

THESIS

WILDLIFE-HUMAN RELATIONS AND EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED MARINE
TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF COASTAL OREGON, U.S.A.

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2023

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ABSTRACT

WILDLIFE-HUMAN RELATIONS AND EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED MARINE TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF COASTAL OREGON, U.S.A.

The tourism industry has witnessed an increased use of non-human animals, both within various attractions as well as in advertisements. This increased interaction and reliance can generate significant hazards which threaten the well-being of these non-human animals and require ongoing study. Animals in marine and community-based tourism destinations, in particular (e.g., coastal Oregon), are facing considerable pressures from tourism and climate change. In view of these concerns, this thesis represents a multi-species and multi-sited ethnography investigating the complexities around degrowth management, tourism policy, and education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic within select Oregonian coastal and marine community-based tourism destinations. Utilizing a posthumanist critical lens, researchers gathered and thematically analyzed data gathered from local inhabitants on Oregon's coast. For efficiency and proficiency, the study employed the Vertical Integrated Projects (VIP) education model, allowing members to gain a hands-on and individualized educational experience. This study has significant relevance for the anthropology of tourism and environmental anthropology literature and broadens current understanding of marine and community-based tourism. Practical implications hold promise for the livelihoods of local Oregonian coastal animals, as well.

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1.0 Introduction

This thesis is based on a two-week multispecies ethnography conducted in the spring of 2022 in Oregon, USA, focusing on coastal and marine community-based tourism. Our study investigated the complexities around degrowth management, tourism policy, and education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic within select Oregonian coastal and marine tourism destinations. Among the countless tourism destinations around the world, a commonly seen component is the use of animals. Tourism companies around the world advertise human-animal encounters for their destinations to attract people's natural tendencies that draw them to the natural world. What's more, destinations that do not possess the ability to offer human-animal encounters have become an exception within the tourism industry (Bohn et al., 2018). This increased reliance on local and/or captive animals begs the need for a sufficient understanding and consideration of diverse perspectives associated with sites where human-animal encounters occur. These perspectives include animal rights, animal welfare, ecofeminism, utilitarianism, and ecocentrism, and inform us on how animals ought to be used for entertainment purposes (Fennell, 2015; Fennell & Thomsen, 2021).

Our multispecies ethnographic study focused on community-based tourism provided considerable insight into issues currently driving debates around wildlife-human sustainability, well-being, and empowerment (Branstrator et al., 2022; Knight, 2022). Outlined in Liu's (2003) critique of sustainable tourism, these issues include the role of tourism demand, the nature of tourism resources, the imperative of intragenerational equity, the role of tourism in promoting sociocultural progress, the measurement of sustainability, and various forms of sustainable development. Drawing from these and with animal ethics as the theoretical backdrop to wildlife-human relations considered here, this study employs a multispecies livelihoods framework in

considering more-than-human relations at the intersectionality of community-based marine tourism and wildlife-human relations (Thomsen, 2021).

The study was facilitated using the Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) education model, where I led a sub-group of six research assistants to collect data. We conducted semi-structured interviews with consenting informants, whose insights contributed to our understanding of how locals viewed and treated animals living close in proximity to the community-based tourism locations they call home. Interview questions and analyses were organized around degrowth management, tourism policy, and education to conceptualize the conditions to which local non-human wildlife may be exposed. Analyses adopted a critical, posthumanist perspective tied to the broader anthropology of tourism literature.

One driver of this study was the opportunity presented to us by the COVID-19 pandemic which had significant effects leading to under-tourism in destinations worldwide. Using relevant ethnographic field methods, the primary objective was to gain a culturally sensitive understanding of how degrowth management, tourism policy, and education impact local non-human wildlife in marine and community-based tourism in coastal Oregon, U.S.A. From this, our study hopes to uncover how a multispecies relations focus of community-based marine tourism facilitates new pathways of understanding wildlife-human relations. It also explores how the VIP model may enhance research project goals while training mid-level (undergraduate and master's) students. It was expected that data pertaining to the study's concepts would indicate a disregard for local wildlife in both policy and management, but that local inhabitants would express some degree of biocentric values towards local non-human wildlife. Practically speaking, results from the study may benefit local animal species which are dying in considerable numbers along the Oregon coast as a result of diverse socio-ecological pressures

like overfishing, tourism, and climate change. These complex interactions are revealed, for example, in the recent local pushback against ecotourism by fishers, fomented by the cultural rift between fishing and new sustainable models of tourism, with different livelihoods at stake (Thomsen, 2021).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) Education Model

The VIP model is one that can be utilized by a team of university researchers with varying levels of aptitude and expertise (e.g., some being undergraduate students, and others being graduate students and faculty). On university research teams, this approach is long-term, large-scale, and multidisciplinary. It allows early students, namely undergrads, to benefit from being awarded course credit, and from direct experience of this innovative process. Graduate students and faculty will, in turn, benefit from the efforts of their teams (Georgia Tech, 2023). For ethnographies, especially those done on issues within tourism anthropology, hands-on experience can be provided to undergraduate students who are in charge of data collection.

In cultural research, this typically takes the form of semi-structured interviews (more explanation on this in the methods section), from which data will be compiled and then analyzed by graduate students and faculty who were also once data collectors themselves (Sonnenberg-Klein, et al., 2018). The mentorship aspect of this model allows for not only mutually beneficial experiences on the research side of things but also in terms of individual growth and development towards being an academic in the field of, say, tourism anthropology, as well as being a reliable member of a research team.

According to Sonnenberg-Klein et al. (2022), vertically integrated projects for multidisciplinary research teams can take the form of either top-down or bottom-up. For the purpose of allowing the co-beneficial dynamic of knowledge flowing down, and benefits from research assistance flowing up, our proposed study took the form of a bottom-up VIP team dynamic.

2.2 Wildlife-human Coexistence & Posthumanism

Scholars argue that Earth has entered its sixth mass extinction event; an era that has been coined *the Anthropocene*. Narrowing our focus to just the last 50 years, more than 60% of the world's wildlife has died off, with 100 million-plus nonhuman animals being used for entertainment purposes in wildlife tourism attractions (WTAs), and over one billion "wildlife" being held in captivity (Steffen et al., 2011). As a result, there is a strong need for literature to be published that acknowledges the effects humans have on other species in tourism, and also advocates for equitable human-nonhuman livelihoods (Thomsen et al., 2021).

Understanding the nature of the relationship (and potential conflict) between local tourism communities and adjacent wildlife is quite important, as it can lead to minimizing negative encounters humans can have with nonhuman animals. Not only that, but it can also help minimize the negative ecological effects on local wildlife than can arise from tourism (Nyhus, 2016). For WTAs, an approach consistent with community-based tourism's ideals would consider the specific context to which local communities and wildlife are exposed to. For example, a human, with a lack of education, could wander into a particular geographic location at the wrong time of year, which could potentially result in a fatal encounter. Similarly, deforestation can create very difficult living circumstances for local flora and fauna wildlife (Nyhus, 2016). An example of why it is necessary to be mindful of the local wildlife around

tourist destinations is that in the case of a human – nonhuman-animal interaction where the human is faced with the choice of life or death (such as if they are approached by a large carnivore like a brown bear), where the former is chosen. The death of a territorial animal at the top of the food chain can cause a cascade of effects on local ecosystems. Here, prey species such as deer and wild boar could explode in population, which could then result in negative impacts on the vegetation within the ecosystem (Gross, et al., 2021). From a different angle, the need for more knowledge and support for human-animal coexistence, let alone within community-based tourism contexts, can be understood by comparing and contrasting rural and urban knowledge and overall perceptions of local wildlife. Research has shown that rural residents tend to have more negative perceptions of wildlife as a result of their pastoral lifestyles and predation's effects on such. Conversely, urbanites have been shown to have more positive perceptions of coexistence from their possession of an education and an understanding of the economic benefits that can come from opening to tourism (Thomsen et al., 2021). Thus, an understanding of how to properly implement policy in given locations will require a sufficient understanding of local political, economic, and cultural variables.

Such an understanding of wildlife-human coexistence lines up well with the philosophical and moral direction that posthumanism embraces. For coexistence to truly flourish, gaining respect for non-human animals not only for them being other living things but as beings with interests and lives of their own just like us, is essential. Posthumanism asks us to push down any anthropocentric boundary that may hinder our ability to view *the other* as something worthy of sufficient consideration within our boundaries and capabilities (Burns, 2004).

2.3 Anthropology of Tourism

Anthropology of tourism, a theoretical perspective utilized to support and enhance sustainable tourism policy, for example, is well-supported in the tourism literature and useful for community-based tourism (Knight & Cottrell, 2016). When considering a dedicated anthropologist in comparison to an avid tourist, both possess the material infrastructure necessary for travel, they possess the motivation to explore the world for romantic stimulation, and they have the tendency to exoticize the other (Crick, 1995). Some may choose to view this similarity as being symbolic of a descendant practice from colonialism, understandably, though this is inaccurate as anthropologists have many other positive intentions for their travels as opposed to it being for exploitation and cultural appropriation (Crick, 1995). Anthropology views tourism as an element of human culture, suggesting that it is part of a particular way of life. The forces that generate tourism are of particular interest to anthropologists, such as the transactions between cultures which are an intrinsic aspect of all tourism, and the consequences for the cultures and the individuals that live therein (Nash & Smith, 1991).

As community-based tourism involves the inclusion of communities within the overall tourism operation, an anthropological perspective is paramount for the system or industry to be effective. This point is supported by Banio and Malchrowicz-Moško's (2019) article on the anthropological perspective being applied to dance tourism. Popular culturally significant dance routines are often times copied and disseminated, thus commercializing them and, in turn, decreasing the cultural essence they are associated with. For ethical reasons, a dance routine's culture of origin, and its cultural, political, and economic scene, should be considered for the purpose of gaining a sufficient and holistic education on said community's conditions (Banio & Malchrowicz-Moškos, 2019). Due to the fact that traditional forms of tourism have been shown

to encompass various economic (supply and demand; business, and markets), psychological (stressing motivation and need), cultural (tourism as a factor in change, and the transmission of knowledge), and social (roles, ties, and contacts) issues, the creation of the systems approaches came about. Holistic in nature, anthropology's use of systemic approaches for understanding tourism is in line with the parameters of sustainable tourism.

3.0 Methodology

The study involved the use of the Vertical Integrated Projects (VIP) education model, which allowed for both students and mentors (graduate students and faculty) to not only become trained in participating in the research process but ultimately research as well. With this bottom-up and inductive system, members were not only provided with a hands-on experience of what they learn in the classroom regarding the field research process but were also exposed to the skills necessary for them to reach the next level of their pursuit within social science research (Sonnenberg-Klein, et al., 2018). The ethnography also took the form of being multi-sited and multi-species, which offered the ability to draw further culturally-significant conclusions as well as make strategic researcher-interests-significant assignments in the form of deciding who focussed on what species/specific issue.

The collection and analysis of our data were qualitative, as it involved interacting with informants by conducting semi-structured interviews on them and coding their in-depth responses to our operationalized indicators for our study's conceptualizations of the conditions local non-human wildlife are exposed to degrowth management, tourism policy, and education.

3.1 Data Collection

Our multi-species and multi-sited ethnography in Oregon occurred over the course of two weeks, where we divided up into sub-groups, one of which I led (containing six people other than myself). Our team consisted of graduate students from Colorado State University in primarily natural resource-oriented courses of study. Interlocutors were local inhabitants on Oregon's coast between the ages of 20 and 65. A Ph.D. candidate that this project was a part of wanted to capture a greater perspective of coastal peoples' attitudes related to community-based, marine tourism. Having students help through the VIP model facilitated greater access and scope to more interlocutors working at the fringes of these issues (e.g., fishing operators vs. kayak tour sales).

Using an informal semi-structured interview approach, we interviewed 32 individuals (out of the total 110) located close in proximity to coastal and marine community-based tourism areas, such as in marinas, specific tourism attractions (e.g., gift shops and visitor centres), and restaurants. Each interview was approached with 12 prompts, though the main objective was to go where the conversation led us, so that all 12 questions were not necessarily asked of each respondent. Notes were taken from these interviews and were discussed and analyzed at team debriefs. In addition, we conducted participant observation over the course of ten days, and also performed archival research on policy and documentation that was relevant and applicable to the well-being of local wildlife. Fifteen formal interviews were also recorded over the two-week span, where a meet-up was arranged with various individuals who ranged from local business owners to tourism operators.

3.2 Data Analysis

Researchers thematically coded field notes and interview transcripts using Delve. As in previous studies, this process adopted a primarily theory-driven approach (Knight et al., 2017; Li et al., 2020; Li et al., 2022), with key findings organized around the three foundational concepts driving the study (i.e., degrowth management, tourism policy, and education).

For the purpose of maximizing our team's use of the VIP model, we administered quantitative surveys to undergraduate student participants and asked them for feedback on their experience as a student of the VIP model. Insight into this will help improve our use of the VIP model for future research trips.

Chapter One: Toward an Era of Multispecies Livelihoods ¹

4.0 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to tourism industries becoming financially suffocated by the phenomenon of under-tourism. This largely affects the communities that have become dependent upon the tourism industry, including many rural communities across the globe. But what if this was an opportunity to rethink how humans treat one another within the industry and the communities in which we operate? This chapter discusses certain integral aspects of the sustainable tourism paradigm to focus on community-based tourism (CBT). It considers how to remediate the effects of over-tourism for (rural) economies as they transition into living with COVID-19. As this unprecedented era of under-tourism persists, it provides humanity a rare opportunity to critically analyze how we operate on a quotidian basis. Not only should community-based tourism focus on the rights, welfare, and agency of local receiving human cultures (Thomsen et al., 2020), they should also extend to the nonhuman animals that are so frequently used in tourism (see Moorhouse et al., 2017). This can be achieved through emerging wildlife-human paradigms such as multispecies livelihoods (Thomsen et al., 2021). Thomsen et al. define multispecies livelihoods:

the right for human and nonhuman animal species to not only exist but to secure the necessities of life in a manner that does not infringe on another species' right to live, except for sustenance hunting or legitimate safety concerns to foster optimal conditions for wildlife-human coexistence (2021a, p.4).

Can humanity leverage this opportunity to foreground local cultures and nonhuman animals in an era of COVID-19? This chapter discusses animal labor in community-based tourism development and then presents a brief case study on coastal marine tourism in Oregon that

provides insights into the complexities of tourism policy, degrowth, and education. We conclude with thoughts on how to reconsider a multispecies livelihoods perspective in community-based tourism as humanity learns to live with COVID-19.

5.0 Literature Review

5.1 Sustainable Tourism

Zhenhua Liu's (2003) critique of sustainable tourism development outlined six issues in tourism research: the nature of tourism resources, the role of tourism demand, the imperative of intra-generational equity, the measurement of sustainability, the role of tourism in promoting sociocultural progress, and various forms of sustainable development. This interdisciplinary approach is essential when reviewing a particular tourist destination(s), or the entire sanction of the tourism industry's policy. As policy within the sustainable tourism sector continues to update and improve (e.g., animal welfare) (Winter, 2020), the process of developing sustainable and culturally appropriate livelihoods through tourism has gained traction (Liu, 2003; Thomsen et al., 2021a). By accounting for both the theoretical and practical bases of sustainability, local cultures and communities will continue to benefit from sustainable tourism as it strives to give due account to their national wealth, ecological diversity, and local communities (Moyle et al., 2020; Thomsen et al. 2021b).

Cultural tourism is "the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs" (Csapó, 2012, p. 205). Cultural tourism and community-based tourism (CBT) possess a grounding and support base within the current literature, as they are either indirectly or directly linked to the many benefits tourism, can have for a local destination

(cultural, ecological, etc.). Among the total number of global tourists, those who are either wholly or partially motivated by culture are those who can be placed into the category of a cultural tourist (Csapó, 2012). The social benefits found when systems of cultures connect communities through the medium of tourism possess high importance. The indirect effects cultural tourism has on a local culture are much higher than the direct ones, due to its multiplier effects. As an example, the ‘cultural tourist’ has been found to spend one-third more money on average than other types of tourists (Csapó, 2012). Community-based tourism maximizes the tourist’s participation and engagement with local cultures to maximize the authenticity of one’s visit. However, for any community development project to be truly sustainable, it must embrace local perspectives, culture, and desires (Thomsen et al., 2020). The following sections review sustainable tourism development in conjunction with CBT in directing a post-pandemic industry that embraces multispecies livelihoods.

5.2 US Policy and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tourism’s historical significance and cultural erudition enables the industry to face challenges posed by global economic conditions, geopolitical turmoil, and natural disasters with remarkable resilience. Tourism remains one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors in the world economy and a valuable source of job creation, economic growth, export revenue, and domestic value added (Steinbrink, 2012). The COVID-19 crisis has led to a collapse in international travel, which has devastated world markets (Mandić, 2021). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), international tourist arrivals declined globally by 74 percent in 2020 with one billion fewer travelers compared to 2019. The WTO estimates that this shift has impacted between 100 and 120 million direct tourism jobs (WTO, 2022). This has negatively affected international revenue for tourism-dependent economies, exports of travel

services, and contributed to the decline in exports of transport services. Despite compounding challenges, tourism countries with strong centralized tourism bodies and a national tourism policy are remediating losses faster than those who do not; Spain, France, and Canada among the top countries (Bork et al., 2020).

In the United States, tourism is a major contributor to the national economy, supplying 2.9 percent of the GDP and accounting for 10 percent of net exports, more than agriculture, mining, and the utility sector (OECD US, 2018). The tourism and travel industry are one of the nation's largest employers, subsidizing 16.8 million jobs in 2019 (OECD US, 2020). According to the 2019 World Population Review, the USA ranked third in international visits, accounting for roughly 79.3 million tourists, directly behind France (1) and Spain (2). However, the US market share in international tourism is currently declining due to the lack of a national tourism policy. The National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) has become embedded within the subcommittee of the International Trade Administration (ITA). The US federal government does not regulate travel and tourism as a distinct industry, and tourism marketing has not been a focal point of recent administrations. The National Tourism Policy Act of 1981 was effectively disbanded by the Clinton era in 1996 which further decentralized tourism initiatives in the USA. This has made it more difficult to compete on a global market due to its fragmented nature. A highly centralized tourism policy that transects government bodies (economic, trade and commerce, foreign affairs, transport) and private sectors (airlines, hotels, and car rentals), is needed to promote tourism as an economic mainstay and a possible tool for economic diplomacy with other nations. Sustainable tourism development, community-based tourism, and cultural tourism initiatives are believed to provide solutions to place-based resilience by tending to the consequences of over-tourism through strategic management.

5.3 Community-based Tourism

Community-based tourism (CBT) is the integration of involved populations with the tourism industry, becoming a part of the tourism system in the relevant area. The host population is involved with all processes of the tourism industry, allowing the residents control over operations with outside influence on practices minimized. The local population's involvement in tourism operations can facilitate sustainable practices, improving on waste oversight and reducing strains within the industry's systems. Sustainability can be improved through further integration of the local resources and the tourism system to create new systems that complement the existing tourism industry. The intent of CBT is to improve the livelihoods of the host community through opportunities in the tourism industry while improving existing tourism models. It is a strategic investment for communities to participate in the broader tourism sector. CBT places heavy reliance on local communities, where planning and process both are dictated by the host population.

The extent to which the host population is involved will affect the effectiveness of the CBT system as well as any other measures tied to the CBT efforts. Sustainability measures will be especially reliant on host connection; one cannot thrive without the other's success. Guidelines and systems must be agreed upon and planned out before beginning CBT to allow for productive, real sustainable measures, evaluated by the community as well as the non-host organizations. Adherence to this plan will give way to more sustainable outcomes in the host community that can be recognized and improved upon with future CBT development. Planning also plays a key role in the future developments, where host populations are especially susceptible to rising land prices and higher costs of living. CBT plays a role in giving these host

populations a voice for upcoming tourism improvements and pathways for least impact to their communities.

A community participation approach, according to Okazaki (2008), has been identified as integral within the process of sustainable tourism development. The proportion of active tourists continues to increase, more and more destinations not previously utilized for tourism are able to afford authentic and culturally diverse experiences to those who are willing to engage and learn (Okazaki, 2008). A mutually beneficial option for tourism has come about at around the turn of the 21st century, which assists in socio-economic development for particular regions that are in need (Dangi & Jamal, 2016). It is also complementary to traditional practices based solely on agriculture, livestock farming, and fishing. It is essential that the development of policies for the purpose of exploiting natural and cultural resources at a particular location must be done by the local communities themselves. Similar to other forms of tourism, CBT also allows for the creation of resources such as health services, infrastructure, and education. For these locals, the level of involvement they have with CBT, too, must be entirely in their hands (López-Guzmán et al., 2011). Finally, for a tourist to ‘participate’ with a local culture, beyond simply obtaining material resources, they must engage in activities of knowledge and cultural exchange with locals (Okazaki, 2008). The following section considers coastal and marine community-based tourism, that is often local and mixed with sometimes competing industrial priorities when considering the rights, welfare, and agency of nonhumans.

5.4 Coastal and Marine Community-based Tourism

Marine wildlife tourism can be understood as any tourist activity that has the primary purpose of studying, watching, or enjoying wildlife in a marine habitat. Zeppel and Muloin (2008) outlined that this form of tourism includes:

Marine wildlife-watching holidays, wildlife boat trips in marine or estuarine areas, guided island or coastal walks, observing marine life from land viewpoints, visiting marine or coastal nature reserves, participating in a marine life study tour or conservation holiday, and visiting marine wildlife visitor centres and marine aquaria. (p. 20)

Coastal and marine tourism is considered a mixed bag of both ‘wicked’ and ‘super wicked’ problems that emphasize the responsibility of tourism researchers and experts in communicating issues to policymakers (Miller et al., 2017). There is an increasing focus on the types of questions and research goals in answering issues related to the Anthropocene (Arias-Maldonado, 2016). This is the geological epoch succeeding the Holocene, marked by significant anthropogenic disturbance to Earth’s climate, oceans, land, and biosphere (Waters et al., 2016).

Flora and fauna that live in the coastal and maritime zone and are dependent upon resources in a particular marine environment, are also either directly or indirectly involved within marine wildlife tourism. Animals or *nonhumans* can be gazed upon in entirely wild habitats, coastal habitats (habituated to humans), or to provisioned i.e., feed habitats. Numerous ways for tourists to interact with marine wildlife have emerged. At sea or near-shore tourism vantage points include shore-based, boat-based, onshore, vantage points, interactive driving, etc. (Zeppel & Muloin, 2008). When considering marine wildlife tourism from the perspective of the human consumer, various benefits include physiological, economic, environmental psychological and social outcomes. Those who seek this form of tourism for biocentric reasons (i.e., all life deserves equal moral standing and consideration) may seek to enjoy a form of non-consumptive activities such as cetacean viewing in opposition to partaking in activities involved in whale killing, fishing, etc. It is through an understanding of the benefits sought by tourists

which mitigates both how marine wildlife tourist attractions are marketed and how they are managed. (Zeppel & Muloin, 2008). However, anthropocentric tendencies have dominated policy decisions in marine and coastal tourism. This effects tourism planning, which can result in the violation of animal ethics, rights, and welfare (Leposa, 2020).

Cater and Cater (2008) discuss the economic impacts of coastal and marine tourism are encapsulated by a series of three multiplier effects. These effects are direct use of commodities by tourists, indirect effects arising from companies who receive money from tourists buying goods and services, and induced effects understood as locals who spend their money on local goods and services. Although limited by leakage, these positive multiplier effects can be found to be omnipresent within tourism, with coastal and marine tourism without exception. Marine tourism often results in benefits for tourists looking for particular social, cultural, and health-related advantages. These can include various participatory (sea bathing, sea sports, etc.), health care (seas often possess metabolism-beneficial properties), and heterogeneous cultural (marine culture itself is often regarded for its openness, innovativeness, and overall extroversion) (Wang & Zhang, 2019).

5.5 Grounding Animal Ethics in/of Animal Labor

Bohn et al. (2018) explain that since animals have become a very important part of tourism and leisure experiences around the world, they can be seen in captivity, as entertainers, in the wild, and as part of tourism activities themselves (Moorhouse et al., 2017; Bohn et al., 2018; Copeland, 2021). Online marketing campaigns from Sweden, Finland, and Norway portray photographs that contain reindeer and huskies engaging in activities performed by tourists, with sledding being a common trend. Tourism companies around the world are akin to these Nordic destinations that utilize the advertising strategy of depicting human–animal encounters more

frequently. Destinations without a possibility of offering animal encounters have become an exception within the tourism industry (Bohn et al., 2018). Fennell (2015) stresses the importance of paying attention to the animal ethics literature, as tourism theorists and practitioners must contain an understanding of the rightness and wrongness of a range of practices involving animals. Some of the major perspectives in this line of thought – animal rights, animal welfare, utilitarianism, ecofeminism, suffering, and ecocentrism – offer unique positions on if or how animals ought to be used for the purpose of entertainment (Fennell, 2015; Fennell & Thomsen, 2021).

When looking at animal ethics and tourism from a cultural anthropological perspective, von Essen et al. (2020) brought forth the issue behind imposing universal standards of animal welfare on other cultures. Although they vary in form, tourism activities that involve animals are indeed typically authentic, multisensory, and tactile in nature. Additionally, the demographics associated with nonhuman animal tourism tends to be relatively consistent. They are typically urban clients who have the willingness to pay a premium price in order to ‘get away’ from their home community and rediscover the wilderness. Due to these trends and the degree of demand for this particular area of tourism, the emergence of animals used at tourist destinations for the purpose of entertainment, self-fulfillment, and edutainment to tourist-consumers is increasing. It can be said that animals become laborers in a global capitalist economy (Copeland, 2020; von Essen et al. 2020). Wadiwel (2018) explained that humans’ understanding of ‘domesticated’ animals is unstable within a variety of production processes. In opposition to ‘harvested’ animals, such as chickens, the author contends:

There is thus a curious instability in how we understand the concept of the
“domesticated animal” who, it is assumed through generations of training,

habituation, body modification, reproductive controls, and enclosure, occupies some sort of position of docility or beneficent relationality with respect to humans and thus, through a kind of failure of resistance, is imagined as “not wild” or “not belonging in the wild. (p. 528)

Consistent with Karl Marx, anthropocentric views toward animal labor provide an ideology which holds that when animals labor under capitalism (i.e., *part* of the working class) they are seen to share the structural condition of humans in the production processes. Critical tourism studies have begun to focus on unearthing what is distinctive about animal labor to reconcile the growing phenomenon (Wadiwel, 2018). Ecotourism, a relatively new form of tourism, is arguably amongst the most ethical forms of leisure travel. Fennell (2020) explains that certain activities such as hunting, fishing, sled dogging are constantly criticized as not conforming to the parameters of ecotourism due to their consumptive nature (see also Thomsen et al., 2021a).

Other human–animal interactions that can be as brief as taking selfies with animals in the background are also contentious in a way such that these instances pose serious welfare risks to the animal because of the interaction. An example of this can be found when a baby dolphin was killed while being passed from tourist to tourist on an Argentinian beach (O’Neil, 2016). It was reported that the tourists were convinced that the calf was at ease during the handing-off process as it had a ‘smile’ on its face. It was only until someone noticed the calf had passed away when they understood something was wrong (Fennell, 2020). The anthropocentric nature of how humans understand nonhuman beings becomes a greater concern in sustainable tourism development, and CBT as animal labor is increasingly deployed.

Cui and Xu (2019) indicated that a non-anthropocentrism model which favors animal rights ethics does not have any practicality in Thailand due to spatial, temporal, social, and

economic constraints. They concluded that there cannot be a single set of ethics which can solve all problems and be sustainable in all contexts. In response, von Essen et al. (2020) presented two approaches that can be used to practice compassionate animal-based tourism, and thus combat the various forms of labor that animals can be subject to in the tourism industry. First, the three R's: "Replacement of animals with alternative methods, Reduction of the number of used animals and Refinement of the methods, including housing and care, to mitigate suffering and promote animal welfare" (von Essen et al., 2020, p. 11). This model challenges humans to ask questions regarding whether it is worth using animals for a given tourist destination, or whether the cost of labor on the animal is worth the interest garnered by the tourists. Thomsen (2021) evaluates the role of individual animals in wildlife tourist attractions (WTAs) from a posthumanist lens. He posits that while noncaptive settings are ideal for nonhumans, the individual animal's circumstances (e.g., what conditions did they live in prior to living in the WTA) must be considered when evaluating the efficacy of using animals in tourism. The second approach underlines the need to inform tourists of animals' welfare, rights, and agency in WTAs. Keeping tourists well informed may help them make animal-welfare-friendly and compassionate decisions when travelling (Fennell & Sheppard, 2021).

Balon (2000) uses moral philosophy to argue against fishing for pleasure, such as in tournaments and for fishing for sport. Garrod (2007) identified three ethical issues emended to the utilization of marine wildlife for tourism stemming from the continual evolution of moral consideration humans hold towards animals: 1) a conservationist approach to the ethical treatment of animals, 2) the welfare of individual animals, and 3) the rights of animals. Ecotourism and marine wildlife tourism possess a strong affinity with one another by incorporating human well-being from nature-based activities, management according to

sustainable development principles, benefits of local communities, and a source for conservation-related resources, among others. However, there are many practical applications within marine wildlife tourism that do not adopt the characteristics of ecotourism. As a result, there have been numerous accounts of poorly managed marine wildlife tourism destinations (Garrod, 2007) which poses the issue around ethical dilemmas within marine wildlife tourism because of unjust animal labor (Crater et al., 2015). Only by embracing pro-animal, non-consumptive practices can marine wildlife tourism transcend to marine wildlife *ecotourism*. The following case study briefly highlights some of the complexities of marine-based wildlife tourism, particularly in the USA during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.6 A Brief Case Study of Oregon Coastal Tourism

In Oregon, USA whale watching tours, science centers, and coastal aquariums serve to educate the public on issues of plastic pollution, ocean acidification, and marine life in general (Nalven, 2019; see also Baechler et al., 2020). Tourism management and planning has examined the relationship between resident attitudes and agency trust in the development of new ‘Marine Protected Areas’ and ‘Marine Reserves’ (Perry et al., 2017). Outdoor recreation activities such as surfing and fishing have been utilized to understand both residents' and tourists' perceptions of current environmental issues (i.e., record-breaking high temperatures, drought, unusual oceanographic conditions, morbidity/mortality of typically harvested aquatic species) and long-term environmental issues (sea level rise, ocean acidification, increased storm intensity, and coastal erosion rates) across the Oregon Coast (Hoelting & Burkardt, 2017). Hoelting and Burkardt (2017) identify several challenges for the growing tourism industry in Oregon's coastal (rural) townships that include increased presence of tropical aquatic species such as Opah, Marlin, and Plankton; warmer temperatures linked to illnesses and die-offs of marine animals,

and increased conditions for toxic algae blooms throughout the region (see also Miller, 2015, McCabe et al., 2016). Many coastal communities struggle to remediate environmental effects due to economic losses associated by declines of the timber industry, an influx of retirees, and fewer fishing opportunities (Ackerman et al., 2016). Tourism growth, declining extractive industries (e.g., timber harvesting), and climate change impacts have increased the need to develop marine tourism and conservation along the Oregon Coast.

The outdoor recreation economy accounts for 2.1% of the national GDP in the US and 2.9% of Oregon's economy – rivalling sectors of mining, agriculture, and big pharma (BEA, 2020). Revenue growth has exceeded the national average by 60%, generating 5.2 million jobs through \$788 billion in economic output (BEA, 2020). It is characterized as an emerging economy consisting of innovators and early adopters with major players undergoing significant disruption. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in 91% of industry supply chains experiencing difficulty with production and distribution while 47% of businesses have laid off or furloughed a portion of their workforce (ORR, 2021). There is an opportunity to assist the sector in the promotion of sustainability, education, and conservation throughout the state.

Oregon State University has recently launched the Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy for industry and cross-university partnerships (Branam, 2021). Key questions remain in how these investments will be distributed and whom they aim to serve. *Travel Oregon* is the State's "semi-independent agency that works to enhance Oregon's economy by developing world-class visitor experiences and implementing sales and marketing campaigns that inspire travel and convey the exceptional quality of Oregon as a destination" (Travel Oregon, 2022). It aims to advance sustainable forestry and fishing, ecotourism initiatives, and marine tourism but

are at risk of becoming fragmented without a national tourism policy or substantial state-wide regulatory body.

As of 2020, community volunteers had long been acting as independent stewards of *Otter Rock Marine Reserve* (ORMR) and formalized their efforts with the creation of the non-profit *Friends of Otter Rock* (FoOR). Consensus for collaborative efforts that promote marine conservation have been established where outreach and interpretive programs alongside the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (marine reserve managers) are emphasized. The objectives are to engage visitors, decision-makers, scientists, and the local community in enhancing protection of the Otter Rock Marine Reserve. FoOR exists to strengthen a stewardship ethic toward protection of the tangible and intangible assets of the ORMR and achieve this by raising awareness of wildlife and the ORMR, connecting visitors and community members with the area, and promoting responsible visitation practices. Visitor demand at ORMR between April and October exceeds the reserve's carrying capacity and problems include disturbance of nesting birds, damage to marine gardens, tide pools, visitor safety on cliffs, and congested traffic (Friends of Otter Rock, 2021).

iNaturalist and *Bioblitz* are two initiatives to promote citizen science, engage tourists and local citizens, and enhance understanding of wildlife within the area by collecting data through wildlife photography with the use of an iPhone. FoOR aims to seek funds from the local municipality for these programs but has been met in opposition from city council (Brock, 2021). Whilst the development of the reserves was to establish goals for conservation, research, and community enrichment, the MRs' lack of size and competing interests hinder their ecological value toward the conservation of marine protection. They were developed in conjunction with the stronghold of the consumptive-based fishing industry and are therefore undersized and placed

in areas where fishing did not typically occur. The case of coastal and marine tourism in Oregon, like tourism studies themselves, is a mixed bag of competing claims where scaling conservation initiatives with the benefits of community-based tourism is representative of settler interests who favour industry and privatization over community organizing and conservation.

5.7 Toward a 'Post'-Pandemic Future of Coastal & Marine CBT

There is a surging interest in tourism research, and amongst practitioners who are looking to manage and valorize new ethos of tourism impacts with the transformational affordance of COVID-19. Hall et al. (2020) contend that the reduction of tourism spending and travel has created enough space between profit and industry to suggest that the crisis can be a trigger of change. Tourism transformation must focus on equity by implementing a resilient post-pandemic tourism industry that addresses economic and environmental gaps by using a multidisciplinary lens (Sigala, 2020). Transforming tourist consumerism to a holistic system of responsible tourism that supports and protects cultural heritage, fragile ecosystems, and the socio-economic position of locals is imperative in remediating the effects of over-tourism and its exploitative nature (Gretzel et al., 2020).

Sustainable tourism strategies such as community-based tourism promote well-being, environmental stewardship, and cultural unity and allyship (Hunt & Harbor, 2019; Dwyer, 2020). In Tanzania, it has been reported that the inflow of affluent tourists “can be instrumental in helping communities to have more realistic expectations about tourism development... people in developing countries like Tanzania have a tendency to essentialize tourists and the mythical developed world they come from” (Salazar, 2012, p. 19). An authentic and holistic experience provided by CBT can evoke feelings of attachment and empathy toward developing cultures (Salazar, 2012). Since the USA does not have a centralized federal policy, implementing one

now with responsible tourism initiatives is essential to curb the climate crisis, mitigate socio-economic problems, and protect fragile ecological zones. However, in the current ecological crisis, nonhuman rights, welfare, and agency must be foregrounded as humanity learns how to emerge from the COVID-19 lockdowns and embrace pent-up demand for a tourism experience. A multispecies livelihoods approach affords community-based tourism operators the opportunity to embrace local and culturally appropriate approaches to human–animal relations that foreground the rights, welfare, and agency of all individuals, no matter the species (see Thomsen et al., 2021a). This is particularly important in coastal and marine areas that are confronted with competing industry and identity demands.

6.0 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was to draw attention to emerging debates and converging phenomena of the (eco)tourism sector as the world emerges from lockdowns and learns to live with COVID-19. Amongst the seemingly endless strife that COVID-19 has caused, its ‘silver lining’ may be that it allows humans to reconsider how we treat all living creatures. By embracing a multispecies livelihoods perspective to community-based tourism, and in particular coastal and marine-based CBT, a new era of wildlife–human coexistence could emerge to present an ethic of care and decency.

¹This paper was previously published with the following citation:

Fennell, S. R., Copeland, K., Thomsen, B., Copeland, S., & Duggan, M. (2022). Toward an era of multispecies livelihoods in coastal and marine community-based tourism. In *The Routledge Handbook of Nature Based Tourism Development* (pp. 555-565). Routledge.

Chapter Two: The Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) Education Model as a Mechanism for Simultaneously Understanding Multispecies Relations and Student Research Learning in Community-based Marine Tourism

7.0 Introduction

The Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) education model is one that academic institutions employ for long-term, large-scale multidisciplinary studies to coalesce faculty research, service, and teaching, with student research mentorship. The model includes the multiple-year participation of students of all levels of higher education as well as faculty. It was adopted from an engineering VIP modelling framework and is highly revered for its mentorship and educational benefits (VIP Consortium, 2023). High-impact activities (e.g., building water filtration systems in areas with poor water quality) in practical community-based projects provide students with a genuine sense of purpose and inspiration. Students often express a deeper sense of learning in the field (Thomsen et al., 2023). The effectiveness associated with high-impact learning activities is attributed to the implementation of purposeful tasks where students see short and long-term benefits. A VIP's research team members often engage in daily tasks that require each member - no matter their level (undergraduate, professor, graduate) - to make decisions. This is possible through a near-peer mentorship model that empowers students to train each other with faculty oversight and to make decisions based on their expertise. This typically deepens a student's investment in the overall project (Zhang et al., 2023). When empowerment is coupled with the knowledge that the project may have 'real-world' positive effects for a particular community, the VIP education model becomes effective for student-involved research teams that contain many levels of proficiency and experience (Strachan et al., 2019).

This study used the VIP model in community-based tourism locations along Oregon's (U.S.) coast. The overarching project examined wildlife-human relations and was led by a Ph.D. candidate. This 'sub-study' examines the role and effectiveness of the VIP model for environmental education and its ability to assist a doctoral candidate's research on community-based tourism's role in wildlife-human relations from the perspective of a junior graduate student. According to Zielinski et al. (2018), locations with community-based tourism can experience difficulties with properly maintaining and balancing social, economic, psychological, and political power. Aspects that affect this include financial resources, skills and technical expertise, control over land and resources, community cohesion, involvement in local planning/management, and political influence. In order to maximize the extent to which these aspects are dealt with, external support, in the form of capital from tourism, is necessary. (*ibid*, 2018). This issue here is that often times there are a number of shortcomings associated with the implementation and management of community-based tourism, and it can make it difficult to bring in meaningful capital for new projects. Blackstock (2005) pointed out three major failings (from the perspective of community development) within the literature regarding community-based tourism: 1- community-based tourism typically takes a functional approach to the involvement of a community; 2- it tends to view the host community as a homogenous group of like-minded people; and 3- it disregards structural constraints on local control of the tourism industry. This suggests that there are a vast number of factors at play when designing and managing community-based tourism, and despite this, community-based tourism efforts are still struggling to account for a sufficient amount of them.

With the use of the VIP education model, a research team can perhaps hope to better understand how to reverse this effect. The model's capability is perhaps its function to be

adaptable and embrace multidisciplinary approaches when investigating a research problem. In this paper, we show how the VIP model enabled the research team to gain an in-depth appreciation for a local community's social, economic, psychological, political, and overall structural conditions. Any use of the first-person is from the perspective of the first author, a graduate student at the time of writing. The following section situates this study within the VIP, wildlife-human coexistence, and anthropology of tourism literature.

8.0 Literature Review

8.1 Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) Education Model

Aspects of the study presented us with situations that required decision-making and strategizing on numerous fronts. Two of the main areas where this was evident were the variety of both species and sites chosen for data collection. With the availability of choosing from multiple sub-sites and species for the purpose of allocating among research assistants, our prioritization of maximizing the experience for all members of our team made it essential that we did not gloss over this decision process lightly. Sonnenberg-Klein et al. (2022) explain that with research teams that explore multidisciplinary topics, bottom-up approaches are best. It is through this approach that team members with more research and field experience can make their expertise useful and, through an understanding of each of their research assistants individually, assign groups of master's students to tasks that best fit their research interests. The VIP model can be useful as a tool to not only systematize multidisciplinary research studies. However, it is critical to do so in a way that enhances the efficacy between research assistants and sources of data.

Focussing more closely on the areas of inter-group dynamics, the VIP model's structure and methodology create a necessary component to allow different members of a research team to benefit each other's knowledge, mentorship and skillset. Thomsen et al. (2023) state that a student's level of education is ancillary to their expertise on the project. For example, a second-year biology student can educate a Ph.D. student in anthropology on the nesting patterns of ravens (*Corvus corax*), and their relationship with wolves (*Canis lupus*). The mentorship aspect of the VIP education model is explained well by Kaul et al. (2019), who presented a comprehensive methodology. It includes the triangulation between vertically integrated mentoring, peer-to-peer mentoring, and faculty-student mentoring. Vertically integrated mentoring involves interactions between members of differing levels of proficiency and experience for purposes such as guidance, advice, or reassurance. Peer-to-peer mentoring is a means of allowing students to share the challenges they may be facing with one another. This feature also allows for these students to gain trust and respect for one another when on similar or close academic levels, generating the 'near-peer' emphasis (Copeland et al., 2022).

Faculty mentoring considers more traditional faculty-student research training and development. This relationship is built on establishing trust, where it is expected that the mentor listens to the mentee and provides constructive criticism (Kaul et al. 2019). The individual benefits for undergraduate students (or graduate students with less field research experience, which is the case of this study) are extensive as well. Time and Mission (2016) list a number of benefits, which includes but is not limited to:

The opportunity to apply what they are learning in their regular coursework to real, challenging problems that are of current interest in their field...learning to work with and eventually take a leadership role in a sophisticated team that is working on a challenging

project...learning about cutting-edge issues in their discipline...development and regular honing of professional skills, including: oral and written communication ability, making presentations to a variety of audiences, collaborative brainstorming and problem solving, developing resilience in the face of failure, etc. (Time & Mission, 2016, pp. 227-228).

The VIP education model was employed in this study for its overall utility and benefits. The Ph.D. student and his faculty mentor had successfully implemented this model for more than five-years. Through the VIP, it was our hope to better understand how the VIP education model's usability improved for subsequent studies, while also maximizing its effectiveness for the present study. The particular focus of a junior-level graduate student as a student-leader was seemingly beneficial when trying to 'bridge the gap' between faculty knowledge and undergraduate student learning. This was particularly useful when discussing theoretical concepts of wildlife-human coexistence.

8.2 Wildlife-human Coexistence

Within the past 50 years, 100 million-plus nonhuman animals have been used for entertainment purposes in wildlife tourism attractions (WTAs), and more than one billion "wildlife" are estimated to be held in captivity (Steffan et al., 2011). This statistic is representative of humans' dominion over other species and that human and nonhuman animals are undoubtedly increasingly coming into contact. The tourism realm is no exception. Because of their proximity to one another, an understanding of how to minimize negative ecological effects as well as negative physical encounters within community-based tourism locations is essential for the benefit of both locals and local animals (Nyhus, 2016). Depending on cultural, societal, and political conditions, as well as the type of nonhuman wildlife present, competition for resources could be present. Human civilizations have been known to co-opt and domesticate

species they seem valuable, eradicate ‘dangerous’ species, and apply a wide range of social, technical, and behavioural approaches to reduce (perceived) negative interactions with wildlife (*ibid*, 2016; Kopnina, 2017; Thomsen, 2022). In tourism, it is common to see animals being used within advertising campaigns to attract potential tourists by appealing to their innate tendency of being drawn to nature (Bohn et al., 2018). Tourism is a prime example of how human civilizations not only can but *will* incorporate local nonhuman wildlife into their livelihoods, which also suggests why it is necessary to gain a holistic understanding of nonhumans’ conditions in wildlife-human relations.

König et al. (2020) developed a conceptual model to frame human-wildlife coexistence and its dimensions. They revealed that multilevel governance approaches, as well as trans- and interdisciplinary approaches, can help institutions and stakeholders apply sustainable management strategies that promote human-wildlife coexistence. Just as knowledge and education are important individual determinants of attitudes towards nonhuman wildlife (in contrast to a societal/cultural determinant such as social norms), so too has our application of the VIP education model allowed us to maintain a holistic perspective (Fletcher & Toncheva, 2021). Understanding the (human) sociocultural dynamics of wildlife-human relations in community-based tourism provided the research team a baseline to evaluate communities’ coexistence with local nonhuman wildlife. The VIP model taught the students *how* to analyze and critique these data, which we describe below.

8.3 Anthropology of Tourism

The dedicated anthropologist and the avid tourist are perhaps not that dissimilar when it comes to their ambition for travel (Stronza, 2001). The tendency to wanting to engage with other people from differing cultures, as well as a love for novel and/or romantic visual stimulation

(e.g., ‘new’ infrastructure), are characteristics of both groups. However, it’s when we uncover a traveller’s underlying intentions that we see whether one is concerned with learning and or leisure (Crick, 1995). The anthropology of tourism can be thought of as a holistic, cultural, and context-specific method of examining tourism, its effects on culture and the environment, and the dependencies and interrelations that occur therein (see Thomsen et al., 2022). Multi- and transdisciplinary approaches remain crucial for investigating and understanding socio-culturally-significant topics that have as much variability (case to case) and complexity (within one given context) as those centred around community-based tourism (Knight, 2016; König et al., 2020). With support from past field studies focussing on similar issues, the VIP education model can adequately provide a research team with the means of enacting a multi- and transdisciplinary approach to this study (VIP consortium, 2023). The benefits come from the model’s horizontal properties, namely its ability to include as many perspectives and approaches as necessary to understand the ‘unseen’ and deeper contexts than an average tourist would see on the surface.

Given its multifaceted and contextual nature, community-based tourism represents an ideal phenomenon for anthropological study. With its emphasis on the inclusion of communities within tourism operations, community-based tourism is one sub-field of tourism where an anthropological perspective can aid in the understanding of how to provide a local community with capital in a meaningful way (Banio & Malchrowicz-Moško, 2019; Knight, 2018). A study of this nature can thus be regarded as “a cross-cultural, holistically oriented anthropology to the broader endeavour of social scientists to understand tourism” (Nash & Smith, 1991, p. 12). In the case of the present study, the multi-sited and multi-species ethnography brought to light how regional issues and strife such as economic competition (within a seemingly homogenous area) could influence community-based tourism - we unpack this in later sections. Anthropological

research within tourism shouldn't simply focus on the tourist as a source for understanding the origins of tourism in a particular destination, nor should it only focus on the locals to understand the effects tourism can have. The focus should rather be on the impacts and incentives for both locals *and* tourists - no matter the species - throughout all of tourism's stages (Stronza, 2001; Thomsen, 2021). This represents a conceptual boundary (and overall conceptual confusion) within anthropological tourism research, and in need of further study. The VIP education model fosters the dissemination of valuable knowledge and skills, and understanding how it can not only fit into this anthropology of the tourism realm, but also parse it out, is essential. Due to its fundamental multidisciplinary nature, the anthropology of tourism could be an appropriate application for the VIP education model. This paper explores this potential by focusing on the role of junior-level graduate students in wildlife-human relations research, which is an under-explored area of VIP research (see Copeland et al., 2022; Thomsen et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023).

9.0 Methodology

This study employed the Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) education model, which allowed for students to become trained in carrying out the research process, and mentors (experienced graduate students and faculty). The project used an iterative process, and approached the study in a bottom-up manner to better understand the context in which actors face (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Through this inductive system, researchers were provided with experiential and hands-on training on what they were learning in their classrooms, a method of learning with seemingly high regard among the academic community (Sonnenberg-Klein, et al., 2018). Ethical approval from the primary research institution was obtained for this study.

We used a short-term (13 days), multi-sited, and multi-species ethnographic approach. The team consisted of an Assistant Professor, a Ph.D. candidate, one additional Ph.D. student, 11 master's students, and two undergraduates. Ages ranged from 20-36, and participants self-identified as 9 females and 7 males. The unique focus of this paper reports on the VIP education model panned out from the perspective of the master's student research assistants, particularly from that of the first author. The 11 master's students were part of a cohort masters in tourism program at a Mountain West, U.S. R1 Carnegie Mellon Classification research institution. The other members were also a part of this institution. The Ph.D. candidate was studying at a peer R1 institution in the Pacific Northwest, U.S. The Ph.D. candidate's study lasted 12 months and conducted more than 150 interviews. This 13-day 'sub-study' was a part of this larger study. The partner institution was limited to 11 days of fieldwork for logistical reasons.

9.1 Data Collection

In the field, the Ph.D. candidate divided researchers into four sub-groups of 3-4 students per group relative to their experience and research interests. He also taught students how to conduct interviews by zooming into the student's classes in the six weeks leading up to the fieldwork. Students sat in on a couple of formal, recorded zoom interviews between the lead doctoral researcher and his interlocutors. Semi-structured interview questions were developed prior to fieldwork, allowing for a baseline analysis of the data while providing the opportunity to diverge based on the interlocutors' expertise (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017). These sub-groups then gathered data from different sites and/or regarding different species, as the study took the form of a multi-sited and multi-species ethnography. Qualitative methods of data collection included participant observation, formal and informal semi-structured interviews, and archival

data research. Interlocutors were locals around Oregonian coastal communities between the ages of 20 and 75.

Our student teams conducted a total of 110 semi-structured interviews (aside from the Ph.D. Candidates research interviews) in total with individuals around locations close in proximity to coastal and marine community-based tourism areas, which includes restaurants, tourist attractions (e.g., visitor centres and gift shops), and marinas in Portland, Astoria, Corvallis, and Newport. Twelve prompts were prepared for informal interviews, though were rarely called upon as natural conversation typically took care of filling in any knowledge gaps. Students recorded hand-written field notes during and immediately after the interviews to be able to code and reflect on later. A total of 15 recorded interviews were also conducted over the two-week span, which included the arrangement of meetups with individuals that we reached out to who ranged from tourism operators to business owners. The Ph.D. Candidate also led twice-daily debriefs to help the students reflect on what we had learned. He then entrusted me, the first author, to co-lead discussions after only two days, as he had closely mentored me on a 16-day research trip to Costa Rica a few months prior. For feedback on the VIP education model experience, we administered a qualitative survey to the master's students at the end of the research trip. Student provided anonymous feedback, albeit certain responses were identifiable due to the limited number of student participants.

9.2 Data Analysis

Field notes were coded using a thematic analysis individually and as a team. The Ph.D. candidate led two class sessions after the trip to help students identify the codes, and keywords we were searching for. The faculty lead, the Ph.D. Candidate, and I then mentored a group of 3-5 students each on coding the hand-written notes. The Ph.D. Candidate and I thematically coded

the recorded interviews and the qualitative student surveys, and added them to his overall DELVE coding software. The 110 interviews, participant observation, twice-daily debriefs, two weeks spent living and working together, as well as the 13 student surveys generated three VIP-related findings. The following findings and discussion are written in an ethnographic style by the first-author. Table 1 below summarizes the study's key findings after using the VIP education model.

Table 1

Three key findings as a result of the Vertical Integrated Projects (VIP) Model's employment

Study's Key Findings	
Key finding #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger master's students had better accessibility to interlocutors. • Locals subjected to a lifestyle of constant competition with other livelihoods. • The VIP education model has normative relevance within qualitative research.
Key Finding #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positionality within the VIP education model offers unique perspectives of the methodology and process. • In a position to be a constant and reliable source of knowledge and guidance. • This unique role on the team offered a 'bird's-eye view' perspective on interlocutor and societal trends.
Key Findings #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief sessions had the capacity to be multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary for facilitated learning. • The small and intimate nature of these sessions helped master's students gain confidence in the field. • Methodological structure, such as that provided by VIP education model, is essential in qualitative research.

10.0 Findings and Discussion

10.1 Key Finding #1: MTM Research Assistant's Accessibility to Data

Gaining access to data in qualitative research isn't always attainable as it is often dependent on interlocutors agreeing to participate. In our study, this came in the form of asking interlocutors to consent to and participate in semi-structured interviews with us, and at times, participant observation such as on a whale-watching expedition. It appeared noticeable that some locals were either unable to or unwilling to speak with some of the older and more experienced members of our team, namely the Assistant Professor and Ph.D. Candidate. As peculiar as it was, this was seen as an issue within our study because it was inhibiting us from obtaining a satisfactory amount of data, and also made it difficult to gain any degree of rapport with the locals. We speculated that this could be due to a perceived lack of trust of outsiders, as many interlocutors eventually cited conflicts between locals and outsiders about economic development. Despite this observation, subsequent attempts revealed that locals actually had the propensity to give perhaps younger-looking and arguably more naïve researchers the proverbial 'time of day'. When the same interlocutor was approached by two researchers in the same research group, with one being a master's student research assistant and the other being a slightly older and more experienced graduate student leader (i.e., the first author), we found that the combination of young enthusiasm would generally elicit more of an in-depth and honest response from the local. We discussed this phenomenon with the group, and several research team members pointed out the same annoyed look or frustration toward the senior researchers. We integrated this new strategy and proceeded to have pleasant and responsive conversations using our semi-structured interview questions. What was valuable to the Ph.D. Candidate,

however, was that these same people who refused him earlier now agreed to and conducted a recorded interview with him. This is how we generated 12 of the 15 recorded interviews.

This taught us that locals living in and around these coastal and marine community-based tourism locations were constantly engulfed in competing lifestyles. For several decades fishing was the primary economic activity, but in the past 20-plus-years, economic livelihoods shifted toward community-based marine tourism. Many interlocutors described how their families' livelihoods were intertwined with the marine wildlife in both fishing and whale-watching. This brought up different perspectives concerning what the town was evolving into. For example, many fishers might have mixed feelings about researchers and academics who come in from other communities and try to understand and in other cases make decisions on behalf of the locals who have been living there their whole lives. On the contrary, young and inexperienced researchers seemed to have been perceived in a better way, perhaps because they were seen as inspiring researchers who were eager to learn and grow. The sense of naivety was a boon for our education and for collecting data, as we felt that the interlocutors maybe saw us as not having any intentions of making bold and misguided assumptions of their local culture. As we rapidly learned, we matured as researchers (see Thomsen et al., 2021). This finding could be quite valuable within the anthropological line of research for future studies to consider. This is also an important finding because, with qualitative research, there are countless factors that can act as spurious or what some in the quantitative sciences might call confounding variables. The effects an interviewer can have on the quality of the information provided to them by an interviewee is one such example (see Potter, 2013).

Fortunately, within our study the student makeup of our researchers allowed us to capitalize on this phenomenon. The VIP education model, as it was applied to our study, is

oriented in a way such that the most inexperienced researchers were tasked with interacting with potential interlocutors the most, at least regarding the non-recorded interviews that we had on the streets of the coastal cities. This suggests that the VIP education model has normative relevance when applied to qualitative data collection (Du Toit et al., 2017). This became evident to me specifically, as I was able to see how locals interacted with both the students in my group, as well as the people above me in the VIP model, such as my primary investigator. Due to my unique role on the research team (with researchers both above and below me on the experience scale) as an experienced master's student leading a small sub-group of less experienced master's students, the VIP education model appeared to do a sufficient job at facilitating student-learning through the near-peer mentorship model.

10.2 Key Finding #2: Author's positionality within the VIP education model

The functionality of the study's VIP methodology on the intra-group dynamics demonstrated notable benefits and contributions. My role for the team and throughout the project became clearer to me and others over time as we built rapport. As I led a group of seven first-year master's students, two important reflections resulted from our study. This reflexivity acts as an important lesson for myself in future anthropological field research projects (Macbeth 2001; Dodgson, 2019). First, in terms of my role as a mentor, master's students became quite comfortable with asking me the seemingly odd question on how to do something. Some of the more prevalently discussed topics within our sub-group generally arose from the following questions: "What's the best way to approach people", "How do I organize my prompt order", "I know how to analyze and critique data, but where do I start", and "What should we consider in order to effectively iterate our research process as the study persists?" Though the students had all witnessed the senior researchers do this and asked questions in the classroom, they were

perhaps timid to speak up or maybe were not as invested in how to conduct research until they were actually doing it. It also became clear that students were benefitting from not only their inquiries but the activities and tasks that were necessary within the study itself. This became evident over time because the rate at which the ‘how to’ questions were being asked decreased. They quickly began to carry out their tasks confidently and more seamlessly. From the point of view of the sub-group leader, it was very rewarding to see, and the senior researchers complemented me on my development in this skill.

Secondly, my positionality within the VIP education model’s experience-scale provided me with a unique insight into the workings and success of the VIP education model, particularly when applied to an anthropological of tourism research context. Many aspects of the study were multidisciplinary in nature, i.e., different theoretical and cultural perspectives to consider and use, important political, economic, and structural conditions to keep in mind when analyzing data, and social norms to be aware of. It was challenging for the more junior research students, as well as doctoral students and faculty at times, to comprehend how some of the topics influenced each other. The VIP education model facilitated better communication within the team, where nearly every person had a mentor to rely upon.

The parsing out of these variables wasn’t too much of an issue for us as a whole, thanks to the VIP education model’s compatibility with multidisciplinary topics and issues (see Copeland et al., 2022; Thomsen et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). We were also able to alter our approach in a manner that allowed us to identify connections between two or more conditions brought up by separate groups. For example, students with a biology experience helped to better speak with state wildlife biologists and help decipher some of the reasonings behind their decisions to cull seals. We were also able to shift toward simple observation of fishers instead of

participant observation when we weren't allowed onto a boat in the marina. Though clearly similar methods and approaches were employed to our overall study, this adaptability to how we were approaching particular interlocutors allowed us to adopt a transdisciplinary means of analysis on the backend. We compared and contrasted different coastal/marine animals at risk of population decline such as salmon, which were also found to be intertwined with relevant local political, economic, and cultural conditions (see Copeland, 2022). By engaging with different types of interlocutors (e.g., fishers, state wildlife biologists, etc.), the students learned how these local coastal/marine animals fates are often tied in with those of marginalized cultures. We had the opportunity to hear this through a local Indigenous Tribe who was gracious and shared their stories and experiences in community-based marine tourism. These experiences allowed for greater discussion amongst ourselves our two-week research study, facilitating a quick and strong rapport within the team.

Due to the fact that the abovementioned inquiries were approached and discussed upon ethically, I was able to continue to foster a trusting relationship between myself and the tourism master's students. They seemed to be keen to learn and grow from constructive criticism, and always asked questions about research and theory, or anything regarding our study's methodology (Kaul et al., 2019). This is reflective of the kind of positionality I had within our group, and how I was able to leverage my relatively calm demeanour in order to benefit the less experienced master's student researchers. As the study was already designed to be an experiential learning project for the students, I was able to utilize my positionality as a more experienced peer to push the student's immersive learning experience to the 'next level' by being a reliable resource for them for guidance and mentorship. This was facilitated by the VIP's

structural methodology, creating a culture and space for a safe and trust-worthy mentoring environment.

10.3 Key Finding #3: Sub-group debriefing process

Team debrief sessions were also had on a regular basis. In these sessions, the bringing together of different groups who may have varying theoretical foci, communities or cultures of interest or animal species of interest made for a great discussion after long days of data collection. The flexibility of these debriefs allowed for us to cross-reference, create important linkages, and make necessary conclusions was, too, made possible by the VIP education model's structure and functionality. This capacity and general propensity that the VIP education model has is one of its many important components. It allowed me to utilize my positionality on the research team to not only observe these occurrences but encourage and facilitate them. During these times, members of all levels on our team partook and contributed to discussion related to our findings from that day, as well as days prior. The Ph.D. Candidate was empowered to lead these sessions, and it was my role to assist him when needed, such as facilitating questions up and down the experience-scale. As he had already been through this process at lower experience-levels, the faculty member and most senior researcher rarely spoke up. Instead, he gave feedback to the Ph.D. Candidate one-on-one, or with me and the two of them. The faculty member (academic staff in other parts of the world) told the group that this is how it would work and asked for buy-in from the team to facilitate our learning at the middle and upper ends of the VIP model. Since the faculty member already built rapport with these students, they trusted him to facilitate this learning process.

This key finding is related to the moments during our debriefs when we arrived at important realizations and conclusions, as they were pertinent to not only accurately analyzing

the results we gathered but also figuring out how we needed to make any necessary changes (typically minor alterations) to our overall study approach in real-time. As it was agreed among the entire team, we were to come to the ‘big’ debrief sessions with a set of synthesized points whether they were specific questions, comments, reports, or general discussion starting prompts. Because of this, our group became quite efficient over the two-weeks at amalgamating field notes, making observations from trends or themes, and coming up with suggestions on how to go about completing the remainder of the research study in terms of who we still wanted to approach for an interview. These soon became known as our “Ah-ha!” moments. There were a number of times where our group came to realizations that were greatly valued when brought to the proverbial table in front of the whole team, such as when one student realized that just because a fisher who was the loudest in a group interview didn’t mean that they had the most experience. The social recognition and sense of pride that came from these events is what I believe contributed to students deeply appreciating the debrief sessions. During these debriefs, the master’s students also seemed to have become more sympathetic towards the animal species being focussed on within our study, as they learned more about the societal issues they were shown to be entangled with. The senior researchers and I took special care to own our own positionality on these topics and tried not to influence the students’ perspectives, which the students cited and appreciated in the post-trip surveys they completed.

I learned that a reliable and mutually agreed upon team VIP structure is quintessential within qualitative team-based anthropological research. As students had a clear understanding of where they were positioned and what their tasks were, I noticed that they were able to excel within and throughout the study in terms of their theoretical and practical knowledge, e.g., how to employ an anthropological perspective, and an understanding of various real-life societal

pressures and injustices which marginalized communities are exposed to, respectively. This was also facilitated by the VIP education model's simplicity and practicality. My theoretical and practical knowledge also benefitted as a result of this study, especially due to the debriefing sessions we had as a team. I felt empowered to then ask deeper questions and sought greater responsibility from the senior research members. They in turn, recognized my role and contributions and allowed me to lead more discussions as we progressed. To me, this shows how the VIP education model is not only a justified means of learning the same topics students learn in the classroom but a preferred method of student research training. It seems reliable and effective as students paid greater attention, participated more in the field, and showed initiative to an extent far greater than that in the classroom.

11.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to provide a unique perspective – that being my own, a master's student from an R1 institution preparing to start his Ph.D. in the fall – on the Vertical Integrated Project (VIP) education model's performance in an anthropological research study. Here, focus is placed on a community-based tourism context. After a two-week short-term ethnography held in various coastal locations in Oregon, U.S.A, three key findings emerged. The first points to the accessibility that younger and less experienced researchers have with some locals in areas of high cultural, economic, or political tension. This suggests that the VIP education model is compatible with societal conditions of this nature. The second key takeaway relates to the positionality I found myself to have on the research team, which led me to two realizations that I found to be valuable. The first is that I took a major role in the mentoring aspect of the project, and the second is that I was able to experience the true nature of the VIP

education model's functionality and structure, as debrief sessions were theoretically and methodologically diverse and differed from my past experiences with the model. This shows how amendable the VIP education model is to the theoretical, conceptual, and societal context in which it is applied. The final key finding was in regard to the benefits associated with being a part of smaller sub-groups within research studies that utilize the VIP education model. As these groups were formed on the basis of similar interests, students clearly gained confidence within the field and reported that what they were learning was both similar to, and a lot more enjoyable than what they were being taught in school. Though this paper is limited in scope for its small sample size, and further research needs to be conducted across disciplines, this study supports the use of the VIP education model in qualitative social science field research. It has shown me that the model has notable utility for researchers, research assistants, and the communities where the research occurs. Continued research should be done to further understand how the VIP education model can fit into various field research conditions and topics.

For researchers who wish to employ the VIP education model on their research team or lab, my unique point of view of its process has led me to come up with four recommendations. Firstly, I would suggest that every member on the team should be empowered to train others on any aspect of the process once they become knowledgeable and proficient enough themselves. My second recommendation is that lab members should be sure to check in on their peers a couple of times per month. The third is that everybody should be aware of the fact that because there are members of differing degrees of knowledge and expertise, different people will have the spotlight at different times, and when it's one person's time to perform, everybody else on the team should rally and support that person as I experienced here. These first three points are essential when maintaining a team-like and mentoring atmosphere in a research lab and

especially when that lab conducts field research. Finally, I would recommend the VIP education model for any form of environmental education. Many issues within the environmental realm are multifaceted and multidimensional and perhaps require multidisciplinary approaches. These recommendations are merely a starting point for future student-based research teams. It helped us to better understand certain aspects of community-based marine tourism research, and how to mature as researchers more rapidly.

Conclusion

Due to a cultural rift between traditional ways of living (e.g., fishing) and new sustainable forms of tourism, multiple livelihoods appear at risk in areas of high multispecies concentration, particularly in coastal regions. This study viewed the post-COVID-19 era as an opportunity to better understand how community-based tourism destinations plagued by under-tourism operate during such times of vulnerability (Knight et al., 2020). This was made possible by our use of the Vertical Integrated Projects (VIP) education model, as well as our application of qualitative research methods, which all acted to help us gain as culturally sensitive of an understanding as possible regarding how tourism policy, education, and degrowth management (and the relationship(s) between them) effect the livelihoods of local non-human wildlife within coastal-marine community-based tourism in Oregon, U.S. Using a posthumanist perspective in Chapter 2, we critiqued thematic data arising from these three concepts, as this was our chosen way to understand the conditions local non-human wildlife are exposed to.

The research was driven by theory characterizing animal-tourism relationships, their ethical implications, and how these interplay with coastal and marine community-based tourism. Additionally, this study also provided a strong argumentative account in Chapter 1 on the utility

of the Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) education model when applied to an anthropological research study that consists of the variables mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. The overarching findings favoured a posthumanist and multispecies livelihoods perspective within the context of community-based tourism and brought forth my unique perspective of the benefits associated with the VIP education model when applied to the present study's area of focus. The theoretical and conceptual grounding that was implemented in the first chapter has been proven to be a useful application for the VIP education model, as was illustrated in this study's second chapter.

Three limitations arose in this study, which were pointed out at different aspects of the thesis. The first one concerns the lack of knowledge and prior work done on many of the conditions and aspects that characterize this study, namely the scant literature on the VIP in non-engineering or health-focused fields (see Zhang et al., 2023; Thomsen et al., 2023). The application of a posthumanist perspective within community-based tourism, and the use of the VIP education model in qualitative anthropological research are seemingly novel but made it challenging to model the study after previous ones directly. The second limitation is concerned with the sampling techniques that were utilized in the research study. Although random sampling is a commonly used method in research designs (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), it seems more supported with quantitative research. The Ph.D. Candidate we supported was able to mitigate this concern for his overall year-long-study, but for two-weeks, our scope was rather limited. The purposive aspect of our methodology, however, went as far as identifying target sites and target communities. Once we arrived at a coastal destination in Oregon, we targeted business owners, fishers, municipality workers, and tourists at the interface of wildlife-human relations and tourism. The final limitation was the study's time constraint. Being a short-term rapid

ethnography (for my research), it was challenging to fully grasp the issues faced by an exhaustive set of Oregonian coastal communities. Data from more communities would have only benefitted our analysis. Generally speaking, the more data a study has to pull from, the higher the chance they will have to draw linkages and relevant conclusions. Future research efforts in this area are encouraged to continue finding new applications for the VIP education model within the social sciences. Nonetheless, these limitations taught me the importance of long-term ethnographic fieldwork when I start my Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology at Oregon State University in fall 2023.

The first chapter, *Toward an Era of Multispecies Livelihoods*, discussed community-based tourism, and how it is an effective means for satisfying the sustainable tourism paradigm by placing an emphasis on a local community's economic, sociocultural, and environmental conditions and constraints. The contributions that this chapter has for the field and literature revolve around its amalgamation and application of variables. I believe that the anthropological academic community will benefit from this short-term ethnography as it is a case study that is valuable in the sense that it pioneered posthumanism and a multispecies livelihoods framework's application not only within a real-life case study, but also within a sub-type of tourism that also has a limited amount of knowledge and understanding within the academic community.

The second chapter, titled *The Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) education model as a Mechanism for Simultaneously Understanding Multispecies Relations and Student Research Learning in Community-based Marine Tourism*, may benefit the VIP literature in terms of its methodological knowledge. Like any methodology, understanding exactly when (or where) to employ various methods is encouraged. As the VIP education model is one that has been adopted from engineering, the first-hand account of someone who was situated at the centre of the study's

experiential-scale is perhaps useful to better understand the potential of the VIP education model. Readers who may be at a similar point in their academic training as myself at the time this paper was written, should benefit by knowing roughly what to expect and how to prepare for it in their own anthropological research study.

Moving forward, this study will be helpful for me as I continue my graduate studies as a Ph.D. student at Oregon State University in the Anthropology department. With research interests that include political ecology, environmental anthropology, cultural anthropology, and environmental philosophy, my knowledge gained here pertaining to tourism and its interconnectedness with relevant economic, sociocultural, and environmental issues will help tremendously. What's more, my experience with the VIP education model and its flexibility and utility will benefit me in future research studies as well. At the present moment, I plan to research socio-cultural perceptions of horses in North America and hope to contribute to the academic literature related to the abovementioned subdisciplines. I also plan on using the VIP education model in my Ph.D. fieldwork. Thank you to my supervisors, mentors, colleagues, and interlocutors who helped me to complete this thesis research.

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