MASTER THESIS

Self-governance in practice. An exploratory research on the Code of Conduct of the whale-watching industry in Iceland

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Abstract

Whale-watching in Iceland has grown rapidly since 2003, contributing to the local and national economy. Research has shown that whale-watching can cause both short- and long-term impacts on whales' welfare when the operations are not run sustainably. Due to the lack of governmental involvement, its management in Iceland is based on self-governance. Whale-watching is limited to Code of Conduct guidelines attempting to manage the whale-watching operations. Insight regarding the quality of management of the industry is missing. Therefore, this research fills in that void by exploring the whale-watching industry in Iceland and revealing the emergent issues of management. In order to do so, perspectives were obtained through semi-structured interviews of stakeholders of the Code of Conduct regarding their experiences with it. Additionally, data were collected through observations. The outcomes highlight key issues that emerge in the management of CoC, aiming to contribute to a more sustainable whale-watching industry of Iceland.

Keywords: Whale-watching, management, sustainability, self-governance, Code of Conduct, Iceland.

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CoC	Code of Conduct
IWC	International Whaling Commission
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
CPR	Common Pool Resources
WDCS	Whale and Dolphin Conservation

1. Introduction

"Whales are definitely more like humans than we think. They have an advanced culture and we can learn a lot about humans by looking at that culture"

- *Alexis Kirke, University of Plymouth*

1.1. Problem Statement & Research Objective

People's relationship with whales has changed fundamentally through recent years. As the opening quote also reflects, the current projection of the Western culture onto cetaceans has a more anthropomorphic characteristic, considering whales as an animal with rights (Henderson, 2004). That perception brought people closer to mammals and their natural environment. This change of public perception is believed that has contributed to the significant growth of the whale-watching industry through the years. In 1998, 87 countries were running whale-watching operations, 10 years later, in 2008, the number was increased to 119 countries (O'Connor et al., 2009). One of those seeing significant growth of inbound tourism in this industry is Iceland. Since 2003, there has been a 170% increase in tourists demand to experience whales in their natural habitat (Martin, 2012). That has helped many in the country to recently realise how valuable whales can be in both the national and local economy. At the same time, due to the rapid growth of the industry, studies from around the world have begun to focus on the impacts of the industry on the marine world. There is a concern that repeated disturbances can impact the whales negatively in both short and long term (Orams, 2000).

In an effort to reduce the negative impacts on the whale population, management and proper regulations have been implemented around the world. In Iceland, despite the increasing demand for whale-watching, the activity remains unregulated by the government. In 2015, the management of the whale-watching industry was taken in the hands of a national non-governmental organisation (NGO) called 'IceWhale'. More specifically, the NGO, together with local tour operators and scientists, created a Code of Conduct (CoC) to assure good welfare for the cetaceans. The CoC consists of guidelines on safety standards for speed, distance and approach to maintaining during whale-watching tours. Today, the majority of the operators in Iceland are part of the IceWhale team, and they are self-regulating their tours accordingly (IceWhale, 2019).

No literature provides information on the way the CoC is implemented in practice and the issues that might exist. Therefore, this study carries an exploratory nature, providing an insight into the self-governance of the industry. More specifically, it focuses on the way it is implemented in practice and key issues and challenges that emerge in the management of the CoC. In that way, this research contributes to filling in the gap in the literature, providing feedback to the interested parties on crucial points for management of the CoC, and also emphasise the need for a potential future governmental collaboration. Building upon this the main question pertinent to this research is:

"How does self-governance work in practice in the whale watching industry of Iceland? "

In order to explore the whale-watching industry, self-regulation theory is used as the backbone of the research. This theory consists of components that help explore the self-governance in three main aspects: *standards*, *monitoring*, and *operate phase*. Based on these aspects, the following specific questions will be studied.

(1) Is there consensus around the standards of the CoC by all stakeholders involved in its implementation?
(2) Is there any form of monitoring taking place regarding the implementation of CoC?
(3) What is the process in case of CoC violation?

The theory and its aspects are explained later in the theoretical framework chapter. More specifically, this thesis consists of the following section that provides background information regarding the history of whale-watching worldwide its evolution until recently— highlighting its pros and cons. Additionally, information regarding the Icelandic whale-watching industry and its management is described. Next, in chapter two, the Theoretical framework on which this research is based is introduced; the different modes of governance, and self-regulation theory. Then, the methodology chapter addresses the methods used for data generation, the research setting and the process of data collection and analysis. Chapter four presents the results derived from the analysis of the collected data and discusses the findings drawing to a Conclusion and Recommendations. Finally, the full Reference list is found at the end of the thesis, along with the appendices of the interview and observation guides, and the consensus form.

1.2.   Background

Context matters. Researching the whale watching industry without knowing its background is like seeking to catch a fish without knowing the natural habitat. Therefore, in the following section, information regarding the history of the whale-watching industry is presented together with its pros and cons. Finally, the last subchapter introduces the case of the Icelandic whale-watching industry and its management.

1.2.1 The History of Whale-watching

Whale-watching is an activity that encompasses various methods and species of viewing; therefore, many definitions of the term exist. Typically, whale watching is the practice of observing cetaceans (whale and dolphins) in their natural habitat, it is mostly a touristic activity but it can also serve scientific and/or educational purposes (Perrin et al., 2009). For this study, whale-watching refers to the touristic activity, where the passengers view cetaceans from a tour boat (O'Connor et al., 2009).

In 1955, in the United States, the first water-based watching operation took place, that cost 1 US dollar per passenger. That spectacle became popular as it attracted 10.000 visitors in the first year and many more in the following ones. The first commercial whale-watching operation took place in 1971, in North America, when the Montreal Zoological Society operated tours to view fins and beluga whales (Perrin et al., 2009). Whale-watching had grown rapidly since 1982 when the global moratorium of whaling came into effect. Six years later, in 1998, Hoyt conducted for the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) the first worldwide survey on whale-watching, which helped to demonstrate the value of the industry. By then, 87 countries were participating in the whale-watching industry, with over 9 million passengers generating over 1 billion dollars (O'Connor et al., 2009). Ten years later, the International Fund for Animal Welfare commissioned economists to expand his work to measure the change in the industry across the world. Interestingly, this report states that the global demand for whale-watching increased up to 119 countries being involved in the industry with 13 million passengers, generating over 2.1 billion dollars. Due to the migratory behaviour of whales, whale-watching is an activity that can occur in almost any coastal country and therefore the potential for continuous growth and development within the industry is great (O'Connor et al., 2009).

Various aspects it is believed that have contributed to the significant rise of the whale watching industry worldwide. The Keiko film and NGO campaigns are two examples.

More specifically, incidents such as the Greenpeace, boycotting the whale stocks to be sold abroad and Sea Shepherds who sank two whaling boats at the harbour of Reykjavík in 1986 are two examples of campaigns that have persuaded the public opinion towards cetaceans (Brydon, 1990). Modern public perception of cetaceans consists of anthropomorphic characteristics of the whales, framing them as the friends of humans who should be treated accordingly. Studies confirm the influence that the anthropomorphic perception can have on human interaction with animals. Tam et al. (2013) for instance run a social experiment on the topic and have proved that when people's perception of an animal has anthropomorphic characteristics, they tend to become more protective of it.

1.2.2. Positive aspects of the whale-watching industry

1.2.2.1.   Socio-economic benefits

That rise of the whale-watching industry contributes in various ways, such as the socio-economically. In 2009, the International Fund for Animal study estimated that the whale-watching industry generated over 2 billion US worldwide and that within 3.000 whale watching operations, there were 13.200 people employed in both seasonal and permanent jobs. Additionally, the study concluded that whale-watching tourism could be used as a medium by developing countries to improve their livelihood through direct and indirect employment (O'Connor et al., 2009). The rise of whale-watching tourism has helped various coastal communities to develop economically. In Kaikoura of New Zealand, within ten years, there was a rise of tourists from 3.400 to 873.000 producing significant employment and income for the locals (Hoyt, 2009).

1.2.2.2.   Education

Another added value of whale-watching is the potential to educate the people that participate in it. Regardless of the background of the passengers, the tour guide has the opportunity to educate whale-watchers in topics regarding the biology of marine mammals, oceanography, the importance of conservation and also the coastal culture of the surrounding communities (Martin, 2012).

In 1997, the Internal Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) ran a workshop in order to get insight into the potential of the whale-watching industry to provide educational input to its passengers. Overall, it was concluded that the most common education that the workshop-participants have received when doing a whale watching tour was on topics regarding the specific animal they might encounter at the moment, such as their biology and their natural environment. (IFAW et al., 1997)

Educational values of whale-watching:

1. Whales are emblems for promoting awareness of endangered species and habitat protection.

2. Whale watching provides the opportunity for people across all ages and cultures to become familiar with environmental issues and to become involved in conservation efforts on a personal, local, regional, national and international level.

3. The development of education programs builds bridges between the general public and scientific communities.

4. Natural history knowledge gained through whale watching has intrinsic value.

5. Whale watching provides an opportunity to observe animals in the wild, transmitting factual information and dispelling myths.

6. Whale watching is a model for marine educational programs in adventure travel and ecotourism.

7. Whale watching provides the opportunity for appreciation and understanding of local history, culture and environment.

1.2.2.3.   Conservation

As mentioned already, whale-watching can contribute strongly to the education of its passengers and thus raise public awareness (Martin, 2012). According to Easman et al. (2018), whale-watching, through the offered educational input, can raise the chances of people to play a more active role in conservation plans from those that did not get informed at all in the first place. Becoming more informed is an important step to raising awareness of the importance of protecting marine mammals and their environment. In many cases, whale watching is aligned with educational programs from higher education, allowing them to have access to the field of their academic studies. Such as cytology, oceanography, ecology and biology (Martin, 2012).

The local community can play an active role in the conservation of the marine environment as well. One example is given by O'Connor et al. (2009), regarding a dolphin watching industry at Samadai reef in Egypt. Tourist activities at the location disturbed the resting behaviour of the dolphins, which made them disperse to more peaceful areas. That was a wake-up call for the local community to take action that would bring back the dolphins and also enable them to run their dolphin watching industry. More specifically, it was reported that in 2003 that local authorities suspended the tours for a year when a marine protection plan was put in place. The plan included zoning and monitoring plan, enforcement strategies and service fee to the local government that is used for maintenance and the conservation of the reef area. Most importantly, the management plan has been successful in allowing dolphins to return to the area. It was noticed that a year later, the number of dolphins that were found in the area had grown from 32 to 78 in total.

1.2.2.4. Research

Whale-watching vessels, in many cases, have been used as a common platform to research social and natural studies. Research involving whale-watching tourists has proven useful for evaluating various aspects of a country's tourism industry and has contributed to greater economic investigations. Additionally, by knowing the target population that the whale- watching industry attracts, along with their motivations for participating, it can contribute to better management of the whale-watching industry (Parsons et al., 2003).

Furthermore, for natural studies, researchers pay attention to the natural behaviour of marine mammals and how they can get affected by the industry. More specifically, the negative impacts on the welfare of marine mammals are introduced below. Studies from various backgrounds such as ecology, population biology and conservation, and behavioural studies can contribute together to more sustainable whale-watching management. Discussions held at the workshop on the Science of Sustainable Whale Watching revolved around why active management is needed and how effective management can be achieved. Based on the public report that would highlight the discussions held by participants, there was a consensus regarding the need for sustainable management and the contribution of the scientists involved to enable such

practice. By identifying the impacts on the welfare of cetaceans by boats of the industry, it will enable proper management to minimise them (Martin, 2012).

1.2.3. Negative impacts of the whale-watching industry

Despite the various positive aspects that whale-watching generates, the negative aspects need to be taken into consideration as well. One of the main downsides of the rise of the whale-watching industry is the impact that the vessels can cause on the welfare of the cetacean population. In 2006, in the International Whaling Commission's (IWC) annual meeting, the Scientific Committee concluded that there was sufficient evidence that cetacean watching could endanger the viability of small coastal populations of whales and dolphins (Martin, 2012). Dr David Lusseau, confirmed the short-term impacts of abnormal boat interaction with whales.

"The short-term effects of boat interacting with whales can disrupt their activities, like stopping them foraging for food or resting" (BBC interview, 2011)

Lusseau and Bejder (2007) discussed the long- term consequences due to the presence of vessels. They concluded that, for instance, in the case of foraging behaviour getting frequently disturbed, it could lead to a reduction of the fitness of the individual and decreased chances for calf survival. Dr David Lusseau, in the same interview, confirmed that theory with the below statement.

"In the long term, this can have an impact on the whales' vital rates. Females can even stop producing enough milk for their calves, which can decrease the survival rate of their young. Ultimately the viability of a pod can be threatened." (BBC, 2011).

The way the industry can impact cetaceans varies among species. Duffus and Dearden (1993) successfully measured the impacts on Killer Whale populations when exposed to intense pressure. It was shown that short-term changes in behaviour took place, including increased swimming speed and dive times that result in increased energetic costs. Another study by Scheidat et al. (2004) focused their research on humpback whales in Ecuador. They observed a decrease in linear swim patterns and an increase in swim speeds of humpback approached by whale-watching vessels. Such behavioural changes have been observed with more cetaceans. For instance, an assessment of how dolphin-watching tour boats affect the behaviour of bottlenose dolphins, Constantine et al. (2004)

concluded that perhaps the most concerning change was the reduction of resting behaviour. Their findings suggested that the increasing frequency and the numbers of boats decrease their resting behaviour. How vessels can generate stress through the sounds that lead to behavioural change causing long-term impacts on the cetacean population it is illustrated in figure 1.
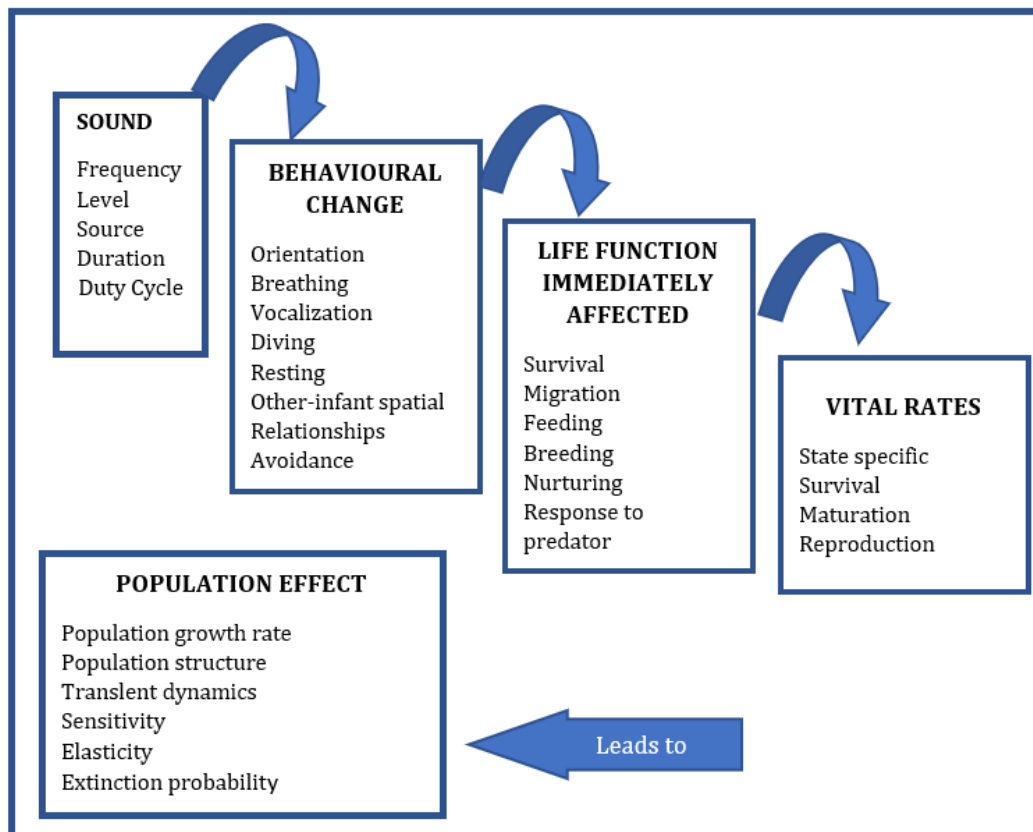
Figure 1. Behavioural responses to whale-watching activity (Lusseau & Bejder, 2007)

Many factors can cause both short- and long-term impacts on the whale population. For instance, there are reported incidents of vessels manoeuvring between a mother and its calf for a closer encounter with whale-watchers. such as calf separation from its mother, unable to locate its food supply, eventually to die (Martin, 2012). Additionally, the engine noise can disturb cetaceans and cause them to leave the area in question, possibly away from rich feeding grounds, rubbing grounds or potential mates. A study by Jensen et al. (2009) investigated that the noise that comes from the engine of the whale-watching vessels can impact the communication of cetaceans. Acoustic tags were attached to common bottlenose dolphins and short-finned pilot whales, and it was concluded that their distance communication was decreased by 70% when boats approached them at 200m.

1.2.4. The Icelandic Industry

1.2.4.1. Whale watching in Iceland

Iceland has become one of the most popular whale-watching destinations in Europe. The Icelandic whale-watching industry began in the 1990s from Southern Iceland, at the port Hofn. Similarly, in the same year, whale-watching started in Husavik as an alternative form of income for fishers that faced the compounding of the fishing industry in the North. The whale-watching industry became the fastest growing industry in the country with an increase from 30.330 whale watchers in 1998 to more than 350.000 in 2017, at it can also be seen in figure 2 (O'Connor et al., 2009).
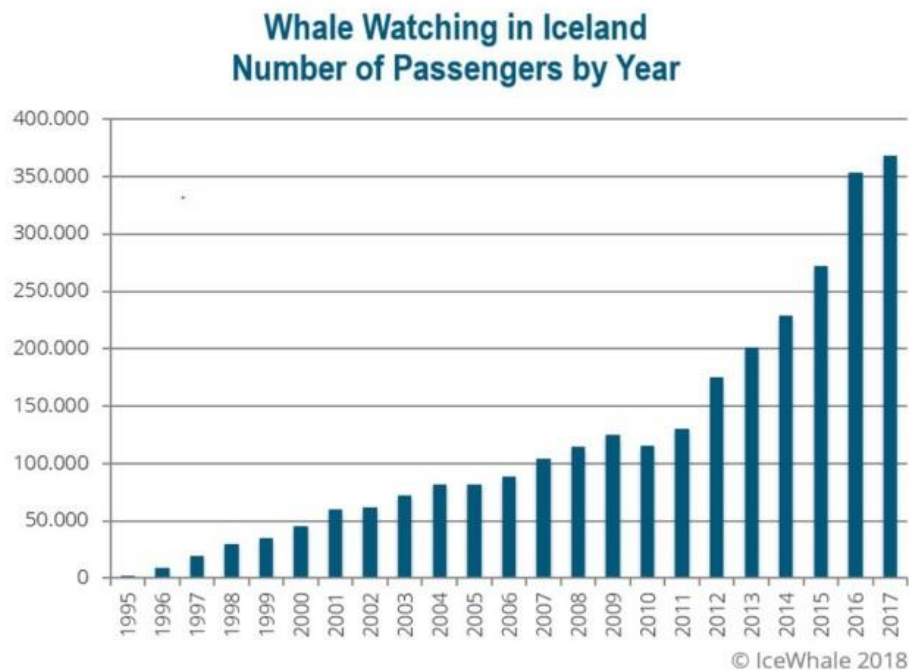
Figure 2. Number of whale watchers in Iceland 1995-2017 (Martin, 2012)

The peak season for the Icelandic whale-watching tourism is from June to August, and a variety of species can be found. Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), blue whales (*Balaenopterausculus*), and killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) are few examples (Higham et al., 2014).

Nowadays, Iceland overall has 14 whale watching companies operating in the two bays consistently, some throughout the whole year and some during summer (*Personal*

Communication with IceWhale, 2019). The capital concentrates the most significant portion of whale-watching visitors, accounting for 51% of the total and Húsavík (36%). Smaller whale watching operations are Dalvík and Hauganes, which account for 6% of whale watchers; Ólafsvík and Drangsnes in the northwest, with 5%. Finally, the Westmann Islands in the South, with around 2% (O'Connor et al., 2009).

1.2.4.2.   Sustainable whale-watching management: Code of Conduct

Various workshops and conferences have been dedicated to the sustainability issue of whale-watching. An example is the Council of Europe-conference, in 2000, where sustainable whale-watching was addressed. Although in some countries, there are guidelines to manage whale watching activities incorporated into national legislation such as Australia, in other cases, including Iceland, the Code of Conduct (CoC) is performed voluntarily (Martin, 2012). In 2015, IceWhale took the initiative to conduct a workshop in Reykjavík, in cooperation with the British and American Embassy. The goal of the conference was to raise awareness on the impacts of the industry and based on that to build the CoC. At the end of the meeting, eight whale watching companies signed the CoC pledging themselves to adhere to specific standards for speed, distance, and approach when operating whale-watching (figure 3) (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2015).
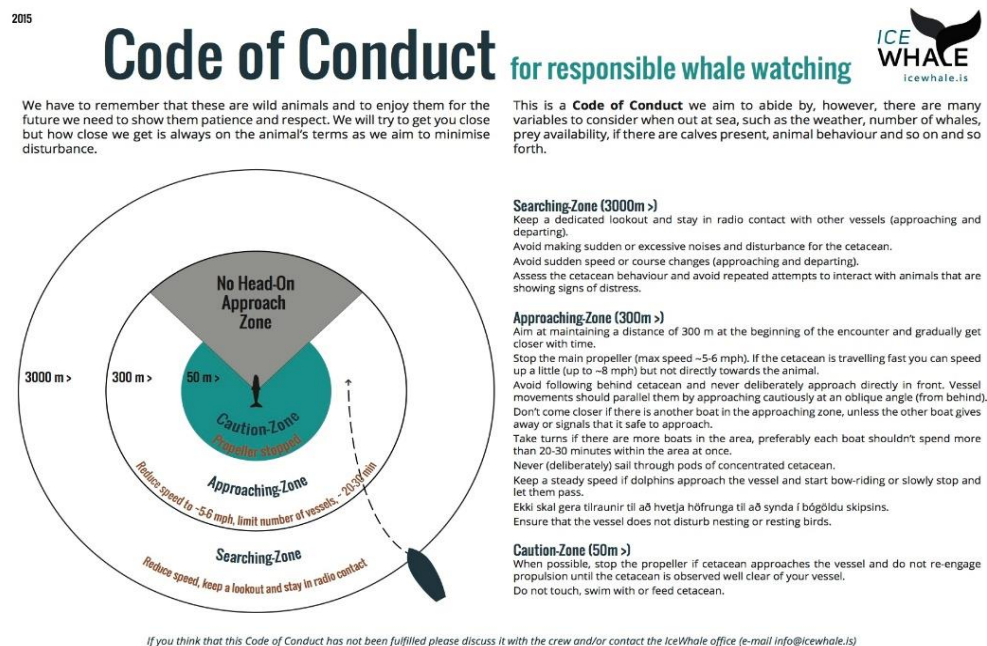
Figure 3. CoC of IceWhale (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2015)

Today there are ten out of fourteen whale-watching companies in the IceWhale team. Generally, a CoC is a document reflecting requirements, regulations, and professional values that can serve as a guide of the behaviour of an organisation, company, and industry (Palidauskaite, 2003). The CoC aims to (i) minimise impact on cetacean for the future and the sustainability of whale-watching operation in Iceland, (ii) to ensure the best possible encounter, both for animal welfare and passenger enjoyment and to (iii)increase development, understanding and awareness of appropriate practices when watching cetaceans (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2015).

2. Theoretical Framework

"Whales have their own dialects and they build communities which are centred around where they are from. So, for whales, their community and being connected with which they were born and live their entire lives together is so important. For us, being able to know your identity and hold it, is so important as well. "

Emma Serlin – London Speech Workshop

Like whales are connected to their community, so is this study connected to the following theoretical framework. More specifically, this theoretical chapter introduces the different modes of governance and self-regulation theory. Finally, by the end of the chapter, a conclusion reintroduces the specific research questions linked to the theory and are illustrated in the conceptual model figure.

2.1.   Modes of Governance

Although there are several definitions and approaches to governance, its traditional approach is used as a synonym for government. Nevertheless, later, a redirection occurred where governance is divided into various modes depending on the involvement of public and private stakeholders (Rhodes, 1997).   In literature, there is a significant variation of modes when it comes to governance. For this study, the one of Kooiman (2003) was used who introduced the following three main different modes, *the hierarchical governance*, *co-governance*, and *self-governance.*

Firstly, when governmental actors play a leading role in governing combined with a minimum role of non-governmental actors, then the mode of governance is called *hierarchical governance*. In decision making, governmental actors play a significant role, while the non-governmental ones can only play an influential role and tend to follow the rules, and tasks defined by governmental actors. (Brookfield et al., 2005).

Next, *co-governance* is a mode which indicates overall that both governmental and non-governmental actors are involved in achieving beneficial outcomes. In these cases, the need for cooperation is high as they want to achieve goals that can only be achieved with cooperation. However, the extent of involvement of each party creates two different subcategories, closed co-governance and open co-governance. When the involvement on decision making is largely equal, it is referred to as closed co-governance. When on the other hand, the decision making is looser, and thus governance is flexible, it is referred to as open co-governance. Access to governance is generally open to those who wish to participate. Each actor is responsible for their activities, only loosely working together with others (Treib et al., 2007).

The final mode of governance is *self-governance*. This mode refers to the situation that is only governed by non-governmental actors, with only a minimum to non-existent influence by governmental actors (Kooiman, 2003). Scholars like Ostrom (1990) and

Olsson and Folke (2001) show the evolution of self-governance as a response to resource supply, such as a rapid decline in the abundance. The term self-governance has a double connotation. "self", which emphasises the grounding of the policy in self-regulation and "governance" which emphasises the governing as an open-ended process that deals with several institutions than just one when it comes to 'government' (Wunsch et al., 2019).

There could be different reasons for an actor to commit to voluntary accords. Self-governance has advantages that are related to the fact that it is a voluntary procedure that requires less administrative decision-making costs making the whole procedure faster and simpler than a legislative procedure. When it comes to the political level, the actors involved prefer voluntary agreements to the legislation because it offers them the possibility to shape the instruments in their advantage, adjusted to sectoral needs (Cutler et al., 1999).

Self-governance is highly discussed in the literature as a common instrument for the management of Common Pool Resource (CPR). CPRs are based on the users of the resource to regulate themselves through crafting and modifying working rules to deal with problems that emerge regarding their common resource (i.e. exploitation) (Colin-Castillo & Woodward, 2015). CPR refers to the types of resources which are open to everybody to use and that one person's usage of the resource decreases the ability of another person to use it (subtractability) (Sarker et al., 2015). A classic example of CPR is fish. Catching fish in the ocean, takes away the possibility of that fish to be caught by another fisherman. The benefit will of catching one extra fish will go solely on that fisherman; however, the future cost of a depleted stock will be on everyone (Ostrom, 1990). Instead, it should be a joint agreement for collective action to protect the resource for the common benefit which is complicated as it is impossible to make sure that the fishers will not catch the fish you refrain from catching (Hardin, 1968). In that matter, Hardin (1968) claims that the only way of preventing exploitation is either by the government taking full control or through privatization.

For long privatization and full governmental control, were considered the only options until the 1990s when Elinor Ostrom, drew attention to the option for self-governing a common resource as there are cases of fishers, irrigators and herders, who have been capable to organize themselves, monitor each other's' behaviour (Ostrom et al., 1992). In terms of results, studies have identified various factors that may enhance or weaken the

self-governance of collective action. For example, in the case of natural resource management, when the characteristics and the evolution of that resource are known, the stakeholders tend to be more active in its management (Ostrom, 2002). The same author (1992) emphasized also how repeated communication among stakeholders plays a crucial role in the improvement of commitment to their voluntary-taken actions. Later on, Cutler et al. (1999) stated as well that being an active participant in the creation of self-governance it is also a crucial component that makes more likely for its stakeholders to stay committed to it (Cutler et al., 1999).

2.2.   Self-regulation theory

For this study, the aspects that are used to explore self-governance are derived by Bandura (1991). The author concluded that for a self-governance to be successful, it requires the ability of the stakeholders involved to regulate themselves. Several factors can influence that ability. Neither intention nor desire alone has many effects if people lack the capability for exercising influence over their motivation and behaviour (Bandura, 1977). This study has used Carver & Scheier (2002) theory which introduces three main interesting components influencing self-regulation; these are standards, monitoring and operate phase.

Standards

Standards are the goals that an individual wants to achieve. Without clear standards, self-regulation will be hampered and could fail self-governance (Heatherton & Ambady, 1993). People motivate themselves through proactive control by setting the desired goals to be achieved and then mobilising their effort accordingly (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996). In a case where collective action is required to achieve effective self-governance, such as the case of this research, it is important that these standards are common among its stakeholders to place them on common ground and enhance collective work to achieve the standards they hope to secure (Nelson, 2000).

Monitoring

The second necessary component for effective self-regulation is *monitoring*. By monitoring it is meant the test phase that compares the current state to the standards (Bandura, 1977). Several scholars claim that does not matter how high the level of the

initial agreement is, there will always be temptations for individuals to break them. If one person chooses to cheat, while others conform to the rules, the cheater is usually able to gain to the disadvantage of others. Thus, monitoring of rules is necessary to sustain systems of resources (Ostrom, 2002). The philosopher Hobbes (1960) also claims that individuals cannot stay committed to their decision making without the presence of an external agent; temptations will always be present to break them. For instance, refers to a term called "covenant" which refers to the act of giving up certain rights based on mutual trust between two parties, a promise. Based on Hobbes' view, every covenant consists of a big suspicion that the other party will not perform as it was commonly agreed. There is no assurance that both parties will stay committed, and that the words themselves are too weak to build enough trust for each other. By having no trust that the other party will perform respectfully, it influences the commitment of the second party negatively. Therefore, the same author finds it necessary to include the placement of an external factor. A so-called "sword" that would have the power to constrain the party that would violate such rules and the proper punishment. Other scholars such as Baland and Platteau (1999), highlight the need for specialised monitoring in case of deficiencies in a decentralized setting.

Mutual monitoring is another version of monitoring that has also been an active part for debate in the literature. Olson (1965) for instance, claims the crucial importance of small-scale community (50-15.000 people) for achieving common interests. Baland and Platteau (1999) stated as well that the smaller the size of the group, the higher the odds for the group to perform collectively. Tang (1992) also suggests that smaller groups perform better than larger ones. There are also studies, however, that disagree with that argument and indicated that the relationship between size and collective action is not that simple. For instance, Wade (1988) researched in India, suggesting that small size did not work in the case of irrigation groups in Southern country.

Operate Phase

Going back to the self-regulation theory, the third component that plays an influential role in self-regulation is the *operate phase*. Many theories of self-regulation are founded on a negative feedback control system as it is an essential regulator for control (Carver & Scheier, 2002). The perceived discrepancy between actual performance and standards triggers a relevant action to reduce that incongruity (Bandura, 1991).

In literature, the need for a penalty in case of violation is highly discussed. Ostrom et al. (1992, 1994) claim that in case of misbehaviour, a kind of a penalty may be sufficient, to remind the violator of the importance of compliance. Fehr and Gächter (2000) also find that cooperation is lower without peer punishment in public goods experiments. The same author believes that punishment could also be in the form of reputation that impacts further the reliability of the individual in the community. The future reliability of the violator will depend on complying with the rules in the future.

The reason that the CPR was shortly introduced to the theoretical framework is that the whale- watching industry in Iceland could be comparable to a self-governed CPR. Although it is not a resource itself, ite gets very close to its two main characteristics, the water is open to everybody (non-excludability) and the overload of vessels can cause significant impact to the whale population that could cause population loss (resource exploitation) (Sarker et al., 2015 & Orams, 2000). Due to the high importance for sustainable management of the whale-watching industry in Iceland, in combination with the lack of literature on the topic, this study contributes to filling in that gap by exploring the topic from the bottom.

Inspired by the self-regulation theory, the self-governance of the whale-watching industry will be explored by using three main aspects, *standards*, *monitoring* and *operate phase*. As mentioned already, standards are crucial as they help the individuals to motivate themselves to adapt their actions to achieve those goals (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996). Additionally, as the self-governance of the whale-watching industry requires collective action, the standards must be common standards among stakeholders, to place them on common ground to work collectively to achieve them (Nelson, 2000). In order to explore the standards of the stakeholders of the whale-watching industry in Iceland and whether the is consensus among them, the first specific research question is formed.

1. Is there consensus around the standards of the CoC by all stakeholders involved in its implementation?

Next, another aspect is *monitoring*. Monitoring on an individual basis is typically inadequate. Therefore, in most cases, monitoring is collectively provided, either in the form of mutual monitoring or a third-party for maintaining control over the situation

(Ostrom, 2002). Due to a lack of literature regarding the monitoring status of the self-governance of whale-watching of Iceland, this research focused on filling in that gap using the following question:

2. Is there any form of monitoring taking place regarding the implementation of CoC?

Finally, we have the third component, the *operate phase*. Many theories find essential that in case of an incident, a follow-up process, such as penalty, needs to take place to enhance compliance to the violators (Ostrom, 1990). As the follow-up process in case of violation of the CoC in the whale-watching industry of Iceland, it is unknown, the following research question is formulated.

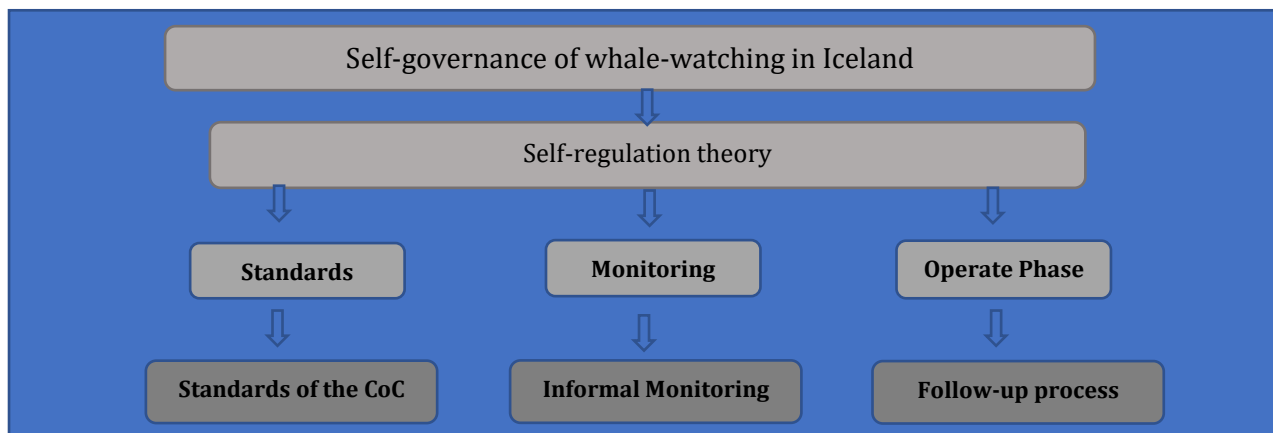3. What is the process in case of CoC violation?

Figure 4. Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

"Whales will pass down information from generation to generation through whale song. Similarly, we as humans will share information through our stories. Often folk tales, nursery rhymes and fairy stories."

Emma Serlin – London Speech Workshop

Like whales pass information from one generation to another through songs, so do the subjects of this study through interviews. Interviews are an effective method to transfer data from the interviewee to the interviewer by answering questions (Boeije, 2009). This chapter introduces the research setting, followed by the methods used to generate the data to answer the research question. The data analysis of my study is described next, concluding the chapter with the ethical practices that were taken into account.

3.1. Research Design

For this research, the researcher chose an exploratory research design. At the time, little was known about the way self-governance works in the whale-watching industry in Iceland, so it was essential to explore this phenomenon from the bottom. The data collection methods were based on qualitative exploratory approach. Quinlan (2008) claim in their study that qualitative studies contributed actively to gain a deeper understanding of thoughts, feelings, and ideas of the individuals of his interest. This study focused on getting a better insight into the topic based on the stakeholders' experiences with the CoC. This research implemented an interpretivist approach as well, where the world is socially constructed, and the reality is subjective (Schwandt, 2000).

In order to conduct the exploratory research, two different locations were selected, Reykjavík and Húsavík. The limited selection of two areas, as opposed to comprehensive coverage of all companies all around Iceland, was due to economic and timing reasons. These two specific locations were selected among the rest based on existing literature that claims that Reykjavík concentrates the highest number of whale-watching tourists (close to 51%), and Húsavík concentrates the second most significant amount (close to 36%) (O'Connor et al., 2009). Selecting the places with the highest whale-watching demand by tourists it is based on the logic that the higher the demand, the more challenging it gets for the tour operators to implement the CoC properly. At the same time, the higher the demand, the more necessary self-governance of the industry becomes to maintain sustainability for cetacean welfare.

Figure 5. Research locations

3.1.1. Determining the population of interest

Once the locations of the research were determined, next was the selection of the population of interest. As this study focuses on the *self-governance* of the Icelandic whale watching industry, the population of interest is the stakeholders involved in self-governance, more specifically, in the CoC. The selection of the population is based on the logic that in order to explore the self-governance of the industry holistically, samples with experience with the CoC were needed.

The stakeholders involved in the creation of the CoC were found through a content analysis of online articles (i.e. official website IceWhale). More specifically, it was found out that the national NGO called IceWhale together with biologists from the University of Iceland, local tour operators and captains <u>created</u> the CoC. Regarding the stakeholders involved in the <u>implementation </u>of the CoC, once the guidelines were created local tour operators signed it and officially became active participants, making a deal that they would implement this in practice. The following figure consists of the population of interest of this study, with stakeholders being divided into three different groups. The first group consists of the ones that were involved in the creation, the second one consists of the tour operators, tour guides and captains that are involved in the implementation of the CoC. Meaning the ones that signed the CoC agreement and finally, due to overlap of some stakeholders being involved in both, they were listed separately in the third category (figure 6).

Stakeholders involved in the **creation** of the CoC	Stakeholders involved in the **implementation** of the CoC	Stakeholders involved in the **creation AND implementation** of the CoC
❖ IceWhale ❖ Academic Biologists ❖ Tour operators ❖ Captains	❖ Tour operators ❖ Tour guides ❖ Captains	❖ Tour operators ❖ Academic Biologists ❖ Captains

Figure 6. Population of interest

3.1.2. Selection of research sample

For the selection of samples to be studied, *non-probability sampling* was used. According to Tansey (2007), this method of sampling is based on the judgment of the researcher. For each sample group of the population of interest, a different sampling technique was used.

Tour operators

For each population of interest, the research sample needed to be selected. The whale-watching companies in Iceland that cooperate with IceWhale regarding the CoC are ten in total. Due to the limited time of this study, I focused only on three — two tour operators in Reykjavík and one in Húsavík. The specific companies were selected based on the number of tours each company operates, choosing those which operate the most daily trips at the location during the season. This is based on the logic that the more daily tours they operate, the more pressure adds to the welfare of the cetaceans; thus, it is more necessary that they implement the CoC correctly. That kind of method is called *purposive sampling technique*, as it is based on a strategy based on the subjective logic of the researcher. (Boeije, 2009).

In order to have a better insight into the number of daily tours, another content analysis took place on the website of all CoC-certified whale-watching companies. More specifically, I checked their online tour schedule and checked the number of daily departures between June and August (table 1). The same procedure was followed for the tour operators of Húsavík. Once, the companies were selected, the next step was to contact the relevant operators via email.

Table 1. CoC companies in Reykjavík & Húsavík and their summer daily tours

Name of the Company	Number of daily tours during high season (June – August)
Reykjavík	
Whale Safari	9
Elding	6
Special Tours	5
Reykjavík Sailors	2
Húsavík	
North Sailing	14
Salka	6
Gentle Giants	6

Tour guides/Captains/ Academic Biologists

Next, the selection of the research sample, of tour guides, academic biologists and captains, was based on the *snowball sampling technique*. This technique uses research participants to recruit other participants, and it consists of two necessary steps. Once the researcher has identified one or two subjects that can be found initially, these subjects identify other people to be recruited (Boeije, 2009).

Meaning that when I approached a tour operator of the three selected companies, that was mentioned before, they introduced me to their colleagues of the same company, such as tour guides and/or captains, and biologists, then introduced me to some other people they know from the industry and so on. The choice of snowball sampling helped me to gain access to a sample population that generally is hard to approach due to the close circle of the industry. Most of the individuals involved in the whale watching tours, such as tour operators, tour guides and captains know each other. That contributed to building trust among the participants. Finally, as I was working on my research in the research centre of the University of Iceland, I got introduced to academic biologists who were part of the CoC creation.

IceWhale

The final sample that needed to be approached was from IceWhale, which is officially the one behind the creation of the CoC. For approaching a sample from the NGO contact was initiated via email that was found on their website, arranging a meeting with a representative of IceWhale that was involved in the creation and/or implementation of the CoC.

3.2. Methods of data collection

Once the location, populations of interest, and research sample for each population were determined, the proper method for collection of data had to be constructed. Due to the qualitative-exploratory nature of this research, two different methods were selected, interviews and observations.

3.2.1. Interviews

Interviews are the ideal medium for collecting data on the topic as it can generate an essential meaning based on the participants' experiences (Boeije, 2009). More specifically, for this research, collecting primary data through *semi-structured* interviews seemed ideal. The reason for it is based on the fact that semi-structured interviews can facilitate an in-depth understanding of the participant's experiences with the CoC. Additionally, it is characterised by flexibility, as it allows the interview questions to vary and adapt to the flow of the conversation, which is ideal for exploratory research (Boeije, 2009).

The interview process was based on the interview guide (appendix I) that consisted of themes derived from the theoretical framework, aiming to answer the research question. Having an interview guide bears two benefits: Firstly, it allows the direction of conversation towards the research questions which minimises the risk of collecting irrelevant data. Secondly, by having specific themes within the interview questions to be answered, it increases the comparability between different respondents (Flick, 2018).

The interview guide consisted of the introductory part where the researcher explained the topic of the research, the importance of the contribution of the interviewee, and signing the informed consent. Then, due to the exploratory nature of this study, the interview started with the open question: "What is your experience with the CoC?"

Asking an open question helps to gain more knowledge on the topic (Boeije, 2009), the answering of such encouraged a conversational flow that could be followed naturally, based on the issue that the participant would put the most emphasis on. Only when the critical topic of the interview was covered, and there was still time left, I would try to cover the questions of my interview guide as well. After all, the primary purpose of the guide was to spark insight and explore the topic through an insightful conversation.

As mentioned already, the interview guide consists of the introductory/closing part and the themes derived from the theoretical framework. The literature of this research is the self-regulation theory which explains the aspects that influence the ability of the stakeholders to govern themselves, which is necessary for an effective self-governance. More specifically, below, the interview questions can be found, linked to the research questions and the theoretical framework of the study.

Standards

As already mentioned in the theoretical framework, having common standards is an essential component for the stakeholders involved in self-governance to work collectively to achieve those standards (Nelson, 2000). Being able to implement correctly the CoC for achieving a common standard(s) is key to a more effective self-governance in the whale-watching industry in Iceland. In order to find out whether that is the case, the following specific research question was formed.

SRQ1: Is there consensus around the standards of the CoC by all stakeholders involved in its implementation?

In order to answer the research question, the following interview questions focused on the awareness and vision of the CoC overall but also the main guidelines within (speed, distance, number of boats). In that way, the researcher could explore the way standards stand in the case of the whale-watching industry in Iceland, based on the perceptions of each stakeholder.

Table 2. Interview Questions on standards of the CoC

- Why do you think the CoC exists in the first place?
- Why do you think it is important to maintain the purposed distances and speed from a detected whale?
- Why do you think there is a guideline regarding the limited number of boats?

- *Monitoring*

Monitoring an industry such as whale-watching is necessary for keeping track of the actions of the tour operators regarding the implementation of CoC (Ostrom et al., 1992). It is a crucial move for a successful self-governance, as monitoring provides the opportunity to those interested parties to have more control over reaching the desiring state (Bandura, 1991). However, as there is no governmental monitoring involved, this research focused on finding out whether there is any informal monitoring instead. Therefore, the following specific research question was formed.

SRQ2: Is there any form of monitoring taking place regarding the implementation of CoC?

In order to answer that research question, the first two questions aimed to gain a better understanding of the monitoring process, including relevant actions and actors. Then, the next questions aimed to explore external aspects regarding the volume and the effectiveness of the current monitoring status.

Table 3. Interview questions on monitoring of the CoC

- Has it ever happened to you to experience a violation of the guidelines?

If yes, '*What did you do in that case*?' If no, '*What would you do in case of violation?*'

- How do staff from other companies usually react in case of violation?
- How often does it happen to experience a violation?
- Would you recommend that governmental involvement is needed?

- *Operate phase*

When monitoring takes place, a relevant action should follow to reduce the incongruity between the current and desired state and enhance compliance (Bandura, 1991, Ostrom et al. (1992, 1994). In order to find out what is the case of the Icelandic whale-watching industry and the CoC violators, the following research question was formed.

SRQ3: What is the process in case of CoC violation?

In order to explore the constituent actions and the actors of this phase, one question was formed. Next, as the literature suggests that a form of penalty could contribute to future compliance the final question was used.

Table 5. Interview questions on operate phase of the CoC

(these questions will be asked in case there is indeed informal monitoring taking place)
- In case of a reaction against a violation, what would usually happen afterwards? Could you describe a common scenario?
- Has it ever happened that someone would face a penalty? Why do you think it has (not) happened?

Finally, the question "Could you explain to me whether and why you think that self-governance is effective?" was added by the end of the interview to give one more opportunity to the meeting to reveal potential key issues that emerge on self-governance.

Overall, twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted in the period of approximately two months. The length of the interviews was close to one hour, depending on the context of the interview setting. The location and the time would influence the length of the interview, such as well the schedule of each respondent. There were cases where an interview was conducted in the form of chatting instead of normal, as it seemed more suitable at the moment. The used language for the interviews was always English, the level of English of all participants is quite high, that helped them express their opinion on the topic. On the following table, there is an overview of the participants that have been both formally and informally interviewed. The formal interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, for the informal ones there were notes taken.

Table 6. Interviewees

Category	Name	Duration
Whale Watching Company	WW-1	1:30
	WW-2	1:35
	WW-3	0:50
	WW-4	0:46
	WW-5	1:02
	WW-6	0:35
	WW-7	0:53
	WW-8	0:30
IceWhale (NGO)	WW-9	0:41
Academic Biologists	WW-10	0:38
	WW-11	0:57
Academic Social Scientist	WW-12	0:52

3.2.2. Observations

Knowledge generation was not only based on opinions, reasons and understandings, but also the observation of phenomena. While the interviews helped to understand the accounts of people regarding the CoC, the actual behaviour of the tour operators in the water was best captured by observations. Interviews and observations produce a different type of data, although the interviews provided data on subjective meaning, the observations contributed to the study by revealing the factuality of the CoC in practice. As a consequence, the data became more diverse, and the inconsistency between the variety of gathered data increased the solidity of my analysis, providing a more holistic point of view of the phenomenon.

The conducted observations were partly overt participatory, as the staff of the boat the researcher was on was aware that they were observed. There is a high value in participant observations, as the researcher becomes accepted and regarded as an insider. Being an insider helps to gain access to information regarding who interacts with whom, how, check how much time is spent on specific activities (Boeije, 2009). However, it can be said that the downside of the subjects knowing the identity of the research is the quality of the observation as it can affect the behaviour of the subjects, not acting

naturally (Boeije, 2009). For the rest of the boats, that were observed during the tours, did not know that they were being watched, therefore, the researcher played a covert role. That helped to increase the chances of gathering a spontaneous and realistic point of view of how the implementation of CoC works in practice.
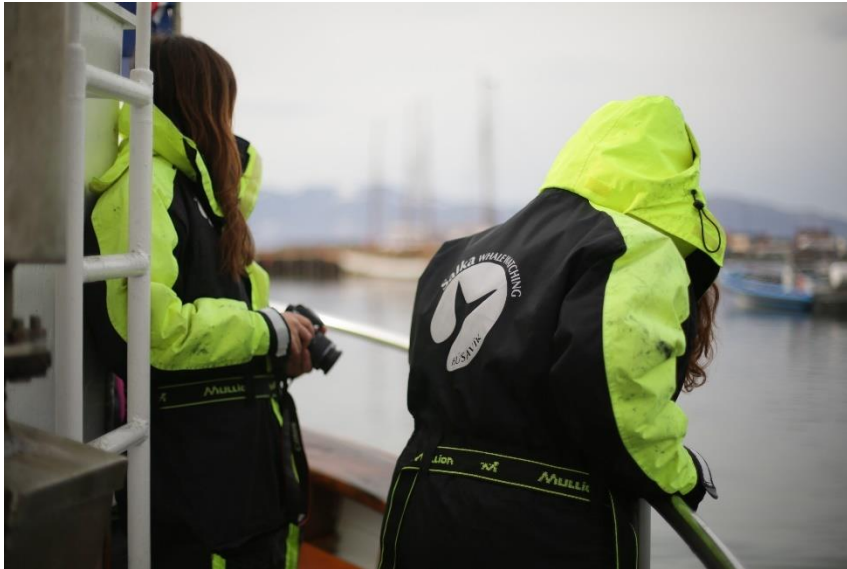

Figure 7. Conducting Participant observation in Húsavík

For the observations, an observation guide was created that consisted of observation points inspired by the main guidelines of the CoC (appendix II).

The main guidelines focus on:

- The speed of the vessels within Searching/Approaching/Caution Zone
- Number of boats and time spent at the location when they are in the Approaching/Caution Zone
- Whether propellers are stopped when they are in Caution Zone
- The distance of the vessels from a detected cetacean
- No Head Approach
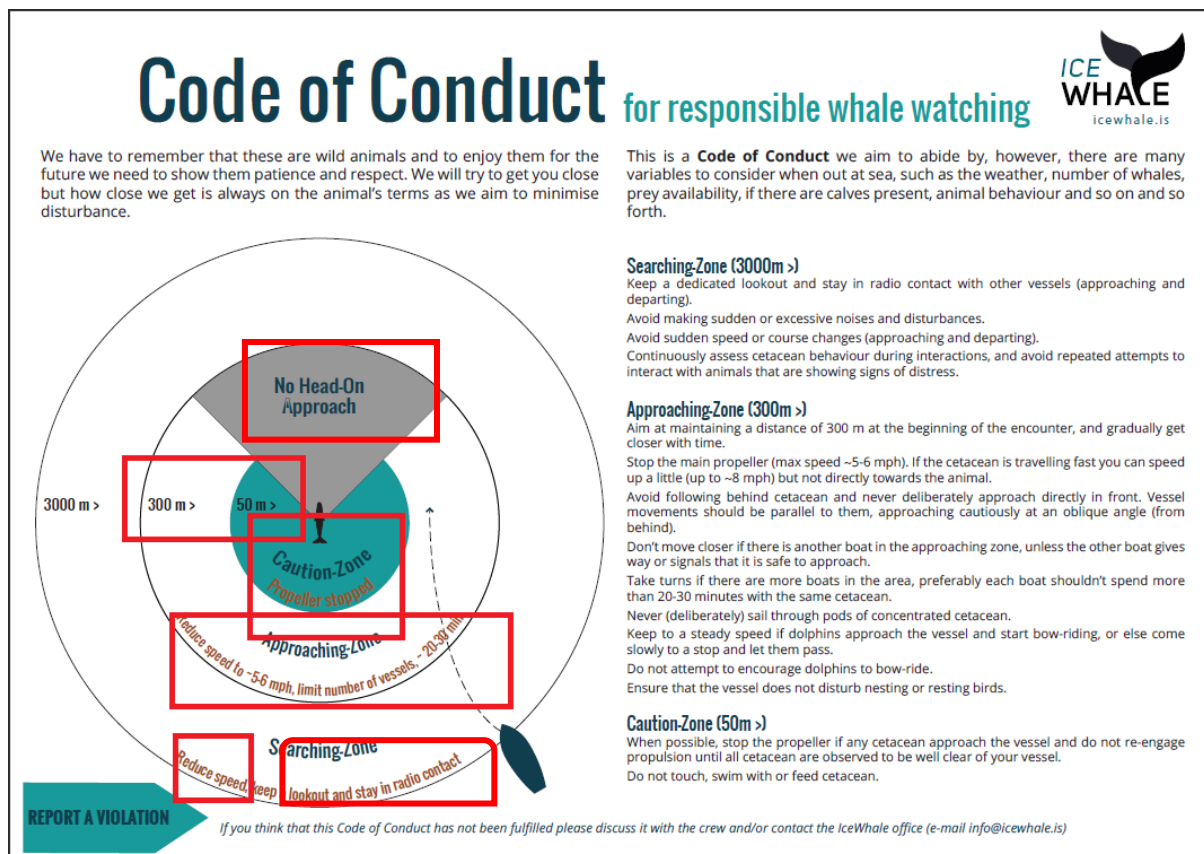- Keeping Radio Contact with each other

Figure 8. Observation points derived from the IceWhale guidelines (IceWhale, 2019)

The observation guide helps to save time and energy and know in advance what to pay attention to, rather than trying to observe everything that happens simultaneously (Boeije, 2009). Although the guide provided me with a structure on the things to pay attention to, it was flexible enough to allow other things to emerge from the scene that was considered in the first place. Once each observation concluded, I would compile field notes of my observations. There was information regarding the implementation of each guideline. What was happening, when, how many boats and visible incidents of violation of an instruction.

3.3. Data Analysis and writing

During the data analysis phase, the researcher starts combining the interpretive engagement with the content of interviews, and field notes, to construct a reality. More specifically, once the interviews were completed, the next phase was writing the interview transcripts to analyse them. In the analysis phase, the collected data are sorted, named, categorised and connected, and all these activities entail interpretation. Interpretations are based on words of the selected subjects, which are explained from the researcher's point of view regarding their meaning. Asking questions such as *What is the*

problem here? What is my subject trying to tell me? What is going on here? It leads to a certain understating of the data. (Boeije, 2009).

Thematic Analysis by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used in this study to analyse the collected data. Thematic Analysis is an interpretive process that helps the researcher to identify patterns in raw data to construct reality and identify what is essential regarding the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis consists of six non-linear steps, moving back and forth, perhaps many times (table 7).

Table 6. Braun and Clark's six-phases for Thematic Analysis

Step1: Become Familiar with the data	Step 4: Review themes
Step 2: Generate initial codes	Step 5: Define themes
Step 3: Search for themes	Step 6: Write the report

The analysis of my raw data started with reading the printed interview transcripts a few times to gain familiarity with the collected data. Once complete, the second time that I started re-reading them, I underlined all the quotes that seem essential for my research questions. Making notes helps the researcher perceive the interviews as data, reading them actively and critically and making sense of what the data might mean (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 1. Generate initial codes

Next, once there was a clearer perception of the potential of the transcripts to generate meaningful data that could answer the research question, I started organising them more systematically through the coding process. Codes provide a summary of a selected phrase, which could give an insight into the research question. The codes are labelled in a way that offers an interpretation of the content of the selected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

More specifically, inductive coding took place, that allowed me to detect codes from the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to do so, I read each line of the transcript

carefully and tried to identify any new code that would be potentially relevant to my research question. For each identified code, the relevant code-name was written on paper with a pencil right next to the quote. I kept reading the transcripts until saturation was achieved and could not come up with any new code that could be relevant to my research question. Once I reached saturation, I made a list with all the defined codes.

Step 2. Clustering codes into predefined themes

Next step, was to organise my codes into my predefined themes. A theme is a cluster of codes that captures anything important and interesting for the main research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Based on the theory, I had the three deductive themes *Standards, Monitoring* and the *Operate phase*. Therefore, I read through the list of codes and distributed them to their relevant theme. Keeping in mind to leave the option open that a completely new theme could emerge. Therefore, I tried to scan my codes to see if I could cluster them to a new theme, besides the three predefined ones.

Step 3. Creation of subthemes

Next, it was clear in my data, that for all three themes, two subthemes emerged, the so-called "BlackBox" and "Issues". The name Blackbox of the subtheme was inspired due to the consisting codes that helped me build up a structure of the self-governance of the whale-watching industry in Iceland. More specifically, the codes provide information regarding the nature of Standards, the process of Monitoring and Operate phase of the CoC in the industry. It was called "BlackBox" due to the internal world of self-governance that highlights its complexity which is not supposed to be known to the outsiders due to its confidential nature. Finally, the "Issues" subtheme consists of the emergent issues of each main theme.

Step 4. Review Themes

During this phase, I had to re-check whether the codes within each theme and subtheme make sense with the attached data and whether they indeed collate. In case they did not make sense, they were taken away from that particular theme/subtheme and checked whether it could be relocated into another theme/subtheme.

Step 5. Define codes in the Themes

Once I distributed all codes into the two subthemes of each theme, I drew them on a thematic map. The thematic map can be found in the next chapter and is used as a summary of the outcomes. Then, I worked in the coherency, ensuring that by putting the themes and subthemes together, they create a flow of story about the collected data. Themes should be connected logically, and meaningfully, and build on previous themes to build that coherent story (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Going towards step 6, I started extracting quotes of each theme, setting them out of the story to show the coverage of the theme. My interpretation of my quoted extracts was used to make a point and also provide a connection to my theoretical framework and the broader research question. The selected quotes can be found in the Results Chapter.

Step 6. Produce the report

The final step is the reporting of the results of the analysis. I transferred all the quotes and their matching themes and subthemes in order, along with my interpretation. It is important to mention the subjectivity of the interpretation of the data is making it impossible to construct an objective reality. The researcher becomes the co-creator of meaning, bringing his/her own subjective experience to the topic. It is the nature of qualitative data itself that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to construct an objective reality (Boeije, 2009). There are ways, however, to try to minimise biased interpretations with qualitative data analysis. In this case, a second peer from the University of Iceland reviewed the codes of the interview transcripts to identify possible gaps, missing points, and misleading interpretations from my side.

Additionally, the analysis of a second peer to increase the internal validity of the study can bring the benefit of adding extra themes to the results - however, the internal validity of the data is not always completely successful. For instance, in case of a disagreement on coding, it is hard to tell who is correct when the data support both of them. There is no definitive answer to the validity issue in qualitative analysis, and it remains one of the limitations for that type of study (Burnard et al., 2008).

3.4. Ethical considerations

Considering the nature of qualitative studies and the interaction between researchers and participants can be ethically challenging. Therefore, the formulation of specific ethical guidelines in this respect seems to be essential. Overall, there are very few fast rules about what makes a research study ethical in all circumstances. Every research project is different. Therefore, a researcher must take into account all the particular circumstances he/she could encounter and create, and then apply the relevant ethical rules accordingly (Orb et al., 2001).

Once researchers have access to a research field and start collecting data, they might face ethical dilemmas (Morse & Field, 1995). In the case of interviews, the purpose of the methodology is to listen to the participants' perspectives and to observe them in their natural environment. That requires an ideal balanced relationship between the researcher and the participant, that is based on disclosure, trust, and awareness of the researcher of potential ethical issues. The difficulties of qualitative research can be alleviated by awareness and use of well-established ethical principles, specifically autonomy and beneficence (Orb et al., 2001). The ethical guidelines that were used for this research are the following.

3.4.1. Autonomy

Every kind of research should be guided by the principles of respect for people, beneficence, and justice. Respect for people regarding the participants' rights to be informed about the study, to freely decide whether they want to participate in a study, and withdraw at any time without penalty. In a qualitative research study, this principle is honoured by informed consent (Orb et al., 2001).

For the conducted interviews, the introduction consisted of the thesis topic, their contribution to it, and their rights regarding the interview procedure. It was clarified from the beginning of the interview that the subject could quit the interview any moment, that the participant only decided whether he/she wants to be voice recorded, that the participants will stay anonymous and that in case of future publication permission by the relevant participants will be asked beforehand. In most cases, verbal consent was enough for most of the participants, but the option of the consent form on paper was also possible (appendix I). The consent form consisted of a summary of the research project and various boxes for participants to tick, agreeing a range of different terms that were just mentioned, i.e. anonymity.

3.4.2. Beneficence

A second ethical principle closely linked to research ensured preventing harm of the subjects (Orb et al., 2001). A researcher needs to spend enough time to go in-depth on those aspects which might harm a subject. Therefore, basic aspects such as the protection of their identity by staying anonymous on the paper is one of the cases by using pseudonyms. Thus, for this research, I used nicknames on the report and a careful selection of quotations that would not reveal the identity of a subject.

Next, as whale-watching is a sensitive topic in Iceland, it was revealed once I was in the field that topic had received lots of pressure by NGOs, activists and journalists due to whaling and the overall relationship that locals have/had with the cetaceans. More specifically, tour operators and captains have received pressure from researchers, biologists and students regarding the implementation of the CoC. Therefore, many participants are overwhelmed with the topic, feeling that they are getting judged continuously for the way they perform their job. Thus, for this research, there was a very careful introduction of the topic and formulation of the questions, trying to assure no offence and harm for the subjects. It is an exploratory research study trying to gain insight into the way it works and not to blame a company and individual. I tried to ensure this was clarified to those participants approached. Additionally, I ran a discourse analysis in my interview guide to protect my subjects from harm by scanning the used words in the formulation of my interview questions, by avoiding the use of words that would make the subjects feel either criticised or offended. The consensus form that was used for this research can be found in appendix III.

4. Results & Discussion

"Like us, sperm whales have families, they have strong affiliations with a few individuals and they are extremely social. Such a social environment is the perfect substrate for culture"

- Felicia Vachon
PhD Candidate in the Department of Biology, Dalhousie University

Like their social environment of the whales build up their culture, so do the stakeholders' perspective build up on making sense of self-governance of the whale watching industry in Iceland. In the following chapter, the final research sample is introduced, and the analysis of the results based on the Thematic Analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006). Additionally, the results of the observation can also be found as part of the discussion of the final results of the research.

4.1. Outcomes

Out of the interview transcripts, the key issues of this research concerning the research question are determined. This chapter links the three main themes, *standards, monitoring, operate phase* to two different subthemes, Blackbox and Main Issues. The 'Blackbox' refers to the outcomes that provide information on the nature of self-governance that helped to build the picture of the standards, monitoring and operate phase of the whale-watching industry. The 'Issues' subtheme refers to the revealed issues that emerged regarding the three themes.

Table 7. Emerged themes and codes of this study

	Standards	**Monitoring**	**Operate Phase**
Blackbox	▪ CoC Standards	▪ Tour guides ▪ Tourists ▪ Small community ▪ IceWhale	▪ Discussions ▪ Reports
Issues	▪ Captains	▪ Hierarchy onboard ▪ Hostile environment ▪ Cowboys	▪ Lack of penalties

4.1.1. Main theme: Standards

The first theme focuses on the standards of the CoC. The first subtheme called Blackbox together with its code provides an overview of the perceived standards of the CoC. The second theme focuses on issues regarding the achievement of the CoC vision. Captains not cooperating and vague guidelines were the ones that were mentioned in consensus.

4.1.1.1.   Subtheme. BlackBox

-   CoC Standards

One theme that emerged from my raw data was on the standards of each stakeholder regarding the CoC. It seemed that every subject had a very diverse approach regarding what needs to be achieved through the CoC. Based on the responses I got, it seemed that most of the interviewees were quite satisfied with the current situation. The satisfaction was based on different reasons. One interviewee mentioned how satisfied they are due to the contribution of CoC in raising awareness and the knowledge of the industry *"The CoC we think has worked quite <u>well</u>. The captains are aware of the rules and they know the rules and how to approach the whales. How to sail with them, and how fast they can go, to not approach them from in front, or follow them for a long time behind. "* (WW4).

Another interviewee seemed satisfied saying that the CoC seems that has already created a change within the industry *"There is more awareness, and when we have meetings, I have noticed that the complaints are less, I think there is a common agreement on the implementation of the CoC because it looks bad but also because we do not want to scare the whales away."* (WW3). Other interviewees seem to count self-governance of the Icelandic whale watching industry as effective based on comparison with other countries. *"Despite the rumours, I think we have better approach with whales here than most of the countries in the world"* (WW3). *"It is hard to talk about standards, if I think of Norway forget it, there are way worse."* (WW8).

- Captains

Uncommon standards seem to be a key issue when it comes to self-governance. Some interviews recognise how not being n a common ground can create challenges in the industry. More specifically, the respondents in consensus put a strong emphasis on the captains of the whale-watching vessels for not cooperating properly. For instance, the respondent (WW1) stated the following opinion *"what is a shame is that the guides are much into it when it comes to the goals and the importance of the CoC. They know a lot about the CoC. The captains not so much. Some of them yes, some no."* The same person added to it "*some captains think that their work is to satisfy the tourists and to give them the best experience. What they think as the best experience".* Similar quotations were interestingly claimed from the majority of the interviewees, stating that "*many captains think "ok we are trying to be responsible" but it would make more sense if they could understand the urgency of it*" Respondent (WW2) "*it is a shame that not all captains are aware of the importance of the CoC as they play a hierarchical role in sailing the (whale-watching) boats. I can complain about things, but the captain is the one that decides what to do in the end".* Another subject stated on the topic *"The problem is the captains. You need to tell them and train them and convince them that it matters. That is the problem today"* (WW6).

4.1.2. Main Theme: Monitoring

The second theme is about the monitoring process of the industry, whether it occurs, the type of issues that might emerge. For the exact areas that add pressure for responsible whale-watching are sub-themed as there were multiple quotations for almost all interviewees for all these topics, thus it is of high importance.

4.1.2.1.   *Subtheme:* BlackBox

- Tour guides

It seems that there is mutual monitoring taking place. More specifically, the pressure seems to come from within whale-watching companies. Especially for the ones that have biologists onboard. As the (WW3) also stated *"The staff puts pressure on one another, as within the crew there are many biologists who become the monitoring bodies in this"* another respondent stated an alike quote *"many companies have focused on getting people as whale-watching guides with biology background, some guides even have masters in their field. They are monitoring how captains behave"* (WW9).

- Tourists

Besides the active role of tour guides in monitoring the operation of the industry, the tourists seem to add pressure too. *"I get the impression that tourists become more aware with time, asking many questions and complaint when they see something they don't like, they were not like this before"* (WW5). The interviewee (WW6) also claimed that "*We are giving flyers to tourists Using them as rangers to keep an eye on the tour operators and report it to IceWhale or the same company*". Another interviewee said, *"can't be present in every trip, so what we do is to encourage and ask the operator to hand in flyers to tourists with the CoC, so they become rangers as well*" (WW7). Finally, another subject stated very similarly "*We give flyers to tourists to keep an eye and let us know when something isn't working*" (WW6).

- Small community

Another area that keeps an eye on the operation in a more indirect way is the whale-watching community itself. Being part of a relatively small population industry and place means that people know each other, especially the ones within the same working industry. For instance, the tour guides that were interviewed in Reykjavík knew most of the rest of the guides from the capital, and the same was noticed in Húsavík. *"Here we know everybody, if someone does something continuously, we will know about it"* (WW3). A similar statement was mentioned by the majority of the respondents, like to following one *"the reputation puts pressure on the tour operators when something happens everybody will know within a day, it is a small community and everybody knows each other"* (WW6).

- IceWhale

Finally, when it comes to the informal monitoring IceWhale seems to play a role in it too. For instance, the respondents commonly mentioned the yearly visit of one member of the NGO keeping an eye on the whale-watching operations both in Reykjavík and Húsavík. *"There is one staff member that his/her job is to go once per year around tours and see if they respect the CoC. They let the tour operators know that they will visit all tours to ask the captains how they are doing and check for feedback."* (WW5). *"We have a person from IceWhale going around each year, asking questions and observe"* (WW7).

4.1.2.2.   *Subtheme.* Issues

- Hierarchy onboard

When it comes to monitoring during operations, another interesting aspect that was mentioned was how the hierarchy onboard affects it. For instance, interviewee (WW8) stated *"But then you have the hierarchy on board, the captain is the one that decides. You cannot have the naturalist, taking decisions, they can suggest but then the captain decides. You are left powerless to do something about that"*. Another subject also said, "*the captains are they in this one, they decide what to do, how to behave*" (WW6).

- Hostile environment

Staff members of the boats do not always find it ideal for monitoring each other, as it affects the working environment. *"You need to think of the environment within the company. In most cases we are friends and you don't want to create a hostile environment with the captains being scared that the guides will fire them. That is not a healthy working environment, a healthy way.*" (WW7) an alike approach on the monitoring case was also taken by another interviewee stating that "Y*ou need to think that these people know each, it is not easy to report your friend, right?"* (WW7).

- Cowboys

It seems that out of the hands of monitoring goes the Cowboys. *"The only problem due to the growing industry is the cowboy companies, that just come in the summertime and they are there to make money quickly. They do not know how whales behave and they are not part of IceWhale and behave unprofessionally, ignoring or ignorant to industry best practices. Then our captains are blaming them; they put pressure on them, but yes. We cannot do anything about it, we can talk to them about it, they mostly Icelanders that take a boat and make easy money having no respect for the whales".* (WW10). Another subject also claimed that "*there are some captains that take their boats and just take few tourists to show them the whales. They are the worse. They do not care.*" (WW1).

4.1.3. Main Theme: Operate Phase

The final theme of the data analysis is the Operate Phase. It is an essential step for taking more control and get closer to the set standards of the CoC (Bandura, 1991). Based on the interviews, it seems that the actions associated with the Operate Phase are limited to discussions and reports.

4.1.3.1.   *Subtheme*: BlackBox

- Discussions

Overall, it was commonly agreed that when an incident is observed by the tour guides and captains will be more likely communicated with each other over the radio. If,

however, the captain insists on consistent bad behaviour then more likely there will be a discussion in person with staff from the whale-watching industry "We just deal with it by ourselves, when we see something we raise it over the radio and then if necessary, we'll find that person and ask "why did you do that". (WW10)

- Reports

Depending on how serious the incidents were, it can be also reported to the relevant tour company and IceWhale. "*I do not know the exact flow of information to be honest. If that happens repeatedly some companies could tell IceWhale or the manager of a company*". (WW4)

When IceWhale receives a complaint by either tourists or guides more likely they will send a formal report to the relevant whale-watching company to let them know "*it happens that we also receive reports from IceWhale*" (WW9) another respondent completed. Tourists tend to be more likely to complain during the tour and more specifically, to the tour guide on board. Then the tour guide will take care of it accordingly. "*there were few cases with tourists that would ask, isn't that boat going too close?*" (WW11)

4.1.3.2. *Subtheme*: Issues

- Lack of penalties

It seems that there is no form of penalty in case of misbehaviour. None of the interviewed subjects has experienced nor heard of a firing incident. More specifically, one interviewee stated "*When an incident takes place, consequences are followed, putting pressure on the captains that the certain regulations need to followed and if not to fire them. However, personally I am not aware of any alike incident*". (WW8) Another one said *"People were being hired but it was always a combination of reasons, only due to violation of CoC I haven't heard of, no. I know there have been words about it and trying to convince the captain to do better you know. But that is*". (WW1) Similarly, another interview claimed that *"I have never heard anyone losing their job out of this"*. (WW6)

4.2. Discussion

In this subchapter, a storyline can be found that connects the findings to the theoretical framework and participant observations. It is important to mention that all the given observations are subjective, and they only aim to add meaning from a different perspective to the findings of the research.

4.2.1. Standards

Having *common standards* is a key step towards effective self-governance, it helps to build consensus around those purposes and enhances effective collective action working on achieving those purposes (Nelson, 2000). In the case of Húsavík and Reykjavík, there is a miscommunication of standards among the stakeholders. In the interviews of this thesis, the stakeholders were asked what makes them believe that the CoC is effective, and they gave various answers. That makes me understand that each of them has a different set of standards when it comes to CoC. Different reasons could cause that, such as miscommunication of clear standards for the CoC. which gives the flexibility to its stakeholders to form their own ones based on their experiences and expectations. Miscommunication of standards is an issue in this case as it can cause a lack of motivation to regulate-themselves collectively and impact the effectiveness of self-governance of the whale-watching industry. The captains of the industry are the hard proof that consensus matters, as the majority of the approached subjects highlighted their concerns regarding their cooperation with some captains. Stating that the captains prioritize tourists 'satisfaction and how that is an issue.

The observations of this research confirmed the importance of consensus on standards. During the observations, it was relatively easy to realize the significance of having all stakeholders on the same page. The captains for instance, due to their hierarchical role onboard, they are the ones who decide how close and how long the vessel would stick at a location. The tour guide was mostly helping with talking, entertaining and educating the tourists and informing the captain in case a cetacean was detected. The captain would decide how close and fast would approach and for how long an operation would last. Therefore, the lack of consensus of the standards of the CoC among stakeholders, with extra emphasis on the captains would be the first key issue of this research.

4.2.2. Monitoring

The next main aspect of this research is *monitoring*. Monitoring is essential in the industry, as it helps to have control over the operations with regards to the standards (Bandura, 1991). As there is no formal monitoring controlling the whale-watching industry in Iceland, the research focused on finding out whether informal monitoring is running instead. As it was already mentioned in the results chapter, it seems that mutual monitoring is the main form of monitoring of the whale-watching industry, with minimum use of third-party monitoring by IceWhale once per year.

Whether monitoring is effective in the case of Iceland, and whether the size of the community plays an influential role in it, it is highly debatable. A more concrete answer requires objective-quantitative research with precise measurements. However, based on the interviews, it can be understood that there is strong confidence regarding the implementation of the CoC from the whale-watching industry. The fact that the community is small plays an influential role as it gives a sense of control. "Everybody knows everything" was the quote that was heard a lot during my research. A bad reputation is the enemy of the whale-watching companies, and that puts pressure on them to be sustainable. However, that could be debated whether it makes it effective or not. According to Ostrom et al. (1992), mutual monitoring can be effective in small communities. Early work by Olson (1965) argues that the size of the group is negatively related to solving collective action problems. Baland & Platteau (1999) conclude that cooperative strategies are more likely to work in smaller than larger groups.

However, on the other hand, some studies claim the opposite. Tang (1992), did not find any correlation between the size and level of effectiveness of collective action on the amount of land being irrigated. In Lam's (1998) analysis also did not find any correlation between the number of appropriators and the amount of land included in the service area. Finally, another example that claims the opposite comes by the Agrawal (2000) who did not find any smaller forest user groups more capable of monitoring the protected forest resources.

What is known from the outcomes is that the downside of mutual monitoring is the hostile environment that it creates. Many subjects raised the issue during their interviews, of how awkward it becomes to judge each other and report them because they work together. This is an issue as it can lead to a behaviour of not "seeing incidents" that happen. This aligns with my observations substantiating my previous assumptions that

no single monitoring was observed by tourists, nor the onboard tour guides during my tours, although *I did* record some violations regarding speed and distance. In one of the cases, my observation of the violation was recognized and confirmed by the guide, resulting to a facial expression implying *"there is nothing to do about it."*

Besides the mutual monitoring of the industry, IceWhale plays the role of a third monitoring body. A staff member by the NGO travels around to different whale watching companies and onboard to control the quality of the operations regarding the CoC and discuss with the staff any matters on the topic. However, this monitoring procedure that takes place once per year, is the only communication and opportunity for the captains, tour guides and tour operator to express themselves regarding the topic. Based on Ostrom et al. (1992) when there is limited communication among stakeholders it can affect their motivation and commitment to self-governance. The authors highlight the importance of maintaining repeated contact among stakeholder, as they proved through a social experiment that it leads to the significant improvement of commitment in the actions of the stakeholders in self-governance.

Finally, regarding monitoring, there is a concern regarding the scenario that the community might not remain small. Icelandic whale-watching is a growing industry and the balance can be affected accordingly. The larger it becomes the more issues it is likely to face. For instance, they are already facing the problem of the so-called *cowboys*. According to my interviewees, they are freelancers that take their boats and make easy money by touring tourists in the Bay to watch the whales, and they tend not to respect the whales. That is an issue as they are not part of the CoC agreement, and thus, the stakeholders feel powerless when it comes to monitoring. That could reflect to the literature that highlights the importance of the size of the community. Like Tang (1992) stated, seeing a clear correlation between size and effectiveness of self-governance. Based on that, the cowboys could be considered one of the first symptoms of a growing industry.

4.2.3. Operate Phase

The perceived discrepancy between actual performance and standards triggers a relevant action to reduce that incongruity (Bandura, 1991). Regarding the action taken after a violation of a CoC of the whale-watching industry in Reykjavík and Húsavík, none of the interviewees has ever experienced nor heard of a staff member facing a penalty,

such as job termination or a fine. Instead, the follow-up process is limited to discussions within the industry and/or reports from IceWhale. That raises questions about whether a penalty could be useful for reaching sustainability. In literature, many scholars discuss the importance of penalty in case of violation. The father of criminology Beccaria C. (2016) states that crime is the result of cost-benefit analysis. When the benefit is higher than the cost, then the actors decide to do the crime. Although CoC violation is not a crime, the industry could still adapt to a similar mentality. Ostrom et al. (1992, 1994) claim as well that a kind of penalty may be sufficient, to remind the violator of the importance of compliance. Fehr and Gächter (2000) also find that cooperation is lower without punishment and believes that punishment could also be in the form of reputation that impacts further the reliability of the individual in the community. Ostrom (2002) highlights the importance of penalty for making rule-breaking an unattractive option. Based on the outcomes, *everybody knows everyone*, and they know what is going on in the industry. The fact could be considered that it contributes strongly to the way the CoC is implemented. Ostrom et al. (1992, 1994) confirm that a bad reputation can sometimes be experienced like a punishment to the violator. Based on my observation, however, there was no compliance, various violations took place, which could raise the question of whether the lack of penalty is an issue to be addressed.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

"It is incredibly difficult to get a handle on. There have been a number of studies on various cognitive tasks using cetaceans but all these have designed by humans, based on how we see the world, how we interact with it "

- Hal Whitehead, Biologist

Like cognitive studies on cetaceans are subjective due to the human perspective of the researchers', so are the interpretations of the interviews and observations of this research. In this chapter the conclusion, key limitations and recommendations can be found.

5.1. Conclusion

Since 2003, Iceland has faced significant growth in the whale-watching industry (Martin, 2012). Due to that rapid growth of the industry, there is a concern of the impacts that the industry cause to the whale population both in short and long term (Orams, 2000). As there is no formal regulation regarding the operation of the tours, management of the whale-watching industry was taken in the hands of a national NGO. IceWhale, as it is called, together with local tour operators and scientists created a Code of Conduct (CoC). CoC is a handbook that consists of guidelines to apply on tour operations regarding safety standards for speed, distance and number of boats. Today, the majority of the operators in Iceland are part of the IceWhale team, and they are self-regulating their tours accordingly (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2015).

However, there is limited literature regarding the way self-governance is implemented in the whale-watching industry of Iceland and the issues that emerge in it. This research contributed to filling in this gap. Doing so, it increases the transparency of the implementation of self-governance and has contributed to bringing to the surface points of improvement that would enhance a more sustainable industry towards the whale population. A qualitative study took place, conducting semi-structured interviews with tour operators, NGO representatives, scientists and tour guides. Additionally, observations on board took place as well. Overall, the management of the CoC was narrowed down to three aspects: standards, monitoring and operate phase. Starting from the high importance of communicating common standards, that increases the motivation, collective action and commitment of the stakeholders. Then, the monitoring phase focuses on the importance of keeping an eye on the operations to gain an insight into the extent the industry cooperates to reach the standards. Finally, the operate phase deals with the follow-up process in case of a violation.

This research has explored all three phases of the whale-watching industry and revealed their key issues. Captains seem to become a crucial challenge in the industry due to lack of consensus regarding the CoC standards, as they seem to prioritize tourists' standards

for a satisficing encounter. The issue with the captains become a crucial challenge to be addressed due to their autonomy in the operations that impacts the sustainability of the industry.

Regarding the monitoring procedure of the industry is mainly mutual, operated by the stakeholders within the whale-watching industry. Additionally, reputation in a small community seems to add significant pressure too. However, the issue regarding the mutual monitoring of the industry is the hostile environment that it creates. The staff of the industry do not want to monitor each other as it creates an awkward working environment that the majority wants to avoid. IceWhale plays the role of third-party monitoring; however, it is limited to only one visit per year. That creates an issue regarding the lack of representativeness and commitment of the stakeholders. In conclusion, due to the limited visits by IceWhale, occurring hierarchy on board by non-cooperative captains, effects of a rapidly growing industry (cowboys) and the avoidable behaviour from the staff of the industry, makes monitoring a topic that needs to be addressed.

Finally, the operate phase, in case of an observed incident, consists of reports to the relevant whale-watching company and IceWhale and discussions between staff members. There is no known incident of penalty in case of a CoC violation. The lack of penalty could be an important factor to be discussed among stakeholders as it can affect the stakeholders' commitment to it and the overall compliance of the industry.

Whether self-governance of the whale-watching industry in Iceland is effective is debatable. This study, due to its qualitative nature, can only answer this subjectively. However, most important of all is the urgency for maintaining a healthy whale population. It is essential not only out of respect but also for protecting the basic resource of the industry, the whales. Once the "product" of attraction is destroyed, there is nothing left to show to tourists. It is a win-win situation that requires motivation and energy to work towards a more sustainable whale-watching industry in Iceland, and all over the world.

5.2. Key Limitations

In this study, the following limitations are recognized. In this study, the following limitations are recognized. First, conducting research in Húsavík and Reykjavík and excluding Dalvík, Ólafsvík, Hólmavík, Hauganes, and Akureyri from the research, strongly affects the external validity of my study. Lack of external validity affects my research regarding the generalisation of the outcomes. This study does not contain enough data to represent outcomes for the whole whale-watching industry of the country. The key challenges of the industry could even change, outweigh those covered by this research when studying the rest of the whale-watching areas.

Secondly, a limitation of this study is the exclusion of the captains from the data collection. They are key stakeholders both of the creation and the implementation of the CoC; thus, their perspective would contribute strongly to the outcomes. The exclusion of captains happened due to lack of time. Attempts to approach them were not successful. The collection of data started with the rest of the stakeholders, with the captain being unfortunately excluded. A third limitation is the lack of variety of the selected whale-watching companies for my observations. Both in Reykjavík and Húsavík, my collection of data was concentrated around two very different whale watching companies. That decreases significantly the internal validity of my study, and questions to what extent the outcomes are represented within these two whale-watching areas.

The final limitation of this study is the choice of the snowball sampling method that was used for the majority of the studied units. This sampling method tends to generate biased information that is hard to generalise to a broader population. The selected sample came from two companies who have similar morals and principles on the topic. Both of the companies show high interest in the implementation of CoC and enhance research on their vessels by cooperating with external researchers. The similar background of the sample, influences the external validity of this study. Meaning that it has weak outcomes for generalization, as the results could be considered biased.

5.3.   Key Recommendations

In order to have more significant outcomes on the effectiveness of the CoC, this research has presented several recommendations for every issue that was obtained from the interviews and observations. The main recommendations are narrowed to the following.

First, I recommend quantitative research that would objectively assess the whale-watching activities on the Bays. By using proper equipment such as theodolite for monitoring the approach density, the distance of approach and the speed of the approaching vessel. Based on the interviewees, it seems that the stakeholders are very confident of the way this industry works in practice, however, the confidence is based on various perspectives on the effectivity of the current situation. There is no objective perception to what extent that type of management works in the whale-watching industry of Reykjavík and Húsavík. Doing so, it would raise awareness regarding the state of the self-governance of the whale-watching industry in Iceland increase the credibility for implementing the CoC. Additionally, it could highlight, when that is the case, the need for governmental involvement.

Captains, seem to be the key stakeholders that future research needs to pay attention to and unfortunately were excluded from this research. Therefore, I recommend in-depth research, that would gain an understanding of the captains and their relationship with the IceWhale, Whale-watching industry and the CoC. That would help to get closer to them and attempt to place them on common ground by trying to solve possible disagreements and issues.

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7. Appendices

7.1.   APPENDIX I - Interview Guide

-For the participants:

Welcome to my thesis!

In this document you will find a summary of my thesis topic, along with some basic information for the reasoning to conduct research on this specific topic; the main research question; a bit of basic theory (which led me to my interview questions) and the potential contribution of this research. You do not have to read everything. The summary is provided in case of your own interest in the deeper understanding and reasoning for being part of this research, otherwise go straight to chapter 2 to see the interview questions that I intend to cover. It is important to mention that this research is of an exploratory nature - meaning the most important aspect of the interview is to hear your stories and experiences with the CoC and let the interview adhere to its own flow and most important of all, have fun.

Takk fyrir for participating!

Summary of the MSc Thesis Topic

Whale watching is an activity with increasing demand in Iceland. That has, as a result, many whale watching businesses operating simultaneously in the same waters and also competing at the destination to provide the best possible experience to the tourists.

A good experience can be related to different variables such as proximity and length of interaction with the cetaceans. This increased interest in the whale-watching industry in combination with meeting the tourists' expectations puts the cetaceans under pressure and stress thus causing an increased risk to their welfare.

Unfortunately, there is lack of governmental regulation and reinforcement and the management of the industry therefore is based on self-governance. The national NGO IceWhale, together with local tour operators and scientists created the Code of Conduct (CoC). The CoC is a set of guidelines targeting the operation of whale-watching in Iceland to ensure the welfare and safety of the cetaceans. As the implementation of the Code of Conduct (CoC) is based on the free will of the tour operators due to lack of legal reinforcement, it is important to be more aware to what extent self-governance occurs efficiently.

Building on this research interest, the following main research question can be formulated:

"Does self-governance work in practice in the whale watching industry of Iceland? "

In order for a self-governance to be successful, it requires the ability of the stakeholders involved to regulate themselves. The ability of individuals involved in self-governance to regulate themselves can be influenced by several factors, such as *Standards, Monitoring* and *Operate phase.* By understanding whether these aspects occur effectively in the case of whale-watching in Iceland, we can provide a better insight of how well self-governance works in practice and also bring to the surface possible benefits and downfalls. In the next page you will find a short explanation of each factor meant to facilitate a better understanding of the interview questions.

Overall, this research can emphasize the need for governmental involvement with formal regulations and enforcement when that is the case. Additionally, it has the potential to provide relevant feedback regarding the implementation of self-governance to the interested parties.

1. Interview Questions

Introductory parts

- Thank you for taking part in the survey. All feedback will be anonymous.
- I am curious about your experiences, opinions and ideas. That way I can gather a significant amount of information for this study. Your experience is important to me.
- Do you give permission for the interview to be recorded?
- Do you have an hour for this interview?

Standards

"Having standards/goals, is an important component for the stakeholders involved in self-governance. Puts them all on the same page and motivates them to commit to it. Characteristics of standards such as specificity, being specific enough, proximity, to not be too long term and difficulty, so that it is feasible in practice to be implemented, are important. Therefore, this research explores the way it applies to whale-watching and the implementation of CoC. "

- Are you aware of the guidelines that the CoC consists of? What do you think of them?
- Why do you think the CoC exists in the first place?
- Why you think it is important to maintain the purposed distances and speed from a detected whale?
- Why do you think there is a guideline regarding the limited number of boats?
- One of the guidelines says that only limited numbers of boats should approach the same cetacean simultaneously. What does 'limited number of boats' mean to you?
- Did you ever have troubles not knowing exactly how to behave regarding a cetacean and another vessel?

Monitoring

"It is important to keep track of how self-governance works in practice; it is a key move for a successful self-governance. Monitoring provides the opportunity to have more control over reaching the desiring state. However, as there is no governmental monitoring involved. "Therefore, I was wondering:

- Has it ever happened to you to experience a violation of the guidelines?

If yes, '*What did you do in that case*?' If no, '*What would you do in case of violation?*'

- How do staff from other companies usually react?
- How often does it happen to experience violation?
- Would you recommend that governmental involvement is needed?

Operate Phase

"Perceived discrepancy between actual performance and standards triggers a relevant action to reduce that incongruity. Therefore, I was wondering what comes next in case of negative feedback by informal monitoring. Whether there is an effort to meet the desired standards, how. "

- In case of a reaction against a violation, what would usually happen afterwards? Could you describe a common scenario?
- Has it ever happened that someone would lose their job as a penalty?

Concluding remarks

- Thank you again for participating, do you have any questions? If you have any questions later on you can always contact me.

TAKK !

-For the researcher:

Main Concepts	Questions
Introductory remarks about the research topic	• Thank you for taking part in the survey. All feedback will be anonymous. • I am curious about your experiences, opinions and ideas. That way I can gather a significant amount of information for this study. Your experience is important to me. • (The researcher introduces herself & explains the reasons for this research.) • What is your experience with the CoC?
Standards	• Why do you think the CoC exists in the first place? • Why you think it is important to maintain the purposed distances and speed from a detected whale? (Specificity, Proximity) • Why do you think there is a guideline regarding the limited number of boats? (Specificity, Proximity) • One of the guidelines says that only limited numbers of boats should approach the same cetacean simultaneously. What does 'limited number of boats' mean to you? (Specificity, Proximity) • Did you ever have troubles not knowing exactly how to behave regarding a cetacean and another vessel? (Difficulty)
Monitoring	• Has it ever happened to you to experience violation of the guidelines? What happened? • How do staff from other companies usually react? • How often does it happen to experience violation? • Would you recommend that governmental involvement is needed?
Operate Phase	(these questions will be asked in case, there is indeed informal monitoring taking place) • In case of a reaction against a violation, what would usually happen afterwards? Could you describe a common scenario?
Concluding Remarks	• Let me shortly summarize for you what you have told me. Do you agree on what I said? • Thank you again for participating, do you have any questions? If you have any questions later on you can always contact me

7.2.   APPENDIX II - Observation Guide

Number of Tour:		Location:	
Date of visit:		Time:	
No. of vessels:		Time spent at the spot:	
Searching Zone No. of boats:		Reduce Speed: How many of them?	Safe/Unsafe
Approaching Zone No. of boats:		Reduce Speed: How many of them?	Safe / Unsafe
Caution Zone: No. of boats:		**Propeller stopped:** How many of them?	Yes/No
Other information:			

7.3.   APPENDIX III - Consensus Form

Is Volunteering Enough? Exploring self-governance of the whale watching industry in Iceland

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The Department of Cultural Geography at Wageningen University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or Wageningen University.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Whale-watching is an activity with increasing demand in Iceland. That has resulted in many whale watching businesses operating simultaneously in the same waters to provide the best possible experience to the tourists. A good tourist experience can be related to different variables such as close encounters with the cetaceans. That increasing interest in the whale-watching industry in combination with meeting tourist expectations can put the cetaceans under pressure risking their welfare.

Unfortunately, there is lack of governmental regulation and monitoring, and the management of the industry is based on self-governance. More specifically, the national NGO IceWhale, together with local tour operators and scientists created the Code of Conduct to ensure the welfare of the cetaceans. As the implementation of the Code of Conduct is based on the free will of the tour operators, it is important to be more aware of the extent self-governance occurs effectively.

Therefore, the examination of this research is based on answering the following main research question:

"How does self-governance work in practice in the whale watching industry of Iceland? "

STUDY PROCEDURES

You are selected because you are an active member in the whale-watching industry. You

will be asked few questions around the topic; the interview will last from half an hour to one hour and it may extend when it is necessary and you agree to follow-up. The interview will be audio-taped if you agree. The reason for taping interviews is that it will help the researcher to be more accurate when reflecting views of the participants. If you do not wish to be audio-taped, the researcher will only take notes.

The interview will be conducted in time and place that is convenient to you.

Your contribution to this study is providing your opinion on the topic based on your experience with the Code of Conduct so far. There is no right or wrong answer to my interview questions, just honesty.

RISKS

The risks associated with this study are related to unwanted feelings that the interview might bring up, such as boredom and irritation.

BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits to you associated with this study. However, your contribution lays in helping the researcher with her study but also in case this research is significant, to contribute to the whale-watching community overall. The research has the potential through the interviews to emphasize possible needs such as governmental involvement with formal regulations and monitoring but also can bring to the surface pitfalls and downsides of the self-governance which could be used as feedback to the interested parties.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses to this interview, will be anonymous and there won't be any information that could reveal your identification. More specifically, the researcher will make every effort to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in the personal possession of the researcher.

DATA ANALYSIS & REPORT

The analysis of the interviews, including yours, will be analyzed only by the researcher and they will be reported on the thesis paper that will be delivered to two different supervisors of Wageningen University in order to supervise it and grade it. The outcomes will not exceed the academic environment of the university. In case of further publicity, you have the right to consent any direct quotations taken from your interview, always anonymously. In that case, a draft version of the report will be emailed to you in order to review the quotations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page.

CONSENT

- I have read and I understood the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost.
- I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form.
- I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.
- If this interview is to be audio-taped, I ( ) consent to be audio taped. I ( ) do <u>NOT</u> consent to be audio-taped. The audio taped material will be viewed only by the researcher.
- Short segments of the results of the analysis will be viewed by the two supervisors of the university and during open to public presentation of my thesis defence. Always after assured your anonymity.
- My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: Date: