Sociología del Deporte

Turn-Taking in the Surfing Lineup

Tomando turnos al hacer surf

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- Rules
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Abstract

This article addresses the specific issue of rules and turn-taking in surfing from an ethnomethodological approach. The naturally occurring coordination of turn-taking of surfers riding ocean waves permits us to examine the nature of organizing local orderlinesses. Operating without officials or external supervision, surfers find ways to enhance safety and keep conflict to a minimum, while avoiding a burdensome structure of rule governance. The microsocial structures that envelop them expose unexpected properties of rules, including a fundamental "occasioned" character that is respectful of the complexity of their affairs. Further, moralities are dependent upon local contingencies that are less than stable and too numerous and shifting to be accounted for by a comprehensive and invariant rule set.

Palabras clave

- *Reglas*
- *Turnos*
- *Surf*
- *Etnometodología*
- *Garfinkel.*

Resumen

Este artículo aborda el tema específico de las reglas y la toma de turnos en surfing desde un enfoque etnometodológico. La coordinación natural de los turnos por parte de los surfistas que surcan las olas del océano nos permite examinar la naturaleza de fenómenos referidos a la organización de órdenes locales. Operando sin oficiales o supervisión externa, los surfistas encuentran formas de aumentar la seguridad y mantener el conflicto al mínimo, mientras evitan una estructura onerosa de gobernanza de reglas. Las estructuras microsociales que los envuelven exhiben propiedades inesperadas de las reglas, incluido un carácter fundamental "ocasionado" que es respetuoso de la complejidad de sus asuntos. Además, las moralidades dependen de contingencias locales que son menos que estables y demasiado numerosas y cambiantes para ser explicadas por un conjunto de reglas integral e invariante.

In October 2013, *Surfer Magazine* published a special issue on "Crowd Control" featuring the topics of rules, localism, and comparing current and former surfing line-ups in order to shed light on the problem and consider possible solutions. Far from being a solved issue, matters are getting worse, as the number of surfers keeps rising in every country, leading to overcrowding at surfing breaks.

The principal issue is that rides are becoming scarcer, even while the spirit of surfing remains resistant to being governed by rules that might alleviate the situation. Sociological research has shown the unique cultural value systems in lifestyle/action sports, which tend to oppose the default assumptions about rules and hierarchies from conventional competitive sports (Wheaton 2004; Thorpe and Wheaton 2013; Crocket 2015). Ugo Corte summarizes this resistance to rules: "Activities such as surfing, skateboarding, snowboarding, and BMX [have] been labeled 'lifestyle sports' because an ethos of anti-competitiveness, anti-regulations, high risk, personal freedom, and artistic expression differs from traditional mainstream sports." (2013, 25)

Despite the interesting and considerable body of studies from the sociology of sport that has already discussed hierarchies and rule-structures in surfing culture (Ford and Brown 2006; Daskalos 2007; Olivier 2010; Stranger 2011; Booth 2012), we examine here the specific issue of rules and turn-taking in surfing, employing an ethnomethodological approach (Garfinkel 1963,1967, 2002). On a similar vein —although based on the standard Conversation Analysis approach—, Ivarsson and Greiffenhagen (2015) analysed the activity of pool skating as some kind of 'turn-taking system' (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). Through non-predetermined bodily actions, the skaters were able to maintain the activity going, to accomplish highly coordinated turns transitions, avoiding overlaps in riding and provoking only very small gaps between rides (p.407). There are obvious differences between skating in a pool and surfing that affect turn taking in both activities: for instance, surfing features changing conditions of the environment and a variable supply of waves for the rides; the length of the ride is constrained by the wave, etc. Nevertheless, both activities share some interesting elements in relation to taking turns: the multiple waiting riders for the next turn (sometimes initiating multiple pre-beginnings at the same time); the self-selection of riders for the next turn, as one rider cannot select the one who goes next; or the non-interactive determination of turns[1].

Our focus of research is the relationship between rules and turn-taking. However, not the formal analysis of the different types of rules that surfers use to accomplish turn-takings for riding waves but to offer detailed analyses of the *in vivo* work of the members within real situations through the use of locally specific ethnomethods. It is in precise and detailed empirical analysis of the *in vivo* work of the members in various cases analyzed that we can find what formal classifications misses. Garfinkel (2002, 99) suggests that formal analysis is too narrowly rigid to be able to observe the complexity, temporality, and development of social facts, a lacuna that Garfinkel has named "*the missing what*." We are interested in analyzing naturally occurring phenomena of surfers taking turns in the "lineup" as they wait for ocean waves so that we can discover, identify and describe the missing what of taking turns in surfing. The situation we are examining is evident in Fig 1.

Fig 1. A crowded lineup of surfers waiting for the waves in Santa Cruz, California

[1] The non-interactive determination of turns in pool skating is due to the fact that the end of a turn is only determined by the current rider (Ivarsson and Greiffenhagen 2015,425). In surfing there is no interaction to determine the next turn, as the next turn comes with the next wave so the previous rider (previous turn) is out of the scene.

The empirical data presented in this article were gathered through the analysis of surfing footage filmed since 2013 in many international surfing spots: *Honu*, Mar Del Plata, Argentina (2 hr); *Quebramar*, Sao Paulo, Brazil (1.5 hr); *Klitmoller*, Denmark (5 hr); *Varazze*, Liguria, Italy (5 hr); *El Socorro*, Mexico (1 hr); *Los Locos*, Cantabria, Spain (1.5h); *Pleasure Point*, Santa Cruz, USA (2 hr); *Steamer Lane*, Santa Cruz, USA (1 hr); *Huntington Beach*, USA (1 hr); *El Porto*, LA, USA (1h); *Swami's*, Encinitas, USA (1.5 hr). This international approach of the collected phenomena made our findings more robust. It permitted us to use a comparative approach that provided some insights about cultural differences in surfing communities around the globe. We analyzed the footage together, classifying and analyzing clips to generate an extended corpus of turn-taking phenomena. One of the authors (Kenneth Liberman) has been surfing for 45 years and had expert perception and knowledge about surfing practices. In this sense, our method of analysis resonated with Evers's (2006) recommendations on the importance of embodied surf research. Moreover, Liberman presented and discussed the clips with several groups of surf experts in Denmark, San Diego, and Mexico to enhance the analysis. Thus, we followed the methodological strategy coined by Garfinkel (2002) as "hybrid studies", aimed at refining the analysis of the phenomena through iterative loops of analysis/discussion between ethnomethodologists and experts in the specific activity under study.

The ethnomethodological analysis of rules in sport

Surfing is unlike many organized sports in that no official is present to call violations, assign penalties, distribute turns, or allocate rights; the surfers must do all of that organizing themselves. It might be said that surfing is an *unorganized* sport, but it is not disorganized. Wave after wave, set after set, somehow someone obtains a ride, collisions are avoided, and the chaos is only apparent. What is going on in the lineup? How do people get a turn? Are there rules, and if so what are they? Even more importantly, *what are rules, after all*? That has become our fundamental question. The problem of turn allocation in surfing can provide us with a naturally occurring opportunity to study what rules are, how they are shaped, where they come from, what benefits they might offer to parties, and what authority they invoke.

Rules are not as straightforward as we usually think. Harold Garfinkel has taught us that rules are always "tangled" in local circumstances (Garfinkel,

2002: 65), and the local contingencies of each moment complicate any straightforward, common sense application of rules. A problem we must face is that we sociologists have had it mostly wrong about how rules function in the world, mostly because we have been accepting uncritically some common sense notions about rules and then using them as the basis for our own thinking. Don Zimmerman and Mel Pollner (1970, 81) have written:

> Sociological inquiry is addressed to phenomena recognized and described in common-sense ways while at the same time such common-sense recognitions and descriptions are pressed into service as fundamentally unquestioned resources for analyzing the phenomena thus made available for study. Thus, contemporary sociology is characterized by a confounding of topic and resource.

In sociology there is justification for using the analysis of games and sports as a prime hunting area in which to study the interactions that happen in everyday environments. That is the strategy used by Garfinkel. According to Garfinkel, research on constitutive expectations regarding normativity "hold not only for game interactions but for interactions of serious life as well" (1963: 201). With this in mind we can understand the studies of authors such as Izquierdo (2003) where he proposed a detailed analysis of football referees as a privileged activity from which to study the disparate fields of science, and particularly social science methodology. This also applies to Kew (1986, 1987,1990, 1992) where he, following the ethnomethodological program, investigates the question of the rules in the sport as a particular case to understand the forms of social interaction. Kew (1986) carried out an investigation of team games, such as football or basketball, involving cooperation and opposition at the same time, and examined "the constant flow of everyday interactions" (p. 309). Following the original article of Garfinkel (1963), Watson (2009) deepens the discussion on basic rules (official rules of the game) and preference rules, which involve a number of considerations on "efficiency, efficacy, aesthetic preference, conventional play, precedent play, traditional play and the rest." (Garfinkel, 1963: 192). The expectations that are constitutive of a game relate primarily to the basic rules and in a weaker sense to the preference rules of the game. Breaking the expectations regarding the preference of the game does usually not threaten the constitutive order of the game as would occur if the break regards the basic rules. Sánchez-García and Fele (2015) differentiated between basic rules, ethical rules (rules of fair play) and praxical

rules (preference rules in Garfinkelian terms) to study natural occurring phenomena of six different types of game actions in sport.

In order to characterize the different phenomena of rule use in the surfing line-up beyond a mere analytical classification we need to study the in vivo interaction of the members involved in this activity. Thus, we would like to propose an ethnomethodological respecification on the analysis of rules in surfing, a topic we discuss in the rest of the paper.

An ethnomethodological respecification of rules in surfing

We as sociologists need to think more originally about what rules really are. Surfers know better than that, and so should we. As surfing becomes increasingly overcrowded, these questions are of interest not only to sociologists but to surfers, and surfing publications have been analyzing the rules and the moralities of the lineup in order to shed light on the phenomenon of turn-taking in the lineup, but their analyses fall short of identifying and describing what is really going on. Because the phenomenon of order in surfing is dense and does not emphasize the rational, we do not want to make our description more abstract than it is or introduce anything artificial, mistaking the topic for an explanatory resource.

There *are* rules in surfing. In fact, one difficulty is that there are too many rules and they sometimes overlap; making it difficult to be clear about which rule should be applied. The rule that the inside surfer has the right to the wave ("Don't drop in") must compete with other rules that direct that the first person to stand up has a right to the wave or that the surfer in the best position to get the best ride that the wave affords (especially if that surfer's skill level is higher) has priority.

Fig 2. A sign presenting surfing rules and etiquette at Somo Beach, Cantabria (Spain)

In Fig 2, the sign is shaped in the form of a surfboard, in hopes of making following rules more palatable to surfers. In the face of highly dynamic ocean-generated local contingencies, it is not an easy matter to decide which rule is applicable. As in the case of claiming parking spaces, rules often become accented to one's own benefit. Moreover, surfers do not act the way they act because there are rules. They are trying to ride a wave, which is mostly a non-verbal and even non-reflective activity.

While a surfer is able to anticipate where and how a wave will break, and so project where an "owner" of that wave will need to be, waves are fickle and their shape is quickly altered by unanticipated changes in the ocean's bottom, and so the priority spot of outside rider can switch several times during the immanent approach of a wave. Surfers need to adapt swiftly to the developing shape of the wave and its likely point of breaking and the riding priorities that it is likely to bestow. The surfing lineup consists not simply of bodies and wave-forms but of projected trajectories of how those bodies are likely to appropriate the space afforded by an approaching wave. The phenomenal field of surfing includes these continuously shifting projected trajectories of bodies, which leaves surfers with little time for considering "rules" (Doug Macbeth, personal comment).

To a large extent, "rules" are the analyst's abstraction, and are something that people mostly think about afterwards. Speaking of jurors, Garfinkel (1967, 114) has written, "Persons define retrospectively decisions that have been made. *The outcome comes before the decision*" (Garfinkel's italics). Analysts usually overelaborate rules. Rather than being a firm schedule, rules are an *ever-shifting*, protean set of resources that can be used to help order local affairs: they are resources that can be used when they help and ignored when they are unlikely to help. Above all, the life of rules consists of being a resource for rendering accounts of the emerging local order. This means that rules are a phenomenon of discourse, not of action; and above all, surfers are engaged in action, not talk. While rules can be used by local parties to produce order, that mostly occurs only after

the riding has happened; that is, when rules are employed skillfully, they can assist surfers in organizing a situation that occurs; but normally the situation occurs *first*, and the rules afterward, as a gloss that might be able to capture the significance of what has just happened.

Thus, rules cannot represent the key element for the prospective character of orderly action, which includes imminent next actions, shared anticipations, and the skillful coordination of bodies in the water. The ever-developing scene of the phenomenal field will at times present the skilled surfer with immediately recognizable violations – actions that do not build towards the scene's coherence. Those breachings of concerted and congregationally ordered actions call for reparation work to restore the ongoing constitutive order of surfing. Rules can be invoked as a posteriori explanation or at best can be invoked in situ when the violation lingers in a public witnessable manner (see cases in Fig 8 and 9).

This account of rules is contrary to the classical analysis that sociologists have given about rule-governed behavior. Interestingly, both Harold Garfinkel and Jacques Derrida appreciated fully these realities about rules. Garfinkel (1967: 73) counseled against "portraying routine actions as those governed by prior agreements," and Derrida (2009) wrote that "the formulation of ethics clearly appears after the fact, i.e. after the transgression." Clearly, we need to rethink the lived reality of rules.

So what are rules, really? Let's examine some of them. Generally, no more than two people can ride a wave at the same time, and Fig 3 presents a typical "A" frame wave:
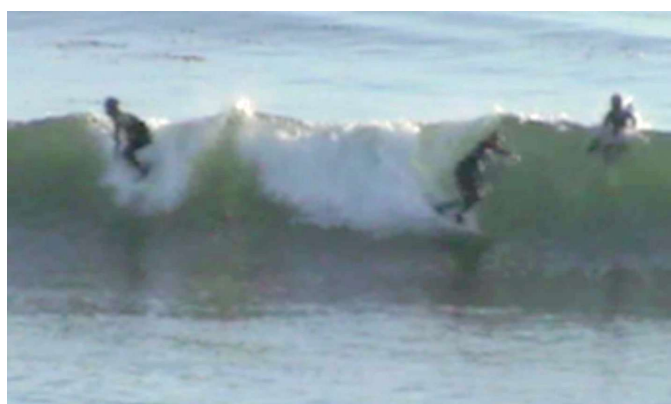

Fig 3. A wave with a "A" frame allows two surfers to ride at the same time without disturbing each other.

But sharing a wave does not always go that well. In Fig 4 (from Pleasure Point, Santa Cruz, California), the paths of a regular-footed and a "goofy"-footed surfer cross, but they somehow avoid a collision; however, in Fig 5 the surfers do not.

Fig 4. Risky situation at the beginning of the ride as two surfers compete for the wave.

Fig 5. An incident leading to a potential accident.

The ideal occurs is portrayed in Fig 6, when the surfer riding "inside" cedes the wave to the outside rider:

Fig 6. The inside surfer (on the left side of the scene) cedes the wave to the outside ride (on the right).

There can be a lot of congestion, and the situation is always very dynamic. Fig 7 illustrates a day in Mar del Plata, Argentina, when the waves were so large and energetic (six-foot barrels with some tubes, with a wave period of only 5-7 seconds) that the surfers were paying attention only to the next impeding wave and not to each other, or to anyone taking off. That is, they were preoccupied with avoiding being smashed by a large wave, and in order to catch the large wave they needed to concentrate on their courage more than on anything else.

Fig 7. Three surfers trying to ride and avoid the beating of a big wave.

For this reason, there were two and three people on every wave and lots of collisions, which made for an ugly situation. It is difficult to look to both sides at once, while also maintaining one's concentration on the wave. Wave size can affect the degree that surfers communicate and how they concert their actions.

Since surfing can be dangerous, a bit of orderliness is needed; local authorities try, but their attempts are somewhat feeble. General advisories like you see on signs worldwide at popular surf breaks are too remote from the situation to make much of a difference. As crowds increase, and especially with the occasional chaos of shortboarders, longboarders, kayakers, and stand-up paddleboarders (SUPs) all surfing together, some surfers have suggested that more formal organization of the order is necessary. Some years ago, a group of surfers called Safe Surf Hawaii proposed a pilot program that would ban stand up paddle surfing at some lineups in Honolulu (Mull 2014). In response to the proposal, the Department of Land and Natural Resources held a meeting where both proponents and opponents debated the issue. The desire for a ban on stand-up paddleboarders in certain Honolulu lineups only three days a week from 3-9 pm arose because they believed that SUPs were taking more than their fair share of waves. SUP supporters outnumbered supporters of the proposal at the meeting and argued that the lineups should be self-policed. The manager of a surf shop that specializes in SUPs argued, "We don't need the government regulating our lineups. For the most part, lineups are self-policing. If someone is being a wavehog, whether he's on an SUP or not, the lineup regulates that." (quoted in Mull 2014). Does the lineup regulate that? If so, *how* does the lineup regulate that?

At the conclusion of the meeting, the government rejected the proposal and the ban was not implemented. The opinion at the meeting most frequently expressed was that surfers and stand-up paddleboarders need to regulate themselves. But it is less than clear just how such "self-regulation" or "self-policing" is supposed to work. The very name "lineup," which is in common use throughout the world, implies that there is a "line" – that is, an order of turns – but it is not quite like that. There can be turns, but to some extent each wave presents a unique situation.

There is much that can be said against organizing local orders too formally, and we do not want to mechanically invoke a Euro-American cultural preference for clearly organized rules when they may not be the solution. A lengthy study that Liberman (2013, 11-43) made of pedestrian crossings at the second busiest pedestrian crossing on the US West Coast demonstrated that the pedestrians themselves were able to make the traffic flow more smoothly and safely than any attempt by local authorities to enforce traffic laws, a fact recognized by the local city police, who came to adopt a policy of never enforcing regulations for the reason that each time they tried to do so the traffic jams only grew worse: the city officials decided that it was better to let the people solve the problem themselves.

Surfers do not move through the phenomenal field with rules prominent in their mind. They are paddling around and making circumspective inspections that maintain some understanding of the developing scene. Heidegger (1996, 74) reminds us that a "circumspect overseeing does not *comprehend* what is at hand. Instead, it acquires an orientation within the surrounding world." This "orientation" is not con-

ceptual in the way that rule-application is sometimes conceived, and even when surfers are trying to "mind rules," when the congestion increases it is difficult to concentrate on anything, including the wave. On days when the swell is large, rule-following may be nowhere on the horizon – simply surviving the waves is the limited aim. Accounts of rule-government may be applied, but that usually takes place *after* a ride, not before. This seems to us different than saying that people are following rules explicitly. And anyway, even when surfers do begin to "talk rules," which is rare, the next approaching wave will quickly shut all of that talk down.

Ethnomethodologists have learned that people's sight usually extends to what is going to happen 'next' and not to principles of interaction. General rules mean much more for sociologists than they do for ordinary people. In everyday life, morality is mostly oriented to what it is that the persons who are present expect one to do, and that very immanent 'morality' is mostly affiliated to the demands of each approaching 'next'. One's behavior is embedded in a *local* occasion, and rules are unable to capture every contingency. One should not be surprised because it is probably never in the nature of rules to capture all contingencies.

Consider the rule that one does not take the first wave when one has just paddled out and others have been waiting. Many signs of surfing rules include, "Give respect to get respect," but that is a very general gloss, and it is more of a recommendation than a rule. Jacques Derrida (2009, 170) tells us, "An objective and theoretical ideality of meaning ... cannot be what gives the rule for the use." Yet many social analysts choose to speak about it that way. Rules are not the first thing in one's mind as one is gliding through the ocean's forms. Thinking about rules is not what is first; rather, one is snagging sudden opportunities that appear within the circumspective inspection. Yet on occasion there may be rule-governed incidents, but their availability to management by rule is always a local production. One surfer reported, "When someone new comes in and breaks a rule they get a pounding from the rest of us and quickly learn the right way" (Waitt and Frazer 2012, 335). Many of those instances where rules *are* applied have a local history, and it usually takes a good deal to get a surfer to invoke a rule. Rules do not apply themselves. Mostly people are myopic, caught up only with what is immediately before them, and some *special* coordinating must happen before a rule can be applied successfully. Rules are occasioned events, inextricably entangled in local circumstances, and so there is no simple rule-governance; rather, rules are resources that are available for use in coordinating and concerting some of the activity.

Before a rule will be applied there can be a building up of frustration, as when there is a person getting greedy by taking too many waves. There are not really standard mechanisms for enforcing a proscription against such a surfer, and a rule in and as it is invoked is an occasioned event, so it will always be influenced by the local particulars. Once a rule is invoked against a greedy "violator," the semiotic details of the rule's articulation can be exploited by anyone for flaws and arguments, just like lawyers do with any legal discourse. "Basic rules ... are sense-making instruments deployed *in situ*" (Watson 2009, 480), for the purpose of making sense out of chaos. Rules do not dictate order; the situation at any given time dictates how rules can be used to assist organizing the situation, which includes assisting communicating about ways to organize the situation. It is not that

RULES → SITUATION.
Instead,
RULES ←→ SITUATION.

Rules are "open-textured" (Watson, 2014); that is, rules are used in situations in flexible ways for the purpose of making sense out of chaos.

In our data, when a rule claim can be readily communicated without complications, it is likely to be invoked. Harold Garfinkel spoke of "the *evidential* bases of rules," by which he meant that the pertinence of a 'rule' must be witnessable during the flow of events. Accordingly, part of the local work of invoking a rule is that the rule's pertinence must be *made* witnessable. A rule collects an orientation to an episode that can be used by parties to enable sharing their understanding. Social order is able to evolve this way; that is, the immediate situation can afford members an opportunity to communicate using the rule as a vehicle. The rule assists communicating about the situation, and surfers will raise a rule only when there is an action that can be attached clearly to the specific rule, since it is pointless to assert a rule when the relationship between rule and action cannot be made publicly visible. When there is no opportunity for clear communication to occur, the attempt to apply a rule will usually be abandoned. Accordingly, what "violations" end up getting articulated depend less upon the degree of blatant disrespect and more upon a party's capacity to articulate the complaint in a clear way. Here the micro-social structures influence the rule governance.

It is similar to the way that conversation analysts speak about repairs in conversation – if the repair of

a misunderstanding is easy to make *and* one gets a turn of speaking in which to make it, then the repair will occur. The availability of these local, immanent, very technical, and fleeting interactional structures better predicts when a repair will take place than does the seriousness of what requires repair. One might hold the solution to a local misunderstanding, but if one cannot find in the local micro-structure a turn to begin to speak, one's best intentions will never be voiced. Stated more generally, it is the local, *immanent* structuring of interaction that dictates what will be done, more than anything having to do with the rational destiny of rules. It is noteworthy that this local infrastructure can dissolve in the face of large, exciting but intimidating waves. For this reason, there may be more arguments on days when the waves are small.

To say that rules are occasioned events is to say that rules are entangled in the details of local affairs. Zimmerman and Pollner (1970: 95-96) have argued that in everyday life rules are always an "occasioned corpus," which means that they are always "the temporally situated achievement of parties to a setting." Since this occasioned corpus is *what is really there for the parties*, in contrast to a standard set corpus that exists prior to and stands independently of every occasion, this locally accomplished, "occasioned" rule set is what must be studied. How do surfers display, detect, and affirm an occasioned corpus as viable accounts of what they must do? Zimmerman and Pollner insist that the occasioned corpus of rules can never consist of a stable collection; rather, "the elements organized by the occasioned corpus are unique to the particular setting in which it is assembled."

We need to be studying more closely the naturally emerging structures of surfers' practical actions, focusing on the local work of assembling on each occasion an occasioned set of pertinent rules, and we should be paying less attention to "generically theorized rules of principled action" (Garfinkel 2002, 107). Our priority must be to study what surfers really do, and not simply be celebrating what lovers of rules, social scientists included, think surfers should do.

Rules are somehow or other "details of a setting" (Garfinkel, 2002: 197), and they function within that setting as one detail among the others. Garfinkel tried to distinguish "basic rules" from situation-furnished conditions, but if even basic rules must be made evident in order for them to have pertinence, then what is it about them that makes them basic? In other words, what makes rules transcendent? From where do rules gain their transcendence anyway: what is this transcendence, and how does it permeate all social life? We are back to Durkheim.

How are the moralities that we witness in the lineup *made evident* by surfers and under what conditions, and just what is the *local work* of surfers in making them evident? Watson (2009, 483) speaks of "members' reciprocal orientation to the normative accountability of their actions," which is a reference to the local work of collaborating about rules and about morality. Two Australian sociologists who study surfing (Waitt and Frazeer 2012, 329) suggest that "Each time a surfer enters the ocean, they must actively negotiate their position within a surfing fraternity and hierarchy." "Negotiating" is probably too rationalist a term here, but there is some competition for wave priority and occasionally some concerted coherence of "my turn" and "your turn," two of the many "real chiasmically embodied congregationally workplace-specific coherences" (Garfinkel, 2002: 111) that one finds in any lineup. And there is a great deal of competition present for a sport that is supposedly "anti-competitive."

Moments of generosity exist, such as giving the approaching wave to another surfer, yet it is an odd sort of generosity since if one examines closely the videotapes of instances of generosity in the lineup, one will notice that surfers usually remain poised to take the wave oneself should the recipient of their generosity prove incapable of benefitting from it, a situation that leaves the donor's body language looking something less than whole-hearted generosity. The generosity of giving the approaching wave to another surfer bears an implication that rights do exist – one has a right to a wave and so one can surrender that right to another. So how can rules both be situational, occasioned phenomena and yet also pre-exist? The contradiction here is inescapable. Derrida (2009: 245), always ready to embrace inescapable contradictions, describes our situation well:

> The formalization of ethics clearly appears after the fact, i.e. after the transgression of ethics, after the murder … as when Freud explains the origin of the moral superego via the murder of the father, Freud – and this is one of the contradictions in what he says – specifies that it is when the sons or the brothers feel remorse after the murder of the father that immorality is born. In other words, the moral law is born of remorse. But the contradiction is that in order for there to be remorse, the moral law would already have to be in place… It is in the moment of expiation, or remorse, the moment of guilty conscience, that the moral law appears as such.

Ethical behavior is connected to the public accountability of a surfer's actions. In surfing, remorse may be more frequent than ethical behavior, as riding comes first and the rule application second. As surfers know better than most, it is easier to ask for forgiveness than it is to ask for permission. But asking for forgiveness bears the implication that there was a violation of norms. Where do those norms come from? In the lineup, frequently they are the precipitate of expectations that are tendered during looking.

Let's examine some more cases and see what we can learn. On many occasions the rule that the outside person has the right to ride is applicable only when the outside is persistent about asserting upon that right:

Fig 8a The inside surfing (on the left) was already riding the wave as the outside surfer comes close.

Fig 8b The inside surfer (back of the image) cedes the ride, acknowledging the right of the outside surfer.

In some circumstances an inside surfer is already up and riding the wave (Fig 8a) when the outside persons stands up, which can undermine the claim that the outside rider has an exclusive right to the wave (Fig 8b). In this next case, since the inside rider was witnessably the first to stand up (Fig 9a), he disallows the outside rider's claim to hold sole rights to the wave (Fig 9b):

Fig 9.a Inside surfer (left side) is the first to stand up.

Fig 9.b Inside rider (on the back) claiming his right of "first standing up" agaings the right of "outside rider."

That such a claim can be invoked on some occasions and not on others is a feature of the *in situ*, embodied environment of rule usage.

The difficulty here is that the rule that the outside surfer closest to the peak has priority is not the only rule. Other rules include the principle that surfers with much ability have more rights than surfers with lesser ability, and so one is constantly bidding for a status, based upon one's performance. Surfers who are part of a local crew have more rights than newcomers do. One of the most important policies is that no wave should go unridden, and this is a rule that justifies the aggressive positioning, which at times competes with another rule that everyone should have fun and that no one should spoil "the vibe."

This phenomenon of "the vibe" leads us to mention another important matter: surfing cultures differ around the world. Brazilians are able to ride tandem waves, wave after wave, without feeling they are being molested. They even enjoy sharing waves with their friends. Americans are more individualistic and prefer possessing sole rights to a wave. When two asymmetric surfing cultures surf together there can be problems. Some surfers and commentators have misunderstood Brazilians' behavior as selfish:

> We were three or four people at the surf break. Suddenly, a pack of six Brazilians paddled towards us, and all of them joyfully ignoring all the basic rules. It was like sharing the spot with 50 other people who behaved correctly." Year after year, the most despicable behavior in the surf is awarded to Brazilians. Their notorious reputation comes from the fact that they generally travel and surf in

groups. Nat Young has also witnessed tense situations lately: "I was in Bali last month, and Russian surfers were the most aggressive. Normally, Brazilians have that leading role. But they're also the ones that don't have a clue. They ignore the etiquette of the sport. (Guinand 2015)

What these condemnations of Brazilians as selfish surfers miss is that in actuality Brazilians do not feel the same possessiveness about waves that Americans and Australians do. They are not possessive individualists; rather, they have a social life that is more communal (cf. "they generally travel and surf in groups") than American surfers, and perhaps they are more able to tolerate the natural disorders of everyday life. They are still coordinating the orderliness of their riding waves, it is just a different idea of orderliness.

Our purpose here is not to give moral advice or to lay down laws. Our task as sociologists is to study what people do, whatever they do, and to understand how they coordinate order. It is a strange kind of coordination because it is mostly nonverbal and occurs by means of looks and body gestures. In human relations (and even in relations among apes), looking is a very dense phenomenon.

In Fig 10 we witness a thoroughgoing reciprocal organization, in order to sort out which surfer will take the right-breaking shoulder of the wave and which one will take the left-breaking shoulder. The inside surfer of the left-breaking shoulder in Fig 10 (far right of the photo, from Huntington Beach, California) turns to see whether the middle surfer chose to catch the left-breaking shoulder.

Fig 10. Reciprocal orientation of surfers to avoid collision and ride the wave.

When competing for a wave, it is necessary to look in order to avoid a collision, but when one *does* look and see, and more importantly when one is *seen seeing,* one acquires a greater responsibility to conform with what rules may become applicable, for the reason that one cannot claim to have been unaware. When one is publicly *seen* to be acting in a way that is related to rule compliance, then rule application becomes more likely. This is why surfers try to see without looking. The work done by such non-gazing is subtle and difficult to record and study, as is the case with looking throughout studies of primate societies. This conduct is similar to what Ivarsson and Greiffenhagen (2015: 424) identified as "displayed dis-attention", a crucial strategy for turn-taking at a skate session in a pool.

Among surfers looking is very minimalist because surfers try to avoid looking at each other, even though they are looking at each other all of the time. Immediately when each new surfer paddles out, the surfers already in the lineup will assess the surfer, and this happens without staring. Especially the first ride will be observed and evaluated. If the surfer lacks competence s/he will lose some rights, and the surfer is very aware of this. Feeling the 'exposure' of this looking-without-gazing, he or she can experience additional pressure during the performance of that first takeoff.

The pressure that one experiences under such scrutiny, a scrutiny which will have serious consequences for the duration of the surfing session, is more intense for female surfers than it is for male surfers, for the reason that many males doubt the ability of female surfers and so will scrutinize women's competence more carefully and tend to patronize them (Olive, McCuaig and Phillips 2015). As in Fig 11, it is common for men not to cede waves to a female surfer until the very last moment, thinking that in the end the female surfer will not be able to catch the wave.

Fig 11. A male surfer (on the left) not acknowledging the right of the female surfer (on the right) standing first to ride the wave.

The proximity of the body of another surfer, especially a skeptical one who is thinking and hoping that one will fail (and so maintaining body tension that suggests the surfer is an instant away from taking off), can diminish the concentration of the outside rider who has first rights; and when it is a challenging wave that requires better than average concentration, the very proximity and skepticism of the inside surfer may be the thing that will cause the outside surfer to fail to stand up successfully. It is a diabolical and self-fulfilling prophesy, which women surfers must suffer more than men.

If one surfs it with competence, then it is likely that one will be accepted as a member, and other surfers will afford one basic 'rights,' but if one wipes out, most rights and opportunities will be surrendered. Once surfers ascertain the skill level (whether the ride is performed well or poorly) the surfers will immediately direct their gaze *away* from the person and, above all, try to avoid being caught looking.

Novice surfers are largely blind too much of the local orderliness of turn rights. For this reason they do not belong in the main pod of surfers who are surfing the best and more challenging waves. The confusion

of novices will cause them to keep getting in the way and will create a hazard, especially where the waves are largest. The standard "rules" mostly do not apply to novices since they have no business offering accounts of a local order that they do not comprehend well. While many signs that articulate basic rules apply to them ("Don't throw your board," etc.), they need to stay out of people's way until their circumspective inspection has developed to the point that they are able to read the order. What is clear to an experienced surfer may be an indistinguishable plenum to a novice surfer. Among the many problems of congestion and collisions at breaks, the problem of novices is perhaps the easiest to resolve. A cohort of surfers in northwestern Denmark have developed a system of "mentoring," according to which several elders are designated to adopt newcomers, offer them some basic encouragement and advice, including elementary local knowledge, and then to escort them out of the main lineup until they have learned to better read the waves and especially the capacity to read the "ownership" that waves allocate.

The *alpha-surfer*, who is greedy for every wave, presents a more intractable problem, whether in a kayak or on a surfboard. It can come down to the quality of a person's character, where rules have even more limited scope. Skateboarders display more willingness to share opportunities than surfers do. Posted at the Somo Skateboarding Park (Township of Cantabria, in northern Spain) was the following recommendation: "This park is designed for the enjoyment of everyone; please respect the usage of those whose level is inferior to yours." Typically, surfers demonstrate little respect for other surfers whose level of expertise is inferior, and certainly less respect than skateboarders have. The reason cannot lie in the quality of the character of surfers, since in many cases they are the same people as skateboarders. There is something particular about how surfing is organized that promotes more selfish behavior, but just what this is has not yet been made clear to us.

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the specific issue of rules and turn taking in surfing from an ethnomethodological approach. We have avoided to treat the formal analysis of rules as some kind of previous normative resource that surfers bear in their minds in order to act. We have considered rules as part of more messy affairs, as resources embedded within the dynamics of local occasions in which surfers need to make judgments (moving fast, with a limited field of vision and sound, threatened by the risk of clashing waves and other participants). Surfers concert their actions with others to achieve the orderliness of an activity we call surfing by the deployment of competent members' methods (ethnomethods). The rules of surfing are just glosses for ethnomethods. The rules of "'outside rider'" and "'first to stand up'" are just glosses for a myriad of behaviours that we can encounter in certain circumstances when two or more surfers are getting ready to ride a wave; some of these behaviours are considered as correct and some others as wrong. Nonetheless, the public accountability of those ethnomethods bounds behaviours to rule following: when publicly seen to be acting in a way that is related to rule breaking, then rules can be explicitly (verbally or non-verbally as in gestures) evoked by participants, as in in the case depicted in Fig 9a-9b.

A better understanding of how surfers coordinate their wave sharing may allow us to identify just how the lineup can become "self-regulating." No doubt surfing will continue to become more popular and the breaks and lineups will grow more crowded, so how will surfers develop solutions as the crowds increase? Can they develop solutions without some imposition of order by an external authority? Would solutions supervised by an external authority even work? Finally, is there anything that the ethnomethodological identification of the natural orderliness of surfing can contribute to improving the situation? These questions need to be dealt with in future research that will help to better clarify the field of inquiry. These clarifications will be pertinent to every social scientist that studies rules in naturally occurring situations.

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