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The Covid-19 Crisis and the 'new' Normality of Surf Tourism in Cape Town, South Africa

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Abstract

Tourism has been one of the sectors that has suffered the greatest impact by the Covid-19 virus, which has created an unprecedented context with thousands of tourism-related companies closing with an unclear future. International tourism was recovering from the previous financial crisis achieving historical milestones regarding international tourist arrivals. Simultaneously, tourism niches like active sport tourism have experienced significant growth which has been developed to achieve more sustainable tourism as is the case of surf tourism in Cape Town. This article aims to investigate the surf tourism socio-economic competitiveness of Cape Town beaches to provide solutions and alternatives for a return to the 'new normality' due to the Covid-19 crisis. Political economy and geography, as well as tourism systems' approach, are employed for the theoretical background. A mixed-method approach was utilised in this study including a qualitative, narrative method for the literature review, and a quantitative weighted set of indicators. The results suggest that active sports and domestic tourism have potential to help short-term tourism recovery. Three beaches showed the best potential for socio-economic development, while two beaches in underprivileged neighbourhoods were found potentially interesting for boosting surf tourism development. This study could inform government policy to determine the main areas for surf tourism development.

Keywords: Active sport tourism, surf tourism, Covid19, Cape Town, South Africa

Introduction

On 31 December 2019, 27 cases of an unknown type of pneumonia were detected in Wuhan, China. On 7 January, Chinese authorities confirmed they had identified a new type of coronavirus, proposing the name of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). On 23 January, China implemented confinement of the city's population to reduce mobility and infections,

together with applying other non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) like imposing wearing masks. On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. The initial Covid-19 outbreak was characterised as a pandemic by the WHO on 11 March 2020 (WHO, 2020b).

Initially, the alarm was not taken seriously by many countries, and the virus soon reached other continents. Its rapid circulation has meant the closure of borders and the confinement of great parts of the population within their homes globally, in order to reduce the contagion, the deaths and the collapse of hospitals and health systems (WHO, 2020a). National mobility policies that were applied by various countries have differed depending on the preparation and the level of the pandemic reached (Askitas, Tatsiramos & Verheyden, 2020).

Practically, all industries and sectors have been affected (Nicola, Alsafi, Sohrabi, Kerwan, Al-Jabir, Iosifidis, Agha & Agha, 2020); with travel and tourism-related activities impacted immediately; similarly, events and sporting activities (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020). Active sports that are practiced outdoors in public parks and open spaces like mountains and beaches were banned in some countries (Frühauf, Schnitzer, Schobersberger, Weiss & Kopp, 2020) leaving the only option of practising sports (e.g., fitness) isolated in our own homes.

Initially affected countries managed to control the first wave of the pandemic within their borders, as the NPI measures implemented provided the desirable effect. These measures have been softened consequently, allowing the population to restart the mobility with restrictions and new norms (BBC, 2020b), although experiencing new spikes or clusters that require localised or regional lockdowns in Asia (Ontiveros, 2020) and Europe (BBC, 2020c). Tourism is being reactivated with restrictions, in some cases with not more than the 50% of occupancy in hotels and restaurants in order control the potential crowds that could affect to the spread of the virus. Work resumption is being challenging and the international demand for tourism has almost completely stopped due to the uneven evolution of the disease in different nations and has restricted travel for most countries (OECD, 2020).

The title of this article refers to the 'new normality' in surf tourism focused on Cape Town since the whole tourism system has experienced a shock due to the Covid-19 crisis, and many jobs dependent on surfing-related companies are under critical risk, creating an unprecedent crisis, including community protests regarding a contested surfing ban (Ishmail, 2020).

But how has the Covid-19 impacted on tourism in Cape Town, and active sports and surfing in particular? And what areas where surf tourism is relevant are potentially more sensitive to the changes due to the emergence of the Covid-19 crisis? This study applies a geographical political economy framework to understand and try to answer these questions reviewing the most relevant literature and data. At the same time, a weighting system, applying geographic information systems (GIS) has been implemented to assess the surf tourism potential in relation to the current Covid-19 crisis. The empirical analysis includes the review of data, the main themes emerging, the results of the calculations and discussion about the surf tourism socio-economic indicators and concludes with the main implications.

Conceptual framework

Broadly, normality is defined as 'the state of being normal' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020b) while normal refers to 'ordinary or usual; the same as would be expected' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020a). To analyse the return to the 'new normality' a geographical political economic framework is applied (Sheppard, 2011). Simultaneously, tourist systems' theory (Cornelissen (2005)) with a supply-side focus and a special reference to the tourist attraction system of Leiper (1990) is utilised. The tourism system approach, political economy and

geography provide ontological and epistemological grounding to choose the main elements from where and how to collect the required information and data for the analysis of surf tourism systems (Martín-González, Luque-Gil & Swart, 2019a).

Finally, a weighting system for assessing the surf tourism potential of Cape Town beaches based on socio-economic indicators is employed; this framework has been employed in analysing tourism competitiveness in rural areas (Lopez, 2001) and in adventure tourism (Cerezo & Galacho, 2011), amongst others (Sánchez-Rivero, Sánchez-Martín & Rengifo-Gallego 2016). The analysis, based on available data, assists in highlighting areas that need intervention and monitoring in the future by the various spheres of government involved within the context of the current Covid-19 crisis.

Political economy and geography

Political economy forms part of the broader social philosophy, which the main objective is to observe and explain the notion of 'wealth' (Mill, 1871). The basic elements of the science of political economy can be summarised in two 'grand inquiries': production and consumption, together with the laws of distribution (an intermediate inquiry) (Mill, 1965). Additionally, this framework has been enriched with the geographical component. Consequently, it elucidates the differences between the Global North and the Global South, that are shaped by means of space and time, and the uneven economic, social and environmental relationships that developing countries like South Africa experience, including colonialism and apartheid, amongst others (Sheppard, 2011). This is also true in the Covid-19 crisis and the distribution of the vaccine, and the prices that South Africa must pay for it (Sullivan, 2021), which means that the recovery of South African destinations will be slower than the recovery of destinations in the Global North. This theory is relevant in the context of the current Covid-19 crisis, since capitalism is known for being cyclically in such conditions (Duménil & Lévy, 2011), and the governmental intervention drives and determines the economic production in different ways with the new policies and, therefore, the consumption.

Concurrently, the framework of evolutionary economic geography is applied to interrogate the possible transformation of the destination due to the current Covid-19 crisis, as this conceptual framework seems to be suitable for surf tourism destinations, formed by micro-enterprises, that operate at the regional level mainly (Brouder, 2017).

Tourism systems' approach

In the case of tourism, on one side, production involves the supply and the agents who produce the different touristic products. On the other, the consumers that can be classified in multiple forms, as the demand is shaped by different psychological and sociological aspects (Cornelissen, 2005). Amongst them, the nationality and origin of the tourists (international or domestic), the duration of the travel (excursionist or tourists) or the purpose of the travel (e.g., business travel, sport tourism), etc. (UNWTO, 2020c). The regulatory bodies correspond to governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (Cornelissen, 2005). The tourism system is also composed by the destination, the place of origin, and the transit area (Leiper, 1979). This framework has been contextualised elsewere and explained in detail for the specific case of Cape Town's surf tourism system (Martín-González, Luque-Gil & Swart, 2019a).

Surf tourism, indicators and competitiveness

Surf tourism has been defined under multiple perspectives (Mach, Ponting, Brown & Savage, 2018): as a lifestyle (Wheaton, 2017), a subset of marine tourism (Orams & Towner, 2012), a type of nature sport (Mach et al., 2018), a serious leisure sport (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013),

a kind of adventure tourism (Buckley, 2010) or a subcategory within the sport tourism framework (Poizat-Newcomb, 1999). The most common definition, proposed by Fluker (2003), defines it as the act of people travelling, with at least one overnight stay, and where the active participation in the sport of surfing is the primary motivation for the selection of the destination. Regarding sport tourism, it is possible to differentiate between active or passive sport tourism (Standeven & De Knop, 1999). Other scholars distinguish between active, events and nostalgia subsets (Gibson, 1998). Nonetheless, as remarked by Mach et al. (2018:5) 'surfing is practiced formally through surf competitions, but most often informally by recreational surfers'. These recreational surfers have been analysed and segmented indicating key characteristics concerning destination preferences, like the high sensitivity to health and crime issues (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003), and preferences for affordable accommodation in the destination (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013).

In another vein, indicators are 'information sets which are formally selected to be used on a regular basis to measure changes that are of importance for tourism development and management' (UNWTO, 2004:8). Dwyer and Kim (2003) underscore the development of indicators as important elements to measure the competitiveness of tourism destinations, since they permit the identification of strengths and weaknesses that can be used to improve socio-economic prosperity.

In the context of surf tourism there are different tools that have been developed by various sectors to assess the sustainability of surf spots and the area of influence around them. The third sector (NGOs like Surfrider Foundation or Surf Nature Alliance) have been involved in many projects to protect and enhance, economically, culturally, and environmentally surf spots and surf destinations. Private companies provide certificates about sustainable surf tourism development (e.g., Stoke, founded by Prof. Jess Ponting). From the academic realm Professors Steven Andrew Martin and Ilian Assenov have been developing their own tool to measure surf sites' sustainable development, applying it in the area of Phuket, Thailand (Martin, 2013; Martin & Assenov, 2013, 2015).

Methods

This article uses a mix-method methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) to understand the Covid-19 crisis and provide answers to the research questions. First a narrative literature review is implemented to investigate the main areas of concern as this a technique that can help to survey the state of knowledge of particular topics (Baumeister & Leary, 1997). Then, the quantitative section deals with a weighting system in order to assess the tourism potential in relation to the Covid-19 crisis.

Qualitative

The main topics (Covid-19 in Cape Town, tourism, active sports and surfing-related sports (SRSs)) are reviewed implementing a narrative method, which include collecting data from official sources, academic literature from the main academic databases, and news in relevant and specialised sources.

A search of the main sources about Covid-19, at various scales, was conducted. At the global level, data and news from the WHO and UNWTO were collected. At the national level, data from the South African National Department of Health (NDH, 2020), dependent on the South African Government (SAG) and the specific Covid-19 website (SAG, 2020e), have been acquired. Finally, at the regional and local levels, data have been gathered from the regional

government of Western Cape (WCG) Covid-19 resource website (WCG, 2020). For gathering tourism data and information, the UNWTO, as well as Southafrica.net (South Africa's official tourism website) was used.

Quantitative

A weighting system for assessing the surf tourism potential of Cape Town's beaches based on socio-economic indicators is employed as noted in the conceptual section. Twenty-four indicators were chosen based on importance for social, health, cultural and economic development in the area concerning sustainability, value, use, quality and integrity attributes (see Table 1), from the range of possible indicators suggested by Martin and Assenov (2014) based on the importance for demand.

Economic indicators include; accessibility, infrastructures, tourism accommodation, surfing companies and information services. Concerning social aspects, two indicators related to the current Covid-19 crisis and their data ('total infections' and, 'last 14 days infections'); social infrastructures like toilets and access for disabled, as well as health infrastructures and safety facilities are included. The data have been gathered from primary and secondary sources based on previous research (Martin-Gonzalez, Luque-Gil & Swart, 2019; Martin-Gonzalez, Swart & Luque-Gil, 2019). Primary sources include informal interviews with key actors (private companies and government), scholars in Cape Town, and field observations.

Secondary sources include a systematic review of the literature in relevant academic databases (Scopus), sources from the Web 2.0 (Wannsurf.com) for information about the main natural resource for surfers (the surf spot), and other private online websites which share weather information (e.g., Windguru.com). Concurrently, Google Maps for information about the accommodation units and the surfing-related sports (SRSs) companies, and ArcGIS Desktop 10.7.1 for the representation of beaches, the different infrastructures and the calculations about distances have been utilised.

Additionally, the official website of the municipality of Cape Town (CT, 2020a) has been used for gathering information about the beaches analysed, including their infrastructures and services. Forty-nine beaches were selected out of 78 listed in the Cape Town municipality portal based on the existence of at least one surf spot marker. These surf spots' markers, which count more than 400 for the area (Martín-González et al., 2019a:217-220), indicate the existence of at least 119 different surf spots along the coast of Cape Town. Data related to other infrastructures (train stops, bus stops, hospitals and clinics) has been collected from the Cape Town Open Data Portal (CT, 2020b).

Table 1: Assessment criteria and Implications

Economic Indicator (Ie_n)	Assessment criteria	Implications
Surf companies	Identify and list the number of surf shops, retailers, and surf schools	Surf spots are exploited by SRS companies, they provide wealth to the community, and services and information for the demand
Surf webs	Identify and list the number of online markers for each spot, including wikis and surf forecast related websites and webcams	Wikis and surf forecast webs provide users information about weather conditions, infrastructures, accessibility, dangers, localism, and level (e.g., beginners/experts) of the spot

Accommodation	Find the number of accommodation units in the adjacent area including hotels, backpackers, lodges, etc.	Accommodation infrastructure provides the area with the potential to attract surf visitors and represents one of the most important sources of income for the area; an important generator of employment
Distance from airport	Calculate the distance from the international airport to the beach	Short distances from the main type of transportation used by international and domestic tourists, provide the area with potential to attract more visitors
Distance from accommodation hub (Central Business District, CBD)	Calculate the distance from the main accommodation hub in destination to the beach	Short distances from the main accommodation hub for tourists provide the area with potential to attract more visitors
Parking	Indicate the existence of parking areas with direct access to the beach	Surfers and accompanies arriving by car need parking facilities to access the surf spot easily; and serves as a place for social gathering
Train stops	Identify if there is any train stop in the area (3kms around)	The existence of train stops adds a better connection to the area from CBD
Bus stops	Identify if there is any bus stop in the area	The existence of bus stops adds a better connection to the area from CBD
Blue Flag	Identify and list the beaches awarded with Blue Flags	Blue Flags provide the beach with a recognised ecolabel of quality that attract more visitors
Picnic area	Identify if there is any of these facilities near the beach	Picnic areas have the potential to attract groups (friends and families) and visitors for a longer time
Tidal pool	Identify whether there is a tidal pool in the area	Tidal pools have the potential to attract families and surfers' companions
Boat launch slipway	Identify if there is a boat launch slipway on the beach	Boat launch slipways allow surfers to practice big wave surfing since those waves are ridden aided by the power of a jet ski
Social Indicators (Is_n)	**Assessment criteria**	**Implications**
Total infections	Identify the number of total infections in the area and compare it with the maximum of the subdistricts	The total number of infections allow visitors and locals to know how the area has been affected by the pandemic
Infections within the last 14 days	Identify the number of infections within the las 14 days and compare it with the subdistricts	The number of infections within the last 14 days permits institutions and individuals to know how the pandemic is developing
Surf clubs	Identify surf clubs that have access and use the area regularly	Surf clubs have the potential to provide better collaboration and communication amongst surfers about rules and hazards in the area
Lifesavers' clubs	Identify the lifesavers' clubs that have access and use the area regularly	Lifesavers can promote safety and awareness about potential hazards for beach goers and surfers as well as awareness about the potential environmental damages to the area
Lifeguards	Identify the existence of lifeguards on duty on the beach	Lifeguards provide the area with safety and better management of the area
Toilets	Identify whether there are showers and bathrooms in the area	Showers and toilets are important elements that promotes hygiene, and interaction
Access for disabled	Identify if there is access for disabled people	Interaction between practitioners of adaptive surfing and regular surfing allows community to enhance relationships
Police stations (within the same major suburb)	Identify if there is any police station nearby (3kms around)	Police stations in the area ensure a rapid response in case of emergency

Hospitals	Identify whether there is a hospital nearby (3kms around)	Hospitals nearby ensure that in case of emergency the person with problems will have first aid and a proper treatment in less time
Clinics	Identify the number of clinics nearby (3kms around)	Clinics around ensure that in case of emergency the person with health problems will have rapid first aid
Running	Identify if the area is suited for runners	Areas suitable for running help with socialisation
Pets allowed	Identify if dogs are allowed	Areas suitable for dogs and pets are spaces of socialisation

Data analysis of socio-economic indicators

Each quantitative indicator has been calculated using the index numbers and the relative method (see Equation 1). Following this method, the maximum raw data scored by a beach is considered as the reference (base) for constructing the indicator, and where the maximum score reached is 1 (which indicates 100%). The result is then multiplied by its correspondent hierarchy multiplier (μ, see Table 2) being the maximum score for each (sub)indicator that is indicated by the hierarchy multiplier as shown in the following equation:

I_n = (Raw value I_n / Raw value I_0) × μ_m

Equation 1. Individual indicators

In the case of qualitative indicators, the maximum score indicates the existence of the specific measure, while the minimum (0) indicates the absence of it.

For the calculation of the socio-economic indicators ($I(s\text{-}e)_n$) for each beach, (n) the following formula (see Equation 2) has been implemented using the weighted average of relatives' method:

$$I(s\text{-}e)_n = \alpha Ie_n + \beta Is_n$$

Equation 2. Socio-economic indicator

Where α (0,4) corresponds to the assigned weight to the economic-related indicator for each beach (Ie_n), and β (0,6) represents the allocated weight to the social-related indicator for each beach (Is_n)

Table 2: Hierarchy multipliers

Economic Indicators (Ie_n)	Hierarchy	Hierarchy multiplier (μ_m)	Type of data
Surf companies	1	μ_1 = 2,0000	Quantitative
Surf webs	2	μ_2 = 1,7500	Quantitative
Accommodation	3	μ_3 = 1,5000	Quantitative
Distance from airport	4	μ_4 = 1,2500	Quantitative
Distance from CBD	5	μ_5 = 0,4375	Quantitative
Parking	5	μ_5 = 0,4375	Qualitative
Train stops	5	μ_5 = 0,4375	Qualitative
Bus stops	5	μ_5 = 0,4375	Qualitative
Blue Flag	5	μ_5 = 0,4375	Qualitative
Picnic area	5	μ_5 = 0,4375	Qualitative

Tidal pool	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative
Boat launch slipway	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative
Social Indicators (Is_n)			
Last 14 days	1	$\mu_1 = 2,0000$	Quantitative
Total Infections	2	$\mu_2 = 1,7500$	Quantitative
Surfclubs	3	$\mu_3 = 1,5000$	Quantitative
Livesavers' clubs	4	$\mu_4 = 1,2500$	Qualitative
Lifeguards	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative
Toilets	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative
Access for people with disabilities	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative
Police stations	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative
Hospitals	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative
Clinics	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Quantitative
Running	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative
Pets allowed	5	$\mu_5 = 0,4375$	Qualitative

Results and discussion

Covid-19 in Cape Town

The South African Government has implemented one of the strictest controls in Africa. Following the Oxford Coronavirus Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT), which is an indicator (ranging from 1 to 100 the strictest) that records 'the number and strictness of government policies', as on 31 March, South Africa obtained the highest score in Africa (87,96) and relatively high compared to other countries all around the globe (OxCGRT, 2020). This measure comprises different aspects concerning policies undertaken by governments globally, including mobility restrictions, information available to combat the spread of the virus and financial support for the companies forced to close during the pandemic. By 14 July, this score reached 80,56 and 72,22 by 10 February 2021 which means that the measures have been softened.

Five alarm levels have been implemented, from Level 5 (the most restrictive) to Level 1 (when the 'new normality' is back). Additionally, the government has declared some areas as Covid-19 hotspots. Metros include Tshwane, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, eThekwini, Nelson Mandela Bay, Buffalo City and Cape Town. Districts include West Coast, Overberg and Cape Winelands in the Western Cape, Chris Hani in the Eastern Cape and iLembe in KwaZulu-Natal.

In alert level 5 the most drastic measures were taken to control the spread of the virus. Only workers of declared essential services (e.g., healthcare, cleaning services and waste management, food retailers, etc.) could move. During Level 4 some economic and individual sporting activities could resume. A more relaxed Level 3 has opened the economy to move from the deep economic crisis after two months of lockdown allowing the travel for business (with strict NPI) within the national borders after an amendment of the first draft for Level 3. Level 2 is designed to 'prevent the resurgence of the virus' with softened measures, while Level 1 is when 'most normal activity can resume', although with NPI and a population ready for coming back to other alert levels if necessary (SAG, 2020a).

As of 1 July 2020, Covid-19 was rising in Cape Town, as shown in Figure 1.

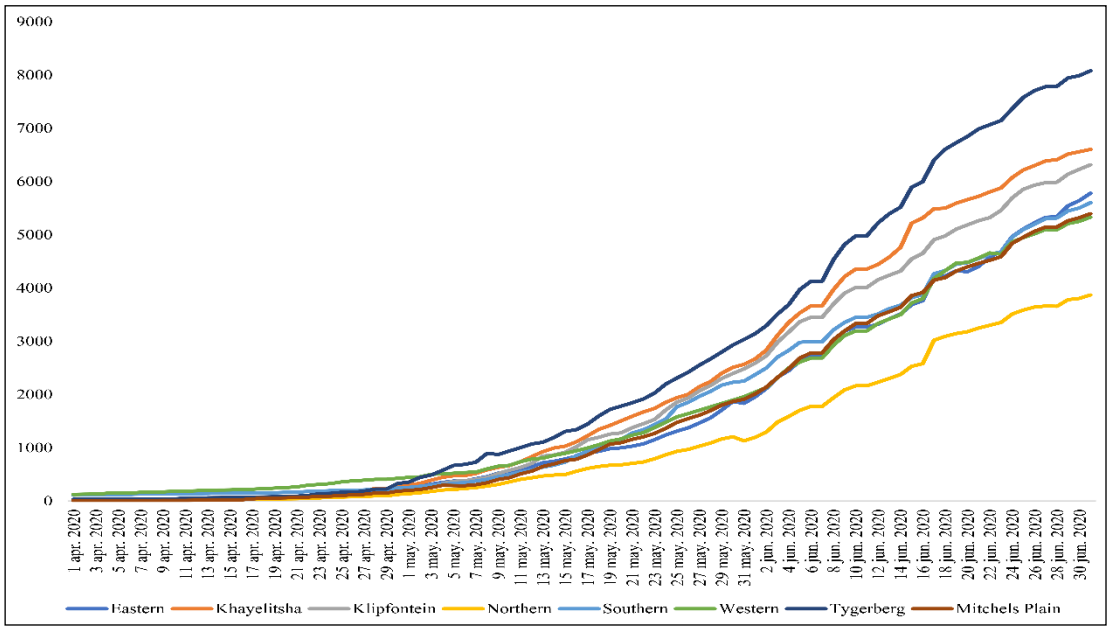

Figure 1: Total Covid-19 confirmed cases by Subdistricts in CT Metro. Source: WCG (2020)

These data suggest that the virus has not reached the top of the curve and still required measures to contain its spread. Nevertheless, the economic situation (30% of unemployment before the pandemic) has forced the government to open-up the economy, and therefore, the future is uncertain regarding virus containment, and the underprivileged areas are again being hit harder (BBC, 2020a). By 10 February 2021, South Africa passed the peak of a second wave, with the hope that the distribution of the new vaccines will change the situation globally in the midterm (Gallagher, 2021). Although a recent study about the effectiveness of the Astra-Zeneca vaccine (the one that has been bought by the South African government) with the new variant found in South Africa is threatening this hope (Fihlani, 2021).

Tourism

2019 was the most prolific year in terms of international arrivals achieving the historical milestone of more than 1.5 billion (UNWTO, 2020a). However, in the first quarter international arrivals have dropped 22%, where March accounted for a 57% decrease globally. The projected scenarios by the UNWTO for 2020 vary from the best that expects around 58% (if the gradual opening of international borders start early July) to the worst that expects 78% (based on the opening in early December), whereas the intermediate one (opening in early September) expects 70% (UNWTO, 2020b).

In the context of South Africa, tourism was slowly recovering from a deep crisis, pushed by domestic tourism (+62% yearly change from 2018 to 2019) and a certain decline (-2,5%) in international arrivals as per Figure 2.

The South African Government has provided a specific ‘Covid-19 Tourism Relief Fund’ to help tourism companies trying to support and safeguard the sector (SAG News Agency, 2020). In the same vein, different associations, from national (e.g., Tourism Business Council South Africa (TBCSA), to international level, belonging to different sectors (e.g., Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA)) have developed their own protocols following the governmental indications. These measures include the screening and control of customers’ health, which requires significant effort from companies (financially) and employees (in terms of time and learning about new procedures) (ATTA, 2020; TBCSA, 2020).

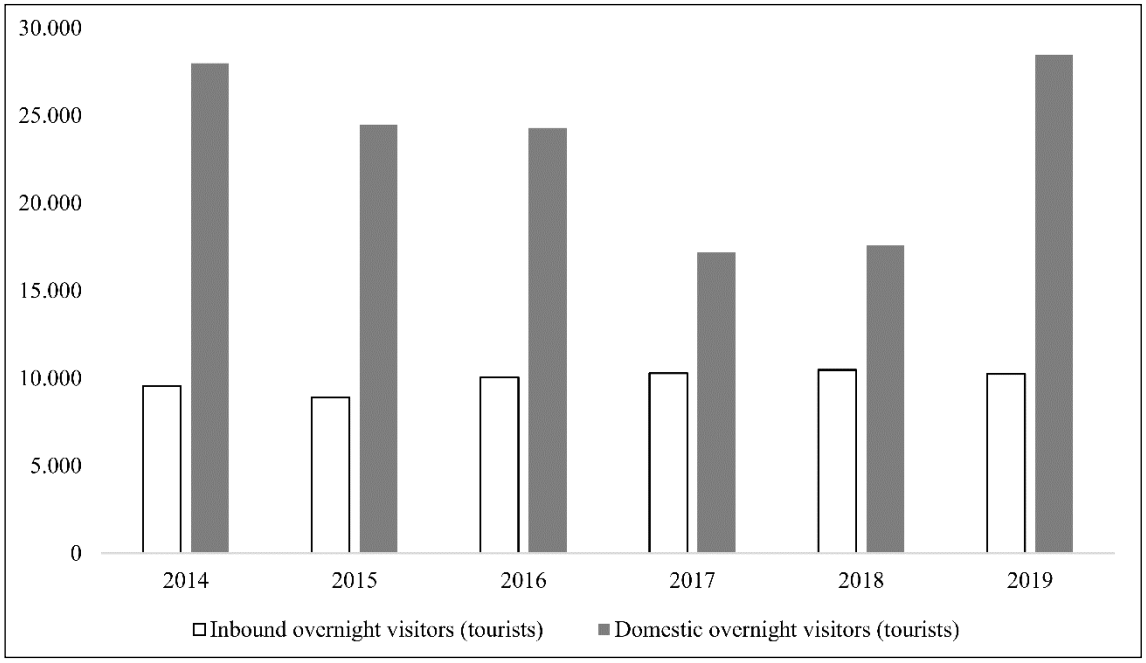

Figure 2: Tourism demand in SA (Inbound and Domestic overnights in thousands) 2014-2019. Sources: UNWTO and https://www.southafrica.net

In another vein, it seems important to note that countries in the Global North have experienced a second and a third wave after the peak season in summer and winter respectively and could serve as a warning to consider in order to avoid the same mistakes (in terms of relaxing Covid-19 health and security regulations and response to outbreaks). On the other hand, although the availability of new vaccines has opened-up a window for shortening the impact of the virus, it seems clear that the complete eradication of the virus using them, or proper pharmaceutical treatments, are not going to be possible in the short-term. Thus, NPI are going to be the standard measures, this means that travel insurances would increase the price, and flights with less passengers are likely to experience a rise in the price in the long-term (Walton, 2020).

Additionally, tourism was at a moment where uneven social and environmental impacts were obvious (Higgins-Desbiolles, Carnicelli, Krolikowski, Wijesinghe & Boluk, 2019). Moreover, it seems an opportunity to re-think tourism by authorities and the supply-side, and to take seriously the hope of a different and sustainable tourism (Brouder, 2020). Employing the following matrix (see Figure 3) proposed by Brouder (2020:3), four possible intersections between paths and institutional positions are possible, being the one on the top-right of the matrix the most desirable scenario from a sustainable development perspective, although as noted by Brouder (2020), the probability of such transformation of tourism is low, based on previous evidence of bouncing back after 'regular crises'.

		Institutional	
		Inertia	**Innovation**
Path	**Creation**	• Regional branching (supply side) • Dissonance (demand side)	• Transformation (supply side) • Transformation (demand side)
	Dependence	• Business as usual (supply side) • Bounce back (demand side)	• Dominant discourse (supply side) • Dissonance (demand side)

Figure 3. Matrix of potential tourism destination evolution. Source: Brouder (2020:3)

This implies a transformation of both, demand and supply, following a path of creation boosted by institutional innovation. On the other side, bottom-left represents the less desirable option, that would suppose a similar scenario prior to the Covid-19 crisis. Intermediate positions are more probable to happen, and vary depending on the transformation of the demand, but with a supply side focused on coming back to the previous model of mass tourism (bottom-right). The last option is that one where the supply side is offering a locally based product focused on regional development, but a demand uninterested in performing such change (Brouder, 2020:4).

In this regard, the South African Government has tried to promote sports amongst South Africans through the 2011 White Paper (SRSA, 2013), which identified recreation, school sport and participation promotion campaigns as strategic focus areas, and sport tourism as a key area to be developed (Swart & Martín-González, 2021). Nevertheless, the focus has been on mega-events, with relative success hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the previous 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup and the IRB 1995 Rugby World Cup. Although, recent failed bids for the Durban Commonwealth Games 2022 and the 2023 Rugby World Cup have revealed a lack of finance (BBC, 2017; Sowetan Live, 2017) for such type of strategy, thus, it is perhaps time to promote sport for all from an active sports perspective and boost the social aspect of sustainable tourism.

Active sports

The sport world has been highly impacted by the pandemic, sport events especially (Nicola et al., 2020). Depending on the level of infection reached, countries have reacted differently, but taking some common measures like suspending events, and closing sporting and recreational facilities (Begović, 2020). The grave effects for health and social functioning have been underscored by medical academics (Frühauf et al., 2020). Thus, sports practiced individually, like fitness, have become one of the main tools to maintain the physical and psychological health (Chen, Mao, Nassis, Harmer, Ainsworth & Li, 2020).

Concerning South Africa specifically, the initial lockdown has also implicated the banning of outdoor activities (SABC News, 2020), although in Level 4 it was possible to have a walk, run or cycle between 06:00 am to 09:00 (SAG, 2020b). In Level 3, sports can be practiced any time although not in groups (SAG, 2020c). In Level 2 and Level 1 sport activities are supposed to resume (including sport events) although with restrictions. Therefore, it seems apparent that active sports, and specifically those of an individual nature (e.g., fitness, running, jogging and surfing) have been tools for maintaining mental and general health within the population during, and after, the worst part of the pandemic.

Surfing-related sports (SRSs)

The practice of any SRSs (surfing, bodyboarding, stand-up paddle-surf, kitesurfing and windsurfing) (Martín-González et al., 2019b) has been banned during the worst period of the pandemic in many countries (Lock, 2020). The measures have been followed by most of the surfers, although there were some contestation and resistance, which derived in fines, prison or even being shot by police (Morton, 2020). Nevertheless, not all the countries have banned surfing completely; in the United States of America (USA), Australia, United Kingdom and New Zealand surfing was allowed albeit with restrictions and helped by new technologies (surf webcams were used by the police to control crowds in New Zealand (Lawrence, 2020). Additionally, in New South Wales (Australia) surf lifesaving clubs have implemented a re-start

of surfing with protocols to control the social distance on the beach (Surf Life Saving NSW, 2020).

In South Africa surfing is beyond the common concept of sport (Thompson, 2011). As has happened in other countries, surfing has suffered a lack of understanding by governmental institutions about its nature (individual sports, which are practised in natural areas) as remarked by the official representative of the sport, Surfing South Africa (SSA). This lack of understanding during the hardest levels of the pandemic pushed SSA to appeal to the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture 'for consideration of surfing and other ocean sports to be permitted as exercise under lockdown'. In South Africa it is estimated that there are over 20.000 competitive and recreational surfers, across disciplines (SSA, 2020). In the context of Cape Town, surfing has become an interesting segment for developing sustainable tourism, as it counts with a well-developed offer, a mature demand with a vibrant surfing community, and a well-established third sector that helps governmental intervention (Martín-Gonzalez et al., 2019a).

Surf tourism socio-economic indicators

Based on the 49 beaches and their spots under interrogation for this paper, Table 3 presents illustrative cases of the top, middle and lowest ranking beaches.

Table 3. Illustrative economic, social and socio-economic indicators

Beach	Position	Subdistrict (Covid-19)	I_e	I_s	$I_{(s-e)}$
Top *I(s-e)*					
Table View	1	Western	7,33	3,94	5,29
Strand	2	Eastern	4,93	5,03	4,99
Surfer's Corner	3	Southern	5,57	4,52	4,94
Big Bay	4	Western	5,40	4,37	4,78
Milnerton	5	Western	3,43	5,32	4,56
Fish Hoek	6	Southern	3,55	5,14	4,50
Mnandi	7	Mitchells Plain	3,60	4,74	4,28
Sunrise	8	Southern	2,87	4,64	3,93
Hout Bay	9	Southern	3,65	4,10	3,92
Granger Bay	10	Western	4,28	3,57	3,85
Middle *I(s-e)*					
Monwabisi	16	Khayelitsha	2,59	4,10	3,50
Macassar	30	Khayelitsha	2,56	2,92	2,77
Bottom *I(s-e)*					
Klippies Bay	48	Eastern	1,27	1,32	1,30
Dappat se Gat	49	Eastern	1,08	1,32	1,23

The results of the calculations show that the top three beaches (Table View, Strand and Surfer's Corner) correspond to three different areas (Western, Southern and Eastern Subdistricts, respectively) that can be considered as the nucleus of the three surfing clusters existing in Cape Town (Martín-González et al., 2019b). Table View appears as the most important pole of economic attraction scoring high in two items directly related to surfing ('Surf companies' and 'Surf webs') (see Table 4) and being the first in terms of 'Accommodation'. Similarly, two more Western beaches close to Table View (Big Bay and Milnerton) appear in the top 5. The Southern area follows with 4 beaches including (apart from Surfers' Corner) Fish Hoek, Sunrise and Hout Bay. Thus, it is possible to distinguish two main areas that concentrate the socio-economic attractiveness for surf tourism.

Given the relative importance of those beaches from a socio-economic perspective, it is expected to have more affluence than others when the mobility restrictions have been softened. This is true for the area surrounding two of the top beaches that have experienced certain incidents (see IOL (2020) for Table View and News24 (2020) for Surfer's Corner) during Levels 5 and 4. Additionally, these results show a dominance of I_e over the total, despite the lower multiplier (0,4) assigned to this indicator (which was assigned in order to highlight the social aspect). This could be the result of the similar data, for most of the beaches, gathered in the specific date for the I_s, 'Total infections', as well as for the I_s, 'Last 14 days', (see Table 4). It is also interesting to note that Strand, 2nd bigger $I_{(s\text{-}e)}$, has the third highest score for the overall I_s (5,03) and the fourth higher I_e, but a low indicator for the individual I_e 'Surf companies' (0,18), although a high score related to 'Surf webs' (0,70) which could indicate a high degree of exposure and variety of markers, but a low surf tourism-related commercialisation.

On the other hand, those beaches at the bottom of the list show the relative lack of socio-economic potential for surf tourism activities. In general, Eastern beaches seem to be less attractive from the health point of view too since the score for 'Total infections' and 'Last 14 days' are lower than others (see Table 4). Thus, these beaches should be monitored meanwhile as the indicator is low. Finally, it is important to note that those beaches in areas that are close to underprivileged neighbourhoods like Mitchells Plains (Mnandi) or Khayelitsha (Monwabisi) seem to be economically underdeveloped, despite scoring high in the overall socio-economic indicator. The low I_e is exposing that there are no surf companies and a lack of accommodation offer (see Table 4).

Table 4: Illustrative individual economic and social indicators for beaches on top, in the middle and at the bottom of the *I(s-e)* ranking (without multiplier)

Ranking	Top *I(s-e)*			Middle *I(s-e)*		Bottom *I(s-e)*	
Beach	Table View	Strand	Surfer's Corner	Mnandi	Monwabisi	Klippies Bay	Dappat se Gat
Position	1	2	3	7	16	48	49
Social indicators							
Surf companies	0,91	0,18	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Surf webs	0,95	0,70	0,55	0,10	0,15	0,15	0,25
Accommodation	1,00	0,31	0,23	0,03	0,03	0,00	0,00
Distance from airport*	0,57	0,50	0,54	0,78	0,62	0,11	0,15
Distance from CBD*	0,74	0,35	0,62	0,49	0,46	0,00	0,04
Parking	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Train stops	0,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,00	0,00
Bus stops	1,00	0,29	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Blue flag	0,00	0,00	0,00	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Picnic area	0,00	0,50	0,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,00
Tidal pool	0,00	1,00	0,00	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Boat launch slipway	1,00	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Economic indicators							
Last 14 days (from 20-06 to 03-07)*	0,36	0,19	0,33	0,39	0,48	0,19	0,19
Total Infections (05-07)*	0,34	0,29	0,31	0,30	0,20	0,29	0,29

Surfclubs	0,00	0,67	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Livesavers clubs	0,00	1,00	0,00	1,00	1,00	0,00	0,00
Lifeguards	0,00	1,00	0,00	1,00	1,00	0,00	0,00
Toilets	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Access for people with disabilities	1,00	0,00	1,00	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Police stations	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,00	0,00
Hospitals	1,00	1,00	0,00	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Clinics	0,00	0,33	0,17	1,00	0,50	0,00	0,00
Running	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Pets allowed	1,00	0,00	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00

***** Calculations for the distances and infections have been inverted [-1×-1]

Implications and conclusions

This article has reviewed key aspects related to the return to the 'new normality' in the context of surf tourism in Cape Town. The latest data available for Covid-19 in South Africa, and Cape Town, indicate the lack of control of the disease to date, despite government's implementation of strict policies and NPI for the population. Moreover, the updated tourism demand figures and projections globally, showing an abrupt drop in demand for the current year causes a shock for suppliers. In South Africa, previous data revealed an important increase in domestic demand in the last year, and a certain decline in international arrivals. Equally, this shock could represent a unique opportunity to re-start a sustainable tourism model.

Regarding the sports' sector, while sport events and active sports have been largely impacted by the crisis, the latter has represented an invaluable tool for maintaining mental and physical health. This could represent an opportunity to reinforce domestic tourism and promote active sport tourism amongst South Africans following the strategy of the 2011 White Paper (SRSA, 2013).

Concerning the world of SRSs, they have been banned during the worst period of the crisis in most of the countries where these sports are popular. Nonetheless, some Anglo-Saxon countries have not banned it completely and have taken advantage of surf-related innovative tools to control beach crowds. The lack of institutional understanding about the individual nature of SRSs created confusion amongst surfers worldwide since some sporting activities with more chance to have less social distance were allowed.

Based on the results of the socio-economic indicators for Cape Town that were developed, three main surf tourism-related socio-economic poles have been exposed; with three beaches leading the ranking, Table View (Western), Surfer's Corner (Southern) and Strand (Eastern) which are likely to face severe economic consequences and social pressure (in terms of surfers practising sports) due to the crisis. These beaches should be monitored and supported with extra services if NPI are going to be the standard for the population. It has also pointed out the lack of economic development of surf spots close to poorer areas like Mitchells Plains (Mnandi), or Khayelitsha (Monwabisi) despite scoring high in the socio-economic indicator. Thus, these indicators could represent a tool to monitor the changes in the future, and to take measures based on objective data.

The limitations of this study are several. A narrative literature review has been applied to understand the main themes, which is qualitative in nature and therefore, subjective. Second, the method appraised to determine indicators, weights and hierarchies is also subjective and has been based on the researcher's expertise in the field as an amateur surfer. Third, Covid-19 data for the I_s just illustrates a fixed picture and it is aggregated by subdistricts. Finally, the environmental indicators have not been included, as the aim of this study focused on economic and social indicators to analyse the impact of the Covid-19 in these areas. Therefore, dynamic

health-related Covid-19 data and environmental indicators are possible future lines for research.

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