Sustainable and smart destination management

Opportunities for the DMO to act as an intelligent agent among destination stakeholders

Authors: Tarik Alami and Taymaz Tahmasebi Aria

Supervisor: Karl Bonnedahl
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Tarik Alami

Taymaz Tahmasebi Aria
Abstract

Increasing mobility facilitated by reduced cost of connecting across distances has made cities become the most attractive and most frequently visited tourist destinations. For many urban destinations, especially in developing countries this increasing inflow of tourists contributes significantly to the local economy. As tourist preferences and expectations change, a sustainable and competitive destination management approach has received increasing importance in order to properly adapt to the changing market conditions. With the increasing importance of including sustainability in developing competitive destinations, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) have noticed the potential to use smart technologies to enhance tourism experiences and develop the destination for increasing the quality of life for tourists and citizens. However, this requires the DMO to find ways how to deliver a wide range of information, facilitate interaction with stakeholders and gather visitor and management information. DMOs have to fulfil the evolving expectations and needs of an increasing number of tourists and at the same time make sure the destination is developed and managed in such a manner that it does not deteriorate the urban environment and contribute to the benefit of its private-, and public stakeholders as well as its residents.

This thesis aims to answer the following research question: How can the DMO use stakeholder perceptions on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals in response to the increasingly competitive tourism market? The purpose of this thesis is to map the perceptions of destination stakeholders and the DMO on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals. This aims to support the DMO to manage stakeholders in a more effective way towards balancing economic-, social- and environmental goals of sustainability in the destination.

This qualitative research was carried out in the context of destination stakeholders to the DMO in Marrakech through semi-structured interviews. Seven different respondents participated that represented the different stakeholder groups relevant in developing sustainable and smart urban tourism goals which are 2 of the private sector-, public sector and the host community respectively as well as the DMO.

The study revealed that there is generally a common understanding among stakeholders in Marrakech regarding the importance of sustainable and smart urban tourism goals. However a common strategic vision and coordinated destination management approach is lacking as well as clarity about an integrated planning approach to realize sustainable and smart tourism goals. Moreover, having established a participatory approach for information exchange has distinguished the city from other top-down approaches that have made many destinations lose their uniqueness. Stakeholders have already benefited from this approach and developed sustainable and smart projects, but an overall vision requires stronger vision from the DMO. The study findings show that this participatory approach provides a basis for the DMO to potentially act as an intelligent agent that acts as a facilitator for information exchange among stakeholders with smart technologies.
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1. **Introduction**

In this chapter we aim to present and lay the foundation of the topic of this study. We will begin with presenting the concerns that have occurred for destinations as a response to the steady development of tourism. Destination management will be explained from the context of smart and sustainable urban tourism. Lastly the research question and the purpose of this study will be presented.

1.1 **Background**

With the recognized beginning of mass tourism in the years following the 2nd world war, nations, cities, regional and rural areas began to promote themselves as tourist destinations with considerable investments towards tourism development (Ruhanen, 2008, pp. 433-434). Whilst tourist destinations nowadays are commonly seen as the primary unit of analysis and management action in the tourism sector (Bornhorst et al. 2010, p. 56; Buhalis, 2000, p. 97), it is the most complex and difficult unit to manage and market (Saarinen, 2004, p. 166). Not only does this complexity derive from the involvement of different stakeholders that can interpret and describe the tourist destination from a multiplicity of angles, but also its consideration as a fundamental unit on which the many complex dimensions of tourism are based (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003, p. 10). In general one can describe a tourist destination as a “bundle of components” that are delivered by private and public companies and organisations such as hotels, museums, restaurants, car rentals, shops, theme parks and conference venues (Palmer, 1998, p. 186; Elbe et al, 2008, p. 284), whilst the consumer perceives and buys the destination as one integrated product (Manente, 2008, p. 4).

The role of destination management is “to manage and support the integration of different resources, activities and stakeholders through suitable policies and actions”. (Manente, 2008, p. 3). Since tourist destinations face the challenge of bundling a fragmented supply into a consistent tourism product (Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014, p. 64) many destinations have created Destination Management Organizations, or so called DMO’s who should provide strategic leadership and ensure collective agency towards shared goals among stakeholders (Flagestad & Hope, 2001, p. 452). One of the central roles of DMOs is to coordinate stakeholders in an integrated and productive manner that must “effectively mobilize and deploy resources to achieve positive outcomes” for the stakeholders and the destination as whole (Presenza, 2005, p. 5). The destination stakeholder can be defined as any entity that is influenced by or that may influence the achievement of the destination management activities as performed by the DMO (Presenza, 2005, p. 4). Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) identified 32 DMO stakeholders amongst which the most important ones are: hotels, public authorities on different levels, attractions, convention centers, residents, restaurants and local chambers of commerce.

**Destination Management in the context of tourism trends**

The issue of destination management has been brought to light in the last two decades in response to the steady development of tourism and the emerging trends observed in the tourism market (Manente, 2008, p. 3). According to the World Tourism Organisation (2012, p. 9), tourism has become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world, with international tourist arrivals increasing from 983 million in
2011 to expected 1.8 billion by 2030. Moreover, less developed countries for which tourism often is a primary source of economic development have experienced an increasing inflow of tourists from developing countries in recent years (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008, pp. 21-22). As a developing country, Morocco has seen an increasing inflow of international tourist arrivals from developed nations and especially the European Union. With the liberalization of the airline market between the EU and Morocco in the year 2006, international tourist arrivals have increased from 6.2 million in 2006 to 10.2 million in 2014 (World Economic Forum, 2015, p. 242) while the share of EU tourists among foreign tourists has surpassed 80% in 2011 (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013, p. 31).

Moreover, urban tourism is a trend that has made cities become the most attractive and most frequently visited destinations (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007, p. 108; Zmyślony, 2011, p. 303; Klimek, 2013, p. 28). In contrast to other North-African countries, Moroccan tourism is largely linked to the main historical capitals Marrakech, Fez, Meknes and Rabat (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013, p. 24) while Casablanca (the largest city), Tangier, Agadir, Essaouira (beach resorts) and Ouarzazate (a noted film making location) complete the major tourism regions (Observatoire du Tourisme, 2014, p. 17). Moreover, Marrakech with over 2.1 million visitors in 2014 received a large share of the increasing inflow of tourist in Morocco (Observatoire du Tourisme, 2014, p. 8). For tourist destinations in Morocco, this means that DMOs have to think about the impact that these income flows of tourist have on their destinations. Despite its positive returns, the negative impact of tourism activities significantly affect tourist destinations in developing countries, since these are often more vulnerable to environmental changes (Barkemeyer et al., 2014, p. 17). In addition, tourist from developing countries, such as in Europe, are characterized by more demanding, price and quality oriented tourists, that seek authentic experiences, especially in unpolluted and green destinations” (Weaver, 2012, p. 1031; Klimek, 2013, p. 28). In accordance to this, we are currently experiencing a major shift to a generation of tech-savvy consumers. (Iunius et al., 2015, p. 12893). This is specifically critical for developing countries, since there is a “digital divide” requiring developing destinations to expand in information and communication technologies (ICT) in order to adapt to the profile of these tourists (Buhalis & Minghetti, 2009, p. 12). This means that the DMO does not only have to fulfill the evolving expectations and needs of an increasing number of tourists (UNWTO, 2012, p.8), but also make sure the destination is developed and managed in such a manner that it does not deteriorate the urban environment and contribute to the benefit of its private-, and public stakeholders as well the resident population (Garbea, 2013, p. 193). This is important since tourism depends on “intact environments, rich cultures and welcoming host communities” (UNWTO, 2013, p. 19).

In line with this development, Beritelli and Reinhold (2010, p. 137) argue that DMOs can be considered as “a mirror of the organizational aspects of tourism destinations, which should constantly re-engineer and adapt their tourist offer to changing market conditions.” The increasing competitiveness among tourist destinations brings along the need for distinctiveness requiring DMOs to continuously provide unique and superior products and experiences to its visitors (UNWTO, 2012, p.10). In order to achieve this, destination management has to be sustainable. Crouch & Ritchie (2003, p.49) argue that “competitiveness, without sustainability is illusionary”. Similarly, Buhalis (2000, p. 106) claims that the long-term success of destinations depends on their ability to include sustainability into their competitive strategies.
The literature on destination management is rather diverse and frequently overlaps with related fields while in recent years the importance of ensuring destinations are sustainable and remain competitive increased. Nonetheless, studies in destination management tend to deal with the topic in general and the focus on urban destinations, the most frequently visited ones, is limited. (Pearce, 2015, p. 4) To respond to emerging trends and changing market conditions, established sustainability practices need to be adapted and redefined from the perspective of the DMO. In order to do so, we need to understand previous approaches to sustainability in the tourism sector.

Sustainability in tourism
The idea of sustainability is nothing new to the tourism sector as it has become popular with the World Conservation Strategy (World Wildlife Fund, 1980) and Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) defining sustainable development with meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Weaver, 2012, p. 1030). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2013, p. 47) has recognized this principles and defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

While the public sector has assumed much of the responsibility with national and regional guidelines, policy statements, strategies and other top-down approaches to develop more sustainable ways of tourism some private sector operators did their efforts with waste reduction, recycling or triple bottom line accounting (Dwyer, 2005, p. 80; Kloiber, 2008, p. 4; Ruhanen, 2008, p. 435). However, governments at all levels as well as private operators have received criticism for hijacking the sustainability term, talking “green” and with statements of rhetoric, while giving priority to economic growth over environmental protection (Ruhanen, 2008, 436; Ali, 2009, p.5; Weaver, 2012, p. 1031). Since the efforts from the public and private sector have been rather general and not put into useful action, there seems to be no progress towards solving the problems of tourism development (Welford & Ytterhus, 2004, p. 412; Ali, 2009, pp. 19-20). While sustainable tourism is nowadays regarded as a philosophical base to provide direction for tourism development, the negative effects of tourism continue to increase further in scale and require realistic and practical solutions. (Pigram, 1990, p. 8; Ruhanen, 2008, p. 437) Many authors have questioned the feasibility of putting theory into praxis when it comes to sustainable tourism (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2001, p. 4; Marshall & Toffel, 2005, p. 673; Dodds, 2007, p. 298; Ali, 2009, p. 5; Weaver, 2012, p. 1031). Ruhanen (2008, p. 430) undertook a study that revealed that despite the vast body of knowledge regarding sustainable tourism, there is a lack of understanding regarding sustainability and its implementation into practice and that “knowledge on the topic has not been diffused effectively to the destination level, where it is actually needed by those who plan and manage tourism activity.” In accordance to this, Ruhanen (2008, p. 449) argues that irresponsible tourism management lead to the degradation of many tourist destinations as a result of ad hoc and unplanned tourism development.

Sustainable destination management
Bringing sustainability into the destination management field has been a rather recent approach since the recognized shift from the DMOs non-marketing related activities to those as destination developers (Presenza, 2005, p. 3) Probably due to this recent development , the term sustainable destination management has not commonly been defined by scholars. However, Wolnik (2011, p. 4) defined sustainable destination
management as “the joint management of a destination in consideration of the concept of sustainable development.” Ritchie & Crouch (2005, p. 184) argue that from a sustainability perspective, DMOs have to manage the various components of a tourist destination in a way that it ensures economic profitability while avoiding degradation of the factors that have created its competitive position. In accordance to this, Franch et al. (2002, p. 2) define destination management as “the strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialisation of the tourism product, to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local actors involved in the destination.” From a sustainability perspective, the stakeholder groups to the DMO can be categorised under public sector, the private sector and the host community (Getz and Timur, 2008, p. 446). However, the presence of multiple and diverse stakeholders that often hold different viewpoints complicates collaboration (Waligo et al., 2013, p. 343). According to Timur et al (2009, p. 231) when different stakeholder groups have varied interpretations of competing environmental-, social-, and economical goals an environment is created that hinders collective acting and decision making. Making tourism more sustainable means addressing all kinds of tourism stakeholders and to take into account tourism’s impacts and needs in the management, planning, development and operation on all levels of authority (Wollnik, 2011, p. 20). The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) calls this process “mainstreaming sustainability” (GIZ, 2013, p. 62). Moreover, when dealing with destination stakeholders, DMOs have to find the right balance between competing environmental-, social-, and economical goals (Bieger, 2009, p. 311; Klimek, 2013, p. 30).

**Smart destination management**

With the increasing importance of including sustainability in developing competitive destinations, DMOs have noticed the smart city concept that emerged in recent years and that they could potentially use to their advantage. In reference to this, cities aim to use the potential of information and communication technologies in order to address the pressures of urbanization and develop “new policies and strategies to target sustainable urban development and economic growth” (Boes et al., 2015, p. 392). The approach that has primarily focused urban development has been applied to the tourism sector under the term “smart destination”, which focuses on the integration of ICT into the physical infrastructure. For instance, Amsterdam uses beacons for the translation of tourist signs into different languages or installing sensors for better crowd management. From the DMO perspective, information and communication technologies (ICT) can help to design, build and operate tourist destinations with a more sustainable approach (OVUM; 2011, p. 1). However, the smart concepts have often been misused to drive political agendas and sell technological solutions. The implementation of isolated technological developments does not necessarily enhance the tourist experience in line with sustainable development goals of the city. (Gretzel et al., 2015, p. 180)

The challenges that DMOs nowadays face call for solutions that make smarter use of resources and that enhances the quality of life for both residents and tourist in a sustainable way (Presenza et al., 2014, p. 315). To manage destination stakeholders effectively towards the balance of environmental-, social-, and economical goals, DMOs have to find ways how to deliver a wide range of information, engage with visitors, facilitate interaction with stakeholders, gather visitor and management information, promotion purposes etc. (European Travel Commission and World
Tourism Organization, 2014, p. 2). In reference to this, Pearce (2015, p. 10) argues that a collective vision shared by destination stakeholders should be pursued with the fulfillment of a set of integrated initiatives that enhances the quality of residents and visitors. From the DMOs perspective, information and communication technologies (ICT) can be used for the development of value-added experiences for tourists in line with improving the effectiveness of sustainability goals. Bornhorst et al. (2010, p. 572) argue that there is still much to be explored in order to understand how DMOs can more effectively make tourist destinations more competitive and ultimately more successful. Urban destinations have not yet used their potential in “developing competitive city destinations that combine a comparative supply able to meet visitors’ expectations with a positive contribution to the development of cities and the well-being of their residents” (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007, p.108). One the one hand, Armenski et al. (2011, p. 58) outlines that tourism can have significant impact on residents such as “commercialisation of culture, increased tensions between imported and traditional lifestyles, erosion of strength of a local language, new patterns of local consumption, and risks of promotion of antisocial activities (gambling, drugs, violence, etc.).” On the other hand, Paskaleva-Shapira (2007, p. 113) points out that urban visitors nowadays want to fit into the residents local way and pace of life and fit in the community for experiencing authenticity. Considering that also many space and services used by visitors are shared with local residents (Pearce, 2015, p. 8) supports the need for an integrated management of the destination in order to find practical solutions that address visitors and residents alike.

1.2 Knowledge gap and significance of the study

Pearce (2015, p. 4) argues that studies in destination management tend to deal with the topic in general without having focused on the environmental pressures urban destinations face. In response to the emerging trends and changing market conditions, established sustainability practices need to be adapted and redefined from the perspective of the DMO. Moreover, a coherent destination management in consideration of the sustainable-, and smart tourism literature has been neglected in the context of urban destinations, despite the fact that more than 50% of the world’s population lives in cities and urban areas and the majority of tourism is in cities (Kitnuntaviwat and Tang, 2008, p. 46; Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 220). The negative influences of tourism, moreover in developing countries, agglomerate in urban environments, and require management action with new and innovative methods and the development of practical solutions for sustainable tourism development (Saarinen, 2006, p. 1134; Ali, 2009, p. 20).

Applying a destination management approach provides potential to effectively put theory on sustainable-, and smart tourism into praxis at the destination level. The importance of a local perspective is supported by Cooper (2008, p. 109) who argues: “Produced where it is consumed, tourism is an activity that is delivered at the ‘local’ destination, hopefully by local residents and drawing upon local culture, cuisine and attractions, yet it is impacted upon by global processes”. Binkhorst & Dekker (2009, p. 313) similarly stress the importance of locality in tourism that requires destinations to highlight their culture as a source to showcase their uniqueness in a world that turns into a global village. Richard (2007, p. 20) argues that as a result of globalization the world becomes increasingly “placeless” implying that tourism contributes to the degradation of local cultures, removing local distinction and replacing it with the differentiations of modernity. In accordance to this, globalizations forces destinations into strategies of
distinction to enhance locally-based place identities that challenge the threat of becoming uniformed tourism landscapes (Cooper, 2008, p. 110). In reference to this, this study contributes to a growing body of research in understanding the complexities of tourism activity taking place in developing urban destinations that need to highlight their uniqueness and preserve their local environment.

While the DMO role to balance sustainability goals has been recognized (Bieger, 2009, p. 311; Klimek, 2013, p. 30), research in destination management has neglected the potential to use the smart concept to find practical solutions in fulfilling these goals at the destination. This study will contribute to a better understanding of the DMO’s influence regarding the achievement of sustainability goals in the broader urban context while reducing the information asymmetries between stakeholders. This study’s context of the city of Marrakech that receives an increasing inflow of tourists, contributes to future research suggested by Pearce (2015, p. 13) to explore the DMO role in expanding city destinations and examine the behaviours and attitudes of those involved.

Destination Management Organisations of urban destinations have to deal with tremendous challenges. While the city advocates the challenge of population density enforced through increasing tourism, the tourists demand unique and memorable tourist experiences and to keep attracting tourists, the destination’s environment needs to be preserved. Therefore, the DMO needs to balance environmental-, economic-, and social goals of destination stakeholders. It is important to clarify that these goals need to be understood in the broader sense as desirable goals in order to cover aspects of sustainable urban tourism. Environmental goals include the preservation of natural resources, for instance (Brown et al., 2011, p.10). Social goals refer to creating peaceful and understanding relationships between visitor and host community and preserving the cultural identity of the local environment (Ali, 2009, p. 14; Bornhorst et al. 2010, p. 573). Economic goals cover for instance the maximisation tourism’s economic contribution to the local population. (Ali, 2009, p. 14; Klimek, 2013, p.30) However to balance these goals, innovative solutions are required that coordinate all activities and services making tourist destinations more accessible and enjoyable for both residents and visitors (Buhalis et al., 2013, p. 554). These are experiential goals that are enabled with information and communication technologies for tourism development. We will hereafter refer to sustainable and smart urban tourism goals to capture the sustainability and technological aspects of these goals at the urban destination level.

1.3 Research Question

How can the DMO use stakeholder perceptions on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals in response to the increasingly competitive tourism market?

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to map the perceptions of destination stakeholders and the DMO on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals. This will allow us to draw conclusions on similarities and differences between different stakeholder groups regarding these goals, which will support the DMO to manage stakeholders in a more effective way towards balancing economic-, social- and environmental goals of sustainability in the destination in a developing country context. The perceptions on smartness will provide the DMO with insights on how information and communication technologies can help to achieve sustainability objectives. In addition, this will contribute to the growing area of research in understanding the complexities of tourism
activity taking place in developing urban destinations. Furthermore, this will contribute to a better understanding of the DMO’s influence and role regarding the achievement of sustainability goals in the broader urban context.
2. Theoretical framework

This chapter will provide the essential theories for this study. Further on the theoretical framework will be presented, in which we will focus more in detail regarding the destination, destination management and destination management organizer. This will later lead to the field within sustainability and destination management organization. The theoretical framework will work as the core spine for the continuation of this study.

2.1 Destination management

2.1.1 The complexity of destination management related to the destination

The issue of destination management has been brought to light in the last two decades, whereas it has only been in the last decade that a more distinctive if still fragmented body of literature emerged (Pearce, 2015, p. 4). During this time, the emphasis of marketing related activities has been complemented by a more recent concern for managing the growth of tourism and ensuring destinations are sustainable and remain competitive. (Presenza, 2005, p. 3; Morrison, 2013, p. 9, Pearce, 2015, p. 4) This relatively recent emergence of studies on destination management has been in line with the steady development of tourism and the emerging trends observed in the tourism market (Manente, 2008, p. 3) and accordingly tourist destinations are nowadays commonly seen as the primary unit of analysis and management action in the tourism sector (Bornhorst et al. 2010, p. 56; Buhalis, 2000, p. 97). However, this development has also led to the assumption that tourist destinations are the most complex and difficult units to manage and market (Saarinen, 2004, p. 166). Not only does this complexity derive from the involvement of different stakeholders that can interpret and describe the tourist destination from a multiplicity of angles, but also its consideration as a fundamental unit on which the many complex dimensions of tourism are based (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003, p. 10).

This complexity begins with the definition of the tourist destination. While there is yet no widely accepted definition of what a tourist destination is (Pearce, 2015, p. 5), the concept of tourist destination has been defined by various researchers from different angles and perspectives (Buhalis & Amaranggama, 2013, p. 556). From a geographical perspective, Manente (2008, p. 3) defines the tourist destination as a “distinct recognizable area with geographic or administrative boundaries that tourists visit and stay in during their trip”. However, the geographical boundaries of a tourist destination often coincide with the political jurisdiction and therefore destinations can be on any scale, such as country, state, province, municipality, city, village or island (Fabricius et al., 2007, p.1).

While these definitions consider the tourist destination purely as a place, Buhalis & Amaranggama (2013, p. 557) elaborate that these places are filled with tourists that consume products and use services, acquire goods and experience available attractions. Therefore they argue that most destinations develop upon the following 6 components, the 6A’s: attractions, accessibility, amenities, available packages, activities and ancillary services. Attractions are defined as what the destination offers regarding its natural, artificial or cultural resources. Accessibility refers to mobility towards visitors such as the transportation system within the destination. Amenities are accommodation, leisure activities and other services facilitating a comfortable stay. Available packages are the availability of service bundles of unique features. Activities represent typical sightseeing spots that trigger tourists to visit a certain place of that destination.
Ancillary services can be all kinds of other services used by tourists such as banks and hospital. These 6As can be seen as the pillars for tourist destinations to increase profits and add value to the touristic experience in the destination (Buhalis & Amaranggama, 2013, p. 557; Boes et al., 2015, p 393).

The definition of the tourist destination depends on the viewpoint of a multiplicity of actors (such as tourism demand, local private tourist activities, public actors, the host community etc.) and their perceptions (Manente, 2008, pp.3-4). In general, two main perspectives for the definition of tourist destinations are recognized by Manente (2008, p. 4): Firstly, the tourist destination as “a tourist place, where tourist activities have been developed and then tourist products are produced and consumed”. Secondly, the tourist destination as “a tourist product and then as a specific supply involving a set of resources, activities and actors of a territory as well as the local community.”

Buhalis (2000, p.97) defines tourist destinations as “amalgams of tourism products offering an integrated experience to consumers.” Similarly, Hu and Ritchie (1993, p.26) regard a tourism destination as “a package of tourism facilities and services, which, like any other consumer product or service, is composed of a number of multidimensional attributes.” Presenza (2005, p. 2) argues that a “destination coincides with the notion of a locality seen as a set of products/experiences, influenced in a critical way by the companies’ attitudes and their willingness to cooperate.” Bornhorst et al. (2010, p. 572) argue that it is “managerially more effective” to define a tourist destination as “a geographical region which contains a sufficiently critical mass or cluster of attractions so as to be able to provide tourists with visitations experiences that attract them to the destinations for tourism purposes.” In reference to this, tourist destinations can be seen as a “bundle of components” that are delivered by private and public companies and organisations such as hotels, museums, restaurants, car rentals, shops, theme parks and conference venues (Palmer, 1998, p. 186; Elbe et al, 2008, p. 284). Whilst consumers perceive and buy the destination as one integrated product (Manente, 2008, p. 4), different actors within the destination have diverging objectives and needs, which requires “a coordinated and focused kind of management of the whole destination network” (Bieger et al., 2009, p. 311). Taking on a managerial point of view that is in line with the purpose of this thesis, the tourist destination is viewed from the perspective of the destination management organization that manages its stakeholders within the geographical boundaries and tourism products/experiences (demand) consumed in the city of Marrakech.

The above outlined variety of definitions of the tourist destination provide a first indication of the complexities of managing them. One could argue that it is probably due to this variety that the destination management literature frequently overlaps with related fields that are functions within the broader concept of destination management; for instance, destination marketing (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Morrison, 2013), DMO roles and stakeholders (Presenza, 2005; Anderson, 2008) or destination competitiveness (Buhalis, 2000; Ritchie & Crouch, 2005) to name a few. Accordingly, these separate functions are viewed through the lenses of either the supply or the demand side, which then in turn calls for an approach that enables the necessary integration of supply and demand in order to manage the diverse facets of a destination (Pearce, 2015, p. 5). In accordance with this line of argumentation, Volgger & Pechlaner (2014, p. 64) recognize that tourist destinations face the challenge of bundling a fragmented supply
into a consistent tourism product and therefore require a coordinated approach in managing the destination as to maximise the benefits for the actors involved.

In general, the role of destination management is “to manage and support the integration of different resources, activities and stakeholders through suitable policies and actions” (Manente, 2008, p. 3). In reference to this, the term management cannot only be related to organizations, but also to destinations considering the adoption of a macro-level view to coordinate the activities that occur, for instance, the urban level in which tourism actors carry out their responsibilities (Ali, 2009, p. 11; Wollnik, 2011, p. 35). Fabricius (2007, p. 4) defines destination management as “the coordinated management of all the elements that make up a destination (attractions, amenities, access, marketing and pricing)” and further outlines that there needs to be a strategic approach to link-up separate actors for improving the management of the destination. Franch et al. (2002, p. 2) provides a definition that is similar, but more focused on sustainability: “Destination Management is the strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialisation of the tourist product originated in the place, to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local actors involved in the destination.” While there is no universal definition of destination management, the above outlined definitions imply an extended view on the topic than only destination marketing, which became one of the functions within the broader concept of destination management (Morrison, 2013, p. 5).

2.1.2 Destination management in the context of tourism trends

According to Wollnik (2011, p. 11), the rapid growth of tourism demand in recent decades reflects a constellation of “economic dynamics, political liberalization, technological progress as well as value shifts in society”. Biernat (2004, pp. 35-37) named this development the “democratization of travel” while Saarinen (2005, p. 161) similarly outlines that tourism has become a “characteristic feature of contemporary societies and global markets.” Moreover, this rapid development and economic significance of tourism means that new destinations are constantly evolving and that tourism is increasingly viewed as an attractive development option for tourist destinations in developing countries (Saarinen, 2005, pp. 161-162) In reference to this, less developed countries for which tourism often is a primary source of economic development have experienced an increasing inflow of tourists from developing countries in recent years (Telfer & Sharples, 2008, pp. 21-22). The increasing tourism demand whether in developed or developing economies means for tourist destinations the need to adapt their task and activities and seek the best strategies in order to cope with increasing competition and changing markets and ultimately gain or sustain their competitive advantage (Bieger, 2009, p. 309; Avci et al., 2011, p. 47). In accordance to this, destinations face diverse challenges: Iunius et al. (2015, p. 12893) argue that tourist destinations need to adapt to the rapid technological changes. Considering the management of tourist expectations there is a trend of more demanding, price and quality oriented tourists, that seek authentic experiences, especially in unpolluted and green destinations” (Weaver, 2012, p. 1031; Klimek, 2013, p. 28). Varghese (2016, p. 106) stresses the need for destinations to reengineer their organizations and recognize creative partnership in managing tourism.

However, while developing countries seek the potential benefits of tourism such as increased income, employment and economic diversification, the extent to which these
benefits are realized is often restricted due to the political, economic and social structures (Telfler & Sharpley, 2008, p. 3) as well as increased vulnerability to environmental changes (Barkemeyer et al., 2014, p. 17). In accordance to this, destinations in developing countries often only experience the benefits of tourism at the local elite, multinational corporations or through economic, social or environmental costs (Telfer and Sharpley, 2008). Without a coordinated management of the destination, the destination environment and local inhabitants are neglected while economic interests are prioritised. In line with this problematic, developing countries often use a top-down approach, where the decision-making is predominately based on the interventions of government agencies and large tourism firms. (Liu & Wall, 2004, p. 159) According to Avci (2011, p. 47) the absence of an integrated and coordinated destination management approach, destinations will not be able to sustain their competitive position in the market. This can be exemplified by Butler’s (1980, p. 7) model of the life-cycle of the tourist destination (Figure 1) that has been widely accepted and used to identify the developmental stages of destinations (Buhalis, 2000, p. 105; Wollnik, 2008, p. 33; Rodriguez et al., 2008, p. 54).

![Figure 1: Life-cycle of the tourist destination (Butler, 1980, p. 7)](image)

This destination life-cycle concept is based on the product life cycle, where product sales develop slowly at the beginning, experience a rapid growth, stabilize, eventually stagnate and then decline. Applied to the destination, this means that tourists initially come in small number due to “lack of access, facilities, and local knowledge.” Afterwards, with the provision of facilities awareness increases and more visitors come to the destination. Subsequently, more marketing and information diffusion will lead to rapid growth of the popularity of the destination. However, eventually, the increase in tourist demand will decline since the destination resources are used to a maximum, such as environmental factors (water/air quality, transportation) or social factors (annoyed local population due to touristification of the destination). With this decrease in attractiveness of the destinations finally tourist demand will decline or with appropriate
renewal of the destination image and attractions visitors will come back again (Butler, 1980, pp. 6-10). The different development stages are presented hereafter.

**Exploration:** few tourists, close interaction with local people; minimal effect on social, cultural and physical environments

**Involvement:** start of tourist market and season; some changes in social life of locals, pressure on public sector to provide infrastructure

**Development:** tourists rapidly increase, loss of local control through increased foreign-owned facilities, influence of regional/ national planning

**Consolidation:** growth rates decline, tourism now major economic sector, heavy advertising to extend tourist season, old facilities have deteriorated

**Stagnation:** tourist capacity reached/exceeded; reliance on repeat visitation, surplus hotel capacity, social, environmental and economic problems

**Post-Consolidation:**

a) **degradation/ decline:** lost vacationers, reliance on week-enders and day visitors

b) **relaunch/ rejuvenation:** renewal of attractions and image, combined public and private sector efforts, new tourist market is found

Oppermann (1995, p. 537) argues that the concept is on the one hand too general in nature and that one cannot place a destination in a specific development stage because of the multifaceted nature of tourism. On the other hand, the real potential of Butlers approach is its potential utilisation to different cases that can test and use it as a basis for finding explanations for specific phenomena at the destination. For instance, Kompulla et al., (2010, p. 88) used the model to examine the life cycle of a particular product, namely Christmas in Lapland, while the product is closely linked to the image of the region and its specific localised tourism products. The concept has also been used in the context of wine tourism. Tomljenović and Getz (2009, pp. 31-49) investigated the development of wine tourism regions in Croatia and linked it to the life cycle concept while incorporating winery owners’ perceptions and attitudes. Whitfield (2008, pp. 559-572) analysed the cyclical models of conference tourism in the UK and applied it to the life cycle concept with a focus on refurbishments that can be used for enabling the rejuvenation stage that can be applied to destination resorts. Moss et al. (2003, p. 393) for instance, argue that the ongoing success of Las Vegas is significantly based on the continued renovation, replacement and addition of attractions enabled through major developers in collaboration with public administration. In the first place, Las Vegas does not seem to be a good example for sustainability and conversation of resources, but Butler (2011, p. 9) notes that Las Vegas shows how a destination can continue to attract a market that is even highly volatile and has many alternatives to choose from. In reference to this, Manente and Pechlaner (2006, p. 235) rather see the concept as an “early-warning system” to predict decline in destinations. Butler (2011, p. 7) emphasises that mostly destinations do not give much attention to proactive planning and development and rather act in a reactive manner when decline or initially stagnation have already occurred.

Considering the destination life cycle, Avci et al., (2011, p. 47) argue that many developed-, and some developing country destinations have reached their saturation point of stage 4 and 5. Wollnik (2008, p. 35) stresses that effective destination management becomes vital at each stage in order to remain competitive and avoid decline in tourism and degradation of the destination environment.
2.1.3 Destination Management Organization – roles and tasks

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (2004, p. 68) defines destination management organizations (DMOs) as “the organisations responsible for the management and/or marketing of destinations” and categorized them in 3 levels:

National Tourism Authorities or Organisations, responsible for management and marketing of tourism at a national level

Regional, provincial or state DMOs responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism in a geographic region defined for that purpose, sometimes but not always an administrative or local government region such as a county, state or province

Local DMO, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism based on a smaller geographic area or city/town

The national level is normally incorporating more strategic roles, while the regional DMO rather plays a co-ordinating role in tourism activity at the local level in order to control the national strategy at the local level (Kurleto, 2013, p. 399). In accordance to this, the local DMO will have more responsibilities regarding operational elements and has to listen to local stakeholders and “embrace them in the planning and implementation process.”(Fabricius, 2007, p. 135). In line with our purpose, the local DMO level is the one from which destination management action is presumed in this study. The advantage of the local DMO is its proximity and direct influence on the destination specific context. In reference to this, a top-down strategic approach should be ideally combined with a bottom-up strategy that enables the local DMO to achieve a listening leadership role in order to make the appropriate decisions for the destination (Fabricius, 2007, p. 136).

In conformity with the literature on destination management, traditionally DMO’s have been viewed as destination marketing organizations. However, in recent years there has been a transition towards the term destination management organization recognizing the importance of non-marketing related activities from a competitive and sustainable perspective. (Sheehan et al., 2015, p. 528; Varghese, 2016, p. 106) In accordance to this, Presenza (2005, p. 3) argues that destination management organizations shift more and more towards “destination developers by acting as catalyst and facilitators for the realization of tourism development”. While the consumer perceives and buys a destination as one integrated product, DMOs have to perform marketing, promotional and sales tasks and at the same time coordinate long-term destination planning and management (Bieger et al., 2009, p. 311, Klimek, 2013, p.30). Presenza (2005, p. 5) argues that DMO’s roles can be categorized into external destination marketing and internal destination development. In accordance to this, external activities include marketing and promotion, to assist local firms to increase their competitiveness and to position the destination in creating a competitive advantage towards other destinations. The internal activities are the coordination of stakeholders in an integrated and productive manner that must “effectively mobilize and deploy resources to achieve positive outcomes” for the stakeholders and the destination as whole. Considering the marketing and management related activities, Beritelli and Reinhold (2010, p. 137) argue that DMOs can be considered as “a mirror of the organizational aspects of tourism destinations, which should constantly re-engineer and adapt their tourist offer to
changing market conditions.” This much more holistic view of DMO functions nowadays, is further noted by Fabricius (2007, p. 4) who illustrates the DMOs central position in managing the diverse aspects of the destination.

![Diagram of DMO roles](image)

**Figure 2: The DMO role (Fabricius, 2007, p. 4)**

Fabricius (2007, pp. 4-7) argues that in this model (Figure 2), the DMO is the focal organization that ensures the proper use of the elements of the destination while leading and coordinating the efforts of different stakeholders in the destination. In reference to this, the DMOs marketing efforts aim to get people to visit the destination, while delivering on the ground implies the management of the quality of tourist experiences with the main goal to exceed visitor expectations. Moreover, creating a suitable environment is regarded as the foundation on which the success of the other elements are dependent as the “right social, economic and physical environment” is necessary for tourism development before the arrival of the visitor to the destination. This includes “planning and infrastructure, human resources development, product development, technology and systems development, related industries and procurement”. Developing upon this model, Morrison (2013, p. 6) regards “creating a suitable environment” as the basis for developing policies and programmes for sustainable tourism development at the destination. In addition, Morrison (2013, p. 7) emphasises the importance fostering cooperation among the public-, and private sector to reach specific goals.

Considering the above mentioned holistic understanding of the DMO roles, one can argue that destination management requires an integrated approach of diverse stakeholders. This argumentation is also in line with the more integrated organizational structures of DMOs nowadays, as outlined hereafter.

### 2.1.4 DMO – organizational structures

Morrison (2013, p. 34) outlines that there is no standardized structural template for a DMO. Apart from the geographical scope, various authors have described different organizational structures including public, quasi-public, public-private partnerships, non-profit or private organisations (Anderson, 2008, p. 3; Wang, 2011, p. 8; Morrison,
In addition, funding may be derived from several sources as for instance: government allocation of public funds, specific tourism taxes such as hotel room taxes, membership fees paid by tourism organizations, sponsorships and advertising in destination promotional activities or commissions for bookings and sales (Presenza, 2005, p. 4). According to Morrison (2013, p. 24) one can generally notice a shift from a traditional public oriented DMO model to a more corporate one with influences from the private sector. As the most dominant form of DMO structure in industrialised countries, public-private partnerships are organizations established through special decrees of respective governments that are administered by board of directors from the public and private sector. Therefore, they are an “arm length” from the government, but also not completely private. (Morrison, 2013, p. 206). Putting emphasis on the local DMO, a study conducted by Borzyszkowski (2013, p. 370) revealed that the 3 most common forms of local DMOs in 16 European countries were non-profit public-private partnerships (40.4%), followed by private non-profit organisations (21.2%) and regional/local government (15.4%). According to Morrison (2013, p. 205) public-private partnerships will further increase among tourist destinations in the future as a way for blending together the strengths of the two sectors. In accordance to this, the public sector provides a rather secure long-term approach with focus on a qualitative and integral view, while the private sector provides a more dynamic, entrepreneurial and short-term oriented view that focuses on specific aspects such as sales and customer relationship management (Fabricius, 2007, p. 137).

However, in developing countries the DMO model of public-private partnership has not yet been widely adopted being either 100% government operated tourism ministries or initiatives of major players of the private sector to form associations (Morrison, 2013, p. 260). Varghese (2016, p. 105) argues that the lack of forming public-private partnership DMO structures derives from the economic focus of developing countries in solely tapping the direct monetary returns from tourism. Since tourism is often a major factor of economic development in developing countries, the private and public sector focus on individual goal fulfilment. However, this approach leads to diverging objectives and processes that result in differences of opinion, which in turn causes different paths to be taken and underachievement of destination potential (UNCTAD, 2005, p. 121; Varghese, 2016, p. 105).

2.1.5 DMO stakeholders
In the literature of stakeholder theory the existence of numerous processes in explaining stakeholder identification and salience is descriptive (Currie et al., 2009, p. 47). Freeman (1984, p. 46) started to define stakeholders as ”any group or individual who can affect or is effected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives.” In accordance to this, business organizations should be concerned by stakeholder interests when taking strategic decisions (Mainardes et al., 2011, p. 227). In the paper by Crane & Ruebottom (2012, p. 78) stakeholder theory is about who is involved in the decision making as well as who benefits from the outcome of this decision. The practical idea however with the stakeholder theory is whether the companies have a smooth cooperation with its stakeholders in order to understand their wants and needs (Tullberg, 2013, p. 128).

According to Doods (2010, p. 253) stakeholder theory is increasingly being used by scholars to explain in what kind of level organizations are in the matter of sustainability and also how stakeholders can increase sustainability in organizations and businesses in
order to improve the quality of the environment. In general, there are three stakeholder theory approaches: normative, instrumental and descriptive (Mainardes et al., 2011, p. 227; Quinlan et al., 2013, p. 1). The instrumental approach covers stakeholder relationships while the focus is on how firms utilize these relationships in order to achieve organizational objectives. This approach is considered as the primary stakeholder group that has a direct economic connection with the firm (Crane & Ruebottom, 2012, p. 79). The descriptive approach examines the relationships between stakeholders and the firm from behavioral aspects and describes specific characteristics and behaviors, for instance, the nature of the firm, how managers perceive their companies and how organizations are managed (Mainardes et al., 2011, p. 235). The third and last approach is the normative approach, which defines how businesses should operate and posits a moral perspective (Quinlan et al., 2013, p. 1; Mainardes et al., 2011, p. 233). These streams provide a broader understanding to the concept of stakeholder theory and also underline the widespread nature on the relations between organizations and stakeholders (Quinlan et al., 2013, p. 1).

According to Quinlan et al., (2013, p. 2-3) the stakeholder concept and management of tourism regions and destinations has been strongly acknowledged since stakeholder influence attracts more than just interdependent product and service providers since tourism itself attracts high levels of external influence from both political and societal stakeholders. The tourism regions and destination organizations are also supported on national, regional and municipal levels as their organizations see the benefits from tourism activity and therefore exert influence on tourism organizations via policy and resource inputs (Quinlan et al., 2013, p. 3).

From a tourist destination point of view stakeholders and the destination is highlighted as a two way relationship were each one is relying on the other for their survival (Quinlan, 2008, p. 60). “From a stakeholder’s perspective, a destination can be seen as an open-social system of interdependent and multiple stakeholders” (d’Angella & Go, 2009, p. 429). One of the reasons of this interdependence is that many destinations lack financial resources in order to develop a tourism marketing strategy, which is necessary for the destination with the purpose to communicate and convince tourists to visit their region instead of other destinations (d’Angella & Go, 2009, p. 429). Secondly, d’Angella & Go, (2009, p. 429) mentions in todays networked society that destinations are in a situation where sudden disasters and events can influence a destination’s reputation negatively, including both firms and public bodies. To be able to succeed as a destination in the global environment the destinations need to adapt and evolve in their economic performance rather than living on old habits (d’Angella & Go, 2009, p. 429). Third and final reason is the supply fragmentation and ”all-in-one experience” demand paradox were destinations need to find a balance between sharing and hoarding resources and knowledge, especially since the digital revolution has caused a battlefield in the tourism business network as the destinations is trying to ‘out-rival’ other destination networks (d’Angella & Go, 2009, p. 429).

Considering stakeholders in tourist destinations the aim is to improve commercial performance and maximize profits since stakeholders possess a normative obligation where the goal is to handle social welfare and the level of harm (Quinlan, 2009, p. 60). In tourist destinations, the stakeholder is either influenced or may influence the achievement of the destination management activities, performed by the DMO (Presenza, 2005, p. 4).
In the tourism context, the DMOs goal is to reduce potential conflicts between tourists and the host community, which according to Aas et al., (2005, p. 31) is anyone who is deemed to reduce this conflicts by shaping the host community who has to be involved in the way tourism develops. Conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated since sustainable urban tourism is a strategic process with diverse stakeholders involved, which would be almost impossible to balance their needs without knowing how they perceive sustainable tourism (Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 221). DMO’s face different sets of key stakeholders and each city faces unique patterns of influences depending on the historical development of the destination, the nature of the industry as well as the governmental and institutional culture (Timur and Getz, 2008, p. 457). Sheehan and Ritchie (2005, p. 728) identified 32 tourism stakeholders and also show the role of a DMO and how important it is for the DMO to understand the stakeholders in order to achieve its objectives (Presenza, 2005, p. 4). The fact is that among the 32 tourism stakeholders, the DMO executives mentioned: hotels, public authorities on different levels, attractions, convention centers, residents, restaurants and local chambers of commerce as the most important stakeholders (Presenza, 2005, p. 4). Since the DMO plays a crucial role for the destination and tourism in general the 32 identified tourism stakeholders will not have the same importance as the other stakeholders, which has been identified. If the DMO also wants to implement sustainable tourism the DMO is required to manage and interact among the diverse stakeholders, which is the public sector, the private sector and the local residents (Timur and Getz, 2008, p. 446). These stakeholders can be divided in three broad groups of key potential stakeholders being relevant in the development of sustainable urban tourism.

The first group consists of sub-sectors such as transportation, accommodation, attractions and the city’s destination management organization is also included in this group, which is in charge for destination marketing, promotion, planning and development. The first sub-group should also be, according to Timur and Getz, identified with hotels and attractions, which we will call “Private entreprises.”

The second stakeholder group is the host environment, which contains both the host community and the resource base of the destination. It refers to community groups, educational and financial institutions, business organizations (e.g. the chamber of commerce) that involve and address issues of the host community, while the resource base is taking care of and helps to preserve the local culture and diversity, the social and natural resources that play a major role in attracting visitors to urban destinations. Stakeholders of importance in the second stakeholder group is residents and local chambers of commerce. This second group will be referred as “Host environment”.

The third stakeholder group refers to the local authorities including the government agencies that have the responsibility of implementing policies and plans, enforcing regulations and monitoring development. Gilmore and Simmons (2007, p. 192) highlight the importance of collaboration between the public sector such as government bodies, city planners, transportation department and the private sector including tour operators and the hospitality sector as well as local businesses and the community. Tourism destinations environments are complex considering that multiple stakeholders with often diverse and divergent views and values are involved (Jamal et al., 2009, p. 172). According to Waligo et al. (2013, p. 343) the involvement of a variety of stakeholders including tourists, industry, local community, government, special interest
groups and educational institutions complicates collaboration. This third and final sub-
group will be referred as ”Public/local authorities sector” and out of the stakeholders
mentioned by the DMO executives government, city council and chamber of commerce
is listed as an important tourist stakeholder. Figure 3 illustrates the destination
stakeholders from the DMO perspective.

Figure 3: Destination stakeholders from the DMO perspective

2.1.6 Destination Management Organization – goals

From the consumer side, the tourist destination is perceived as whole and bought as one
integrated product. From the perspective of the DMO, there is a need to meet these
consumer expectations and differentiate the destination with its components, as a whole,
in order to form the tourism product. Destination and product can therefore be
considered identical. (Manente, 2008, p. 4) In accordance to this, the DMO needs to
make sure that consumers gain a collection of experiences that can be perceived as one
integrated product being delivered by various suppliers and that tourists are willing to
consume (Buhalıs, 2000, p. 97). Tung & Ritchie (2011, p. 1369) argue that tourist
experiences can be seen as process that stretches from the stage before the trip is
planned to after the trip is done and throughout this process it is filled with individuals
subjective evaluations and undergoing events related to their touristic activities. In
accordance to this, the DMO needs to facilitate the perception of the destination and
manage its stakeholders in a way that it creates memorable experiences for the tourists.
This way the destination distinguishes itself from other destinations in order to maintain
its market position and share and/or improve upon them (Dwyer & Kim, 2003, p. 375).
However, to create unique and memorable experiences that are competitive to other
destinations, destination management has to be sustainable. Crouch & Ritchie (2003,
p.49) argue that “competitiveness, without sustainability is illusionary” and therefore
DMO must examine the destinations’ dimensions of environmental-, economic- and
social dimensions of sustainability.
From the perspective of sustainability, a DMO has to find the right balance between competing environmental-, social-, and economical goals (Bieger, 2009, p. 311; Klimek, 2013, p. 30). This includes the preservation of natural resources and minimization of negative impacts on tourism and the destination itself for its future development (Buhalıs, 2000, p. 109; Brown et al., 2011, p.10), but also the guarantee that attractions and experiences are realised so that the destination sustains its appeal to be reputed as sustainable and “environmental-friendly”. In accordance to this, DMO’s also work towards the maximisation of tourism’s economic contribution to the local population. (Ali, 2009, p. 14; Klimek, 2013, p.30) Another aspect is the DMO’s goal of ensuring that tourism is socially sustainable in terms of increasing the well-being of the host community, creating peaceful and understanding relationships between visitor and host community as well as preserving the cultural identity of the local environment (Fabricius, 2007, p. 9; Ali, 2009, p. 14; Bornhorst et al. 2010, p. 573; Brown et al., 2011, p. 10). Within the context of sustainability one of the main DMO goals is to increase the well-being of local populations as well as private and public stakeholders (Bornhorst et al., 2010, p. 586, Timur & Getz, 2009, p. 223; Klimek, 2013, p. 30).

Considering the shift to recognize the DMO’s role as “destination developers” (Presenza, 2005, p. 3) with goals to find the right balance between competing environmental-, social-, and economical goals (Bieger, 2009, p. 311; Klimek, 2013, p. 30), one can argue that DMO’s play an important role for accomplishing sustainable destination development. This is further supported by Wray et al. (2010, p. 23) who argue that sustainable destination management can be achieved by the DMO through a “long term vision of destination development, clear designation of responsibilities and governance structures, transparent and responsible decision-making engaging local groups of interest.” In accordance to this, Wollnik (2011, p. 4) regards sustainable destination management as “the joint management of a destination in consideration of the concept of sustainable development.” This is supported by Mezei (2009, p. 52) who argues that the challenges of managing tourist destination is strongly related to the concept of sustainable development.

2.2 Sustainable development

The previous section outlined that DMOs need to find the right balance between economic-, social-, and environmental goals when dealing with stakeholders. The following sections aim to clarify the concept of sustainability in general and its adoption in the tourism industry. This will allow a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability goals in this thesis destination context, which is the urban environment.

The idea of sustainability has become popular in the tourism industry with the World Conservation Strategy (World Wildlife Fund, 1980) and Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) defining sustainable development with meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Weaver, 2012, p. 1030). Following this definition, Manning and Dougherty (1995, p.30) further clarified the term as “the use of natural resources to support economic activity without compromising the environment’s carrying capacity, which is its ability to continue producing those economic goods and services”. In accordance to this, Marshall & Toffel (2005, p. 673) concluded in their review that sustainability has been defined in various ways. They argue that sustainability definitions range from an internal, organizational perspectives, such as “a business approach that creates long-term shareholder value by embracing opportunities and managing risks deriving from economic, environmental and social developments” to rather broad views with hundreds
of sustainability indicators and “diverse sets of goals, such as poverty elimination and fair and transparent governance.” In order to address this issue Marshall & Toffel (2005, p. 675) developed a sustainability hierarchy based on Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) arguing that “humans are motivated by unsatisfied needs and that certain lower needs must be satisfied before higher needs can be”. In reference to this, sustainability hierarchy levels build upon another:

Level 1: actions that, if continued at the current or forecasted rate, endanger the survival of humans.

Level 2: Actions that significantly reduce life expectancy or other basic health indicators (e.g. an action that degrades the stratospheric ozone layer and thus impedes human health is unsustainable).

Level 3: Actions that may cause species extinction or that violate human rights (e.g. displacement of people living in low-lying areas due to sea level rises accompanying global climate change).

Level 4: Actions that reduce quality of life or are inconsistent with other values, beliefs, or aesthetic preferences (e.g. unsustainable urban sprawl leading to congestion and a lack of preserved urban space).

The hierarchy aims to structure the way the term “sustainability” has been used and it illustrates that an action can be considered sustainable for one person addressing one level of the hierarchy whilst neglecting another one and therefore individuals have to specify which sustainability levels they are referring to when talking about sustainability. In accordance to this, sustainability can be defined either too narrowly neglecting issues or too broadly making the term too vague or even meaningless. (Marshall & Toffel, 2005, p. 675) In reference to this, Stoddard et al. (2012, p. 241) argue that different factors including the local environmental conditions and culture, the sustainability hierarchy level as well as spatial and temporal scale of the sustainability initiative influence to which degree the organisations endeavour is sustainable.

2.2.1 The triple bottom line

To assess the degree to which the DMO’s initiative is sustainable, Barkemeyer et al. (2011, p. 17) include the organisations aim for the outcome of the triple-bottom line covering economic, social and environmental dimension of development. The triple bottom line, coined by Elkington (1998), considers that a corporation’s success should not only be measured by the traditional economic bottom-line, but also by social and environmental indicators (Stoddard et al., 2013, p. 234). In accordance to this, one of the key elements of the triple bottom line approach is that corporate performance should not only target the benefits of the shareholders but also the stakeholders such as the local community within which business operations are conducted (Stoddard et al., 2013, p. 235). Where the economic dimension simply requires a look at traditional financial performance indicators such as revenue, profit and return on investment, the other dimensions are more difficult to assess. In the tourism industry the economic dimension may include heads in beds for hotels or visitations for attractions (Stoddard et al., 2013, p. 235).
On the one hand, the social dimension consists of the human capital that employees, contractors and suppliers directly invest into the business. Companies often refer to employees as their most important asset that needs to be motivated, rewarded and maintained to improve financial performance while at the same time some companies consider them an expense that can be decreased to improve the financial bottom line. On the other hand, the social dimension consists of the investments of the social systems supporting the business. In reference to this, educational, governmental and infrastructural institutions provide a framework within which companies operate providing them with educated employees, a legal system, infrastructural resources and costumers that have the ability to purchase products and services. (Dwyer, 2005, p. 81). Miller et al. (2007, p. 228) argue that the social dimension of the triple bottom line refers to social well-being, working with employees, their families, the local community and the society in general to improve their quality of life. They further stress the importance of addressing an individual’s well-being, community well-being, employment experiences and organisational or industry impact (Miller et al., 2007, p. 229).

The environmental dimension is also referred to as natural capital and represents all the resources provided to a firm in forms of raw material, plants, and animals. This can also be physical, cultural and heritage resources that are of importance in the tourism context. (Dwyer, 2005, p.81.) As stated by Stoddard et al. (2013, p. 243) environmental dimensions such as the use of energy, recycled materials, the organisations use of water have long been neglected even though they are vital for our existence.

2.2.2 Criticism of the triple bottom line

It should be noted that not all scholars have advocated triple bottom line thinking. Marshall & Toffel (2005, p. 674) argue that often organisations label objects and approaches or even the entire company “sustainable” without necessarily being sustainable. Norman & Mc Donald (2004, p. 256) even consider the concept of the triple bottom line to be a “‘good old fashioned single bottom line plus vague commitments to social and environmental concerns’” and further argue that the triple bottom line facilitates hypocrisy of business claiming to address the dimensions telling us very little about a firm’s actual commitment to sustainability (Norman & Mc Donald, 2004, p. 257).

One of the major criticisms of the triple bottom line refers to how and if it can measure sustainability. According to Pava (2007, p.108) one of the major limitations is the inability to measure social and environmental dimensions for performance in a “meaningful, consistent and comparable way”. The non-existence of real social and environmental bottom-lines to be calculated has been starkly criticised by Norman & Mc Donald (2004, p. 256). In reference to this, comparability becomes impossible considering that different kinds of indicators applied by each firm with the triple bottom line dimensions. In this sense, companies can interpret and change indicators the way they want, which does not allow a comprehensive track of efforts made towards the triple bottom line (Norman & Mc Donald, 2004, p. 256-257). Ehrenfeld (2004, p.4) argues that creating sustainability is not the same as reducing unsustainability. This refers to the measurability of unsustainability as a current state but the problems associated with sustainability as a future aspiration that is difficult to predict. In reference to this, Vanclay (2004, p.267) agrees with the struggles to develop comparable indicators within social and environmental dimensions of the triple bottom
line, but disagrees in the sense that scholar who criticise lose sight of the intention of the triple bottom line. The triple bottom line should not be regarded as a “set of accounts” but a philosophy helping companies to include social and environmental aspects in their operations. Pava (2007, p. 108) supports this stressing that “the triple bottom line is a metaphor to remind us that corporate performance is multi-dimensional”.

2.2.3 Sustainable tourism
Sustainable tourism can basically be regarded as the application of sustainable development to the tourism sector (Robinson et al., 2011, p. 70). However, the problem of what people understand and how they interpret sustainability remains also in the tourism context. Butler (1999, p. 19) describes this ambiguity and inability to define what is meant by sustainable tourism as the key problem of stakeholders in tourism. Definition have either placed more emphasis on the physical environment or on the social and cultural dynamics of destinations (Robinson et al., 2011, p.70). In fact, tourism can have far-reaching impacts on destinations in terms of the human resources and its cultural and social dimensions as well as the physical resources such as wildlife, water and energy (Butler, 2007, p. 14). The last decade of the 20th century has focused on economic and organizational perspectives in the explanation of the concept (Robinson et al., 2011, p.70). Timur and Getz (2009, pp. 224-225) further questions whether the emphasis should be on economic or human development. On the one hand, traditional tourism planning is based on economic development often neglecting the improvement of the residents’ lives. On the other hand, an environmental focus may not achieve enough in terms sustainability regarding employment and other social benefits. Another criticism includes confusion over growth and sustainability addressing questions of scale and whether mass tourism can be made more sustainable. Environmental and economic forces often clash creating social conflicts and industry inefficiencies and therefore an integrated sustainable tourism is needed. (Dodds, 2007, p. 298)

The World Tourism Organization has recognized this principles and defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNWTO, 2013, p. 47). This is supported by Gilmore and Simmons (2007, p. 193) arguing that even though there is still a debate surrounding the definition of sustainable tourism “there is a wide agreement that it should facilitate the social, economic, and environmental well-being of a region”. According to the UNWTO (2013, p. 19) the tourism sector has the “ability to link the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of sustainability and to act as a driving force for their mutual enhancement” since tourism depends on the “intact environments, rich cultures and welcoming host communities.” In accordance to this, the triple bottom line approach has been widely recommended within sustainable tourism. However, the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the triple bottom line can be interpreted in different ways depending on the stakeholder’s perspectives and interests (Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 224).

2.2.4 Sustainable urban tourism
Considering the large body of the literature on sustainable tourism, research on its application to the urban environment is relatively new and the focus has been on natural
environments and protected areas whilst most of the world’s population lives in urban areas and the majority of tourism is in cities (Kitnuntaviwat and Tang, 2008, p. 46; Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 220). This is surprising, considering that tourist destinations, as demarcated by cities, are environments where the negative impacts of tourism have been tremendous, such as carbon emissions, over-development, and destruction of natural resources (Klimek, 2013, p. 29). Cities can be considered multifunctional, complex and distinctive place with “high physical densities of structures, people, and functions; social and cultural heterogeneity; an economic multi-functionalism; and a physical centrality within regional and interurban networks” (Douglas, 2001, p. 927). In addition, cities can be seen as physical places where tourist and residents needs converge meaning that cities need to serve different demands and find solutions to provide adequate services and facilities (La Rocca, 2014, p. 271; Douglas, 2001, p. 927). On the one hand, cities promote themselves as tourist destinations to improve their competitiveness whilst they have actually become one of the preferred tourist destinations (La Rocha, 2014, p.271) representing a major economic activity (Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 221). The attractiveness of cities in the tourism experience lies in a rich variety of “historical and cultural attractions, architecture, interesting shopping venues, restaurants, theatres and night clubs” and in “a reasonably compact, interesting, and attractive environment, rather than in any one component” (La Rocha, 2014,p. 271). On the other hand, urban tourism is a significant cause of undesirable social, cultural and environmental outcomes such as “protection of the environment, conversation of heritage, preservation of social fabric, cultural values and the desired maintenance of the quality of life of residents” (Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 221).

Previous research has neglected the notion of sustainability in the context of urban areas (Barke and Newton 1995, p. 115; Kitnuntaviwat and Tang, 2008, p. 46) despite the argument that the adoption of sustainable tourism facilitates the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the host community (Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 221). The EU-SUT-Governance research project of the European Union defined sustainable urban tourism as a “holistic, equitable, and future-oriented development strategy” with the aim of having a balanced consistent and continuous development strategy for the benefits of tourism with future opportunities of the host community (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2003, p.3). Whilst urban tourism development that is sustainable in economic, environmental, social and cultural terms has been repeatedly recommended (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2003, p.3; Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 224), the involvement and collaboration of diverse stakeholders turns out to be complex and difficult to achieve. In reference to this, the management and implementation of sustainable urban tourism becomes a major challenge. (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2003, p.3) Depending on the stakeholder’s views and interpretations of sustainability in the urban environment, different goals are set and Timur and Getz (2009, p. 225) have summed up economic, environmental, socio-cultural and experiential dimensions of sustainable urban tourism goals being significant in the urban context.
Table 1: Dimensions of sustainable urban tourism (Timur and Getz, 2009, p. 225)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Sociocultural (community issues)</th>
<th>Experiential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>providing long term business profitability</td>
<td>maintaining and considering re-use of old buildings in the downtown area</td>
<td>providing long term and well paying employment opportunities</td>
<td>ensuring visitors’ experiences are memorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuing to grow &lt;city’s&gt; tourism industry</td>
<td>preserving all of &lt;city’s&gt; remaining natural areas</td>
<td>ensuring residents have control over tourism development decision-making</td>
<td>securing health and wellness of visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensuring &lt;city’s&gt; tourism marketing budget is sustained and increased</td>
<td>restricting private car movements by tourists to control air pollution and congestion in &lt;city&gt;</td>
<td>developing a sustainable industry where all businesses practice green operations</td>
<td>providing strong motivators for visiting &lt;city&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying these dimensions of sustainable urban tourism goals to this thesis destination context, we need to understand that sustainable tourism is nowadays regarded as a philosophical base (Vanclay, 2004, p. 267) and that “there is a wide agreement that it should facilitate the social, economic, and environmental well-being of a region (Gilmore and Simmons, 2007, p. 193). This in turn means that Timur and Getz’s (2009, p. 225) dimensions of sustainable urban tourism goals should be seen as desirable goals in order to develop practical solutions (Pigram, 1990, p. 8; Ruhanen, 2008, p. 437). The necessity to do so at the destination level is supported by Ruhanen (2008, p. 430) who undertook a study that revealed that despite the vast body of knowledge regarding sustainable tourism, there is a lack of understanding regarding sustainability and its implementation into practice and that “knowledge on the topic has not been diffused effectively to the destination level, where it is actually needed by those who plan and manage tourism activity”. While the dimensions of sustainable urban tourism goals cover economic-, environmental-, and socio-cultural aspects, the experiential component indicates that visitor experiences need to be taken into account and that there need to be motivators for visiting the city. Therefore DMOs need to find practical solutions that address the experiential component that is however in line with the other dimensions. In reference to this, Presenza et al. (2014, p. 315) argues that DMOs need to make smarter use of resources and that enhance the quality of life for both residents and tourist in a sustainable way. For this reason, the following section of the smartness concept refers to the experiential dimension with the aim of fulfilling the dimensions of sustainable urban tourism goals.

2.3 Smart destination management

2.3.1 Technological change

With the increasing importance of including sustainability in developing competitive destinations, DMOs have noticed the smart city concept that emerged in recent years and that they could potentially use to their advantage. We will first provide an overview of the technological developments that have changed the tourism industry in unprecedented ways. We are living in a world of rapid technological change. Cloud services provide access to applications, software and data in a very convenient way where for instance tour guide systems address a large number of tourist without being installed on personal devices (Wang et al., 2013, p. 60). Having experienced the evolution from the world-wide-web in the 1990s to the mobile internet in the beginning of the 21st century, we are heading towards “the internet of things”. The term refers to the linkage of the “objects of the real world with the virtual world, thus enabling anytime, anyplace connectivity for anything and not only for anyone.” (European
Commission, 2010, p. 11). According to the European Commission there are currently 1.5 billion internet enabled PC’s and over 1 billion internet enabled cell-phones. In 2020, 50-100 billion devices are expected to be connected. (European Commission, 2010, p. 13). This development implies, for instance, that individual payments systems can be designed based on smartphones and tablets, wireless connections and touch screens have the potential to enhance the tourism experience (Wang et al, 2013, p. 60).

2.3.2 Smart cities
In recent years, cities have seen the potential of using information and communication technologies (ICT) in order to address the pressures of urbanization and develop “new policies and strategies to target sustainable urban development and economic growth” (Boes et al., 2015, p. 392). In accordance to this, in the policy arena as well as for researchers the concept of a smart cities has been receiving considerable attention (Lombardi et al., 2012, p. 138). According to the European Travel Commission and World Tourism Organization (2014, p. 17) “a smart city is a city seeking to address public issues via ICT-based solutions on the basis of a multi-stakeholder, municipally based partnership to improve competitiveness and ensure a more sustainable future by symbiotic linkage of networks of people, businesses, technologies, infrastructures, consumption, energy and spaces”. However, scholars have not agreed on a universal definition since cities have different characteristics and circumstances all over the world (Chourabi et al., 2012, p. 2290; Boes et al., 2015, p. 393). A major hurdle in identifying a common definition is also the ambiguity of meanings attributed to the word “smart” and the label “smart city” such as digital city, wired city, green city or knowledge city. These meanings often aim to link technological transformations of the city with economic-, political-, and socio-cultural change (Coccia, 2014, p. 14). In general, a smart city concept represents a technology environment embedded within the city, with its main focus on ICT which literature has discussed as important for the successful development of smart cities (Boes et al., 2015, p. 392; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013, p. 554; Lombardi et al., 2012, p. 137). Gretzel et al., (2015, p. 2) argue that a smart city is where the urban environment offers its citizens advanced and innovative services for the purpose of improving the inhabitants quality of life, which is offered from the pervasive ICT systems. Vicini et al., (2012, p. 56) argue that the smart city concept embeds information and communication technology within an urban area finding synergies with social components within the city to improve the citizens’ quality of life whilst optimizing service efficiency, the use of energy and better traffic monitoring. For the purpose of this thesis, we do not aim to elaborate on the definitional issues of this very recently developed smart city concept. We rather want to highlight that smart cities have a major technological component that aims to be linked to economic, political and socio-cultural change. We here see a parallel with the challenges that destinations face in developing practical solutions for reaching sustainable urban tourism goals.

The following presentation of smart city components and subsequent practical examples serve as an overview for the reader of the concept, which helps to understand its potential use for tourist destinations.

Smart Economy (Competitiveness)
The factors included in the smart economy develop around competitiveness such as innovation, entrepreneurship, productivity and flexibility of the labour market as well as the integration in the (inter-)national market (Giffinger et al., 2007, p. 11). Chourabi et al., (2012, p. 2293) argue that the economy is the major driver of smart city initiatives.
In accordance to this, a range of specialized enterprises need to be involved that have expertise in developing the ICT environment (Lombardi et al., 2012, p. 138).

**Smart People (Social and Human Capital)**

Smart city also includes social and human capital, such as the level of qualification or education of the citizens as well as the social and ethnic plurality. This implies the development of the quality of social interactions towards integration and public life as well as the degree of openness towards foreigners (Giffinger et al., 2007, p. 11). In accordance to this, Chourabi et al. (2012, p. 2293) argues that it is critical to consider the citizens wants and needs so that smart initiatives should be sensitive in balancing the needs of various communities.

**Smart Governance (Participation)**

The main factor necessary from the governance perspective is participation, especially in the relation with administration as its citizen. In reference to this, smart governance is mentioned as transparent governance with political strategies & perspectives, which enables new channels of communication for the citizens. (Giffinger et al., 2007, p 11). In addition, smart governance and smart people are related in terms of using new channels of communication for citizens, such as the usage of ICT (Lombardi et al., 2012, p. 139).

**Smart Mobility (Transport and ICT)**

Factors included in mobility contain availability of ICT-infrastructure as well as the logistics of new transport systems that should be sustainable, innovative and safe, improving urban traffic as well as the inhabitants’ mobility (Giffinger, 2007, p. 11). The technology used in mobility mainly addresses how payment of transportation has changed, such as the technology of purchasing tickets. Smart mobility is where modern technology is used in everyday urban life (Lombardi et al., 2012, p. 139).

**Smart Environment (Natural resources)**

The smart environment includes factors such as environmental protection, sustainability and overall efficient ways in using natural resources (Giffinger, 2007, p. 11). This also implies how efficient and cost saving the city is on the industrial level, governmental level and private level. To fulfil the requirements of a smart environment, the implementation of goals and awareness amongst the inhabitants regarding consumption of water, energy and electricity is required (Lombardi et al., 2012, p. 140). Chourabi et al., (2012, p. 2294) stresses the importance of protecting natural resources and the related infrastructure with relevant technologies.

**Smart Living (Quality of life)**

Smart living includes the city’s awareness on housing quality, cultural- and education facilities, individual safety and social cohesion (Giffinger et al., 2007, p. 11). What is covered is the amount of resources the city has in healthcare, education, entertainment and cultural facilities (Lombardi et al., 2012, p. 140-141). To fulfil the last dimension the city needs to supply facilities and resources that the inhabitants actively chooses to use and participate in.

2.3.3 Practical examples

Due to the variety of possibilities that the smart city concept offers, the use of practical examples can be useful at this point. An example of smart mobility: In Rio de Janeiro
sensors, satellites, cameras and GPS systems are set up to gather real-time information on traffic, weather, lighting, electricity use and other parameters to manage transport flow, reroute cars around accidents and congested areas and help emergency services navigate effectively. Smart people: Singapore established a social media platform called blockpooling that strengthens local communities and fosters more efficient use of resources. For example, the platform uses postcodes to help people find others in their neighbourhood who have items they are willing to share or borrow. People can also connect with others in their block for seeking advice, to host events for neighbours or inform them about activities such as building work that might inconvenience them. (Nesta, n.d.) Smart environment: London’s tube trains recycle waste energy into electric power. The city installs inverter systems at its underground stations, which reclaim energy that would normally be lost when the subway is breaking. The first week trial showed that the breaking energy reclaimed at one station was enough to power that entire station for 2 days (Smart Cities Council, 2015). Smart economy: London, for instance, developed an Innovation hub that addresses resource pressures whilst creating new economic and research opportunities. This network of private and public organisations have the goal to develop London in areas such as smarter crowd management, environmental sensing, extensive wise infrastructure in parks etc. An example of smart governance is Paris. The city explored how to encourage citizen participation in deciding how the city spends its money. Citizens propose projects via an app and the most voted ones are realised by the city such as the creation of vertical garden along buildings, the set-up of recycling stations, gardens in schools and co-working spaces for students and entrepreneurs (Blanc, 2015).

2.3.4 Smart tourism destinations
The World Tourism Organization (2012, p. 47) declared the advance towards the concept of smart cities by the tourism industry as a main priority and promotes to “prioritize strategies and actions that include sustainable policies and innovative technological developments as integral elements” in urban destinations (UNWTO, 2012, p. 49). The smart city approach that has primarily focused urban development has been applied to the tourism sector under the term smart destination. Lecuona & Abad Galzacorta (2014, p. 2) define smart destinations as “consolidated tourism areas based on cutting-edge technology infrastructure, an intelligence system that captures information, analyses and understands the events in real time, to facilitate decision-making and interaction between visitors and the tourism environment.” Lopez de Avila & Garcia Sanchez (2015, 62) define the smart destination as “an innovative tourist destination, built on an infrastructure of state-of-the-art technology guaranteeing the sustainable development of tourist areas, accessible to everyone, which facilitates the visitor’s interaction with and integration into his or her surroundings, increases the quality of the experience at the destination, and improves residents’ quality of life.”

In conformity with these definitions smart destinations can be viewed as special cases of smart cities, since they apply smart city principles while not only considering residents but also tourists in their efforts (Gretzel et al., 2015, p. 180). Taking on a more managerial perspective, Micera et al., (2013, p. 1408) define the smart destination as “a local system characterized by advanced services, a high degree of innovation through a considerable use of advanced technologies (ICTs) and the presence of open, multipolar, integrated and shared processes directed at enhancing the quality of life for both residents and tourists.” This definition appears to reflect the perspective of the DMO who needs to involve a variety of stakeholders the urban planning environment (Kanter
et al., 2009, p.2; Chourabi et al., 2012, p. 2290; Schaffers et al., 2012; Buhalis et al., 2013, p. 556). Micera’s et al. (2013, p. 1408) definition highlights the need for an integrated management based on the use of technology to optimize resources in the destination while proposing the development of new strategies based on more bottom-up approaches. In reference to this, this approach allows DMOs to coordinate and collaborate with stakeholders for the purpose of designing smart solutions that benefit residents and tourists while using bottom-up input from stakeholders to share information and knowledge and create additional opportunities (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007, p. 113; Micera, 2013, p. 1408).

The challenges that DMOs nowadays face call for solutions that make smarter use of resources and that enhance the quality of life for both residents and tourists in a sustainable way (Presenza et al., 2014, p. 315). To manage destination stakeholders effectively towards the balance of environmental-, social-, and economical goals, DMOs have to find ways how to deliver a wide range of information, engage with visitors, facilitate interaction with stakeholders, gather visitor and management information, promotion purposes etc. (European Travel Commission and World Tourism Organization, 2014, p. 2). In this sense, Sheehan et al. (2015, p. 532) proposes a model (Figure 4) that depicts the nature of the DMO as an intelligent agent for destination management that can reduce the information asymmetries between stakeholders through the generation and intelligent application of knowledge (on customer needs, collaborating suppliers, environmental as well as human and cultural resource).

![Figure 4: The DMO as an intelligent agent (Sheehan, 2015, p. 532)](image)

In accordance to this, the DMO acts as a boundary spanner between the internal environment (with the goal of managing stakeholders) and the external environment (with the goal of competitive positioning of the destination) by gathering information and resources to create knowledge and disseminate it to the appropriate actors. This inside-, outside-, perspective on destinations is also supported by Buhalis (2000, p. 106) who argues that the competitiveness and prosperity of destinations depends on the combined consideration of factors in both environments. In Sheehan’s et al. (2015, p. 533) model 3 types information need to be gathered by the DMO that will then be transferred into practical solutions for destination management: stakeholder specific
(such as room occupancy patterns, expansion-, or marketing plans), sector specific (e.g. serving smaller portions, developments of new consumer needs in food and beverage sector) and destination specific (such as resident opposition to certain tourism development, city investment in new recreation facilities).

Considering the DMO as an intelligent agent, information relating to tourism activities could be exchanged instantly between dynamically interconnected stakeholders through a technological platform (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013, p. 378). To provide a better overview of the technological factor when considering the DMO as an intelligent agent the three main components of technology support systems for smart destinations will be outlined: The Cloud Services are designed to provide access to solid web platforms, applications and data storage in a convenient way (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013, p. 557; Wang et al., 2013, p. 60). The Internet of Things refers to objects that interact with each other in order to reach common goals, which for instance tourism service providers can take an advantage of by analysing consumption behaviour (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013, p. 558; Wang et al., 2013, p. 60). The End-User Internet Service System refers to the various amounts of applications such as the design of individual payment systems is based on devices such as smartphones and tablets (Wang et al., 2013, p. 60). The key to all these components to is to have proper connectivity, were the government, supported by various stakeholders, maintain and support stabilised networks and connections in the cities (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013, p. 558). In accordance to this, the DMO needs to foster the “interconnection, synchronization and concerted use of different technologies” to exploit real-time data to make better operational decisions (Gretzel et al., 2015, p. 179).

The DMO as an intelligent agent can retrieve information and knowledge of the internal-, and external destination environment from stakeholders, which allows increased stakeholder engagement and participative bottom-up decision making. (Sheehan, 2015, p. 532). This in turn enables to balance the diverging objectives of stakeholders on sustainable urban tourism goals and accordingly find practical solutions with information and communication technologies. To reach this objective other authors have supported the view of a shift from a top-down-, to am more dialogue-based governance approach to avoid that technological platforms are used without being connected to the local needs (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007, p. 113: Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013, p. 558; Boes et al., 2015, p. 401) The smart concept has often been misused to drive political agendas and sell technological solutions. The implementation of isolated technological developments does not necessarily enhance the tourist experience in line with sustainable development goals of the city. (Gretzel et al., 2015, p. 180; Lamsfus et al., 2015, p. 364). Thus, smartness emerges when creative people dynamically share their knowledge to the system (Buhalis and Amaranggana 2015, p. 379). In accordance to this, Luecona & Abad Galzacorta (2014, p. 3) argue that “a destination with a strong technology base is not a smart destination, nor a destination that is committed only to the social side”.

2.3.5 Smartness in the developing country context

The key to a successful destination is to attract visitors and tourists and by that making sure that the tourism area offer quality and unique experiences since this ensures benefits for all the stakeholders, the local community and for the destination itself (F. Iunius et al., 2015, p. 12892). For a long-term success, F. Iunius et al., (2015, p. 12892) further argue that the destination should put emphasis on continuous development
through a sustainable way. According to a report from the World Bank (2012) urban areas, which already populates more than half of the world’s population, is estimated to rise to 75 percent by 2050. This will lead to the fact that residents within the urban areas will have a huge strain on access to healthcare, education, sanitation, transport, water and electricity, which is even more urgent in developing countries since there are people who live without basic services (Kbabra, 2014). Managing urban tourism is the key issue for the cities to respond to the needs of both visitors and local communities (UNTO, 2012). This is why partnerships in tourism planning has been more common where stakeholders gather in different sectors for the interest of the destination with the belief that bringing the expertise and capital from different organizations will lead to competitive advantage for the destination (Bramwell & Lane, 2000, pp. 1-2). The concentration of the global population in urban areas neglect the importance and address the issues of sustainable development (Höjer & Wangel, 2014, p. 3; World Bank, 2012).

People of today live in an information society in which it concerns from both social and economic aspects (Borzyszkowski, 2014, p. 62). Therefore, many destinations nowadays must face information and communication technologies with the pressure of rapidly adapting them in order to remain competitive on rapidly developing tourism market worldwide (Borzyszkowski, 2014, p. 63; F. Iunius et al., 2015, p. 12893). In order for cities to be competitive, destinations need to develop strategies and set values that characterize new generations of consumers that are tech-savvy (F. Iunius et al., 2015, p. 12893). Although their exist disparities in access, skills in using ICT in less developed areas, Minghetti & Buhalis (2015, p. 1) argue the potential that lies within the technology and stresses the importance to overcome the knowledge barriers and the benefits developed regions have in using internet services.

Morocco has worked with numerous major reforms in urban planning, clean energy, water scarcity, agricultural development and transportation with the purpose to plan for smart initiatives that will help modernise the nation (Kbabra, 2014). The so called “Smart cities” is a key step towards a modern society where the emphasis is in facilitating exchange in cities, both internally and externally, and foremost to build an atmosphere of trust involving a wide swath of stakeholders (Campbell, 2012, p. 13). The smart city concept has gained popularity lately and is of importance especially in the use of ICT for the purpose to deliver high services to citizens and visitors in the city (UNWTO, 2012, p. 43).

As population in cities is growing, smart cities bring the opportunities for the destinations to create an atmosphere by bringing together formal and informal sectors and connecting urban cores with peripheries, which will make it possible for the city to provide the same services (World Bank, 2012). What the smart city concept can do for destinations is offering services at municipal and governmental level as the ICT tools provides the ability to collect, analyse and channel data in which it can be useful to make better decisions regarding the projects within the city (World Bank, 2012). In the perspective of DMOs in using ICT, there are a lot of various possibilities in communication, like for instance e-brochures, which has been popular in recent years as e-brochures is easy to update, cheaper to produce and it will also be possible for the DMO to control the number of downloads made (Borzyszkowski, 2014, p. 64). The investments in smart city fosters a lot of different aspects for the citizens and the tourism within the city, such as economic competitiveness and managing resources and
physical infrastructure, which promotes sustainable economic and urban development that can guarantee a better quality of life (Kabra, 2014).
3. Methodology

This chapter informs about the authors’ way of conducting the study. Within this chapter, the authors will present their ontological and epistemological viewpoints. This will further go into the explanation of the research approach and move into the practical method, in which we present our case study.

3.1 Scientific method

3.1.1 Research philosophy

According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 127) research philosophy is concerned with the development of knowledge in a particular field and the nature of that knowledge. Research philosophy can be viewed as a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Lincoln and Guba, 1994, p. 107). In reference to this, the assumptions taken from the research philosophy will not only influence the research strategy and the methods chosen for that strategy, but also underpin the way the researcher sees the world (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 128). In this thesis, we will deepen our knowledge and at the same time increase the understanding in a specific field, which is in this case destination management. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 134) stress that the researcher who is concerned with facts is likely to have a completely different view on the way research should be conducted from the one who is concerned with feelings and attitudes. In our case the research philosophy is towards an open and free-based view as we aim to grasp the perceptions of DMO stakeholders based on their views on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals. The research philosophy is usually divided into two major ways of thinking, which have important differences that influence the way of thinking as a researcher in the research process, called ontology and epistemology (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 24; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 129). We will outline our ontological and epistemological assumptions in the following sections.

3.1.2 Ontological assumptions

Ontology refers to the nature of reality (Punch, 2014, p. 15), which is divided into two aspects that can be used and where both aspects are accepted by research as a valid way of providing knowledge (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 130). These aspects are objectivism and constructivism. Objectivism is where social entities exist in reality external to social actors and constructivism is the understanding of the actions constructed by the social phenomena’s perception and consequent actions concerned with their existence (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 131; Quinlan, 2011, p. 99).

What this tells us as researchers is how we can conduct our study in order to provide knowledge, which in our case will be done through interviews. Interviews is an interactive process that gives the interviewee the opportunity to understand a phenomena through questions that will help the interviewer to understand the reality and perceptions in a specific field from this interview. Since interviews are ongoing processes, the approach that will be used in this thesis is constructionism as the value and useful information lies on the perceptions of the social actors. We want to understand and gain knowledge into the field of destination management, especially from the perspective of the destination management organization and the different stakeholders that are of importance to be able to apply the tools that are needed. This will be explained thoroughly in the theoretical framework chapter. This is in line with the position of constructivism because social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 22)
According to Quinlan (2011, p. 96) constructivism holds that ”social phenomena develop in social contexts and that individuals and groups create, in part, their own realities”, which goes in line with the way we want to approach our study since our goal is to have a deeper knowledge among the destination stakeholders, how they perceive their own situation and how they see possibilities in the making of the destination.

3.1.3 Epistemological assumptions

According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 132) epistemology refers to “what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study.” The issue of epistemology is “the question of whether or not the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures, and ethos as the natural sciences” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15). The two major epistemological philosophies are called positivism and interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 134; Quinlan, 2011, p. 98). On the one hand, positivism “advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15). In accordance to this, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 134) refer to the “resources” researchers for whom reality is represented by objects who have a separate existence to that of the researcher, which in turn leads to the argumentation that these objects are less open to bias and therefore more objective. On the other hand, interpretivism “respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 17). In reference to this, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 134) refers to the “feelings” researcher who emphasizes feelings and attitudes and “measures” human feelings with results presented in a narrative way compared with the resources researcher presenting results through statistical data.

The epistemological position adopted for this thesis is interpretivism, since the data are collected through interviews and for this reason the data will be covered with wordings that will be useful for the purpose of this study. Punch (2014, p. 17) argues that interpretivism refers to understanding behaviour as people bring meanings to situations in which they use to make sense of their world. Interpretivism is the philosophical view where the researcher focuses on understanding the differences between humans as social actors (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 137; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 16). In the philosophy of positivism the researcher works with an observable social reality, where the data that is collected can be law-like generalizations and the researcher will most likely use existing theory to develop hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 137). However, this is not an approach that goes in line with the purpose of this study since we, as human beings, have different views and different ways of interacting with each other and where the researcher has the opportunities of understanding human behaviors by including personal involvement, like for instance having interviews to collect attitudes and feelings. The philosophical stance of interpretivist is how we will progress our study, since our aim with this research is to understand the perceptions of different stakeholders. The approach of interpretivism will open up for interpretations, which will lead this research further since the interviews are conducted with people who have expertise in the field. By having interviews with stakeholders in the urban environment, we will be able to understand their view on developing a destination that goes in line with smart and sustainable dimensions and also manages to achieve the common goals that exist in their destination.

3.1.4 Research approach
Considering the role of theory within this thesis, there are generally two main approaches, which are the deductive and inductive approach (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 143; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 11). The deductive approach is the dominant research approach in the natural sciences where the researcher is testing theory by, for instance, deducing a hypothesis (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 145). The opposite approach to this is an inductive approach where the researcher is building theories by observing people for the purpose of the researchers study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 146).

This thesis has its starting point in theories that are related to develop a sustainable and smart destination management approach such as sustainable urban tourism and smart cities, smart destinations. In this sense, our interpretation of the study results are based on these theories, which follows a deductive research approach. However, there are also some inductive elements in our thesis. The inductive approach is often adopted when there is not much known about the problem or when previous approaches either did not address the problem at all or does so in a way that is inadequate and need further exploration to be understood (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007, p. 26; Bryman and Bell, 2012, pp. 12-13). Studies on destination management tend to deal with the topic in general (Pearce, 2015, p. 4). While the DMO role to balance sustainability goals has been recognized (Bieger, 2009, p. 311; Klimek, 2013, p. 30), the potential use of the smart concept when finding practical solutions to fulfilling these goals at the destination has not been considered. Since research has not considered this specific context, we believe that this thesis includes inductive elements. However, despite the lack of research in this specific context, our study is based on existing theories and therefore follows a deductive approach. Therefore, the inductive approach is not applicable in our study since we do not solely generate new theory, but rather try to develop knowledge in this field. At the same time as we are looking at theories to build our knowledge, our goal is not to test these theories since we want to understand the perceptions and views in the urban destination from people involved. The following provides an overview of our scientific research methods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontological orientation</td>
<td>Constructivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemological orientation</td>
<td>Interpretivism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Overview of the research methods (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27)

3.1.5 Literature selection
For the literature selection we have applied several steps starting with the search in peer reviewed-articles on the library website of the university. Peer-reviewed material is classified as legitimate material since these works are sent to appropriate reviewers, who both contribute to knowledge and asses the quality of the work written (Jesson et al., 2011, p. 21). In accordance to this, to find suitable sources we have used key words as outlined in Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 108). Our main sources were in fact peer-reviewed articles since they provide a certain credibility to our thesis. However, we also used books from the library about the tourism industry, destination management, sustainable development and tourism. The literature review is of importance as there are
researchers who have already done research in a field and for this reason all academic works begin by looking at what is known already (Jesson et al., 2011, pp. 17-18). Considering that the literature on smart tourism and smart cities is very new, books and also articles that address the development of smart and sustainable dimensions in the urban context was limited. Nonetheless, we were also including most recent research and reports from research institutions and international organisations supporting the literature found in scientific journals and books. Apart from that, when selecting the literature, we tried to solely use primary sources and limit the use of secondary sources to a minimum in order to retrieve valid information. Regarding the smart part we have focused on finding literature after 2010 since we want to have information about recent developments in that area. The articles, data and material regarding the country and city selection has also been aimed to be up-to-date for the purpose of presenting the actual situation that occurs in the selected area.

3.2 Practical method

3.2.1 Research design
Saunders et al. (2012, p. 158) outlines that the way the research question is stated can give hints on how to proceed with the research strategy and the choice of collecting techniques and analysis. The research design is the general plan of how to proceed with the research and how to structure the research project in order to answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 159; Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 55). The research design is the overall plan for the data collection and its analysis, which is useful for the researcher since it reveals the type of research in order to continue with the study and later on for the research method regarding the empirical data (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 55; Punch, 2014, p. 114). Saunders et al., (2012, p. 158) divide the processes of research design into three blocks: research strategies, research choice and time horizons. These research designs are the core in the next phase of the study, which is the research strategies that can be implemented in the research design (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 173). Before checking these three blocks it is important for the researcher to classify what purpose they have with their study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 170).

The purpose of this study is to map the perceptions of destination stakeholders and the DMO on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals. In this case, we aim to explain these perceptions by understanding the reality among the different stakeholders within the city of Marrakech. According to Saunders et al., (2012, p. 171) an explanatory study is useful when the researcher is studying a situation or a problem in order to get a clearer view on the subject. In order to look at the research strategy, we as authors of this study need to consider how we should proceed based on how we want to collect our empirical data and what kind of empirical data we want to collect. We believe that this study goes in line with the explanatory research since the purpose of this study is to have an understanding and more deepened knowledge on stakeholder perceptions.

3.2.2 Research strategy
The research strategy is the overall plan to achieve a goal, which in the terms of research is the way the researcher will go to answer his or her research question (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 173). None of the research strategies are explicit to the research designs as the goal of a study is to answer the research question and meet the researcher’s objectives (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 173).
There are eight different research strategies mentioned by Saunders et al., (2012, p. 173), which describes the format of the research and gives the idea of how the empirical data should be collected and what variables or observations the researcher should analyse. The strategy of a case study is when a contemporary phenomenon is being investigated within its real life context were empirical data is collected from multiple sources (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179). The approach is usually in line with a descriptive or exploratory research design (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 109), but as mentioned before the research strategies are not restricted to these areas. The research strategy of a case study is useful when "the phenomenon under investigation is difficult to study outside its natural setting and also when the concepts and variables under study are difficult to quantify" (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 109).

A case study is where one or several cases will be studied in detail with the purpose to develop a full understanding in that specific case based on the research question (Punch, 2014, p. 120). In this study we focus on a smart and sustainable destination management approach from the DMO in the city of Marrakech specifically. In reference to this, we found a case study to fit our purpose. Regarding the research strategy itself, a case study is holistic (Quinlan, 2011, p. 76) as it consist of primary data sources from verbal reports and personal interviews (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 109; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179). A case study strategy is of interest if the research question consist of a "why", "what" and "how"-question to be answered and the study itself is of an exploratory or explanatory character (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 179).

A single case study is useful since it provides the opportunity to "observe and analyze a phenomenon that few have considered before" (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179). The single case study gives the opportunity to study a phenomenon that have not been accessible and can provide useful insights (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 115). We aim to uncover the complexities of our specific case Marrakech in developing a smart and sustainable destination management approach while investigating the perceptions of different stakeholders. This is in line with Yin (2003, p. 2) who argues that the distinctive need for conducting a case arises from the desire to understand complex social phenomena. Moreover, case study is the preferred research strategy “when “how” and “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p.1). In conformity with this, our research question: “How can the DMO use stakeholder perceptions on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals in response to the increasingly competitive tourism market?” addresses a complex social phenomenon that needs to be investigated trying to capture the perceptions of different stakeholders. Moreover, our case approach allows us to have direct collaboration between the destinations stakeholders and ourselves, which enables the stakeholders to tell their stories and describe their views on reality to better understand the individuals’ actions (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545).

The problem that usually occurs when conducting a case study is the level of generalization, as there are several authors who claim that it has a low status and that one cannot generalize from a single case (Thomas & Myers, 2015, p. 29). "This study is based on only one case, so how can we generalize?” (Punch, 2013, p. 122). According to Punch (2013, p. 123) case studies can potentially produce generalizable results, while it depends on the way the case data are analysed. The two main ways that exist within a case study in producing generalizable results is conceptualizing and developing
propositions (Punch, 2013, p. 123). The difference between these two ways is whether it is an in-depth study or if the researcher of a study finds propositions for further studies.

### 3.2.3 Case selection

The case selection has been done through a two-step process meaning that we set a number of criteria for the selection of country. The next step in the selection was to distinguish from the different cities, in which we found factors that finalized our case selection. For the selection of country we decided to set a number of criteria, which we will present below, fitting our interest in exploring how a city that experiences tremendous growth in the tourism sector finds smart and sustainable solutions for their specific characteristics. Initially, we have not been specifically searching for destination management organizations, but have looked into problems associated with tourism and sustainability issues in companies and then at a later stage came across the smart city concept. At this point we read more about problems of urban areas and made the connection to increasing city tourism. We will start by highlighting the number of criteria we have for the selection of country and afterwards we will present the factors that lead us selecting the city. The criteria and factors will be explained briefly in the following paragraphs.

#### Country selection

The criteria we have conducted for the selection of the country are:

- **Inflow of tourists from developing countries**
  - Experiencing an increasing tourist demand

- **Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2015**
  - Availability of latest technologies
  - Government priority to travel and tourism
  - Sustainability of tourism sector
  - World cultural heritage sites
  - Business environment
  - Safety

Considering the trends in the tourism sector in recent years, less developed countries have experienced an increasing inflow of tourists from developing countries (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008, pp. 21-22). This puts lots of pressure on destinations in these countries to cope with this increasing demand and to adapt to the tech-savvy profile of these tourists (Buhalis & Minghetti, 2009, p. 12) that seek “authentic experiences, especially in unpolluted and green destinations” (Weaver, 2012, p. 1031; Klimek, 2013, p. 28). In order to find a suitable case, we decided to look for countries that are affected by these developments and afterwards look at potential urban destinations in these countries. According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015, p. 8) the 10 most visited developing country destinations by the EU28 + Norway and Switzerland are: Turkey (16.5 million), Morocco (8.2 million), Ukraine (4.2 million), Thailand (4.2 million), Egypt (3.6 million), China (3.6 million), Tunisia (2.3 million), India (2 million), Brazil (1.8 million), South Africa (1.7 million). Considering tourism we need to filter out these countries that experience an increasing tourist demand. Based on the development of data available from 2009-2013, the following countries experience an increasing demand: Turkey, Morocco, Thailand, China, India, Brazil and South Africa. Ukraine, Egypt and Tunisia experience decreasing tourist arrivals and are therefore not fitting this criterion. It is important at this stage to mention that during this process we have
also had contacted companies and managers in our environment to receive further information. During this process, a consultant in Germany in the tourism industry made us aware of the city of Marrakech in Morocco, currently looking into achieving more sustainable tourism practices at the destination considering the importance of smart technologies, such as in smart city projects. We have researched information and became aware that the city of Marrakech received the traveller choice awards of tripadvisor.com as the Best Tourist Destination in the world in 2015 (Pemberton, 2015). Of course, we have to be aware as researchers that this might have had influenced us in our final decision, since we have looked into this specific case extensively while looking at other possible cases.

However, during this process we have found information on the World Economic Forum (2015) “Travel and Tourism Competitiveness report” regarding Morocco and also the potential other countries to focus on. The report compares 141 countries and ranks them based on “set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the Travel & Tourism sector, which in turn, contributes to the development and competitiveness of a country.” We decided to compare indicators relevant to our study on the remaining countries, which are availability of latest technologies (the capacity of businesses and individuals to use smart technologies), government priority to travel and tourism (important to channel funds to related projects), sustainability of tourism sector (policies and environmental regulations), world cultural heritage sites (protection of environment and attraction), business environment (indicates the degree to which stakeholders can collaborate freely and drive innovation) and safety, which indicates the vulnerability of a sustainable future demand. (World Economic Forum, 2015, pp. 6-7). The following table presents the world ranks of each of the countries identified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>S.Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Av. of latest</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technologies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. priority</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to tourism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of tourism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World cultural</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heritage sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summarized world ranks of travel & tourism competitiveness report

Regarding availability of latest technologies as well as sustainability of tourism South Africa, Morocco and Turkey are ranked highest. In government priority to tourism Morocco, Thailand, South Africa perform strongest, while in world cultural heritage
sites China, India and Turkey have the highest ranking. Regarding the business environment the top ranked nations are South Africa, Thailand and Morocco and when it comes to safety Morocco, China and Brazil are ranked highest. Overall, Morocco appears 5 times in the top 3, South Africa (4), Turkey (3), Thailand, China and Brazil respectively 2 times and India only reaches a high rank in 1 case, which the world cultural heritage sites. Considering the rankings, 3 countries stand out and these are Morocco, South Africa and Turkey. It is important to mention that we see this ranking as an indication of these countries to provide a suitable case for our study. We cannot derive from these rankings, which country is suits our case best, but rather see this as an indication of the countries environment supporting our choice of the destination.

Our choice to further investigate Morocco was supported when looking at the other options. South Africa’s proportion of European travellers was relatively low (1.7 million) compared with their overall tourist arrivals of 9.7 million in 2013 of which almost 7 million tourist came from other African countries (southafrica.info, 2014). So one can assume that the impact of the European tourist profile coming from developed countries, is not that significant. Furthermore, while there is generally a trend of growth, there has been stagnation in 2011 and 2012 and even decline in tourist arrivals in 2013 in South Africa. (World Economic Forum, 2015, p. 304) So overall, the country might not represent the best case of the recent tourism trends. Turkey has been an experienced tourism destination where tourist arrivals reached 10 million already 2 decades ago (World Economic Forum, 2015, p. 330). While tourist arrivals from Europe account for ca. 40% in Turkey (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 8), in Morocco the impact of European travellers has been much more recent and more intense since the share of EU tourists among foreign tourists has surpassed 80% in 2011 (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013, p. 31). Relating to this, a key factor is Morocco’s unique open skies agreement with European Union, which is the first of its kind (apart from the EU-US agreement) in the history of the EU with a country outside of the European Union and moreover with a developing country. It covers the full scope of liberalization principles and in effect means that the Moroccan airline market operates as part of an extended EU reregulated market (Christidis, 2016, p. 110). This enables Morocco to offer direct flights to more than fifty EU destinations (Christidis, 2016, p. 110) and significantly affected the increase in international tourist arrivals from 6.2 million in 2006 to 10.2 million in 2014 (World Economic Forum, 2015, p. 242). This development has specifically affected city destinations with international airports such as Casablanca, Marrakech, Tanger, Fès and Rabat who received 7 million of the 10.2 million international tourist arrivals in 2014 (Observatoire du Tourisme, 2014, p. 8). Apart from that, Moroccan tourism is largely linked to the main historical capitals Marrakech, Fez, Meknes and Rabat (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013, p. 24), which relates to our study that requires a destination management approach with sustainable and smart actions in urban environments. Therefore, one can argue that the study results can be more valuable for DMOs in Morocco than Turkey, which is primarily a popular mass tourism destination for sun and beach tourism (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 7).

City selection factors
The factors we have conducted for the selection of the city are:

*Inflow of tourists from developing countries*
- Experiencing an increasing tourist demand

*Urban environment*
Focusing on Morocco, the selection of Marrakech as the case to be investigated derived from a number of factors important for our study. Since the negative influence of tourism are mostly felt in urban environments (Saarinen, 2006, p. 1134), we focused on urban destinations that experience significant growth in tourism, while the city is large enough to face problems of increasing population density. In accordance to this, Binkhorst & Dekker (2009, p. 313), Cooper (2008, p. 110) and others have highlighted the importance of local cultures and locally based place identities in order to showcase a destination’s uniqueness in a competitive global tourism market. Among the main historical capitals Marrakech, Fez, Meknes and Rabat (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013, p. 24), Marrakech is mostly known for its cultural authenticity (Benner, 2011, p. 7). Bigio (2010, p. 4) Marrakech’s uniqueness originates from its public spaces where social interaction, recreational activities and commerce are at the heart of the city. Marrakech with over 2.1 million visitors in 2014 is Morocco’s most visited destination (Observatoire du Tourisme, 2014, p. 8) and has experienced the highest growth in international tourist arrivals compared to other destinations (CRT Plan, 2015, p. 12).

The factor is the DMOs ambition to use more technologies and become more sustainable in the future. Marrakech is one of the destinations that has put lots of effort in translating national guidelines into action. The country is working within a lot of sectors in order to reform urban planning, clean energy, water security, agricultural development and transportation with the purpose for policymakers "to plan for smart initiatives that will help modernize the nation and serve as an example to the rest of North Africa” (Kabra, 2014). In 2012, for instance, IBM did a geographic expansion initiative in cities and regions with growth potential, where Morocco is one of the countries to transform their operations and increase competitiveness (Tredger, 2012). In its tourism strategy “Vision 2020”, the Moroccan government set sustainable development as the key strategy for the country with the aim of “Guaranteeing sustainability and conservation of Morocco’s natural resources, its authenticity and the wellbeing of its citizens. Responding to tourists’ evolving social and environmental sensitivities and seizing the opportunity to make sustainability a distinguishing feature for Morocco” (sustainabledevelopment.un.org). Marrakech has for instance fostered the development of traditional Moroccan homes that are designed to keep temperature levels inside warm during the winter and cold during the summers. (Mountaki, 2012, p. 4). To protect the city environment, a private-public collaboration enabled to collect all the wastewater from the city, treat the water and reuse it for instance for irrigation of the palm groves of Marrakech and golf courses. This initiative has not only helped to preserve the environment and conventional water resources but also boosted the development of golfing and ecotourism in the city (CRT Plan, 2015, p. 22). Regarding smart technologies, free wifi has been made available in parks, buses and malls in the city and several stakeholders have developed a pocket wifi device for connection all over the city (CRT Plan, 2015, pp. 21-22). The city also hosted various conferences for the development of smart technologies, innovation, entrepreneurship and city tourism that have fostered collaboration on sustainable development, smart cities and tourism.
such as: The International Conference of Cloud Computing Technologies and Applications (macc.ma, 2015), the 5th Global Entrepreneurship Summit (gesmarrakech2014.org, 2014), 4th Global Summit on city tourism as well as the setup of an international task force on sustainable tourism in the framework of the World Tourism Organization. (UNWTO, 2015)

Marrakech experiences these changes in the Moroccan tourism market significantly and has worked towards the “Vision 2020” for sustainable tourism development with the above mentioned examples. We chose to focus on this case to get an in-depth understanding of the DMO and stakeholder perceptions on smart and sustainable tourism goals in order to find practical solutions for a more coordinated destination management approach with regard to the increasing tourist arrivals in Marrakech. As outlined by Gerring & Seawright (2008, p. 296) there are different case selection techniques: typical, diverse, extreme, deviant, influential, most similar and most different. Our case needs to be investigated within its context, which differentiates it from a typical case that is fully explained by an existing model (Gerring & Seawright, 2008, p. 299). According to Gerring & Seawright (2008, pp. 300-301) this case “probes for new – but as yet unspecified – explanations”, which has the potential to be applicable to other cases since it aims to reveal causal processes referring to a deviant case.

3.2.4 Research choice
To be able to answer a research question, material and data needs to be collected and analysed while the research design follows the collection of either qualitative-, or quantitative data (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 161). The differences between qualitative and quantitative data is whether the focus is on numeric or non-numeric data (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 161; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 410). In our case we have gathered data through words that has been said during interviews where feelings, thoughts and ideas are collected, which is referred as a qualitative research choice (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 163; Quinlan, 2011, p. 105). Qualitative data can be collected through different sources and can range from a short amount of responses to more complex data as an in-depth interview can give (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 544). In our case we have made our qualitative research by having in-depth interviews and to make sure that we have everything covered we will also collect reports from our respondents. As a researcher the data need to be gathered for the research project and therefore it is important to identify key respondents and at the same time engage these respondents in an interview process in order for the researcher to understand the phenomena under investigation (Quinlan, 2011, p. 289).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3) state that qualitative research focuses on studying things “in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” By adopting a qualitative research approach, we aim to see the social reality among the stakeholders and to have a better understanding and knowledge in their territories. We do not aim to quantify the stakeholder perceptions on smart and sustainable urban tourism dimensions. However, we rather attempt to reveal common or conflicting opinions among respondents and the organizations they represent in order to find ways for the DMO to manage stakeholders in a more effective way towards balancing economic-, social- and environmental goals of sustainability in the destination. To be able to reveal the perceptions of stakeholders, we will conduct in depth interviews, which is one of the key types of generated data in
qualitative research (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 57). These interviews are of importance as the data that will be gathered include information that is relevant for the purpose of this study.

3.2.5 Time horizons
For the research design the researcher has to estimate the time needed for the study (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 2010, p. 66), which in research terms is either a cross-sectional or longitudinal study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 190; Bryman, 2008, p. 48-49). The differences between these studies regarding the time horizon is that a cross-sectional study studies a particular phenomenon at a particular time (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 190). The longitudinal study represents a study that lasts over a given period where it studies change and development by, for instance, a survey will be measured twice on at least one further occasion (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 190; Bryman, 2008, p. 49). For our research design regarding the time horizon our research goes in line with the cross-sectional study. Due to our limited amount of time we have chosen to have one personal interview with our respondents involved.

3.2.6 Sampling criteria
The following method will enable us to choose relevant stakeholders to reveal their perceptions on smart and sustainable urban tourism dimensions in the context of Marrakech. We decided to use the purposive sampling method, which is a method that enables the researcher “to sample participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research question being posed” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 442). In accordance to this, in purposive sampling selecting the sampling units “is subjective since the researcher relies on his or her experience and judgment” (Guarte & Barrios, 2007, p. 277). However, it is not a randomized sample and also not a convenient sample, which is just available by chance to the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 442). A purposive sampling is a ”selection of sampling units within the segment of the population with the most information on the characteristic of interest” (Guarte & Barrios, 2007, p. 277). Through purposive sampling we can choose sample units that allow us to investigate specific issues of sustainable and smart urban tourism goals. According to this our respondent selection was made purposively since we consider that the respondents are representative and relevant to answer our research question (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 237). Therefore, we think that certain criteria need to be met in order to choose the organization most relevant to answer our research question.

Organization sampling criteria
We believe that a purposive sampling method will guarantee a multifaceted data generation that is balanced and covers the most important stakeholders in line with the literature. Considering the main stakeholders pointed out in the theoretical framework, we want to make sure that we get input from destination stakeholders being relevant in line with the study purpose. At the core of managing stakeholders towards smart and sustainable tourism goals, the DMO is the focal actor being relevant to retrieve information from. Furthermore, in line with the literature, private and public sector stakeholders as well as the local community need to be included. In accordance to this, we set the following criteria: Firstly, the organizations should be stakeholders of the DMO in Marrakech and fall under the most important ones identified by Sheehan and Ritchie (2005, p. 728): hotels, public authorities on different levels, attractions, convention centres, residents, restaurants and local chambers of commerce. Secondly, the organizations should have been involved in tourism development in collaboration
with the DMO in the past, like involvement in meetings and exchange of information regarding tourism in Marrakech. Thirdly, the organizations should either deal with or initiated sustainability practices and/or practice related to the involvement of information and communication technologies.

Based on these criteria, the DMO provided a number of organizations that we needed to map into the three major categories of stakeholder in the urban tourism environment: 1) the private enterprises includes a hotel and a tour operator, which falls under the planning of attractions. 2) the public authorities are represented by the major and the ministry of tourism 3) the host environment includes the regional investment centre that fosters the local involvement of small businesses and the chamber of craftsman that supports local artisans and designers providing a platform for tourism development. While the organization sampling criteria provided a number of other organizations available, our final choice for these organizations was also influenced by the respondent sampling criteria outlined hereafter.

**Respondent sampling criteria**

Sampling is one of the most important things in quantitative research, but it is as of importance in a qualitative research as there are settings and processes regarding which people to interview (Punch, pp.160-161). Considering another level of sampling, after having found organizations that are available to participate in our research, we have decided to also set criteria for the respondents. The purpose of this, is to guarantee that we can have a goal-oriented discussion with respondents that are able to answer our questions. In reference to this, we have set the following criteria: Firstly, the respondent should be able to speak for the organization (Communication or Communication Manager, upper management or directly involved in projects, such as project managers) and be able to answer questions related to smart and sustainable urban tourism topics from the perspective as being representative stakeholders for their destination. In reference to this, a short description of the study, the purpose and the requirements for respondents have been sent to organizations so that they can appoint a person suitable for answering our questions. Secondly, concerning language barriers, we needed to make sure we can talk to the respondents in English, French or German, although we pointed out that English would be desirable considering the language of the study. Thirdly, we needed to find respondents that are available and have the time to hold the interview. We asked the organizations for respondents that are physically available between the 4th and 08th of May so that we can make sure to have face-to-face interviews. This was important to us since we wanted to be as close as possible to the environment we are studying. This enables us to get a better feeling of where and how stakeholders are working in Marrakech and also serves as an opportunity to make direct observations during interviews, which can also be a source of evidence in case study research (Yin, 2003, p. 92) In accordance to this, we found an agreement to conduct the interviews within an estimated 45 minutes to 1 hour. Based on these criteria, each organization appointed a respondent.

**3.2.7 Semi-structured interviews**

In qualitative research there are different types of interviewing. Focus groups or group interviewing would not have fit our research considering that we would like to perceive individual perceptions of different stakeholders and not group perspectives. The stakeholder’s thoughts and arguments are constructed by them personally. In unstructured interviewing only a few questions are asked where “the interviewee is then
allowed to respond freely” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 467). However, this would not allow us to guide the conversation towards smart and sustainable urban tourism dimensions. There is a risk that the conversation becomes unstructured, not addressing the purpose of the study and that interview develops in undesirable directions (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003, p. 111). Since structured interviews would constrain our flexibility (Grix, 2001, p. 76), we decided to conduct semi-structured interviews allowing the respondent to have a certain degree of flexibility and “leeway on how to reply” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 467). In accordance to this, we designed question topics based on smart and sustainable urban tourism and smart city related questions where we are able to ask context dependent follow-up questions giving depth to the answers (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003, p. 111). We resumed the interviews conducted in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Class (tour operator)</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>1hr 15 minutes</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Private enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major office Marrakech</td>
<td>Deputy Major</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>English/French</td>
<td>Public authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Seasons Hotel</td>
<td>Communication Manager</td>
<td>1hr 05 minutes</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Private enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Tourism Ministry</td>
<td>Tourism Coordinator</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Public authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Investment Centre</td>
<td>Communication Manager</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Host community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Tourism Office (DMO)</td>
<td>Vice-Director</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>DMO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Craftsman</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>1 hr</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Host community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Details about the interviews conducted

### 3.2.8 Interview guide

The interview guide could be a “brief list of memory prompt of areas to be covered” often applied in unstructured interviewing, but that can also be a “somewhat more structured list of issues to be addressed or questions to be asked in semi-structured interviewing.” In conformity with this, the interview guide represents a guide where questions are asked in a flexible way helping us “to glean the ways in which research participants view their social world”. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 473) Therefore, the questions address the smart and sustainable urban tourism dimensions outlined in the theoretical framework as well as broader questions of understanding the respondents view on the development of smart cities. Our interview guide with the set of questions to be addressed can be found in Appendix 1.

Regarding semi-structured interviews, Dumay & Qu (2011, p. 246) point out that the interview guide should incorporate a series of prepared questions that are guided by identified and broad themes to be covered during the interview. In accordance to this, the interview guide should help to ensure that relevant issues are included while still
allowing enough flexibility to follow up on details that salient to each individual participant. Moreover, this flexibility should be ensured by not necessarily asking the exact same questions, but rather using the interview guide as a means to steer the discussion. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p.115) In line with this argumentation, the interview guide in this study is divided into three main themes covering smartness, sustainable urban tourism and stakeholders. Each theme is divided into several subtopics with corresponding questions that help us to steer the discussion towards getting insights on how the stakeholders makes sense of their environment and how they perceive smart and sustainable urban tourism dimensions. The importance of this flexibility is stressed by Dumay & Qu (2011, p. 246) who argue that semi-structured interviews enable the interviewee to answer in their own terms and in the way that they think and use language, since the interviewer has the possibility to modify the style, pace and ordering of the questions. This in turn allows to develop an understanding of the way managers create meanings about their jobs and their environment. In order to enable the interviewees to talk freely, our interview guide starts with an introduction and opening up questions that are more general and try to clarify the topic and aim of the interview.

According to Ritchie & Lewis (2003, p. 250) opening up questions are recommended to build trust, inform the interviewee about the purpose of the interview, which helps the interviewee to talk freely about the topic. In reference to this, we introduced ourselves, explained once again the purpose of the interview and asked the interviewee to tell a bit about the organization, responsibilities and role and what they think about the topic. In all 3 themes, we first started with more general questions of the topic in order to make it clear to the respondents that they are not being read from a pre-formulated list (Dumay & Qu, 2011, p. 145). From there onwards, more detailed subtopics are addressed to retrieve the interviewees perceptions on economic-, social-, environmental-, and experiential dimensions. In reference to this, follow-up and probing questions have been asked that attempt to extend the interviewees answers (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 250). While the smart and sustainable urban tourism topics provide insight on the interviewees’ perceptions on the topics themselves in the context of the destination, the stakeholder topic focuses on how the interviewees perceive their role in the destination management environment. This enables to get insights on what kind of challenges and potential conflicts need to be taken into account when considering the role of the DMO as an intelligent agent that can reduce the information asymmetries between stakeholders. The interview guide that we used can be found in appendix 1.

3.2.9 Ethical considerations
When writing any kind of research there is one part of importance, that has increased the past decade and should not be forgotten since it contains critical aspects to be aware of, and that is the ethical considerations (Saunders et al., 2012, p 208). ”A researcher's work is regulated by varyingly binding rules and regulations. Nevertheless it could be said that the researcher's own ethical responsibility forms the basis for all research ethics”, according to CODEX (2015). From our perspective, as authors’ of this thesis, it means that we have the ultimate responsibility to make sure that our research is of good quality and is morally acceptable.

One of the key aspects regarding ethical considerations is how the data collection was gathered, how it has been stored and in what way it has been used in the research (Trost, 2010, p. 123). In our case we have done qualitative interviews were the material from
the interviews has been exclusively used for the purpose of this study, as the respondents who participates in interviews should have the right from the very first approach to protect their integrity and their own dignity (Trost, 2010, p. 123). There are other codes of ethics to be aware of when conducting a research, with the intention to avoid poor practice, malpractice and harm (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 230).

In our study we have had interviews with people who are involved and concerned by the research topic and all the interviews have been conducted with the intention to understand their reality in order for us to debone their reality as they see it. Already in the beginning we made clear for our respondents on the topic of our study and what the purpose of this study is. Although it is always hard to stay fully objective, we made clear that our questions were based on theory and without involving valuations that will put the respondent into an uncomfortable situation. Both the material collected will be confidential and the respondent’s identity will be anonymous, were we will only present what professions each respondent has. It is important to note that specifically the answers from the respondents of the Four Seasons Hotel and the Ministry of Tourism are by no means official statements and are personal views. This applies to all respondents, but these two specifically emphasised this, which we hereby clarify.

According to Bryman & Bell, (2011, p. 128) for ethical principals have to be respected first; harm to participants, which means neither physical harm nor stress. Accordance to this we ensured them to participate in the interview anonymously and made sure that every participant is willing to participate. Secondly; the lack of informed consent, which means that the respondents should be given enough information to decide whether they want to participate in the study. Before our trip to Marrakech we have contacted all participants and provided them with a guideline of our research and asked them if they feel comfortable in holding this interview. The third ethical principle refers to privacy meaning that the data collected from the interviews will be in use restrictively for the purpose of this study. Final ethical principal is deception, which occurs "when researchers represent their research as something other then what it is" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 136). In reference to this, we informed our participants beforehand about the purpose of the research, our study program and university. At the interviews we repeated again what this study is about and how their participation help to provide knowledge for the study. After the interviews we provided them with contact information in case they needed further information about the study and in case they were interested in getting a copy.

3.2.10 Transcribing and analysing interviews
The interviews have been recorded in order to make the analysing process easier and it allows a more “thorough examination of what people say” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 481). For a qualitative research study it is important to reproduce the spoken words from the interviews into text, or transcribed as the technique is called (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 550). The important part is not only to catch what has been said in the interviews, but also how some part of the words and sentences have been said by the respondents in the interviews (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 550). To transcribe interviews is time consuming, but it is necessary in order to collect what has actually been said in the interviews (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 550), which in our case is data of importance since the interviews will later be analysed in this study. There are alternative ways of reducing the time needed for the transcription of the interviews, which can be useful in order to not spend too much time on the transcription part (Saunders et al., 2012, p.
Five interviews have been conducted in English, one in French and English (switching by respondent) and one in German, since we offered respondents the possibility to answer in their preferred language in line with our language capabilities. As researchers we have to be aware that conducting interviews in foreign languages holds difficulties, such as the risk of using wrong or inappropriate expressions that might lead to misunderstandings. This risk can be reduced when interviewer and interviewee are more or less fluent, which allows things to be easily clarified. Switching languages can even be seen as a method that supports the communication process, since it enables a conscious clarification of words and meanings. (Filep (2009, p. 64) The switching from English to French in one interview was possible, since one of us is fluent in French and tried to clarify the wordings when for example the respondent talked about “societies”, but actually meant companies or corporation, the French “société”. Regarding the transcription from German to English and French to English, we read through the transcribed text and compared wordings “in the source language until ambiguities or discrepancies in meaning are clarified or removed” (Filep, 2009, p. 67).

Qualitative research easily generates a large amount of data and unlike the analysis of quantitative data, there are few well established and widely accepted rules regarding the analysis of qualitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 571). According to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 491), there is no standardized way of reporting and organizing the empirical material in qualitative research. Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 571) argue that thematic analysis is one of the most common ways of approaching qualitative data analysis. Braun & Clarke (2006, p. 79) describe thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” According to Vaismoradi et al (2013, p. 400) thematic analysis is an “independent and a reliable qualitative approach to analysis.” In addition, thematic analysis provides certain flexibility that can provide “rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Moreover, Desantis and Ugarriza (2000, p. 354) highlight that thematic analysis “involves the search for and identification of common threads that extend throughout an entire interview or set of interviews.” In conformity with the thematic analysis approach, we searched for and identified common themes in the interviews conducted and aimed to link the empirical findings to the theoretical framework. We identified 3 main themes, which are smart destination, sustainable urban tourism and stakeholders. The smart destination theme is directed towards stakeholder perceptions on the components of smart city, smart tourism, experiential tourism experiences and ICT in general. The sustainable urban tourism theme is directed towards stakeholder perceptions on the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable urban tourism goals. The stakeholder theme provides destination management insights regarding diverging stakeholder views, top-down/bottom-up approach and general collaboration. The analysis then tried to link and compare the different themes across the different interviews with the aim to identify similarities and differences between destination stakeholders.
4. Empirical study

This chapter will start out by providing an overview of Marrakech in order for the reader to better grasp the context of the destination. Information on the tourism demand, destination characteristics and structure intends to help the reader to understand in what kind of environment the interviewed destination-stakeholders work. This chapter then aims to show the results of our qualitative study. The interviews with the different stakeholders will be presented and will be the basis for our analysis and discussion. Regarding the interviews, we decided to put a lot of direct quotation, since we believe that this will give voice to our participants in a way that it is not mediated by our own interpretations.

4.1 Presentation of Marrakech

4.1.1 Tourism demand

Marrakech is located just north of the Atlas Mountains in the centre of the North African country Morocco. It is the 3rd largest city in Morocco after Casablanca and Rabat with around 1.3 million inhabitants (Populationdata, 2015). In contrast to other North African countries, tourism in Morocco is largely linked to its 4 imperial cities, which are Marrakech along with Fes, Meknes and Rabat (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013, p. 24). With 2.2 million international tourist arrivals in 2014, Marrakech is the most visited tourist destination in Morocco (Observatoire du Tourisme, 2014, p. 8) and the 74th most visited destination in the world (Geertz, 2014, p. 8). Furthermore, Marrakech received the travellers’ choice awards for being rated “Best Destination in the World in 2015” based on millions of reviews of travellers on the world’s largest review platform tripadvisor.com (Pemberton, 2015). Tourism development in Marrakech has significantly been driven by the countries “Vision 2010” and “Vision 2020” comprehensive tourism strategies that aim to position the country among the top 20 tourist destinations in the world (Perretn & Perret, 2015, p. 2). One of the key factors that Morocco and specifically Marrakech benefited from, is the open skies agreement between the EU and Morocco in the year 2006. Between 2006 and 2014 international tourist arrivals in Marrakech increased by 46% and Morocco developed into the most visited African tourist destination with 10.2 million tourists (World Economic Forum, 2015, p. 242) Figure 5 illustrates that Marrakech airport is primarily connected to European airports (flightconnections.com, n.d.).
Perreten & Perret (2015, p. 3) state that the primary source markets for visitation to Marrakech in 2014 were France (26.7%), the UK (9.2%), Spain (4.1%) and Germany (4.2%). Driven by the “Vision 2020” Marrakech aims to reach 3.7 million international tourist arrivals by 2020 in line with the creation of additional 67700 jobs in the sector (CRT Plan, 2015, p. 13).

4.1.2 Destination characteristics
According to Marrakech’s destination management organization, Marrakech “has a thousand-year-old history and its mosques, fountains, palaces and legendary Jamaâ el-Fna square make it an exclusive cultural destination, offering a wide range of luxury boutique hotels, riads and palaces...”(CRT Plan, 2015, p. 3). In general, Marrakech has a reputation for its high cultural authenticity (Benner, 2011, p. 7; Steenbruggen, 2014, p. 7). Bigio (2010, p. 4) sees Marrakech’s uniqueness originating from its public spaces where social interaction, recreational activities and commerce are at the heart of the city.

Tourism plays one of the main income sources for many developing countries (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008, pp. 21-22). In reference to this, the World Bank (2014) states that “many of the needs of developing countries centre on providing and maintaining modern infrastructure and since this built environment lasts a long time, getting the right infrastructure in place shapes a city for decades to come. For Marrakech, tourism is the major source of income, but its rapid development comes along with the need to preserve its cultural heritage, landscapes, gardens and way of life (Bull, 2007, p. 53; Steenbruggen, 2014, p. 3). The development of tourism puts local authorities under pressure to develop an infrastructure that is not cut of scale with the vulnerable environment and cultural heritage of the urban area (Bull, 2007, p. 53).

Marrakech’s tourist development strategy is closely connected to the national “Vision 2020”, which puts sustainable development at the heart of the tourism strategy: “Vision
2020 wishes to develop a model of tourism that combines sustained growth and responsible custody of the environment with respect for our authentic social and cultural life. An innovative approach to sustainability, based on a new generation of tourist products, long-term ecosystem management and local people’s participation in development and the benefits of tourism” (Roudies, 2013, p. 7). In reference to this, the 3 main challenges of sustainable tourism in the Vision 2020 are: Firstly, to guarantee the sustainability and conservation of Morocco’s natural resources, its authenticity and the wellbeing of its citizens. Secondly, to respond to tourists’ evolving social and environmental sensitivities and thirdly to seize the opportunity to make sustainability a distinguishing feature for Morocco (Roudies, 2013, p. 9).

The significance of the tourism sector and future growth forecasts requires Marrakech to tackle challenges and objectives set by the 2020 vision on sustainability whilst adapting to technological developments and consumer preferences of tourist from Europe. Morocco has the ambition to portray an image, where cultural heritage claims a place in modernity. This means that contemporary trends are integrated, such as the appreciation of the quality and environmental and ecological sustainability while not forgetting the local particularities of each region (Kessab, 2009, p. 7).

Marrakech’s DMO (CRT Plan, 2015, p. 5) translates this strategy into a unique tourism offer that highlights the contrasts between the city’s cultural heritage and modernity and refers to this as Marrakech’s DNA. The DNA reflects the contrasts of:

Preserving the cultural heritage while opening up to modern lifestyles with tourist and visitor interaction, modern influences in traditional architecture and design etc. A destination offering a luxurious experience (more than 80 spa centres, some of the most luxurious hotels in the world, 10 golf courses) and serving all budget segments surrounded by the Atlas Mountains with snow in proximity to the Sahara. Centrally located between the North and South, only a 3.5 hour flight from London, while still offering an exotic and foreign tourist experience. Figure 6 illustrates these contrasts:

Figure 6: Marrakech – contrasting tourism offer (CRT Plan, 2015, p. 5)
4.1.3 Destination structure

In Marrakech the Regional Tourism Office functions as the DMO and collaborates with a variety of stakeholders that are categorized in 3 main categories: Public representations, private enterprises and institutions. In accordance with our study, the major office and the regional tourism ministry belong to the public representatives. The regional ministry of tourism is here kept distinct from core city stakeholders since it acts as a delegation of the national tourism ministry, but in fact represents the public sector. The hotel and the tour operator as private enterprises. The chamber of craftsman and the regional investment centre belong to the institutions category, which is in fact a mixture of representations of the local host community and facilitators of development projects in the interest of the host community.

**Figure 7: Marrakech - Destination stakeholder setting (CRT Plan, 2015, p. 24)**

Considering the nature of mass tourism as struggling to implement sustainability and difficulty to manage various stakeholders due their tendency to respond to initiatives with their own interests provides a challenge of the DMO to promote collaboration amongst stakeholders in order to achieve sustainable objectives (Waligo et al., 2013, p. 349).

The situation in Marrakech shows the DMO as the focal point in the destination stakeholder setting. This indicates the potential of the DMO as an intelligent agent for destination management as proposed by Sheehan et al. (2015, p. 532) that can reduce the information asymmetries between stakeholders through the generation and intelligent application of knowledge (on customer needs, collaborating suppliers, environmental as well as human and cultural resource). Regarding smart technologies, the DMOs potential in Marrakech is further supported by the availability of latest technologies, which is relatively high compared to other developing countries (Steenbruggen, 2014, p. 3; World Economic Forum, 2015, pp. 6-7). According to Bakker et al. (2013, p. 21) in the African Tourism Monitor, 33% of online bookings regarding air travel, hotel and tour packages are made in Morocco followed by South Africa (16%), Egypt (15%) and Tunisia (9%). Moreover, Marrakech is when it comes to
online bookings in air travel, hotel and tour packages the leading African destination with 17% as shown in Figure 8 below:

![Figure 8: Online bookings African city destinations (Bakker et al., 2013, p. 21) in Africa Tourism Monitor](image)

Considering the DMOs central position in the destination provides potential for the integration of information retrieved through these different booking channels. From a sustainability perspective, the DMOs perspective in Marrakech also provides opportunity for balancing the different economic, social and environmental sustainable urban tourism goals between these stakeholders. The following section presents the results of the interviews that provide further insights into stakeholder perceptions regarding sustainable and smart urban tourism goals.

4.2 Presentation of interviews

4.2.1 Interview with CEO of Business Class (Destination Experiences by Design)
The first participant is the CEO of “Business Class”, one of the leading private Destination Management Companies in Marrakech. This company is part of a group involved in different areas of the tourism business from several sister companies including a luxury hotel, an event management company as well as this Destination Management Company. The CEO is acting as a consultant within this larger group as well. Previous experience has also included the CEO’s position at the top of the largest hotel chain in Morocco. Having realised the large potential of tourist experiences, Business Class is specifically focused on providing destination experiences to tourists, which is reflected in the slogan: “Destination Experiences by Design.”

Smart destination
The CEO points out his perspective on the smart city: “In my position presently maybe the issues are different, I am looking at it from a business point of view”. In reference to this, he considers the smart city as “maybe one of the unique selling proposals that might be enough strong to make the city much more effective than the others and the competitors”. However, the CEO stresses the importance of economic value when engaging in smart city initiatives: “I always like to type this value with how can I extract benefits and revenues, since the bottom-line is what it’s all about”. Moreover, the CEO exemplifies the complexity of smart cities. He argues that “a smart city is not some application, it’s something integrated”. The CEO argues that tourists can be defined in different ways since different populations are in the same territory making tourism generally an important driver from “the natives, the visitors, the expatriates, the people
who come to work, investors” and also mentions the daily issues such as “administrative, medical, social, political economical etc.” Referring to the use of technology, the CEO stresses technology as the “optimal media to reach our clients” and also argues for the importance of staying connected with them “before, during and after the experience”. In accordance to this, he stresses the development of new technologies that facilitate the way the company interacts with clients: “We have mobile applications, CRM strategies asking for feedback, we want then to share their experiences, photos, and selfies”. The use of technologies is further exemplified when he talks about information that the company is able to receive from clients through data on where “phone calls are made, where the phone calls in the city are made in real time, where pictures are taken, how many tourist from which countries go to which attractions”. In addition, the CEO presents examples of how information can be aggregated and used to determine tourist preference: “...information is coming from everyone, the authorities, the tourists, the social media etc.” that makes it to ”get feedback and address preferences to design experiences for tourists”. The CEO exemplifies that smart cities need revenue streams and he refers to his experience: “I can tell you that I have been visiting many smart city conference to observe how and which business model they design to extract revenues. And believe me there are some who really succeed to do it. My conclusion is that smaller scale projects are working better...such as a smart mall, where all commercial transactions are connected to 1 player who has aggregates information of visitors and provides all stakeholders with this to reap the benefits of knowledge”.

Sustainable urban tourism

The CEO puts significant emphasis on the need for experiential tourism and argues that the whole city needs to “redefine their jobs, hotel managers should not only provide bedrooms and restaurant. Transporters are not only driving from here to there”. In reference to this, the CEO stresses the importance of all stakeholders thinking in global experiences that “positively affects the tourists”, “leave a memorable souvenir” so that tourist “come back again and share it with others”. This is further pointed out by “catching the tourist attention and provide extraordinary service” and go beyond the basic services and therefore Business Class offers a portfolio of services such as “Green Marrakech”. He argues that “imagination” is an important component and that his business has focused on this with “experience destination by design”. He argues that people want “exclusive and unique experiences and that is where the city needs to provide motivation for tourist to come to Marrakech”. The emphasis is here on creating new experiences by “being an experience match maker that involves the client and by delivering an obsessive customer service.”

Considering further sustainable urban tourism dimensions, the CEO refers to including the local community when for instance visiting the “Jardin Majorelle”, the most important botanical garden in the city. In reference to this, he explains that the company “invites experts and guest speakers who explain the history of the gardens in the community, the religion connected to it, the citizen’s life and culture, lifestyles” and how “green” is viewed from the “citizen’s perspective”. This also includes visits to families “explaining their way of living in the old town, the medina, and to see how green is important to the people”. A basic theme like “Green Marrakech” is explained while connecting visitors to the residents catching up on topics such as “green, ecological, sustainable, meeting, understanding and giving the own inside on the issues”. Furthermore, the CEO point out that the rapid increase in connectivity within
the city with “old and young people now being connected with smartphones etc.” deserves “our special interest”. The population needs to be involved, since “visitors and residents are directly connected in the tourism experience and if the community does not see the benefits, they cannot share their point of view and visitors do not enjoy this experience”. In this sense, “experiences are shared communication between the local community and the tourists”. The CEO mentions that involvement of the local community requires “education”, which the company will do so that they see the benefits in their daily life when interacting with tourist. The connection between host environment and visitors exist without technology, however technology helps “to connect faster, easier, friendlier, and then beyond this the main issue is how operators and stakeholders can extract revenue from this”.

Stakeholders
The CEO is sceptical about the total commitment of stakeholders to sustainability saying that “I am not sure we can mix ethics and business. Business and environments. America does it? No. Canada does it? No. Did we succeed with Kyoto. No.” He emphasises though that for the company “it is something that is valued by the clients, so we have to as well”. The company tries to educate and when there is the opportunity “we involve our partners and clients to do it”. Nonetheless, the CEO regards the whole chain as important he asks for “general policies” and says “nothing works without a policy frame”: “Let’s say we select the garbage, but if the city don’t, it does not matter. It doesn’t pay me as a hotel, but on my point of view I try to be social”. Apart from that, the CEO points out the importance of a “real vision and strategy” from the public authorities. He argues that there is progress “step by step” and he think that a “collaborative framework where all stakeholder can share and think together” is something that needs to be fostered by the public sector. He regards technology as an “opportunity” and the solution can be thinking of tourism as a “cluster”, where “knowledge sharing is enabled that connects stakeholders and drives the sector”.

4.2.2 Interview with the Tourism Coordinator of the Regional Tourism Ministry
The second participant is a tourism coordinator working at the delegation of the national tourism ministry for the Marrakech region. The Regional Tourism Ministry is basically in charge of communicating the national tourism strategy to the regional requirements and supports different stakeholders in the fulfilment of tourism goals. The tourism coordinator not only has a control function in fulfilling the sustainable tourism development goals of the “Vision 2020”, but also to fosters entrepreneurial activity and approves investment at the destination level for tourism development projects that enable a sustainable tourism product and enhances the tourism experience through innovation and information and communication technologies (Moroccan Ministry of Tourism, 2016, p. 4).

Smart destination
The tourism coordinator explains that there are several objectives in terms of developing sustainable tourism while he is in charge of enabling the investment and support for realisation of projects that fulfil sustainable tourism objectives. The final purpose is to have a high level of quality and services which we offer to the tourists. One of the examples he mentions from the program is the information system. The tourism ministry tries to identify what is needed in order to help companies to develop their own information systems. The reasoning is that information systems will ease their job and at the same time it gives opportunities to offer more services with quality. At
the moment the major part of this development is to try to exchange information with companies that have expertise in information systems, identify potential for implementing new technologies in the tourism value chain and finally link technology companies to tour guides, hotels and other partners. “We try help companies operating in tourism to develop and offer services with the best quality” he says and means that they try to help by supporting financially with this kind of programs in order for these companies to improve interconnection in the tourism value chain.

**Sustainable urban tourism**

The coordinator sees sustainable development as a kind of approach they take, which automatically leads to the development of economic activity. The sustainable development influences the economic activity for the local population in a positive way at the same time as this approach protects the environment without having any negative impact for the ethic sphere. “We can touch all of these elements, especially the environment and the social”, he says and explains that there are a lot of people that work in the tourism industry that have a direct impact among the local population as the tourists who visit the cities. The important part is to find the right equilibrium between the social regarding people who are working in the tourism industry that have direct impact on the local population and the same time for the environment regarding golf, water stations, and pollution.

There is a lot of things to keep in mind when deciding the format of the future growth in the city and this is something that the tourism ministry is aware of. The tourism coordinator mentions that Marrakech has a large urban development and that decisions need to look into how the city will look like 10-20 years from now. The problem that arises is the link between tourism and agriculture. In reference to this, there has already been a major change where the airport has been moved closer to the city centre and the next phase is in the agricultural area where a touristic project will be implemented. Since the city continues to grow it has caused problems on the agriculture territories that forced the population who lived in this areas to move out: “All of these people have to change activity. They move to the city and once in the city they have to find a job, schools for children, where to leave and find a house”. This has caused problems for these people who lived on the countryside, since they have a hard time to integrate with the population living in the city. This is the main reason why Marrakech need to have an integral vision.

Both the inhabitants of the city as well as the tourists need to be kept in mind when developing the city. The tourism coordinator says that these problems of deciding what to aim for at first is not a mission that concerns the administrator of tourism and is in the hands of other departments. His personal views though in this area is to have a global vision and an open mind regarding cooperation with other institutions. “The most important thing to do is to try to have a clear vision about urban development. And we have to execute it in the future and make it real”.

Even if the tourism industry has changed and tourists’ needs switched from sightseeing to the whole experience itself, the tourism coordinator argues that this does not concern all tourists. One part they put more effort in is the sustainable development where their vision is to integrate it in all sectors. It is a strategic move for the future as they integrate sustainable solutions in some hotels with the objective to make their tourists
sustainable. "For the moment we are trying to develop this approach and I think in the future it will be more developed with the time".

Technology plays a central role in these issues, but it is not possible to solely invest in it since there has to be a purpose of where it should be installed and for what reason. This is something that the tourism ministry has talked about for all cities and this technology is designated to all communities. This service cannot be provided without having the local authorities to collaborate to make it available for all people.

**Stakeholders**

The companies involved in the tourism industry do help in the development if there is an event that aims towards all people everyone will benefit of this event as tourists will come to Marrakesh for this kind of event. In reference to this, the tourism coordinator mentions how important it is for all actors, both in the private sector as well as in the public sector, to collaborate together in order to create an attractive city. It is even that of importance that a program for Marrakesh called “the city of renewal” was announced by the King. The program is still in progress where all parties come together and have meetings before any decision is made and when every stakeholder is satisfied and an agreement will be made in which areas to start the project. The tourism coordinator thinks that this as a successful strategy and argues that they go through the suggestion in detail. "Because we are official departments, all the time we have contact. We are working together because we are working for the interest of the city. For the citizens and its public service”.

4.2.3 Interview with the Vice-Director of the Regional Tourism Office (DMO)

The regional tourism office (CRT) is in fact the destination management organisation for Marrakech. As previously presented, the DMO is the focal point in the interaction of different stakeholders at the destination. While the Vice-director states that he is generally “in charge of the promotion and development of the destination”, he has extensive contact with the other stakeholders of the destination. The DMOs objective is to bring together and mobilize all tourism stakeholders and combining their efforts (CRT, 2015, p. 6).

**Smart destination**

The DMO vice director tasks in the smart city concept is to have projects that both benefits citizens as tourists. "We have this slogan in the office that says that if our citizens are happy, our tourists will be happy too”. He says that the smart city concept is a challenging concept for all destinations as the tourism industry changed due to the development of IT in technology and mobility. The strategy that cities need to apply is to make a plan for tourists, but also for the citizens. There are already a few cities that has implemented the smart city concept, but if you start analyse the strategies you would notice that the cities does not act in the same way since they do not share the same priorities. "The most important thing is what are the priorities and in second what are the challenges and how to make the quality of life of citizens and tourists better”. The strategy the DMO uses is listening to the market and mentions the opportunities that has occurred with the IT-technology, since it is possible to collect visitors’ comments during or after their holiday in the destination. Another thing to keep in mind is to estimate and develop the trends demanding from the tourism of tomorrow. Since we cannot estimate the future of tourism in our offices or the consulting companies it is of importance to listen to the market, he says. Today the important part is to create good
experiences for the tourist industry, since visit and discover is not as important anymore for the visitors in a destination. The technology itself is not needed when collecting tourists comments about their experiences but they do support it, as we take as an advantage and try to develop is the way the tourists behave. He explains further: “If now our customers have more reservations by smartphones, not by laptop that means that we should develop application, not websites”. The role that ICT has is really important and is a dimension that should be developed in the beginning when creating a smart city according to the DMO of Marrakesh.

**Sustainable urban tourism**

There are three parts to keep in mind regarding the sustainability in the context of tourism; The first one refers to the implementation of water and energy, second part is to see tourism as an economic benefit for the citizens and the third part is social. There are parts that the city of Marrakesh already been putting their effort in but, as the DMO says, it is not enough and there is room for a lot more in the development. The struggles the city has is providing energy and water. The city tries to find ways for the tourism to choose not only the city of Marrakesh, but emphasize to encourage people to explore the area of Marrakesh. He also mentions that sustainability is not solely what the destination can do and point that even tourists need to act when they are abroad in order to respect the environment. This is generally for the tourists since they do respect the environment, but it is more of a problem for the citizens. An example that he brought up was whether the streets were clean as that influences tourist behaviours to respect the environment.

The information about the tourism industry starts at an early stage were children in primary school gets informed about how tourism in beneficial for the economy. This promotional action is only two years old, but the vice director mean that it is a good way for children to get the idea and perceptions about the industry. The citizens are also aware of the importance of tourism since it creates job opportunities. He points out the fact that the people in Marrakesh are very open to communicate with people from all over the world, which has played a huge role in the development of the destination. "We do not have a touristic zone in Marrakesh, we have a mix", the vice director says and mentions that their aim is to prevent having a tourist, since the tourist rather chooses to see the people in the city and to discover the culture of the city.

The smart city project is something that the council has approached by including all people to make sure that everyone agrees on the decisions that will be taken. The information is shared with the community, associations, people and elected persons to make clear that everyone shares the same vision because otherwise the process will not be successful.

The vice director explains sustainability as product that you are selling and if the product is not good, it means that it is not good for the industry. The environment is the product that the city of Marrakesh is providing and if it not respected by the customers then it means that the city needs to rethink in order to meet customers’ needs. The city has engaged in the environment regarding sustainability. "We have a problem with the pollution on air because we have a lot of motorcycles in Marrakesh and the quality of oil is not good for the air or us”. The city solved this problem by installing sensor of the quality on the air were they could see the results from time to time. In order to change
this problem there are several different associations who gets incentives to change the traffic.

**Stakeholders**
The key role in the development of a smart city is, according to the vice director, the major of the city. *Three reasons: the first one is that they represent the city, the second one; they have the budget and the third is that they have the challenge viz a viz citizen and tourist.* Before a project is ready the people who are involved in the smart tourism concept is between the DMO and the major. When there is a project we will share it with other organizations to see if they share the same vision. The vice director mentions how all councils and organizations need to be involved for the development of a smart city and according to him the collaboration work good since they have good contact between the involved actors in the development of a smart city. *”For example we have Cisco, we have IBM, we have best society in order to build and make the strategy. And after the major will make the budget to have Cisco, for example in order to do for us strategies. We take this work and we share it with all the people”*. The city developers make it clear to investigate all possibilities and compares among companies to get the best results of what they aim with their own development of a smart city. The vice director says that he aims to have collaborations with companies with experiences, especially for them since it is an developing country it is worth to take the company that have the experiences and will help to provide with great solutions in the development of a smart city. The challenges that faces in the development of a smart city is according to the vice director when involved stakeholders does not share the same interests and visions.

### 4.2.4 Interview with Communication Manager - Four Seasons Hotel Marrakech
The 4th participant is the Communication Manager of the Four Seasons Hotel Marrakech, a luxury 5-star hotel in Marrakech. The Communication Manager is in charge of the public relations, the communication, marketing, reporting to the sales directors as well as all kinds of issues related to social media, international visibility and the website.

**Smart destination**
The Communication Manager starts to describe her own view of what a smart city is: *“I think it is about technology within the city and that it makes it easier to communicate with having Wifi available.”* In addition, the Communication Manager outlines the importance of smart technology within the tourism industry explaining that *“every tourist is a source of information and they share their experience with their smart phones. This is the most powerful tool in nowadays development when it comes to tourism. It changes the way communication is happening, there are direct contacts after having acquired information that has been shared.”* In accordance to this, the company stays in contact with visitors through the social media and even keep personal contact with guest. She exemplifies this by saying that people *“want to experience something, culture, nature, trips etc. and we have cooperation with tour operators, restaurants, the city and try to provide the best service and experience to our guests”*. Guests are sharing their experiences and the hotel follows up *“through the social media to make it visible to the whole world”*
Sustainable urban tourism

The Communication Manager outlines her view on sustainability: “It is something considering eco-friendliness, ethics and the collaboration with local suppliers and then we also talk about environmental issues such as the re-use of water and better use of electricity.” When it comes to the community, the Communication Manager explains that “we try to create jobs and educate local applicants” since “they know the city and country better than anyone else.” In addition, she describes that this “ensures authenticity of the tourism experience” and the hotel sees this as a way of helping the local community and provide “jobs to feed 300 families.” In reference to this, employees are “trained” and “we help them to become better and provide excellent services.” At the same time the hotel is offering them “social health care packages” since the hotels priority is that its employees “are feeling save and we think this will be transported in the way they represent this to the guests, so that the guests are feeling this while staying in the hotel.” Apart from that, the Communication Manager mentions that “almost all suppliers are local” in order to save cost and since the hotel believes that “the resources are there and also helps the development of the community.”

Concerning the environment, the Communication Manager outlines that “we give guest the possibility to say we do not need our towels to be cleaned today or our sheets. This saves cost and also helps to operate in an environmental friendly way.” However, when it comes to environmental issues, “things happen within the hotel.” The Communication Manager further explains: “I am always asking myself: There is so much sun in Morocco. Why are renewable energies and especially solar power plants not developed in Marrakech?” She outlines that the hotel sees huge potential to save energy and make things more sustainable, but “we were not getting anything from the local authorities regarding this issue”. In accordance to this, she points out that “in the end we are just a hotel” and that the surrounding environment needs to provide the basis for acting in a more environmental friendly way also outside of the hotel. Within the hotel, she refers to the construction with the aim to make people live the way they are used to: “We want them to feel home, but at the same time we want them to experience the Moroccan touch. They come to Marrakech to experience something new, something extraordinary, they want feel the culture, the people, the architecture, the things that make Marrakech unique.” In reference to this, the hotel was built with the input of “the craftsman from Marrakech” who were specifically hired for this since “they have the talent and know the details of the Moroccan architecture” and they do this with passion because it is part of showing their culture: “No other craftsman in the world, no matter how talented, can know how to design and make the details look exactly the Marrakech way than the craftsman from the region.” Since “they live the culture” the hotel wants its guests to feel this.

The Communication Manager further emphasis the need for providing the visitors with authentic tourist experiences: “People always request to see the real berber villages, they want to experience the history and see the cultural heritage.” She points out that this culture “has to be maintained” where the hotels also encourages costumers “to feel free to bring presents for the local families.” In accordance to this, the hotel has lots of cooperation with other companies in the region to increase the quality of the guests stay: “For example, we work with a bike-shop where we see that they provide excellent services and then visitors are sharing their positive experiences. They interact with the service that we consider of higher quality and people love to experience this close interaction with the bike-shop staff where lots of interaction is taking place. This is
different from just offering people to rent a bike and use the service. Here the staff is with the tourists, showing, explaining and laughing with the tourist during their bike-ride. So the interaction takes place naturally without us telling them what to do. It’s something about the local mentality, their openness and willingness to tell something about their city. People are then sharing pictures on the social media and we follow up with this and comment or like their posts to show that the hotel is indirectly connected to this

Nonetheless, she also points out the importance to have profitable operations, which is “obviously extremely important to us.” The Communication Manager acknowledges that the construction of the hotel may cause problems in surrounding areas in “the agricultural sector and regarding water scarcity”, but also emphasises that the hotel complies “with regulations the authorities put upon us”. However, the hotel tries to improve and have “more green processes in the hotel” and “the customers love that we ask them to re-use towels, the careful use of water etc. and that we also care about the environment.”

Stakeholders
The Communication Manager outlines that the hotel works together with many stakeholders such as “the regional tourism office, the representation of the ministry of tourism, the tourism board of the city of Marrakech” and specifically mentions that “the collaboration works fantastic” with very open communication “talking about any issues” with “monthly meetings” taking place with “public authorities in the tourism sector”. In accordance to this, everyone is asked to raise issues of any nature such as “the taxis drivers have problems to get to the hotel because of the increasing traffic or that the transport from the airport to the hotel is taking too long due to traffic problems.” She points out that wifi is planned to be installed all over the city, which is “good for our tourist to go to a destination” calling it a “win-win-situation” for providing a high quality hotel with high quality services for the tourists and the authorities try to develop upon this by changing the city making it better for our tourists and making the destination more attractive.

Apart from that, the Communication Manager emphasises the good relations without any disagreements: “I can’t think of any issue that we had and where we disagreed or had even conflicts” and makes the comparison to her previous experience: “I have been working in London before and our hotel there was not having anything like this. Here they always ask us for feedback and they search for the exchange of information. In London, there was almost no communication. This is quite unique and we are very happy about this. They are very approachable and we are all working as a team. There is no separation between hotel and the authorities” In the end the Communication Manager argues that the city should start building a smart city from the tourist point of view first since “the tourists drive the development and they will ask for even more interaction with the locals, an experience to be in exchange with the local community, so inevitably the city needs to look at both the citizens and the tourists”

4.2.5 Interview with Deputy Major - economic and sustainable local development
The 5th participant is the Deputy Major for economic development and coordinator of the United Nations “Agenda 21 programme” for the embeddedness of sustainable local development for the city of Marrakech. He developed expertise and significant experience in issues surrounding the sustainable development of regional territories and
acts as consultant to the major of Marrakech within these areas. Further information about the project can be retrieved at the website of the United Nations Agency for human settlements (un habitat.org).

**Smart destination**

Considering the smart destination, the Deputy Major emphasises the importance of understanding tourist preferences and retrieving information. He outlines that “we need to listen to tourist, what are their priorities. It is not only the city, but also the citizens themselves who understand how important it is to get information about tourist and their preferences.” However, he highlights that this also applies to the citizens. He argues that city development should target citizens and tourists because everything is interconnected. For instance, “the city has established cyber parks, where internet is available for free to tourists and the local population. There are computers, sockets for electricity etc.” The Deputy Major further explains that the service has been further expanded to “wifi in big squares, in newly established malls and more recently also buses” and also that in the future public transport will also be more affected by this.

Nonetheless, he argues that “still a lot needs to be done” regarding the flow of information. In reference to this, the city has in the past primarily focused on working towards a mobility plan that provides the basis for becoming a smart city, such as the improvement of the infrastructure, how to better structure the city for citizen to have higher quality of life. The city works on this “by integrating citizens and retrieving information about their lives, challenges they face to reach their workplace etc.” He argues that smart technologies will become an important role “we need to better exchange information between the stakeholders and for implementing smart technologies we need the expertise that should derive from our population, the collaboration with universities and at the same time expertise from the private sector to develop a strategy where ICTs can be created collectively.” Apart from that, the deputy major adds that “we are an emerging economy, not like a developing country in the sense Mauritania or Burkina Faso, but still not developed like France or Germany. We cannot develop from one day to another into a highly developed country. We have to respect the steps.”

**Sustainable urban tourism**

When it comes to sustainable urban tourism, the deputy major put emphasis on the social component. He picks up on the development aspect in the emerging economy and says that the country is making huge progress: “When it comes to democratization. We are there, we have opened up to democracy, human rights, we are in a process of the modernisation of the institutions of the state, also in these of pursuing a strategy of decentralisation and the aim to find solutions at the local level collectively.” He further outlines the cities approach: “We are trying to let stakeholders come together. We all agree that the city has to develop and that tourism plays a significant role in this city.” The major deputy stresses that Marrakech is the first city in Morocco that has adopted this participatory approach where the city closely works together with its tourism stakeholders and that has “constant exchange and collaboration” which enabled the city to review its politics and its way to plan the city.

The deputy major explains the competitive approach of Marrakech as “we have to master tourism and make sure to not lose our cultural identity because this is our competitive advantage”. He further outlines that people come to Marrakech because
“we preserve our identity” and further explains that this differentiates them from destinations like Thailand or Singapore where tourism took over this identity. He says that “we are open to the world, to tourism and we want people to respect each other by being open without forgetting our roots.” He argues that the goal is to not allow a touristification or enabling a separation between tourists and citizens: “We have an inclusive city, not like in Agadir where you can feel that tourism has taken over the city.”

Regarding the environment, he highlights the water scarcity in Marrakech that is affected by tourist consumption behaviour as well as the many “golf courts that consume tremendous amounts of water.” To encounter this “unsustainable problem”, he exemplifies that “we enabled a project in corporation with companies to recycle waste water from all over the city and re-use it on the golf courts. Marrakech is a city of history and there are many botanical gardens from the 08th or 9th century that need lots of water and that need to be preserved.” He further argues that “the preservation of the socio-cultural and natural resources” made Marrakech the number one tourist destination in Morocco.

Stakeholders
The deputy major stresses the importance of the participatory approach and how the city of Marrakech does not let “the state dictate how we are doing things. We listen to them, we see this as a guideline, but how we develop our city is our concern.” He further explains that there are “diverging opinions with the state, we discuss, but finally we are building the strategy from the bottom. We can only develop the city when including the citizens in the process.” The deputy major explains that this participatory approach is reached through “meetings with stakeholders, public debates and exchange of information”. Apart from that he advocates a new way of governance: “We listen to what is out there, while in the past governance was more top-down”. He further explains that it is only this way that the destination can develop and it means “exchange with the DMO, universities, the private sector, the population, the regional centre of investment, the chamber of craftsman…everyone”. However, he argues that the collaboration does not work always work as it should: “Not to 100%. We have agreements to work together”. He explains that with the tourism organisations it is a bit easier because there is a strong interest in developing the destination as a whole, while “companies often look at their own interest first.”

4.2.6 Interview Project Coordinator - Chamber of Craftsman Marrakech
The 6th participant is a project coordinator at the Chamber of Craftsman that represents the local artisans, craftsmen and designers for the development, promotion and preservation of the cultural heritage of crafts in Marrakech.

Smart destination
When it comes to developing the destination with smart technologies, the project coordinator outlines that generally new technologies play an important role “for reaching the market.” In accordance to this, the project coordinator stresses that nowadays the craftsmanship, a traditional business, has to find ways how to be preserved as part of cultural identity of Marrakech while connecting it to modernity. In terms of smartness, this means that “the artisans’ crafts need to be promoted and ways need to be found to connect the tourists to the artisans. Smart technologies can play an important role there in the way this connection is established”. In reference to this, the
project coordinator exemplifies with a project “that linked the crafts and tourism market with the creation of artisan and cultural heritage routes. This increased awareness of Moroccan culture and crafts tradition and allowed artisans to sell directly to tourist increasing their revenue. While establishing this routes, internet platforms with interactive maps are established and this will be expanded to apps/tablets etc.” The project coordinator argues that more information of tourist behaviour in the city is needed to further exploit this potential such as that “we need information where tourist prefer to walk around, how well are they getting aware of our routes, to promote the app and make further connections to other activities and walking patterns to produce products in cooperation with other stakeholders in the city.”

**Sustainable urban tourism**

The project coordinator emphasises the role of protecting the cultural heritage and crafts tradition while having business objectives: “With more than 150000 artisans in Marrakech, the craftsmanship have a major share on the success of tourism, since their crafts and design shape the appearance of the city with its Moorish style and their products attract tourists. So we need to preserve this authenticity and crafts tradition and at the same time find ways how to sell products more efficiently.” In accordance to this, the project coordinator explains that the chamber of craftsman in collaboration with the city establishes educational programmes for young people that should enhance professionalism and modernisation of production for a better commercialisation of the product, while making sure the originality of traditional Marrakech craftsmanship remains embedded in their work: “We have established exchanges between our craftsman programmes and students from design universities in Europe that should enable students to learn about the culture and highlight the importance of traditional craftsmanship in their efforts of developing products that are attractive to European tourists.” He further argues that “this will open up for modernity while keeping traditional uniqueness of the products and design.” The project coordinator says that many European companies and investors want to use modern manufacturing technologies and technical know-how to enable mass production but he argues that “the direct input of the artisan has to remain” and stresses: “Using technologies to facilitate the work for artisans and bring quality to another level is to a certain extent ok, but the concepts they present need to show that handicraft remains handicraft and that the business model does not exploit artisans, but considers their economic returns and their artistic integrity.” Considering the environment, the project coordinator explains that this approach of traditional and modernity is shaped by the environment: “Often the artisans are influences by their rural environment and use resources and images while the influence of European designer is also reflected and this mixture shapes the city and its charm which should be protected.”

**Stakeholders**

The project coordinator emphasises the importance of exchanging information with city stakeholders such as the collaboration with the DMO, the city and the investment centre. He argues that the regional investment centre always provides the newest updates on investment opportunities and trends. In reference to this, hotels play an important role, since their “skills and products are often needed for their interior design”. In addition, hotels and tour operators can often provide an enhanced destination experience “by providing authentic packages and tours to the artisans’ workshops.” He further outlines that the DMO is often asking how one can better
integrate artisans in projects either with the help of the private sector, tourists or the city.

4.2.7 Interview Communication Manager Regional Investment Centre
The 7th participant is the communication manager in charge of linking investment opportunities to local needs. She states “the objective is to enable investments where local potential can be leveraged for the sustainable development of the city and the region.”

Smart destination
The communication manager outlines that there is an increasing need for connecting domestic and international companies and investors to local stakeholders. She explains that Marrakech has in recent years experienced an “increased investment in digital communication agencies that develop digital strategies for local companies, development of apps, website design, but also process-oriented management of customer relations through tele-marketing and the implementation of CRM systems”. She further explains that 50% of these investments are directly linked to the tourism sector: “the craftsman have a huge influence on the city and its tourism and we had companies that have smart technologies, but first needed to be introduced to the craftsman tradition and culture in Morocco to find technological solutions to better sell their products. The communication manager stresses that many projects have been initiated by the city to develop more connectivity and that some ideas, such as the smart park were enabled through collaboration with citizens: “We need to enforce our exchange of information and be more innovative with better technologies with foreign companies’ know-how, but always with the involvement of the local businesses and citizens.”

Sustainable urban tourism
The communication manager explains that tourism can have serious effects on the environment and highlights: “We have experienced that our agricultural sector is specifically suffering under the extreme expansion of hotels (…), the water resources are limited and the hotels need lots of water for their swimming pools, gardens etc. In reference to this, she argues that local stakeholders need to be better integrated in the sustainable development of the region and specifically there needs to be a better process in finding solutions that address the problems before foreign hotel chains build their hotels. Therefore, “we need to address environmental issues at the stage businesses come to us and want to present their strategies” and she further exemplifies that they have established, for instance, a coherent environmental plan with hotels that includes “energy efficient buildings, waste water recycling as well as involving locals in the process, farmers, the craftsman who are involved in the hotel design, training and development of hotel staff etc.” The communication manager stresses that all economic activity has to take into account that “tourists come because of the local identity of Marrakech”, which requires investors to understand that tourism needs to be developed in “co-creation with the population.” In accordance to this, she highlights that “tourists want to experience the city, the culture, how people live, how they work, how they dance.” Apart from that, the communication manager explains that tourists and local need to be connected: “We have in the Marrakech region the “argan-oil” tree, which cannot be found anywhere else in the world. We try to bring tourists and directly experience the hand-made production of this oil. Tourists see, taste, ask questions, and communicate with the workers.” She further highlights that this enables the production
workers, who are mainly co-operatives initiated out of local families and sponsored by the European Union and social development agencies, to have an income with a direct sales channel as well as it reinforces the cultural experience for future tourists.

**Stakeholder**

The communication manager stresses that she is “always in exchange with the DMO, the major office, the chamber of crafts and other local organisations” in the efforts of trying to enable private and public investments to be realised. She further argues that it is sometimes difficult to find a solution that satisfies all parties because “hotels or tourism businesses have sometimes more economic priorities” while the city is trying to “keep the culture and identity alive” as this is essential for the city. She explains that decisions cannot be imposed and that the best way is to exchange information and have a dialogue and “we need also to listen to the residents and their needs because without them, Marrakech will not be able to keep its attraction”.
5. Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter the theoretical framework will be compared with the material collected from the interviews in the previous chapter. The analysis has been divided into three themes in line with the thematic analysis, which are smart destination, sustainable urban tourism and stakeholders and their relevant components as outlined in section 3.2.10.

5.1 Smart destination

Within the development of a sustainable tourist destination in Marrakesh the stakeholders involved in the tourism industry mention that this strategy is something that both the public and private authorities pay extra attention to. For Marrakech as a city in a developing country, tourism plays a crucial role for economic prosperity. An integrated destination management approach that considers the diverse stakeholders related to developing the destination is important. Ali (2009, p. 12) mentions that the destination management organization is needed, since they provide a coordinated approach to maximize the benefits for the actors involved in the development of a destination.

The destination management organization has put its interest and resources towards developing the destination considering a sustainability approach that can potentially be enhanced through aspects of "smart cities" that use information and communication technologies. The DMO has an important role in finding smart solutions regarding the different challenges a destination face in order to enhance the quality of life for both residents and tourist in a sustainable way according to Presenza et al., (2014, p. 315). The quality of life for the citizens and tourist is one of the important things in Marrakech, which is mentioned by the DMO. The Deputy Mayor goes also in line with the quality of life and argues that the city has earlier focused on a mobility plan that provides the basis needed for a smart destination, such as the improvement of the infrastructure and how to structure the city for citizen to have higher quality of life. The CEO of the tour operator Business Class sees it as an opportunity to make their city effective among others and stresses the importance of economic value. The other respondents put in how the technology behind the concept of a smart city can lead to better quality and services that can be offered both for the citizens and tourists. This is also something that the tourism coordinator from the Regional Ministry of tourism is aware of and mentions that they support the technology that investors in tourism develop, with the goal to offer high level of quality and services to the tourists. According to theory, Manente (2008, p. 1) emphasizes that it is the destination management organization who needs to manage and support from different resources and activities rather than working solely with marketing. Presenza, 2005, p. 3) further argues that the destination management organizations have to shift from marketing to a more holistic management approach and nowadays do work with destination developers as they are acting for the realization of tourism development as catalyst and facilitators.

The smart city concept differs, which is pointed out by the DMO, depending on the priorities each and every destination has. Cities have developed their smart city approach, but have often focused on the implementation of technology or developed their strategies with less focus on tourism, such as Barcelona or Amsterdam, as outlined by the DMO. The connectivity and possibilities in exchange of information is what the respondents see as the most beneficial part regarding the smartness concept. As
mentioned by the Deputy Major, it is of importance to understand tourist preferences, which is possible through the connectivity as the city tries to develop a participatory approach where the city listens to its tourists. This is not solely the city’s approach, but also the citizens are involved as they understand the importance, which is why they also try to retrieve information on tourist preferences. Retrieving information and also exchanging information will have an important role for the purpose to better exchange information between the stakeholders according to the Deputy Major. The smart technologies makes it possible to collect more information on tourist behaviours, where it is possible to gather this data in order to produce products in cooperation with other stakeholders, which is argued by the project coordinator for the chamber of craftsmen in Marrakech. The communication manager of the Regional Investment Centre emphasizes the exchange of information and mentions that many projects have been initiated by the city to develop more connectivity in which the projects have been accomplished through collaboration with citizens and involvement of the local businesses. The outcomes of these projects, including the involvement of ICT, has made an impact for both residents and tourists, which is why the DMO need to reflect on the involvement of stakeholders within the city according to Kanter et al., 2009, p. 2; Chourabi et al., 2012, p. 2290; Schaffers et al., 2012; Buhalis et al., 2013, p. 556).

A problem that has occurred with the development of new technologies is, according to the project coordinator at the chamber of craftsmen, to find ways to preserve cultural identity of Marrakech as the same time as "the artisans” crafts need to connect it to modernity. The deputy major means that the city needs to be even better in the exchange of information between stakeholders and having expertise from the private sector to develop a strategy that includes technologies.

Tung & Ritchie (2011, p. 1369) mentions in their study how tourists collect experiences and that it is a long phase, which starts already before the trip is planned to after the trip is done and throughout this phases the destination management organizers need to manage its stakeholders to facilitate the perceptions of the destination as individual subjective evaluations is filled, which stresses the destination management organization to be able to create memorable experiences for the tourists. This goes in line with how our respondents have argued as the tour operator mentioned that technology is the optimal media in order to stay connected since they emphasize their "clients” (which in this case is referred to tourists) for feedbacks and to share their experiences with photos. This strategy is also supported by the DMO who points out the importance of technology and how technology is helping the stakeholders involved in the tourism section to listen to the market and collect visitor comments in order to estimate and develop the trends, which is demanded by the tourists of tomorrow. The technology in tourism industry is also of importance according to the Communication Manager of the Four Seasons Hotel and explains that the technology provides information from tourists since they share experiences through their smartphones from their stay. The technology development creates even more possibilities for the stakeholders and companies who are involved in the tourism industry. As mentioned by the tour operator, the technology development has also made it possible to follow patterns based on tourists’ use of their smartphones. The companies are able to receive data from their clients, which the tour operator exemplified with where the clients were calling from, where their photos were taken and from what countries people are.
Buhalis & Amaranggana (2013, p. 557) and Wang et al. (2013, p. 59) note that there are three main components for developing smartness, which are “Cloud Services”, the “Internet of Things” and “End-User Internet Service system. The key of these three components is, for the government supported by various stakeholders, to have proper connectivity within the city and to maintain and support the networks and connections available. The DMO means that technology is not solely the way to collect feedback and comments, but technology does support it. He also mentions the importance of offering technology in line with tourist needs, which means that if the destination management organization notices that more bookings are made through smartphones, then the destination should rather focus on developing applications on smartphones instead of having websites. Lamsfus et al., (2015, p. 364) argue that as ICT environments are developing it is of importance for destinations to empower tourism stakeholders with an ICT infrastructure in order to meet visitor needs and work on the same platforms as they do. What is argued by Lamsfus et al., (2015, p. 364) is supported both by the DMO and also by the Regional Tourism Ministry as they provide financial support for developing the technological infrastructure in order to help companies in tourism to develop products and services of higher quality.

5.2 Sustainable urban tourism

The DMO mentions that there are three parts in the context of tourism to keep in mind regarding sustainability in Marrakech. Firstly, tourism is an economic drivers for the city and therefore tourism should be seen as an economic benefit for the citizens. Secondly, the social part should not be neglected, as tourism does only develop when the local population is integrated. Thirdly, the environment needs to be preserved. Moreover, water and energy need to be used efficiently without harming the environment. The Communication Manager of the 4 Seasons Hotel, also supports this view of sustainability and explains sustainability as eco-friendliness, ethics, collaboration with local suppliers and from an environmental perspective regarding re-use of water and the use of electricity. The tourism coordinator of the Regional Tourism Ministry also goes in line with the statements mentioned above and stresses that sustainable development is the kind of approach they adopt in economic, social and environmental terms as it automatically leads to the development of economic activity. What is interesting to see is that the stakeholders involved in the tourism sector of Marrakesh share the same visions and points out what still needs to be done and how it will be solved. The stakeholders see the opportunities and see the benefits of always being updated with the behaviour of the future tourists as it creates opportunities for the destination to be managed more effectively.

The tourism coordinator of the Regional Tourism Ministry argues that the sustainable development influence other key elements, which is of importance in the sustainable urban tourism. He mentions that sustainable development influences the local population positively and at the same time this approach touch the key elements, especially from an environmental-, and social point of view. It is of importance to find the right equilibrium between social and environment as both elements have a direct impact on the local population and at the same time for the environment regarding gulfs, water stations and pollution. This has also been noted by the DMO: There is a lot of progress regarding sustainable tourism in Marrakech, but it is not enough since there are a lot more things that can be done and developed when information are better exchanged with the help of smart technologies.
The tourism industry is experiencing a shift from where sightseeing is not the only part that is demanded from the tourists, it is rather the whole experience itself. For the Regional Tourism Ministry the vision is to integrate sustainable development in all sectors, with the objective to make their tourists sustainable. The CEO of business class mentions ”Green Marrakesh” and exemplifies it with the botanical garden, in which the sightseeing switches to experience and going beyond basic services. This is where the city needs to provide motivation for the tourists to revisit Marrakesh, which is made by being an experience match maker. Regarding the ”Jardin Majorelle”, the CEO explains that the local community is included where they explain the history, the religion connected, citizens overall behavior in life, culture, lifestyles and how sustainability is referred from the citizens perspective. The shift that the tourism industry is facing with tourists is of importance as the city needs to master tourism and especially making sure to not lose the control over the cultural identity as it is the competitive advantage in the city according to the major deputy. The local identity of Marrakech is also mentioned by the communication manager of the Four Seasons Hotel as an important activity from an economic point of view as the tourist mainly want to experience the city from the perspective of an inhabitant, which is why investors need to understand that tourism needs to be developed in collaboration with the tourism sector in the city. To keep the authenticity of the originality of traditional Marrakech craftsmanship, the chamber of craftsman has established educational programs in collaboration with the city to tutor the traditional artwork that is attractive to tourists.

Most of our respondents stress the importance of having a clear vision, which should be shared in all levels and also by all the stakeholders involved in the tourism development as this give better incentives for the companies to strive towards the same direction for the development of a competitive destination. It seems that the city development of Marrakesh is something that is of importance for the destination as the destination management organization puts efforts in the local population to integrate with the tourism sector. In fact, the DMO mentions that the approach they take is to include all people and make sure that everyone agrees on the decisions taken. The tour operator noted that visitors and residents are directly connected in the tourism experience and that is why the population of Marrakesh needs to be involved and see the benefits in the community. This is enabled by the tour operator who provides education to the citizens, in which the citizens will see the benefits in their daily life when interacting with tourists. Tourism is important, which is why children in primary school get information about the tourism industry, which is mentioned by the DMO. In this way, children get the idea and perceptions about the industry and this is also why the citizens are aware of the importance with tourism, especially as it creates job opportunities. Job opportunities for the community is what the Communication Manager (4 Seasons Hotel) also offer and focuses on creating the jobs towards local applicants with the reasoning that it ensures authenticity, the locals know their city and country and finally the hotel see it as a way to provide jobs as the same time as they help the local community.

Sustainability has gained in popularity in the tourism industry as mentioned in the theoretical framework. Manning and Dougherty (1995, p. 30) see the term as a way of using natural resources to support economic activity without compromising the environment’s carrying capacity, which is the same idea that our stakeholders involved in the tourism sector strive towards. As there are different priorities to choose from regarding sustainability, Marshall & Toffel have in their study structured the hierarchy in the term sustainability were they argue that individuals have different actions and that
is also why they have different satisfaction level in the hierarchy. The satisfactory level differs among individuals. In accordance to this, the DMO points out that the environment and its citizens play an important role. The DMO explains that when the streets are clean, it influences people around regarding respecting the environment. He further explains that that sustainability should be seen as a product and if the product is not good, then it is not a product meant for the industry and therefore should be reconsidered to meet customer needs.

In the case of the 4 Seasons Hotel, they offer their hotel guests to be sustainable by, for instance, giving the opportunity to not clean the guests’ towels or sheets every day. In this way the hotel and the guests act in an environmental friendly way as this action saves cost and causes less impact on the environment. As mentioned before, there are a lot of different views in the tourism industry regarding sustainability, especially according to our respondents who argue for different approaches regarding the sustainability part. In fact, all respondents agree that the city should act sustainable but since people see sustainability from different perspectives and have different opinions on the levels of being sustainable, the strategies differ from one person to the other. The city of Marrakesh struggles with air pollution, which is mentioned by the DMO, and this has been solved by installing sensor of the quality on the air in order to measure the results. The Communication Manager of the 4 Seasons Hotel also questions the technical development and thinks that it is strange that solar power plans have not been developed in Marrakesh, which she finds strange since Morocco provides a lot of sun and by installing solar power plants the hotel can save energy and make things more sustainable.

The tour operator argues that the whole city needs to redefine their jobs and not work within its regular frame, especially jobs within the tourism industry. The reason behind this, he further explains lies on the fact that all stakeholders should be thinking in global experiences since this affects the tourists positively, which will later lead that tourists will have more incentives to return to the specific destination. DMO’s have the outermost responsibility to collect all comments and views from all stakeholders, citizens and tourists and make sure that everyone involved in the development of a sustainable, yet competitive, destination support the shared visions and goals. What is important to be aware of for the DMO’s is not to solely think about the economic dimension when decisions is being made. Elkington (1998), who is known for “The triple bottom line” mentions that there are three dimensions to be aware of, which is economic, social and environmental. According to Stoddard et al., (2013, p. 234-235) a corporations success should be measured based on all three dimensions and the performances in a corporation should target the benefits both for shareholders and stakeholders.

Sustainability in the tourism context have been a problem regarding how people understand and interpret it. According to Butler (1999, p. 19) the issue that lies within sustainability in a tourism context is the missing valid definition of sustainability, which is seen as a key problem for the stakeholders involved in the destination development. The definition is either more focused on the physical environment or the social and cultural dynamics (Robinson et al., 2011, p. 70). Today, focus has switched on economic and organizational perspectives according to Robinson et al., (2011, p. 70). The economic and organizational perspectives is also dimensions that has been stated by our respondents as they have mentioned it. The community have played an important
role in the development of a popular tourist destination that gather people. The strategies that are being used by the respondents cover the perspectives of importance for a sustainable destination, especially from the economic part as the community gets involved with jobs and education and from the organizational perspective as all stakeholders within tourism are involved in the discussions on the visions and goals planned ahead for the destination. Another popular topic within Marrakesh as a competitive destination is the encouragement of including their residents and local communities to work in the tourism sector, which also goes in line with Timur and Getz (2009, pp. 224-225) regarding whether emphasis in tourism should be on economic, which means neglecting the improvement of residents’ lives, or human development, which is the environmental focus regarding employment and other social benefits.

The World Tourism Organization regards sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNWTO, 2013, p. 47). This statement is an overall plan within, economic, social and environmental impacts, which also gives a reminder of how the triple bottom line is defined and structured. To understand how these dimensions should be developed and in which dimension the stakeholders should start as there are different views and goals among tourism is a challenge for the destination.

5.3 Stakeholders

According to the respondents, the development towards a sustainable and smart tourism destination requires an exchange of information between stakeholders and an increasing involvement in stakeholder collaboration. In this process, the importance of an integrated sustainability approach with smart technologies needs to be highlighted. This means that the DMO in collaboration with stakeholders needs to lead the development as a focal actor in the destination stakeholder setting. The tour operator argues that not all stakeholders are fully committed to all sustainability dimensions. The CEO also questions whether it is possible to mix ethics and business and points out several examples were the idea of being sustainability has been popular, but ended up in failures or the fact that the sustainable goals have not been reached as what has been expected. This is often the case when economic interests prevail over social and environmental ones. To integrate them and to make stakeholders see the importance of developing the destination with a holistic approach, is a major challenge for the development of a sustainable and smart destination. All respondents argue that the city of Marrakesh do have great information sharing and good collaboration among the stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. The involvement among stakeholders in the decision making is according to Crane & Ruebottom (2012, p. 78) what stakeholder theory is based on. In practice this means whether there is a smooth cooperation between companies and their stakeholders for the purpose of understanding the wants and needs of the stakeholders (Tullberg, 2013, p. 128).

According to F. Junius (2015, p. 12892) a successful destination is a destination that attracts visitors and tourists in which the tourism area offers quality and unique experiences, since all the stakeholders who are involved benefit from it. The participatory approach is common in Marrakech as our respondents have mentioned that public sector meet with stakeholders from time to time where discussions on projects are done with the tourism sector before any decision is being made. The deputy major means that the public sector is in charge when it comes to the development of the city,
but they do listen to the stakeholders and exchange information with the DMO, universities and the private sector. The project coordinator of the chamber of craftsman also stresses the importance of exchanging information with stakeholders and emphasizes the collaboration with the DMO, the public-, and private sector. He also mentions that the regional investment centre updates the chamber of craftsmen on opportunities and trends. The communication manager of the regional investment centre also supports the fact with exchanging information and having a dialogue as it is of importance to listen to the needs of their residents, especially since Marrakech would not be able to keep its attraction otherwise. She also notes that there is always an exchange with several authorities, such as the DMO, the major office and local organisations in order to enable private and public investments to be realized.

The exchange of information is where the DMO as an intelligent agent has the important role to retrieve information and knowledge from the different stakeholders and through this strategy it also encourages engagement as mentioned by Sheehan (2015, p. 532). To reach and exchange of information environment authors have supported the view of a shift from a top-down-, to a more dialogue-based governance approach (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007, p. 113; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013, p. 558; Boes et al., 2015, p. 401). As earlier presented in Figure 4 by Sheehan (2015, p. 532) the DMO acts as a boundary spanner between the internal environment and the external environment. In other words, to manage stakeholders from the internal environment perspective and having the goal to be a competitive destination from the external environment perspective. This is also supported by Buhalis (2000, p. 106), who says that the emphasis on the internal and external environment in combination decides the competitiveness and prosperity of destinations.

A sustainability approach has also increased in popularity in stakeholder theory according to Doods (2010, p. 253) who means that stakeholder theory also explains on which level the organizations are in the matter of sustainability and how organizations and businesses should work with stakeholders in order to improve the quality of the environment. This is also something that the city of Marrakesh tries to do. The Tourism Coordinator of the regional tourism ministry means that it is important for both the private sector and the public sector to collaborate together. Collaboration among all sectors is of importance to create an attractive city and Marrakesh as a city have actively chosen to promote its citizen to work along for the interest of the city. The progress from an idea to implementation is a process where suggestions and ideas are discussed in detail until every department is satisfied, in order for the stakeholders to know in which area the city wants to start of a particular project, as mentioned by the tourism coordinator. The progress is also mentioned by the DMO vice director who explains before a project starts how it gets shared to other organizations in order to share the same visions. The DMO also stresses how important it is to have all organizations and councils involved for the development of a sustainable and smart destination and do also mention that the collaboration among the stakeholders involved in this development works well.

Stakeholder theory in general covers stakeholder relationships within firms in how firms should utilize these relationships in order to achieve organizational goals. In stakeholder theory behavioural aspects between stakeholders and the firms is important to identify the nature of the firm and how managers perceive the organization and also how it should be operated. This means that the management within stakeholder theory is
crucial to build up relationships among firms and stakeholders to have good communication in order to work well and also collaborate successfully. Studies have shown that managers do take decisions without considering stakeholders interests, which is mentioned in Tashman & Relin (2013, p. 591). According to Quinlan (2008, p. 60) stakeholders and the destinations rely on one other for their survival looking at it from a tourist destination point of view. This two way relationship works well in Marrakesh since the city developers collect information from all companies and stakeholders and make sure to find the best solution.

The DMO states that there are high ambitions for developing a sustainable and smart tourism destination. There are negotiations with experienced companies, especially since Morocco is a developing country, which is why the strategy for Marrakesh is to rather put more budget in hiring companies with experience as they can provide the technology. The collaboration from the public and private sector is also something that the Communication Manager of the 4 Seasons Hotel also notices and mentions the previous experiences working in a hotel in another country and means that there is a difference in the way the tourism sector is working in Marrakesh. The communication manager refers to her personal experience in the hotel industry in other destinations and notices that the main difference between these destinations and Marrakech is the communication where the city developers ask about feedback and exchange information, while this was not the case in the previous job experience. Collaboration, sharing information and working together are key terms that our respondents mentions regarding the way the destination of Marrakesh is working towards a attractive city. The tour operator mentions that there is a shared vision and a step by step progress towards a collaborative framework, but at the same time he stresses the importance of the public sector to involve all stakeholders when projects are being planned. This reasoning is also shared by the DMO who mentions how important it is to collaborate together both in the private as the public sector for the interest of the city. Also the Communication Manager of the 4 Seasons Hotel means that they are involved in the development of a sustainable and smart city and mentions that everyone is working together as a team where there is no separation between the hotel and the authorities.

What can be seen regarding stakeholder perceptions on their collaboration is that the city developers do not hesitate to inform and share project ideas and information regarding their visions for the future of the city. This is also something that the private sector, tourism sector and other companies involved in destination development is aware of. Everyone agrees that sustainability is of importance, but it seems that it is rather easier said than done. This is exemplified by the tour operator who states that the clients demand sustainable solutions, but do also mention that other international initiatives have failed. The struggle lies somewhere on the public sector, which the communication manager of the 4 Seasons Hotel means and mentions that it is strange why the city has not thought about installing solar panels as there is a lot of sun in Morocco. D’Angella & Go (2009, p. 429) argues that their needs to be a change in the mind-set regarding the destinations way of working. According to d’Angella & Go, (2009, p. 429) the destination lacks financial resources, which is why their economic performance has to evolve and work differently than living on old habits. They argue that destinations need to find a balance sharing and hoarding resources, and it is here where the open communication that exist in Marrakesh can lead to a successful strategy among other destinations.
6. Conclusion

In this chapter the research question and the purpose of this study will be answered. Here we will draw the final conclusions of our study by finding similarities and differences in the perceptions regarding the destination stakeholders and the DMO on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals. In the end of this chapter we present suggestions for future research within this area.

6.1 General

The purpose of this thesis is to map the perceptions of destination stakeholders and the DMO on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals, which allows us to draw conclusion on similarities and differences between different stakeholder groups regarding these goals. This aims to support the DMO to manage stakeholders in a more effective way towards balancing economic-, social- and environmental goals of sustainability in the destination in a developing country context. The perceptions on smartness provide the DMO with insights on how information and communication technologies can help to achieve sustainability objectives. In the increasingly competitive tourism market, destinations need to find a destination management approach that enhances the tourism experience while protecting its natural environment and cultural heritage. The DMO in Marrakech faces a situations where tourism demand mainly from developed European countries put pressure on the destination to manage its increasing inflow in tourism numbers while protecting its environment and cultural heritage. In reference to this, the research questions was: How can the DMO use stakeholder perceptions on sustainable and smart urban tourism goals in response to the increasingly competitive tourism market?

The study revealed that there is generally a common understanding among stakeholders in Marrakech regarding the importance of sustainable and smart tourism goals. However a common strategic vision and coordinated destination management approach is lacking as well as clarity about an integrated planning approach to realize sustainable and smart tourism goals.

We can firstly note that the private sector (tour operator and hotel) has directly made use of smartness, moreover to enhance the tourism experience such as CRM/feedback systems, social media, mobile applications, geo-localization of tourism behaviour in the city. Secondly, we can see that public authorities (Major and Ministry) act moreover as facilitators of technology availability through financial help to companies. In accordance to this, the major office also tries to enhance the necessary infrastructure with Wifi availability in parks, malls, buses etc. in order to let stakeholders reap the benefits of smart technologies. While the regional investment centre also acts a facilitator for linking investors to the host community, it made clear that the focus is on preserving the destinations cultural heritage as well as the chamber of commerce. Both have a strong affiliation for highlighting the cultural identity in any modernization through technological development. Therefore, apart from the private sector who used technology for tourist experiences, the public sector who facilitates availability, thirdly the host community stakeholders in this study are the ones who are more reactive to these technological changes. They are interested since it provides economic benefits, but according to them the importance of keeping Marrakech’s tradition and cultural heritage alive should be in the foreground of any private sector collaboration with smart technologies. The DMO rather sees the smart component as technology being the means
for enhancing the tourist experience, but simultaneously emphasizes the importance of implementing technology by engaging citizens. This diverging roles that stakeholder groups inherit are not used to their full potential for developing a smart destination. They all have their roles, but to enable their effective use the DMO can reveal from these perceptions that a more coherent approach needs to be developed that makes them all use smart technologies in a dynamic and collaborative way. Considering the development of smart technologies in a developing country context, this study shows that technological development is not only a matter of technological expertise in the first place, since efforts have been made to integrate smart technologies in the destination by various stakeholders. However, the development stage is not as far as in a highly developed country, which might indicate why some of the stakeholders have not focused or fully used the potential of smart technologies.

Moreover, this coherent use of smart technologies should be implemented towards a balance of economic-, social-, and environmental goals of sustainability. In reference to this, diverging approaches can be observed when looking at stakeholder perceptions. The private sector puts much more emphasis on economic goals, while especially environmental responsibilities are passed over to the public sector. The hotel stresses that public authorities should take care of energy efficient use of water resources and the use of solar energies and that they just rather make sure they act sustainably within their hotel. This perceptions indicates a reactive role regarding sustainable development of the destination which is primarily considered a necessity to satisfy tourist needs and wishes to stay in a hotel that care about sustainability rather than actually doing it out of intrinsic motivation. The tour operator argues similarly and even questions the total commitment of stakeholders regarding sustainability and the mix of ethics and business. The social component is more emphasized by the public authorities who developed a participatory approach engaging citizens and tourists in the development of the destination. The public sector tends to be proactive in this area, but environmental problems almost seem to be taken as a necessary evil that needs to be kept to a minimum. This is highlighted by the DMO who argues that decisions are made collectively, but many issues remain undiscussed or not priorities when it comes to the environment. The host community organizations in this study mainly highlighted social aspects as well regarding the preservation of cultural identity. On can see that economic interest prevail in general while the private sector sees the preservation of cultural heritage and environment as means to generate more revenue. The public sector aims to keep an equilibrium of economic interest and social and environmental preservation, while the latter seems to receive less attention than social concerns.

Destination like Marrakech are highly influenced by tourism and need to balance economic, social-, and environmental goals to remain competitive in a rapidly developing market where tourist behaviours changes in line with technological development. The fact that Marrakech is an emerging country has been stressed by the major office and that one cannot expect that smartness is as rapidly implemented as in a developed country. However, progress has been made in developing a smarter tourist destination and the study showed that stakeholders have different information needs and the DMO has the potential to act as an intelligent agent. The participatory approach is emphasized by all destination stakeholders and has distinguished the city from other top-down approaches that have made many destinations lose their uniqueness. Obviously, this has not yet happened to Marrakech, but the warning signs to lead the destination into a potential decline as indicated by the destination life-cycle should not
be neglected. The participatory approach has benefited the destination to keep its uniqueness, however the DMO needs to make sure that stakeholders not only talk, but “walk the talk”, meaning that they actually try to reap the benefits of collaboration. Information needs about tourists and information exchange has been stressed by all stakeholders. However, the DMOs role as an intelligent agent has not been adopted yet. Smart technologies can accelerate the process of collecting data and exchanging those between stakeholders with a clear vision towards sustainability objectives in order to avoid separate initiatives that benefit a few stakeholders but not the destination as whole.

6.2 Practical and academic implications

Theory has shown that destination stakeholders often hold diverging objectives regarding economic-, social-, and environmental goals of sustainability. The study revealed that this also applies to the DMO and stakeholders in Marrakech. However, we can see that these objectives do not lead to stakeholders acting necessarily in isolation. The tour operator and hotel have shown that economic objectives prevail, but do not show the whole picture. They collaborate with the host environment, such as the hotel with the chamber of craftsman on developing cultural heritage routes. The public sector includes the host environment in participative approach for destination development. The public sector develops the city and provides the infrastructure with wifi availability to support the private sector to develop smart solutions. The literature recognized the DMO as an intelligent agent and we can see that the stakeholders emphasized the importance of exchanging information. This implies that the DMO as an intelligent agent can be used as a destination management approach while steering stakeholders towards sustainable and smart tourism goals. This study shows that the DMO needs to use stakeholder perceptions to develop a vision that enables to integrate the diverse views on sustainable and smart tourism goals into a dynamic platform that enables stakeholders to retrieve and exchange information. This in turn requires the involvement of technological expertise from the private sector that needs to clearly be integrated and understand that smart solutions require the recognition of the destinations’ specific context. In the case of Marrakech, the local culture should be seen as an asset that enhances the tourist experience and at the same time enables modernity with smart solutions. Therefore this study contributed to a better understanding of the DMO’s influence regarding the achievement of sustainability goals in the broader urban context while reducing the information asymmetries between stakeholders. This study’s context of the city of Marrakech that receives an increasing inflow of tourists, contributes to future research suggested by Pearce (2015, p. 13) to explore the DMO role in expanding city destinations and examine the behaviours and attitudes of those involved. In addition, this study contributes to a growing body of research in understanding the complexities of tourism activity taking place in developing urban destinations that need to highlight their uniqueness and preserve their local environment.

6.3 Future research

This thesis is limited to the city of Marrakech and therefore future research could investigate the DMO perspective in developing a sustainable and smart tourist destination in another context, such as in another city. This could specifically interesting regarding future open sky agreements between the European Union and other developing countries, where cities experiences a comparable inflow of visitors with a developing country tourist profile. This would enable to make comparisons with this
case that enables to reveal similarities or contradictory outcomes. We suggest that future research examines a larger sample of stakeholders with representatives from more diverse organization to get further insights into the possible use of the DMO perspective as an intelligent agent. Apart from that, we suggest that future studies can also use quantifiable methods to analyze information exchanges with information and communication technologies and the degree to which these information have resulted in sustainable solutions. We suggest that future research should also look into how the DMO can create a coherent vision among stakeholders with for instance leadership approaches, something that was not the focus of our study.

6.4 Delimitations

Since this is a case study within a developing country, we delimited the work to a specific region; in this case Morocco and Marrakech. All of the respondents for our interviews work within the tourism industry in Marrakech. We only did the interviews with a few companies in Morocco, which limited the studies generalizability. However, since a lot of developing countries have their main income from the tourism industry, it is possible to at least measure the same kind of study in another developing country. Regarding the interviews, the material collected might have been a bit biased as the company representatives do not want to talk negatively about their company. On the other hand, we informed and offered before the interviews about that the interviews will be confidential between us as authors and the respondents. This option could have led that our respondents answered the questions personally and giving higher incentives of being honest instead of us revealing their identity.
7. Truth criteria

In this chapter we will explain how we as authors' have followed the codes of conduct regarding the trustworthiness of this study. The reliability and validity will be presented and in the end the four criterion: transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability.

The goal with any kind of research is to have research findings were the evidence that is collected and conclusions can stand up to the closest scrutiny (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 191). It might not be possible to fulfil the research findings to its fullest, but the possibilities of getting the answer wrong will be reduced (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 192). The first main part, which is expected to be done by all research is the critical appraisal were the first part of that appraisal is to judging how the evidence for the study conclusions has been assessed (Hinds et al., 1990, p. 431).

In the matter of research there is different views of how a research should be made in general, which we have presented in the method chapter. This is also the fact regarding the quality of the research design depending whether the research has been collected through qualitative- or quantitative data (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 192). Below we will explain why we have chosen to present these criteria, how these criteria has been used in our study and why these criteria should be fulfilled in this study.

In order to establish and asses the quality of a research there are two important criteria of importance, which is reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 394). There has been some discussions regarding its relevance as qualitative researchers and writers mean that the terms need to be altered, since these criteria is relevant for measurements suited more towards quantitative researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 394). The definitions of reliability and validity goes in line with the measurement part as reliability is defined as "repeatability of scientific observations, and sources that could influence the stability and consistency of those observations" and validity is stated as the findings collected that reflects the reality and the meaning of the data is accurately interpreted (Hinds et al., 1990, p. 431; Kirk & L. Miller, 1986, p. 19; Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 354). In Whittemore et al., (2001, p. 522) it is mentioned that the development of a qualitative research is challenging when the qualitative research contains of rigor and subjectivity as well as creativity into the scientific process.

Some qualitative researchers claims though that validity and reliability are terms not suitable for a qualitative study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 194) as they want to reject these terms and substitute it with credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 354; (Thomas & K. Magilvy, p. 152, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 395). The trustworthiness of qualitative research is based on four components of trustworthiness, which has an equivalent criterion in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 395; Thomas & K. Magilvy, 2011, p. 152).

Credibility
Credibility is the first criteria to be aware of regarding the quality of an academic study. According to Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 400) credibility is the alternative criteria for evaluating qualitative research for the internal validity. The credibility of a research is evaluated when the researcher has made logical links between the observations and the intention of the study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). From a researcher’s
perspective, credibility is the quality of being trustworthy. The research needs to both ensure that it has been carried out according to the canons of good practice and that the social world of the members, within the study, has been correctly understood and confirmed between the researcher and the members studied in the research.

In our study we have interviewed people who are working in the destination we have focused our study in. Interviews gives the researcher an opportunity to collect participants’ experiences through interpretation were the part of credibility is achieved when checking the representativeness of the data as a whole (Thomas & K. Magilvy, 2011, p. 152; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 396). To check if we have understood our respondents we have collected all the data from the interviews, as we have documented all interviews and also given the opportunity to our respondents to check the documents.

**Transferability**
Transferability covers whether the collected data is generalizable and if it can be used in another context, or in the same context but during another time (Whittemore et al., 2001, p. 523; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Even though the research has been focused within a developing country, in which the tourism sector is of huge importance for the specific region, the generalizability is a factor which cannot be fully excluded. The approach that has been conducted in this study give the possibility to transfer the results into other context within tourism and the development of a tourism destination. The transferability in this case gives also space for doing this kind of research in other countries in which the tourism if of importance and counted as a main income. As argued by Lincoln and Guba (cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 392), this criteria explains whether the results and findings is transferable in another context and other milieu.

**Dependability**
The third criteria is dependability and this is the criteria where the researchers make sure that the records and phases through the research process is accessible from an auditor, who will be able to provide detailed description during the procedures of the research (Thomas & K. Magilvy, 2011, p. 152; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). To accomplish dependability criteria the records in all phases should involve a peer that will act as an "auditor", with the purpose to validate the procedures throughout the study (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, p. 294) explains it as dependability is fulfilled when the process of the research has been logical, traceable and documented. Throughout all the phases in the research process the material of this study has been revised and reviewed by a supervisor to establish proper procedures. All the gathered material from the respondents have only been in use for the study and the documents have only been accessed by the authors of this study and due to the ethics of this study the gathered material will also be erased after the study has been published.

**Conformability**
Fourth and final criteria is confirmability, which is when all of the previous criteria has been established (Thomas & K. Magilvy, 2011, p. 154) and where the researcher can show that the research has been restricted from personal values or theoretical inclinations (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Throughout this study we as researchers have tried to be as objective as possible to make sure that our respondents have not been directed in any direction.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Interview guide

Introduction
Please let us know a bit about your organisation and your responsibilities?

Smart
General - Could you please explain to us your view on smart cities?
Experiential - What kind of role do tourists play in the development of a smart city?
Experiential - What role does ICT play when creating tourist experiences?

Sustainable urban tourism
General - What do you understand under sustainable urban tourism?
Economic - How do you think the city can guarantee sustained future growth?
Economic/experiential - How do you think tourists should be targeted?
Social - What do you think are the major needs and concerns citizens have in Marrakech?
Social - To what extent does your organization try to make sure the community is involved?
Social/experiential - How do you think citizens should be targeted?
Social/experiential - What could be the major needs and concern tourists have when visiting Marrakech?
Environment - To what extent does your organization try to address environmental concerns when targeting tourists and citizens?

Stakeholders (destination management insights)
General - With who and how does your organization collaborate?
Conflicting views - What challenges do you face in working together with other organisations?
Top down/ bottom up - How do you make decisions and based on what criteria?