

The Spatial Behavior of Surfers

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MOTIVATION

Behavioral theory in geography attempts to describe and explain the spatial activities of individuals in terms of fundamental perceptual and cognitive processes. As applied to surfing, behavioral theory can give us greater insight into localism (territoriality) and provides a context for understanding the complex cognitive processes involved in choosing where to surf and in choosing where to paddle out at a particular surf break. The major emphasis throughout this section will be on localism. Although the intent is to set the behavioral theories in the context of surfing, it will also be necessary to consider other theory bases such as ecological models, economic models, and ethical models.

SPATIAL BEHAVIOR, PERCEPTION, AND COGNITION

The objective of Behavioral Geography (or Environmental Psychology) is to develop descriptive and explanatory theories of an individual's behavior in a spatial setting. Two basic concepts from psychology are needed to build a behavioral theory: *perception* and *cognition*. *Perception* describes the way in which an individual acquires knowledge about themselves and the world through their senses. The senses include vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, pressure, texture, temperature, kinesthesia (limb position and movement), and vestibular senses (gravity and body acceleration). *Cognition* describes higher order processes that are used to interpretate the sensed world and form a basis for action. These higher order processes include thinking, imagery, reasoning, problem-solving, memory, learning, and language (Montello 1997).

The two sub-branches of behavioral geography which are of interest to us are (1) theories dealing with crowding and territoriality and (2) theories dealing with navigation and way-finding. Crowding is defined as the subjective response to high density (spatial constraint). As noted by Holahan (1982), "People are more likely to report feeling crowded when the spatial constraints in an area cause social interference, such as competition, between individuals in the setting. Negative behavior due to crowding is mediated by stress. That is, at some level of crowding, individuals undergo a complex series of psycho-biological reactions (increased adrenaline, heart rate, blood pressure, etc.) and the negative behavior derives from the stress when other coping mechanisms fail. Yet, long-term crowding may ultimately yield negative consequences even when coping mitigates negative behavior over repeated episodes. As noted by Holahan (1982), "...interpersonal stress in dense environments disturb the natural ecology of the organism. In the process of coping with the stress of crowding, a long-term chain of events may occur: social stimulation → initial coping responses → psychological stress → further coping efforts → eventual costs. (Pp. 203-204)"

John Calhoun's (1962a, 1962b, 1967, 1971) experiments with rats in high density settings are often cited as seminal evidence of aberrant behavior that may develop under crowding. As noted by Holahan (1982),

The manifestations... were serious and dramatic. Abnormalities were observed in the female rats' ability to bear and care for their offspring. Many females were unable to carry a pregnancy to full term, while others

died in the process of delivering their young. In addition, many females were unable to carry out the normal maternal behaviors essential to raising their offspring. ... Calhoun reported that 96 percent of infants born in the behavioral sink died before weaning. ... Male rats also showed dramatic manifestations... Some males engaged in unusual patterns of sexual behavior, which Calhoun described as 'pansexual.' They failed to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate sex partners, making sexual advances to females who were not in heat, to juvenile rats, and to other males. Another group of male rats, which Alhoun designated "probers," became frenetically hyperactive, engaging at times in cannibalistic behavior. (Pp. 206-207)

Studies on humans have been more mixed, though it is also worth noting that the experimental conditions that humans have been subjected to are more mild. Studies of children have shown mixed results – some showing that violence increases with density, others showing no correlation. Research does confirm that there are distinct differences among individuals and important gender differences. As noted in Holahan (1982) "...while high density causes men to feel more aggressive and to act more competitively, high density is not associated with increased aggression or competition in women and may even lead women to respond to one another in more positive and friendly ways. (Pp. 210)"

A closely related body of research in behavioral geography deals with privacy and territoriality. Privacy is typically defined following one of two alternatives: (1) withdrawal – meaning solitude, seclusion, or intimacy, and (2) control of information – meaning anonymity, reserve, and not-neighboring. A general purpose definition is due to Altman (1975), "selective control of access to the self or to one's group." *Territoriality*, then, can be seen as a means to enhance or secure privacy. The function of privacy maps nicely onto localism in surfing. In the psychology literature, the functions include: (1) **interaction management** – to regulate the interaction between a person, a group, and the rest of the world; (2) **maintaining group order** – to enforce status divisions among a group of individuals; and (3) **boundary regulation** – people or groups use boundaries to regulate access to other people.

Territoriality is defined as either (1) "a geographical area that is personalized and defended from encroachment," or (2) "...defense of a spatial area by a person or group that regards it as their exclusive preserve." Territoriality in humans is used for many purposes. One purpose is to define a cognitive 'map' that indicates the types of behavior that can be expected, or will be tolerated, in a particular area. This is very close to typical localism behavior. Territoriality also functions to reinforce group identity and maintain social order among individuals of different social statuses. One theory of territoriality is that of sociobiology which argues that there is a strong genetic basis for territorial behavior among humans. The seminal text was by Ardrey (1966) *The Territorial Imperative*. Sociocultural theories, in contrast, emphasize the role of social learning and culture specific influences in defining the legitimacy of aggression as a response to territoriality. As I noted in class, the acculturation of surfers is strongly oriented towards an endorsement of aggression. Yet, as noted in the baboon article from *The Economist* (see the course website), that acculturation can change over time. The general consensus in the literature is that both sociocultural and sociobiological explanations hold some validity.

LOCALISM IN SURFING

Localism has always been part of surfing culture. As noted in the history section of the course, Hawaiian Kings designated certain breaks as "royal breaks." Hawaiian culture was socially stratified in terms of the types of boards they were allowed to ride. As such, localism is part of the surfing landscape – a necessary evil – but we would like to find ways to understand the range over which localism is manifest. We would also like to intervene and eliminate the most egregious forms of localism since they are fundamentally incompatible with the basic ethos of surfing.

As a first step, we watched Darren McInerney's (2003) documentary "The Swell Life." It provides an excellent account of the most extreme forms of territoriality in surfing but was weak on providing any rationalization of the behavior. Since it primarily focused on the extreme cases, surfers, as a whole, came

off looking like a bunch of half-wits with primitive notions of ownership and no capacity for compassion.

I mentioned in class that Nat Young, a former world champion and ambassador of surfing, was beaten a hairs breath from death in Australia while surfing his home break. The beating and the subsequent outrage led to the publishing of an anthology titled *Surf Rage* (2000). In the first chapter of the book, Nat Young recounts the beating:

Things came to a head later on that fateful day. Michael's son, Luke, began verbally abusing me out in the line-up because he thought I had 'dropped in' on a young surfer we both knew. Unbeknownst to the strapping lad, our mutual friend had actually called me to go, as he couldn't catch the wave. After repeatedly trying to explain that the kid had given me the wave, I paddled over to Luke, who was screaming obscenities at the top of his lungs. He wouldn't listen to me, so, out of frustration, I swatted him in the mouth, in the way you would smack a puppy when it does the wrong thing. It was the only option I felt I had left to get him to shut up.

A little later, Michael caught up with me on the beach and began pounding me unmercifully, all the while saying how I didn't even recognise his existence and how everybody thought I was God, but now he was. I should have said something but I couldn't get a word out. I should have tried to defend myself, but my left hand was wrapped in a waterproof bandage since I had lopped the top of my thumb off with a chainsaw the day before. He was punching me around my head, telling me to have a go, saying how I'd had this coming for a long time.

It was my worst nightmare. Michael beat on me until I stumbled and fell to the ground. I could feel the blood running down my face, saw it pooling on the sand. The amount of blood was amazing; I knew it was serious. Then he started kicking my back the pain running through me was intense.

Beau helped me up, but I couldn't stand by myself – not very well anyhow. I was swaying, going in and out of focus when the blows to my face started again, all in exactly the same place, one fist after another, hitting between the eye sockets and the top jaw. It was beyond any pain I have ever felt before. I had no more clarity. The, for some reason, Michael stopped. I don't know why. He just let me go.

Beau commandeered a friend's car, and the nightmare of doctors and X-rays began. That first night the sedation was so heavy a nurse had to sit with me in the hospital to make sure I continued breathing. The scan showed multiple fractures to the front of my face. Six and a half hours of reconstructive facial surgery later ...and the road to recovery is well defined. With rest and love, it should be possible to put my life back together. (Pp. 18-19)

Young goes on to describe his recovery and to reflect on the nature and causes of violence in surfing. Although this is not an instance of localism, per se, it does reflect the high level of anxiety and tension underlying surfing and the real potential for extreme violence.

After the movie and discussion, I charged the class with solving the localism problem. The hypothetical context was set ten years in the future during a summer in which two people were murdered as acts of localism. The state government convened a committee to recommend a course of action and to define state policy on localism. Our approach was (1) to describe the nature of localism, (2) to develop a alternative models of localism, and (3) to derive policy prescription from the models.

Describing Localism

The class provided several instances of localism from Palos Verdes, Silver Strand, Ocean Beach, Fort Point and Rhode Island (or somewhere on the east coast). We noted that people might be maligned and expelled because of their disrespectful behavior or perhaps the length of their hair, color of their wetsuit, or style of board. Other instances were noted in your journals – Oceanside is one that stuck with me. There was general agreement that localism was not all bad. In fact, when we went to list positive and negative aspects it was far easier to list the former. Our balanced perspective looked something like this:

| <u>Positive:</u> | <u>Negative:</u> |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Self-preservation ▶ Crowd control / safety ▶ “Place” preservation in terms of the human-cultural content and environmental content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Violence ▶ “Vibe” impacts on the aesthetics of the surfing experience. This occurs at the personal level, person-environment level, and interpersonal level. ▶ Letting negative behavior go unchecked may result in the government imposing policies that severely limit surfing freedom. ▶ Limits where an individual can surf ▶ Impact on local earning (retailing) based on surfing |

We noted that crowd control, safety, and cultural-environmental preservation are all laudable goals, yet individuals, as outsiders, also have rights. Also it is not the goals of localism that necessarily are problematic, it is the means of achieving those goals that cause problems. Expression of localism could take many forms including assault and battery, property damage, shouting / ranting, subtle vibing / mind games, promoting misconceptions about a place, or working as a team to prevent outsiders from getting waves (‘snaking’). Again, it is the extreme forms involving violence that are always a problem. It is also the case that situations may escalate from subtle vibing to overt snaking and finally fists are thrown. The context is also important. Once localism is deemed acceptable by a local culture, it may jump to ranting and shouting (ala P.V. ‘Bay boys’ – The Swell Life) with relatively little provocation.

Models

Scientists use models to characterize a complex process in terms of interactions among a simplified set of core elements. We started by posing a very simple model that was not informed by any theory. Specifically we posited the functional relationship,

$$localism = f(population, proportion\ of\ population\ that\ surfs, topography, local\ culture)$$

In words, localism should increase as the population increases and as the proportion of the population that surfs increases. The topography and local culture should mediate those responses. If an area is more isolated and has reef breaks, then localism should be higher than a wide open beach break. Also, if there is already a negative attitude towards outsiders in the city or region, then we would expect that to be expressed or magnified in the surfers of that region. In terms of the latter point, Palos Verdes is a good example. Recall from the documentary that the sheriff suggested that the homeowners paid good money for their privacy and did not like intrusions by the chattel living in less expensive homes. It is unsurprising then that children in that community would grow up to become ranting goons.

I suggested that three theories might inform our model building. The three theory bases were (1) sociobiological models of invasion / repulsion, (2) economic theories of public goods and externalities, and (3) ethical models that pose strategic games.

(1) **Sociobiology model:**

The basic premise of this approach was mentioned already in the theory section. In short, humans are conceived of as animals with a strong predilection for territoriality and defense of territory through violence. If that is true, we can learn about humans by observing other animals territorial behavior, e.g. Calhoun’s rats. A process theory is posed by Wilson (2000): “In short, the territorial strategy evolved is the one that maximizes the increment due to extraction of energy from the defended area as compared with the loss of fitness due to the efforts and perils

of defense.” I particularly like the quote because it focuses on energy conservation. Since surfing is all about tapping into wave energy, localism is, in a sense, also about preserving a certain quota of energy for the local tribe. The important distinction is that our lives do not depend on that infusion of energy – though the addition-like chemical stimulus in the brain might make it seem that way to some surfers.

Schoener’s (1971) *Theory of Feeding Strategies* provides a simple model of territoriality in terms of a linear *invasion* rate equation and a linear *expulsion* rate equation. Though the theory was developed for birds we will set it in the more sinister social setting of surfing. Suppose we have a group of locals that are intent on preserving their surfing territory, L , which has an area A and perimeter q . There are more than enough waves for the locals but they don’t like surfing with outsiders. They spend some amount of time, T_{SD} , searching for non-locals that have invaded their territory and find the non-locals per unit time proportional to J . When they find non-locals they are successful in chasing a fraction, f , of the non-locals out of the area. Also, when non-locals invade they spend one period, P , in the localized territory and there are N of them that invade. The surf spots in the localized territory can hold a maximum density of H invaders. Given those behavioral definitions, we can define a linear *invasion rate*, I ,

$$I = q \times v \times \left(1 - \frac{N/A}{H}\right)$$

where v is a constant determined by the probability that an outsider will invade. In words, the equation indicates that the invasion rate will increase as the perimeter of the territory increases and as some exogenous proclivity to invade increases. The invasion rate decreases as the density of invaders approaches the maximum limit of the surf spots in territory L .

The linear *expulsion rate*, E , is determined by,

$$E = \frac{J T_{SD} f (N/A)}{P}$$

In words, the expulsion rate increases as the number of invaders per unit area increases (N/A), it increases as the fraction repulsed increases, f , and increases with the amount of search effort by the locals. If the invading non-locals are crafty and travel as individuals instead of in packs, they can reduce J and thereby reduce the expulsion rate.

The theory is useful in that it not only decomposes the complex process into elements, but the intersection of the invasion rate and expulsion rate lines define a territorial equilibrium expressed as the density of non-locals surfing in a given territory. The formulation also coincides with some of our suppositions about localism. Topography is formalized here as area and perimeter. As such, beach breaks will be difficult to defend in the sense that too much energy will be expended on patrolling. It is also possible to show that the same equilibrium density can result from either a low expulsion rate, low invasion rate scheme or a high expulsion rate, high invasion rate scheme. The latter will require much more active defense and therefore more intrinsic violence.

A final element to note about the sociobiology formulation is that it provides a dynamic model in which uncertainty is formally incorporated as part of the spatial-temporal process. In the two above equations the uncertainty is restricted to fixed terms over time. In reality uncertainty plays an important role in the dynamics of localism. Under a more realistic expression of uncertainty and its impact on the behavior of locals and non-locals, the equilibrium would be tenuous at best.

(2) **Economic Models:**

The sociobiology models are intriguing but are also unappealing because they assume that human behavior is dominated by traits determined by long term evolutionary processes. Though this may be true to some degree, we would also like to allow our surfers to engage in higher order thinking that might violate the simple behavioral norms defined by birds and rats. The sociobiology models are also somewhat useless as a guide to policy formation or as a guide to choosing one policy proposal among a set of policy proposals. Economic models solve some of those problems by (a) making explicit the behavioral assumptions about individuals, (b) providing an ethical basis (utilitarian philosophy) for choosing among a set of competing policies prescriptions, and (c) defining the conditions under which the government should intervene.

The core issue studied by economics is allocation. The core thesis is that the allocation of goods and services is optimal when it results from a free market in which individuals bid for the goods and services based on their willingness to pay. Those individuals that really want a particular good are willing to pay more for the good. If many people want the same good, the price will be bid up to a higher level. The end result is that goods are allocated according to prices, and those individuals that derive the most utility from a particular good are the ones that get it. An important premise that is required for the system to work properly is that the prices reflect the aggregated preferences of individuals. In elementary economics those preferences are expressed as an aggregate demand curve. The supply of goods, reflecting the market conditions for manufacturers – input costs, technology, etc – are summarized by an aggregate supply curve. The intersection of the supply curve and the demand curve determine the market clearing price and the amount of the good that will be sold in the market; thus allocation by price.

What determines the supply and demand conditions for surfing? All of the artifacts of surfing (boards, wetsuits, wax, etc.) follow the normal manufacturing supply conditions of mainstream economics. But localism stems from the perceived shortage in the supply of good waves. As noted earlier in the course, waves are simply an expression of the global energy cycle; there is no manufacturing plant. What about the demand side? What are people willing to pay to surf a perfect day at Rincon with only ten people in the water? Nobody knows because there is no formal pricing mechanism in the wave riding market.¹

The sub-field of public economics does provide some useful guidance for markets and allocation rules when the price mechanism is corrupted or non-existent. A *pure* public goods is defined as a commodity that is *non-rival* and *non-excludable*. Non-rival means that if one person consumes part of the commodity, it does not diminish the consumption of anyone else (Rosen 1995). Typical examples of such commodities are lighthouses or national defense. Once the lighthouse exists, individuals are free to observe the light without having to pay for the service of maintaining the lighthouse. That there is a disincentive to pay for a product is often termed the *free-rider* problem. Government acts to solve the problem by taxing the population and providing the public good. This is one of the strongest grounds for government intervention in the private market. It is the basis for K-12 public education, police protection, national military spending, and many other publicly provided goods and services.

Ocean waves and surf breaks are, in fact, a type of public good. Over some range of population density in the water, the commodity (a wave) is non-rival. If I am paddling out and you take a wave, it does not impact my consumption during the surf session. Similarly, if you are taking rights and I am taking lefts, we can ride the same wave without impacting each others

¹ One could argue that the price of wave riding could be taken from wave parks. Until they can produce a wave of comparable quality to Rincon those price will be useless.

consumption. In economics, we would define crowding as a type of effect on each others consumption that occurs as soon as two people try to ride the same wave in the same direction. The term for that impact is *externality* (Rosen 1995). To explore that idea fully would require introducing concepts of marginal private cost, marginal social cost, marginal private benefit, and marginal social benefit. That would take us too far into economics. The essence of the problem with crowding, is that there is no market that values the impact of the next surfer paddling out at a break on all of the other surfers who are already in the water. The price mechanism is broken, and this results in an inefficient allocation of waves to riders. In the absence of government intervention, the economic theory suggests that we should expect to see over-crowding since there is no price mechanism regulating the resource.

The public economics framework yields a direct policy solution. We need to have the government get involved to either tax the use of the resource or introduce a quota system. This is exactly the solution we want, right? Wrong. The overwhelming sentiment in the class was that we want to preserve human-environment experience in all of its existential glory. The introduction of surfing “meter maids” would take away from that experience. Still, if localism induced violence did become extreme and the government was intent on ‘solving’ the problem, it is very likely that they would turn to either a usage fee or a quota system.

How does localism fit into this context? Localism creates an informal pricing mechanism where none exists. The more that localism can increase the ‘price’ (or costs) of surfing the lower the demand at a particular break or over a whole stretch of coastline. This suggests we should identify the various costs of surfing and consider the way in which localism increases costs.

The costs can be broken into four categories based on whether they are valued in the market or not and whether they are independent or dependent on the location surfed (see Table 1). The prices listed under panel A (no localism) in the upper left quadrant are sunk costs that are formally priced in the market (a surf shop) and are independent of where one surfs. Even without localism (panel A), there are still costs associated with the uncertainty of whether the surf will be good and whether the crowd size will be manageable at a particular break. Each individual varies in terms of their aversion to risk. In general, however, the farther away the surf break, the higher will be the uncertainty about the wave conditions. As such, the advent of wave forecasts and surf cams has decreased the costs of surfing by directly reducing uncertainty about wave conditions. This, in turn, will result in a higher equilibrium density of surfers in the water in all locations where the information has improved.

The impacts of localism are shown in panel B. There is some chance of formal costs when venturing into a localized area due to bodily injury or property damage inflicted by the locals. The primary cost increases surround psychic costs and additional uncertainty that comes with surfing in area known for localism. Again, the response of each individual will differ in the face of this added uncertainty. Individuals that are risk-averse and passive will avoid localized breaks. Individuals who are aggressive, individuals with a strong sense of personal cabotage, or individuals willing to accept the odds of ‘capture’ will charge into the localized break. In the absence of government intervention, localism can be viewed as a rationally motivated response to increase the price of surfing selected breaks to decrease the equilibrium density in the water. Also, as forecasts and web cams increase in prevalence we would expect to see an increase in localism to maintain a fixed equilibrium density. This line of reasoning suggests that we might reduce localism by having the government limit the information exposure of a particular region.

Table 1. The price of surfing

A. No localism

| | | Price mechanism | |
|----------|-------------|---|---|
| | | Formal | Informal |
| Location | Independent | Surfboard, wetsuit, wax, food, leash, board repairs | |
| | Dependent | Transportation costs (gas money, car maintenance, etc.) | Uncertainty about wave and crowd conditions; time costs (opportunity costs) |

B. Increased prices (costs) due to localism

| | | Price mechanism | |
|----------|-------------|--------------------------------|---|
| | | Formal | Informal |
| Location | Independent | | |
| | Dependent | Property damage; medical costs | Psychic costs (fear, will it be possible to get waves?, etc.) |

As a final note, consider the case of Hollister Ranch within the economic paradigm. We would already expect that the equilibrium density of surfers will be low relative to other breaks even without localism. The costs of surfing there are high already in terms of transportation costs and opportunity costs since it is only accessible by boat (to non-owners). In Table 1, therefore, we would have to add the cost of the boat and its maintenance to the upper left cell of panel A. Should we begrudge the ranch property owners who have easier access? No. The owners could have chosen any use for their money; many of those investments would have yielded a higher return. If they bought the property specifically to gain access to the surf, that is exactly the type of formal market regulation that does result in an efficient allocation of resources. In this sense, Hollister ranch serves as one manifestation of how crowding might be regulated more generally.

If we follow the logic of public goods laid out above, the idea of ownership is anathema to the notion that we should share in nature’s bounty. As such, we move away from economics and towards an ethical basis for the regulation of surfing and control of localism.

(3) Ethical Models

Ethical theories depart from the above two approaches in that they specifically attempt to define a basis for norms of behavior. In short, they attempt to answer the questions: (1) How ought we act towards our fellow surfers?, and (2) How ought we act towards the surf environment? (Scherer and Attig 1983) Economic theory tends to spill over into making prescriptions about behavioral norms and ‘efficient’ allocation – as mentioned above it is grounded in the moral philosophy of utilitarianism – but economic theories are highly constrained in their approach.

I only mentioned two ethical bases for understanding territoriality; given more time it would be easy to do several lectures on the topic. The first approach I mentioned was Garrett Hardin's famous argument known as the *Tragedy of the Commons*. He describes a community economy dependent on grazing which has a limited amount of grazing land. If each individual rancher restricts their flock to a certain level, X , the community economy overall will reach the highest level of output. If any individual rancher cheats and allows grazing at level $Y > X$ they benefit personally (more wealth) but the community overall suffers. In the extreme case, self-interested ranchers can overgraze to the point of a complete environmental and economic collapse.

The basic tension in the argument is between self-interest and community interest. This is very close to the idea of public goods and externalities discussed above. In this context, however, the focus is on the uncertainty surrounding the likelihood of reciprocity among your peers. In the surfing context the tension surrounding reciprocal behavior appears constantly: If I wait to paddle out until the crowd shrinks, will the next person who arrives do the same? If I wait my turn for a wave, rather than continual posture and snake for waves, will others in the line-up do the same? The essence of the problem can be captured by game theory which seeks to describe strategic behavior under conditions of uncertainty. The ethical prescription is definitely to assume reciprocity and act on behalf of the community. Game theory instead tries to characterize the equilibrium results under certain gaming conditions. The reality of violence and localism in surfing suggest that the underlying game results in a very unstable equilibrium which does not reinforce reciprocal behavior over the long-term.

Seeing as uncertainty plays a central role in each of the three models discussed – economic, sociobiological, and ethical – it is probably the most important fundamental force sustaining and promoting localism. Even given forecasting models, it is still extremely difficult to know whether the wind, wave, and tide conditions will combine to form good surf at a particular break. Is the break you choose really the best location on that day? What about the peak down the beach? There is also uncertainty surrounding crowd size and behavior. If I wake up at dawn will there be other surfers also charging at the same time? If I surf break X , will Joe Jerk be in the line-up that day? The uncertainty generally argues for gorging yourself at the trough of waves while the perceived fickle wave and crowd conditions are favorable. In areas with lower average surfing densities and more waves and good breaks, we would expect longer periods of sustained reciprocity.

The second basis for an ethical approach to localism and violence is to agree on a written ethical code that describes the expected behavioral norms. I handed out one such code in class titled the *Tribal Law, Surf Riders Code of Ethics*. The ten precepts of that code are:

1. Right of way priority A. Furthest out or waiting the longest
2. Right of way priority B. Furthest inside and closest to the peak
3. Right of way priority C. First to feet or first on wave
4. Right of way priority D. Call left or right (communicate)
5. Do not snake or drop in
6. Paddle wide using the rip
7. If caught inside, stay in the white water
8. Do not throw, or let go of, your board
9. Respect the beach, the ocean, and others
10. Give respect to gain respect

Notice that precept 10 is a restatement of reciprocity. As an ethical code, this is not something we would expect to be enforced by the state. Instead, learning about the code should be part of cultural assimilation into surfing and enforcement should be through subtle, non-violent forms such as dialog or shunning.

DISCUSSION

A few conclusions emerge from the preceding discussion. Localism (territoriality) is a deeply ingrained behavior that manifests in many areas outside of surfing. As such, the complete elimination of localism is not a realistic goal. Instead we should strive to constrain the most violent expressions of localism. The theoretical explorations suggest that there are complex social and environmental processes that continually reinforce territorial behavior. The increase in information about wave and crowd conditions will likely increase territorial behavior in many places. Limiting information access should be explored and is not entirely incompatible with basic notions of privacy. Ultimately, limiting localism depends on our reciprocal behavior of surfers on behalf of each other. Institutions like the Groundswell Society that take a more overt approach to acculturation and teaching behavior norms represent an important step forward for surfing. The alternative of quotas or other government intervention are certainly less appealing alternatives.

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