). This crowd, the surf schools and shops have contributed to the exposure and activity of surfing, but it has also led to 'overcrowded line-ups, accidents and frustrations' (Boot 2007). This last part is especially interesting for my research about the interplay between danger and power dynamics. I have used the surf etiquette as a frame, to get an understanding of how it relates to both danger and power dynamics at surf spot Scheveningen Noord. I will now explain the surf etiquette in more detail.

Surf etiquette

As described before, the seldom conditions for good waves and crowdedness led surfers to develop a set of norms and rules to govern behavior in the water and regulate priority over the waves (Anderson 2013: 962). This set of norms and rules is known in the surf scene as surf etiquette. As Nazer (2004) describes, some norms can differ a bit from place to place, but overall, there are three norms that are valid within the international surf scene (Nazer 2004: 665). Those are the following:

- Don't 'drop in' on someone, which means you should not take off on a wave which someone else is already surfing on or has priority on (ibid: 665);
- Paddle out around the waves, 'away from the part of the wave most likely to be ridden by others. Nazer mentions this norm is to prevent collisions (ibid: 666);
- Don't let go of your surfboard 'if you are forced to pass through a broken wave' (ibid: 666).

Besides these norms there are more norms valid within the Scheveningen surf scene. Although these etiquettes are said to be unwritten (Nazer 2004: 664), they have been captured on flyers and banners among other things of the Scheveningen surf schools The Shore, Aloha and Hartbeach. Furthermore, some surf books include them, such as Boot (2012). Within the context of the surf schools these flyers and banners are to teach newcomers not only how to surf, but also how to behave within the surf space. Based on the surf etiquette produced with these banners and flyers by The Shore, Aloha, Hartbeach and the Boot (2012), I will further describe the norms which are valid at surf spot Scheveningen Noord. These are the following:

- The person closest to the breaking peak has the priority to take the wave (Boot 2012: 64).⁹

⁸ There are more of these individuals, but for my research I talked only with these two surfers and I joined a coach session of Pepijn Tigges.

⁹ Based on flyers and banners of The Shore, Aloha and Hartbeach.

- Don't snake, meaning don't push the queue when you have just caught a wave. The line-up is like a row, and you are supposed to join back in the row when paddling back and wait your turn.¹⁰
- Communicate with other surfers which direction you are tending to surf; in this case another surfer could decide to still paddle to ride the wave the other side (ibid: 64).¹¹
- If you happen to not have paddled around the wave and are confronted with a breaking wave that approaches you, always paddle towards the broken part of the wave, as you will not be in the way of the surfer riding the wave.¹²
- Always look around you and be alert.¹³

Two participants who work as surf instructors at one of the surf schools in Scheveningen told me that they usually bring up the surf etiquette by the time the pupils start to try and catch unbroken waves¹⁴. This often means they will paddle out and join the line-ups where they have to compete for the same waves with other more experienced surfers. Since it is not obligatory to take lessons before entering the water, this means in reality a lot of beginner surfers just take a couple of lessons to learn the basics of standing on your surfboard and from there only rent a surfboard without a lesson.¹⁵ I did it like this as well, and that meant I did not know the surf etiquette, while I was already paddling out myself and joining these line-ups. When talking with participants, they expressed there are a lot of beginner surfers who just rent a surfboard and don't know the rules¹⁶. When they keep on breaking these social rules, they will be addressed and corrected by other surfers in the water.¹⁷

As Nazer (2004) described, the norms of the surf etiquette are both to govern who 'has priority over a wave and safety issues' (Nazer 2004: 665). Thus, part of the norms that make up the surf etiquette function to reduce dangerous situations and part of the norms functions as a regulation of who gets priority over the waves. This means that the surf etiquette both relates to a context of danger and to a context of power dynamics. Therefore, I use the surf etiquette as a frame in which I try to understand how the surf etiquette is embedded within these two contexts and by doing so explore the interplay between danger and power dynamics at crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord.

To conclude this chapter, it provided a description of the context in which I did my research. I explained how the increased popularization of the surf sport led worldwide to explosive growth of the surf sport from the 1990s. This led to crowded line-ups in Scheveningen, the surf city of the Netherlands. This explosive growth of the group of beginner surfers contextualizes the negative attitude towards beginners which I discussed within the introduction. Lastly, I have described the surf etiquette in more detail, and I explained how I use this as a frame to explore the interplay between danger and power dynamics at Scheveningen Noord. The next chapter focuses on the first

¹⁰ Based on flyers and banners of The Shore, Aloha and Hartbeach.

¹¹ Based on flyers and banners of The Shore, Aloha and Hartbeach.

¹² Based on flyers and banners of The Shore, Aloha and Hartbeach.

¹³ Based on flyers and banners of The Shore, Aloha and Hartbeach.

¹⁴ This was brought up by Pim and Mark.

¹⁵ This was brought up by Pim during our first meeting.

¹⁶ This was brought up by Pim, Mark, Berend and Suzy.

¹⁷ This was brought up by Pim, Mark and Berend.

part of my research question and will examine how surf etiquette is embedded within the context of danger.

'De Mui' (The riptide)

13 January 2021, 13.00

With a little reluctance I am unzipping my pants. I look at the waves and I am asking myself why for God's sake I would take a dip in the cold water without a wetsuit. I was already freezing with my clothes on. Max sees the doubts on my face and smiles 'Come Roosje, it won't be too bad, I do this more often, it is refreshing'. I know Max from a surf trip to Peniche about three years ago. I had not seen him for two years, but thought it would be a fun idea to go surfing in Scheveningen both for my research and to catch up on things. Once we came to the beach, the sea was rough and restless and the waves were about 1,5/2 meters high. Only in the back we saw two experienced surfers, furthermore there were no other surfers to be found. Because we would probably not be able to take waves with these conditions, Max and I decided to postpone the surf session to another day. Instead, Max suggested we take a dip in the ocean. I had seen more people doing this the times that I had been at the beach. And thus, we were changing at the blocks next to the north harbor head, a little sheltered from the wind.

I felt the wind blowing on my stomach, and all the hairs I had stood erect, hoping to still offer some warmth. Max ran ahead to the waves and I ran behind him. With confidence Max ran into the sea and took a dip underwater. My feet touched the sea and immediately my breath protested. 'Okay Roos, don't be a wimp'. I gathered the courage and took a dive in the surf. A shock went through my body, everything hurt. I could not do this, I ran back to my clothes and shivering I started drying myself. Max was swimming a little deeper in the ocean now. Max still seemed to enjoy himself swimming in the water. I had my sweater on and drying my legs, and at the same time looking at Max. He seemed to only go deeper into the sea, which I thought was not a good idea, because he still had to swim back. I put my pants on and looked up again, but did not see Max anymore. 'Oh, my goodness...' At that point I remembered someone once told me there was a riptide next to the blocks which takes you into the open sea. I worried and started to panic a little. What should I do? There were no surfers who could help him, and I did not know what number to call for the help brigades.

A little further on, a man sat on the blocks who had been swimming himself as well. I explained the situation to him and asked if he knew what I could do. The man ran away from the blocks to see if he could see Max somewhere. He ran back and told me he saw him climbing up the blocks. I was relieved, he was out of the cold water. It would be something for Max to climb up the blocks as he would think it would be more adventurous than swimming back, and I thought to myself 'maybe nothing went wrong'. A minute later Max was back. He was shaking and could not say anything else than 'sorry'. He was bleeding on his hands, his knees and had a scratch on his lip and stomach. I gave him my hat and offered him some water. I was worried and thankful at the same time that he stood next to me, still processing what just happened and how wrong this could have gone. About ten minutes later when he had changed himself and we walked over the beach, he started talking. 'I was swimming and all of a sudden, I was very deep into the water. I tried to swim back to the shore, but I only seemed to go deeper. Out of survival I started swimming to the blocks and climbed up'. The blocks were rough and slippery at parts. He could have easily fallen in between the two-meter-high blocks.

That moment in the second week of my fieldwork I realized how dangerous the sea can be and how important it is to be careful. Without knowledge about the sea, something which can seem innocent and playful can be very dangerous. I wondered why there were no warning signs. It seems problematic that it is so easy to go into the sea without knowing anything about what can go wrong.

Chapter 2: Danger

When I asked my participants if there were dangers to surfing the answer was unanimous: YES. During my fieldwork period I experienced this myself as well when my surf friend came into a riptide (as described within the ethnographic vignette of this chapter) and at times that I met my own limits when surfing. Also, within literature surfing has been widely considered as an adventurous and dangerous sport in which people seek for adrenaline and risk (Anderson 2013: 954, Booth 2013: 9; Canniford & Shankar 2013: 1052; Stranger 1999: 266; Stranger 2001: 127; Stranger 2010: 1119; Waitt 2008: 84; Wheaton 2019: 398; Nathanson 2013: 148). Within this chapter I explore in what way danger is experienced as part of the surfing experience in Scheveningen and in what way the surf etiquette relates to these perceptions of danger. Before doing this, I will first discuss the theoretical frame of the concept of danger.

Theorizing danger

Within some of this literature which highlight the component of danger, the existence of danger has been even considered as an integral part of the surf experience, as the risks enable many surfers to experience the adrenaline and thrill that surfers so often seek (Stranger 1999: 266; Stranger 2011; Anderson 2013; Warshaw 2005). Anderson (2013) describes these dangers to be 'the threat of currents, (rip) tides, geological obstacles, prolonged submergence and drowning in this space', which create physical risks that can lead to fatal accidents (Anderson 2013: 957).

There has been extensive literature in which the aspect of danger is analyzed within the surf aesthetic of surf films and magazines (Booth 2008; Ormrod 2005; Beattie 2001; Ormrod 2007; Congdon & King 2002; Stranger 2001; Canniford & Shankar 2013). Within these studies danger and risk-taking are argued to be romanticized within the surf aesthetic. As described by Canniford & Shankar (2013) 'sublime interpretations of nature are common in surfing media that valorize images of surfers getting "tube rides" accompanied by copy that emphasizes the intensity of these situations, portraying nature as a raw, terrifying power' (Canniford & Shankar 2013: 1055). I recognized this aesthetic also within famous surf films such as 'A view from a blue moon' and 'Psychic Migrations' (Veeco Productions 2020; Blake Kueny 2015). Also surf films of Scheveningen produced this aesthetic, such as in the film 'Ongetempt' (Max & Jongeneel 2006). These images which value risk-taking and danger influence the way surfers perceive and look at the danger of the sea. According to Warshaw (2005) these 'near-constant surf media encourages them to take star-making risks' to capture the most phenomenal surf tricks (Warshaw 2005: 417). Through both the romanticized representation of danger produced within the surfing media and through their own bodily experiences, surfers learn to view the waves as 'both terrible and beautiful, as objects of fear and desire, of pleasure and pain - as images of the sublime' (Stranger 2001: 189).

Within other surf-related studies danger and risk-taking has been discussed in relation to gender, among other things the performance of (heroic) masculinity through surfing and the exclusion of women-who-surf within the male dominated surf scene (Yenilmez & Celik 2017: 67; Waitt 2008; Stranger 2001: 113; Ripley 2018: 347; Dean & Bundon 2019: 10; Thompson 2015; Olive & Thorpe 2011; Olive 2019; Brennan 2016: 914; Canniford & Shankar 2013: 1052). Waitt (2008) for example described how the surf zone can be 'understood as an uncontrolled, unordered space that requires

taming by men, these men enjoy surfing as a test of their strength' (Waitt 2008: 84). Here risk-taking and controlling danger are to be seen as a status symbol and an indication of heroic masculinity (Stranger 2001: 90; Waitt 2008: 84). Within this context dying while surfing is being romanticized and is seen as something heroic (Stranger 2001: 131). As Stranger (2001) described the mentality within this context is defined by an idea that 'to have the ultimate thrill, you've got to be prepared to pay the ultimate price' (ibid: 131). In addition to literature on this practice of masculinity, several scholars have been writing about the exclusion of women in the male dominated surf scene. They describe among other things how hetero normative norms in society frame surfing (alongside men) as being too dangerous for women (Yenilmez & Celik 2017: 67; Brennan 2016: 919). Women-who-surf have to deal with the difficulties of negotiating a male-dominated space 'which is coded by masculine embodiment, fantasies and histories' (Waitt 2008: 90). These studies also expose power dynamics within the surf space with an emphasis on power dynamics between men and women. Although these power dynamics also relate to danger, this has not been explicitly analyzed.

What is remarkable within these surf-related studies on masculinity and the surf aesthetic, is that they all emphasize the dangers of the sea. Research on the perception of the danger of the crowd is underexposed in these studies, while this is specifically relevant within the context of the increased crowdedness. I argue that especially the danger of the crowd is an important aspect to look at when studying the interplay between danger and power dynamics at the crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord. Therefore, the next section of this chapter pays attention to both the danger of the sea, the danger of the crowd and the danger of the surfer itself. This chapter aims to unpack how surfers perceive danger and how this relates to the surf etiquette.

Unpacking danger at surf spot Scheveningen Noord

When unpacking danger within the context of Scheveningen, there are different dimensions in which danger takes place and that influence the perception of danger by surfers. For example, sharing the space with swimmers, kite surfers and wind surfers adds new dangers to the context of surfing. I will shortly describe this dimension to discuss how my study is positioned in relation to this dimension and how I have demarcated my research.

As discussed in chapter 1, in general the area for wave surfers and kite surfers/windsurfers has been divided by the The Hague municipality for safety reasons.¹⁸ This division nevertheless functions more as a guideline, and regularly you see both types of surfers crossing to the other area.¹⁹ This does often not cause too much trouble, as the conditions for good wave surfing and windsurfing/kitesurfing differ much²⁰. Remarkably though, there is no division between surfers and swimmers at Scheveningen, which is often the case at crowded beaches outside of the Netherlands²¹. In this context where surfers and swimmers share the same space, this can both

¹⁸ This was brought up by Henk when discussing danger and safety measurements.

¹⁹ This is also based on my own observation during fieldwork.

²⁰ Participant Jim who is a kitesurfer and Ellis who is a wave surfer told me this during the preliminary research.

²¹ This was brought up during the interview with Henk. Also from my own experience in Baleal in summer, I noticed the space was divided for surfers and swimmers, indicated with a sign.

contribute to a safer place and more dangerous situations, one participant explained.²² On the one hand surfers are there to help swimmers in distress who for example get in a riptide, but on the other hand it can create accidents when surfboards come against a swimmer's head. Because of the time frame in which I could do my research, I decided to mainly focus on exploring the dangers perceived between wave surfers who share the same space.

During interviews with my participants the perceived dangers of surfing could be divided into three categories: the danger of the sea, the danger of the crowd and the danger of the surfer itself. Participants expressed that all three of these dangers were present when surfing in Scheveningen, nevertheless they were contextualized differently by the surfers.

When discussing the dangers of surfing, participants often brought up the dangers of the sea first. They expressed how the sea is always unpredictable and therefore is always dangerous. Some surfers referred to the accident on 11 May 2020 when five surfers died as an example of the unpredictability of the sea (Kraaijeveld 2020; Douglas 2020; Kolirin 2020)²³. The dangers of the sea in Scheveningen include: riptides (especially the one next to the north harbor head), powerful waves, currents, extreme weather conditions, from which you can drown or become hypothermic. Also being smashed to the blocks of the harbor head was mentioned as a danger when there would be a strong north east wind. When discussing these dangers, participants explained that the unpredictability of the sea always brings risk to surfing, but that taking calculated risks and respecting your own limits could also reduce these dangers.

The opinions were divided with the question if danger and risk were an integral part of the surf experience. Two participants agreed that danger and risk in the sense of pushing your own limits gave them the thrill and made surfing fun.²⁴ For other participants danger was not necessarily part of their surf experience. One of them explained he could experience as much of a thrill on a day with big powerful waves as on a day with small waves and sunny weather²⁵. In the first case he would experience the thrill from competing against the elements of nature, while in the case of small waves he would get a thrill of being one with the wave. One participant on the other hand indicated that danger was not at all part of her surfing experience, for her it was all about being in nature and being in connection with the sea²⁶.

Thus, within the context of Scheveningen danger and risk was experienced as part of the surf experience for some surfers, but it was not necessary for everybody. Remarkable here was that the danger which was described as part of the surf experience was about the unpredictability of the sea and powerful waves which were pushing the limits of the surfer. The danger of the crowd was not mentioned here when asking if danger was part of the surf experience. The absence of the danger of the crowd within these conversations is in a way similar to its absence within the surf aesthetic. Within both these conversations and in the aesthetic of the surf images the dangers of the sea were

²² This was brought up by Henk when talking about the dangers and safety measurements.

²³ This was brought up by Suzy, Ben, Madelief, Pim and Sabine.

²⁴ This was brought up by Pim and Mark.

²⁵ Mick told me this during our first meeting.

²⁶ Experienced longboarder Rachel brought this up during the interview.

being romanticized. When bringing this up and asking my participants how the danger of the crowd then relates to their surf experience, one participant said:

“The crowd is just annoying, surfing is about the waves, and the crowd disrupts that. You get a thrill from bigger waves, but not from people who are in the way.”²⁷

This influence of the films and magazines on the perception of danger of surfing, as described by Warshaw (2005) and Stranger (2001) might explain the absence of the danger of the crowd when discussing the role of danger within the surf experience (Warshaw 2005: 417; Stranger 2001: 189). The absence of the danger of the crowd within these conversations could also be explained by what Stranger (2001) said:

‘Existence of hazards over which the participants have little or no control do not usually contribute to the thrill of the sport. Risk provides a motivating thrill when it challenges the skill of the participant, not when it distracts from the participants' focus on their chosen activities.’ (Stranger 2001: 127)

Thus, where the dangers of the sea contribute to experiencing a thrill when the skill of the participant is being challenged, the dangers of the crowd can be seen as hazards which distract their focus from what surfing is about: riding waves.

Nevertheless, the danger of the crowd is a real danger within the context of crowded line-ups nowadays and therefore needs to receive more attention. This danger has been often described as the risk of collisions with other surfers. In this way you can get injured by getting someone else's surfboard against you for example. Several participants explained how the danger of the crowd adds another dimension to surfing. As participants described and as I experienced myself during participant observation, surfers constantly make an estimate of what the waves are going to do and how surfers are going to move around them through the space. Based on this estimate, they navigate their position within this space to be able to catch waves.

The feeling of safety also relates to perceptions of beginners as mentioned by more experienced surfer Mick. He explained that making an estimate of what surfers around you are going to do, helps to reduce the danger of collisions. He felt less safe surfing with beginner surfers around him, as they are often unpredictable which makes it more difficult to make an estimate of what they will do:

“Last time I had a wave and I thought someone would paddle fast over the unbroken part of the wave. But instead, he stopped paddling when he saw me approaching, which I had not anticipated. I could not go around him and had to jump off the wave”.²⁸

This experience of unsafety related to beginners was also brought up by Theo. He had a bad experience with a collision in his childhood which still impacts the way Theo navigates through the

²⁷ This was brought up by Matteo during the interview.

²⁸ This was brought up by Mick in the interview.

water when there are more people surfing. He competes within the Dutch Surf Championships and is considered to be one of the best surfers of the Netherlands. When he was twelve a girl surfed towards him and she lost control of her surfboard. Her surfboard went into his stomach and made a tear in his kidney. He had to lay down in the hospital for eleven days. Since this accident he still avoids the crowd, and often paddles out to more quiet surf breaks. Even though he is one of the best surfers and would win the competition over a wave easily, the danger of collisions with others where he has no control of, keeps him away from the best surf breaks.

Besides the dangers of the sea and the danger of the crowd, surfers also discerned the danger of the surfer itself. This often relates to ignorance or overconfidence of a surfer, which can bring the surfer in a situation where he goes beyond his own borders. This can lead to dangerous situations. He can get his own surfboard against his head when not in control of his surfboard for example. But also getting in a riptide can be dangerous if the surfer does not know how to handle this.

Surf etiquette and the context of danger

To understand how surfers perceive and use the surf etiquette it is important to examine how this relates to the perceptions of danger. Within this context specifically the danger of the crowd is relevant. To reduce risks of collisions the surf etiquette might be used as a guideline for surfers on how to move through the water and anticipate others. These guidelines help surfers better to estimate what other surfers are going to do and, in this way, helps to reduce the danger of collisions. Nevertheless, as discussed before, a lot of beginners don't know these rules or have not yet embodied these rules. They are not yet in control of moving their body on a surfboard and in this way are not able to follow the rules. I experienced this also during my participant observation as discussed in the chapter positionality and methodology.

In this way it is this combination of more experienced surfers and beginners surfing in the same space that makes a dangerous situation. Beginner surfers on the one hand can be ignorant and within their enthusiasm can just start to paddle without looking around them and without paying attention to other surfers. On the other hand, experienced surfers can be overconfident and can be taking risks as they think they can maneuver around other surfers²⁹. In the situation that a beginner does not do what the experienced surfer had estimated, this can lead to collisions. Within this context my participants emphasized the importance of surf etiquette to reduce the risks of collisions.

To conclude this chapter, it provided insights into how surfers in Scheveningen perceive the dangers of surfing and in what way the surf etiquette relates to these perceptions. I looked at existing theories about danger. I argued that within these studies the danger of the crowd has been underexposed, while this is specifically relevant when trying to understand the interplay between danger and power dynamics at crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord. The danger of the crowd was also absent in conversations with participants about the role of danger within the surf experience. Nevertheless in regards to the surf etiquette, it is the danger of collisions which is aimed to be reduced. In the next chapter I will explore how these surf etiquettes relate to a context of

²⁹ This was brought up by Merel during the interview.

power dynamics. I will do so by first describing a theoretical framework of the concept of politics of waves. Then I will discuss how the waves are being regulated at Scheveningen and how individual surfers develop strategies to have an advantage over other surfers to catch waves. Within this context, I will argue that the surf etiquette can be problematic.

New surfboard

4 February 2021, 14:00

“Come on in”, Ben opens the door and asks me how I am doing. We had met once before, and today we would talk further about his experiences in regards to the crowdedness and danger. I walked behind him up the stairs. “So, these are two of my surfboards, but I have not used them much lately”. Two shortboards with a pointy nose greeted me when entering the door to his apartment. “Yeah, and I bought a new surfboard for the crowded situation”, Ben told me with excitement. He pointed towards a short green surfboard which stood in the middle of his room. “Look, it is a shortboard soft top, so it has more volume, which makes it easier to catch a wave. And because it is a soft top, it won’t break so fast, when you bump into someone.” I only knew soft top surfboards as beginner boards, and had no idea short boards of this type existed. “But can you make turns with it then?”, I asked as this is often difficult with the beginner board soft tops. “Yeh that is the cool part, the rails are quite thin, so you have a grip on the wave. But it feels different I have to say, I have to get used to it. But it is just not doable to surf with my other surfboards at Scheveningen anymore, I can’t catch any waves with the crowdedness, so I hope with this surfboard it will become easier”.

Chapter 3: Power dynamics

Within the previous chapter I have discussed how there are real dangers to surfing and that surfers are aware of this fact. I discussed how the surf etiquette functions within the context of danger, more specifically as a way to reduce the danger of collisions. In this chapter I will examine how the surf etiquette relates to power dynamics. I do so by first theorizing the concept of politics of space and by proposing a new concept 'politics of waves' within the context of surfing. From here I discuss how the politics of waves come about in Scheveningen by looking at how the waves are being regulated and how individual surfers use strategies to have an advantage over other surfers to catch waves. Lastly, I discuss how the surf etiquette can be problematized within the context of power dynamics between beginner and more experienced surfers.

Theorizing politics of space

When trying to understand the power dynamics that are at play at surf spot Scheveningen Noord the concept politics of space is useful. Although this concept has been explored broadly within anthropological literature often in the field of governance, surprisingly this concept has not yet been examined within research on surfing. Nevertheless, I argue that this concept is also applicable to processes that happen in the surf space.

Anthropological studies on governance approach politics of space often on a macro level and examine the ways that a physical space is used, organized and constantly being negotiated by different actors. For example, Verkaaik (2020) looked at the conflicts that arose with the construction of a new mosque building in Almere, which reveals how different actors think about the organization and use of the space they live in. In addition, Cassar (2018) studied politics of space in the context of forced migratory attempts by Syrian refugees and explored how the rights to asylum are shaped and constantly (re)negotiated. Also, Littlejohn (2020) looked at the conflicts that arose with the reconstruction of the small village Minamisanriku after the tsunami. He describes how the rhetoric of safety was used by the municipality to decide how to rearrange the space which represented their interests. This rhetoric of safety also plays a role within the surf etiquette which regulate priority over the waves, thus prescribing how and by whom the space should be used.

I argue that the same processes of politics of space take place within the context of surfing. With this I mean the processes of negotiating the organization and use of the surfing space. Within this study I explore the politics of space on a micro level by looking at how the waves are being regulated and appropriated by surfers at crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord. Within this context of surfing, I introduce a new concept 'politics of waves', which emphasizes the regulation and appropriation of the waves. Anthropological literature on regulations of surfing emphasizes the regulation of the waves instead of the regulation of the space (Uekusa 2019; Usher & Gómez 2017; Comley 2011; Daskalos 2007; Olivier 2010). Also, within conversations with my participants it became clear that it is not so much the space which is being appropriated and regulated, but that it is about the waves which constantly break at different places in this surfing space.

The crowdedness plays a role within these politics of waves. Within the context of crowdedness these waves can be experienced by surfers as a scarce resource (Anderson 2013: 992; Uekusa 2019:

540). The approach to waves as scarce or limited resources have also been discussed within more surf-related research (Lawson-Remer & Valderrama 2010) (Olivier 2010) (Eberlein 2011) (Comley 2011) (Usher & Gómez 2017) (Uekusa 2019). In this case the waves are not seen as being at risk of overexploitation in the long term, which is often experienced with other common resources, but can be seen as 'cultural overuse' (Anderson 2013: 996). The number of surfers won't influence the number of waves coming in in the long term, but the crowdedness can keep surfers from 'the momentary experience of the surfed wave' (ibid: 996). Especially with the general surfing rule of "one person per wave" does, also according to Uekusa (2019), 'not always let all surfers enjoy riding as many waves as they want in crowded and competitive line-ups' (Uekusa 2019: 540).

In addition to the crowdedness, good surfable waves are already relatively rare (Lawson-Remer & Valderrama 2010:13; Eberlein 2011: 21). This is because the waves are shaped by a combination of natural factors, such as: 'the tide, wind, swell, height and directions, as well as seabed conditions and the shape of the shore/beach' (Eberlein 2011: 21). In the Netherlands the conditions for good waves are even more rare in comparison to other European surf countries, because of the location of England, which blocks the waves that come from the northern Atlantic Ocean. The longer a wave travels across the ocean, the more powerful and clean it will be when arriving at the coast. This makes the waves that arrive in Scheveningen often messy and unorganized. At moments when the conditions are good for clean and powerful waves, many surfers come to Scheveningen Noord to enjoy riding them. This scarcity of good waves and the increased crowdedness has led to a regulation of surfing (Comley 2011: 19; Anderson 2013: 962; Ford & Brown 2006). The concept 'politics of waves' is relevant here to get a better understanding of the power dynamics that are at play in processes of negotiating the regulation and individual appropriation of waves.

Ways of regulating the waves have been discussed within anthropological literature (Uekusa 2019; Usher & Gómez 2017; Comley 2011; Daskalos 2007; Olivier 2010). Anderson (2013) describes that there are two processes of regulation: surf provenance and surfer-positioning (Anderson 2013: 955). Surf provenance can also be seen as 'localism', in which local surfers claim to have more right on surfing the waves than outsiders (Evers 2007: 1) (Anderson 2013: 963). The process of surfer-positioning starts from the idea 'that the surfer closest to where the wave is breaking has the right to ride that wave' (Anderson 2013: 964). With both these regulations 'complex games of assimilation and exclusion take place' (Evers 2007: 1; Anderson 2013: 962). Surfers can 'use intimidation and physicality to territorialize the space' of the surf spot and how this defines who belongs to the space (the locals or those well-positioned on a wave), and those who do not belong (non-locals, and those waiting for a wave) (ibid: 965).

Uekusa (2019) described how these two processes of regulations can take place at the same time and can be used alternately by an individual surfer within different contexts to claim priority over a wave (Uekusa 2019). She used Bourdieu's concept of capital and argued that surfers use different types of capital to have an advantage over other surfers in catching waves. Within this context 'being part of the insider group of locals' and 'the experience and skill to position oneself closest to the peak' can be seen as capitals, which are used alternately by individual surfers within different contexts. For example, when a surfer is part of the insiders' group, he can use the regulation of localism to claim the right to surf a wave when competing for waves with an outsider. But when this

insider is competing with another insider for waves he can use the surfer-positioning to claim the right to ride the wave. Within this chapter I will discuss how the waves are being regulated at surf spot Scheveningen Noord and what other ways individual surfers use to get priority over waves within the context of crowdedness.

Regulations of the waves in Scheveningen

Although Scheveningen has a small group of surfers who consider themselves local and feel they should have more priority over the waves, according to my participants this localism is by far not as strongly experienced as in other countries. Abroad localism can result in threatening foreign surfers and go to blows³⁰. Within these contexts localism can be experienced as another danger of surfing. Within the context of Scheveningen, these locals don't go to blows, but they do yell at other surfers when they are in their way of taking any wave, they want³¹. Also, a couple years ago some locals had painted the text 'locals only' on one of the harbor blocks, which indicates the presence of this group that try to exclude the big group of newcomers to Scheveningen.³² Nevertheless this text has been removed again.

According to my participants this group of locals is not really taken seriously. As one of my participants said:

“We just laugh at these people; they are being made fun of. It does not work to try and regulate it here in Scheveningen, because it is too crowded. Furthermore, it is pathetic to have localism over the waves we have here. I understand the effort of localism better at other spots with high waves, but here it is not really worth it.”³³

Thus, at surf spot Scheveningen Noord the regulation through localism is not that strong. Within this context surfer-positioning is used as the common process of regulation. This means that the surfer closest to the breaking peak has priority over the wave. This regulation is also one of the norms of surf etiquette. I argue that this is problematic when placing this within the context of crowdedness and the context of power dynamics between more experienced surfers and beginner surfers who compete for the same waves.

Problematizing the surf etiquette

With the regulation of surfer-positioning, surfers with more experience, knowledge and skill have an advantage over beginner surfers. It takes practice, knowledge and physical strength to be able to see where a wave will break and to position yourself at the right spot when the wave breaks. Especially in the Netherlands, where a set of waves never breaks exactly at the same spot. With this regulation, in practice this means that more experienced surfers have more priority over the waves than beginner surfers. With the surfer-positioning as one of the norms of the surf etiquette, this means more experienced surfers can use this surf etiquette to their advantage to get priority over the

³⁰ In conversations with Pepijn, Mark, Pepijn, Bas, Marcello, Sabine and Marieke.

³¹ During the interview with Mark, see footage interview on 31 May 2021.

³² Described in conversation with Bas, see notes 11 January 2021.

³³ During a conversation with Hans, see notes 25 February 2021.

waves. This leads to situations in Scheveningen where experienced surfers take lots of waves and where beginner surfers catch no waves. In this way the surf etiquette justifies and maintains the power dynamics between more experienced and beginner surfers. Nevertheless, within these established power dynamics, (beginner) surfers use other ways to catch waves.

Strategies to catch more waves

Within the context of crowdedness my participants use different ways to be able to still catch waves. One of the strategies is the choice of surfboard which can give an advantage in the competition of paddling for waves (as also discussed within the ethnographic vignette). With a surfboard with more volume, you were more likely to catch a wave. In this way longboarders are often also in an advantage when competing for the same waves as shortboarders. Some participants who surfed on shortboards mentioned that this could be frustrating, but overall longboarders and shortboarders like to ride different types of waves. This divides them over different breaks.

Secondly, knowledge about the spot, surf skills and condition (experience) can give a surfer the advantage to catch waves over surfers with less experience. This point is especially important in understanding the advantage that more experienced surfers have with the surf etiquette. It is their knowledge which enables them to position closest to the breaking peak and get priority over the wave within the frame of the surf etiquette. With this experience they will always have priority over a wave compared to beginner surfers who can't estimate yet where the wave will break or are not skilled enough to navigate smoothly through the water.

Thirdly, one of my participants mentioned he used to paddle with confidence which resulted in other surfers who were less confident would not paddle for the same wave. Reflecting upon my own experience while surfing, if I would see another surfer paddling with confidence this would indeed also keep me from paddling for a wave. Often when I saw surfers paddling in such a way, I was too intimidated and felt too insecure to also paddle for it. This made me more aware of my own position within these power dynamics that are at play at the line-up. This shows that the power dynamics can be embodied in the way more experienced surfers move around confidently and less experienced surfers move more carefully.

Fourthly, surfers expressed they would just go surfing at a less busy time of the day. This could be early in the morning or moments that most people were working. Nevertheless, this required flexibility and the knowledge of what weather conditions created good.

Fifthly, surfers would surf at less crowded surf breaks when it was crowded. These were often surf breaks where the waves were less clean or powerful, but because the line-up at these places were smaller, there was less competition for these waves.

Sixthly, surfers would simply go to other surf spots where there was a smaller crowd. Some surfers expressed they did not go to Scheveningen Noord anymore, because it was too crowded. Instead, they would go to other spots not known yet by the bigger audience of surfers. Surfers often wanted to keep these spots a secret, to avoid these spots from also getting crowded.

Within this chapter I discussed the politics of waves at surf spot Scheveningen Noord and problematized the surf etiquette within the context of power dynamics. I argued that through the regulation of surfer-positioning which is promoted by the surf etiquette, experienced surfers are at an advantage of catching waves within the context of crowdedness. In this way the surf etiquette establishes power dynamics between beginner and more experienced surfers.

Conclusion

With the increased popularity of the surf sport over the last decades, the group of people surfing in the Netherlands has grown explosively since the nineties, which has led to crowded line-ups at surf spot Scheveningen Noord. This has increased the competition over the waves and the risk of collisions. Within this context waves can be experienced as scarce, moreover this scarcity is about the experience of riding a good wave which becomes scarcer when it is crowded. The discourse around 'kooks' and beginners in the surf community reveal tensions towards the big group of beginners who are new to the sport and don't follow the surf etiquette. Surf etiquette exists as a set of unwritten rules which prescribe how to behave in the water and regulate who gets priority over a wave. By using the surf etiquette as a frame, this study has explored the interplay between danger and power dynamics at crowded surf spot Scheveningen Noord. I did so by examining how the surf etiquette relates to both perceptions of danger and processes of power dynamics at Scheveningen Noord.

I argue that the surf etiquette contributes to established power dynamics between experienced and beginner surfers. The regulation over the waves is based on the idea that the person closest positioned to the breaking peak gets priority over the wave. In practice this means that the person who knows best where the wave will break and who is the fittest to position himself closest to this break will get priority over the wave. In this way the surf etiquette can be used by more experienced surfers to get priority over the wave and they can justify this advantage through the framing of danger within the etiquette. Thus I argue the framing of danger within the surf etiquette further contributes to these power dynamics at surf spot Scheveningen Noord.

In practice this makes it hard for beginners to catch waves when they have to compete for the same waves as experienced surfers. However, within this competition for waves, they find other ways to still enjoy the experience of surfing. Ways that surfers mentioned within this study were: the choice of surfboard; improving knowledge about the spot, surf skills and condition; paddling with confidence; surfing on other less busy times of the day; surfing at less crowded surf breaks and going to less busy surf spots. Surfers looked for other ways to enjoy riding waves.

Within this study I also discussed how the danger of the sea is romanticized within the surf aesthetic in surf magazines and surf films, while the danger of the crowd seems absent within this surf aesthetic. This danger of the crowd was also absent within literature and within conversations about the surf experience. This is remarkable as it is the danger of the crowd which is more so present within crowded line-ups and which plays an important role within the surf etiquette.

Thus, this study showed how there are real dangers to surfing and that the surf etiquette is used to reduce the danger of the crowd (reducing the risk of collisions). Besides the increasing risk of collisions, the crowdedness also impacts power dynamics at the surf spot as more surfers have to compete for the same waves. This competition over the waves and the risk of collision both can be reasons which hinder the surfer in catching a wave. This can lead to frustrations and more often surfers express this frustration to people who are in the way or don't follow the surf etiquette. This frustration is also carried out within the discourse around 'kooks' and beginners. However, within

this discourse the perspective of the beginner who might be struggling with following the surf etiquette is not included.

Looking back to the Portuguese surfer yelling at me in 2016 and placing it within the context of my research, his frustration is more understandable. He might have been frustrated for not finishing his wave or he might have been scared of the risk of collision. Nevertheless, by yelling at me, he made me feel intimidated and insecure. It is ironic that his frustration towards me for not following the surf etiquette, which functions to reduce danger, created an unsafe space for me. Should the surf etiquette not also prescribe behavior which creates a social safe space and which is more beginner friendly?

To give shape to my wish to activate critical thinking within the surf community I created a magazine. This magazine questions the discourse around 'kooks' and the absence of crowdedness within the surf aesthetic of danger. It furthermore aims to promote a 'safe space' which goes beyond the surf etiquette. By doing so, the aim of this magazine is to open up the conversation between beginner and more experienced surfers to discuss ways of interacting with each other within the crowded line-ups and in what way we can create both a physical and social 'safe space'.

To conclude, by looking at the interplay between danger and power dynamics, this study has contributed to debates concerning power dynamics, danger and crowdedness in the context of surfing. I recommend doing extended research on the politics of waves and danger, to get further insights in the power dynamics that are at play in many facets. The role that the image of danger plays within power dynamics between men and women can be a focus of research for example. Another research could be exploring the interplay between danger and politics of waves within the context of Nazare, where big wave surfing (another scale of danger) and localism (another type of regulation) are big at this place. This can give further insights into the interplay between danger and power dynamics.

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