

Impacts of romance and sex tourism on the larger tourism sector in Tunisia

Perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders

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SUMMARY

In Tunisia, there is not much space for cross-cultural understanding. Combined with the gap of values that are between the local people and the tourists coming from very different social backgrounds, the contact between hosts and guests is sometimes conflictive, and in many cases not even existing. Within the scope of host-guest relations, this study zooms in the sexual and romantic encounters that take place between locals and tourists and sheds light on the impacts of these encounters on the Tunisian tourism industry at large. Findings have shown different impacts of sex and romance tourism on Tunisia's reputation and the tourist experience. However, looking further than sex and romance tourism, there are other impacts on the general tourism industry that cannot be ignored. This study has found the connections between different kind of impacts, whereas conflictive host-guest relations are taking a large space. At the same time, sex and romance tourism has been argued by tourism stakeholders to take a place within the bigger scope of host-guest relations as these stakeholders do not perceive sex and romance tourism as an isolated field of practices but rather as part of a range of host-guest tensions and relations that are not desired to be present and provide alternatives.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Tunisia is a country where African, Arabic and European culture meet. This has been found in its history where the original tribes of North-Africa have made space for Roman culture and then Arab colonisation. Later cultural influences were from Turkey and the impact of the colonization of Tunisia by France led to a lot of changes in for example administration, education, language, clothing and architecture. Tunisia therefore can be seen as a mix of several cultures, that each have left their mark on this part of Africa and its people (Bleasdale, 2012).

Tourism development in Tunisia has gone through several stages, in which certain regions were developed majorly for tourism and where in rather a short time, a huge tourism sector has been established. Also can one perceive the state as a major actor in tourism development, as many developments have resulted from state policies and decisions and investments. This was especially since the 1960s where Government Tourism policy has been very influential on tourism development, which led to the development of mass tourism mostly in the Eastern coastal areas of Tunisia (Hammamet, see appendix 1), where beach tourists were hosted in newly established resorts and hotels. Before that, international tourism consisted mostly of artists and intellectuals visiting the country. Nowadays, the tourism zones on the coast lines of Tunisia are taking part of the competition of international tourism, where cities like Hammamet, Monastir and Sousse but over time also the island of Djerba, have been majorly changed. This development went ongoing, as the state also did attempts to introduce other forms of tourism (like desert, golf, heritage, business tourism) in other regions (Desert, East-Southern, Northern coast lines), meanwhile beach tourism has stayed the dominant form of tourism in Tunisia, of course related to the pleasant climate during summer. Tunisia has become a 'packaged destination' for beach tourism over time (Rutin, 2010). These developments are on international tourism, whereas Tunisia also attracts regional tourists from Algeria and Libya and domestic tourism, where middle class families own second homes (Bleasdale, 2006; Poirier, 1995), however European tourists are the majority (Rutin, 2010).

The benefits of tourism can be cultural (like the exchange of culture which again encourages preservation of culture by (Besculides, Lee and McCormick, 2002), however one of the major benefits of tourism in Tunisia is social-economical. Employment and income are provided by this important economic sector, especially for the people living around tourism areas (Rutin, 2010). This has been confirmed by research on the view of local people, who also see tourism as a boost to the economy (Robinson and Boniface, 1999).

Host-guest contact

However, tourism can also be a source of conflicts. One of the major points of conflict has to do with host-guest relations. As mentioned earlier, in Tunisia the dominant form of tourism is still the mass tourism, beach tourism. Research showed that there is not much space for cross-cultural understanding. Combined with the gap of values that are between the local people and the tourists coming from very different social backgrounds, the contact between hosts and guests is sometimes conflictive, and in many cases not even existing (Robinson and Boniface, 1999).

This lack of contact between locals and tourists has been very much characterizing the Tunisian tourism industry (Poirier, 1995). Also male prostitution in relation to tourism has been a problem to the Tunisian community, next to alcohol abuse and disrespect for the

culture and customs (Poirier, 1995). In the case study on Tozeur, southern Tunisia, by Robinson and Boniface (1999) downsides to tourism have been addressed by tourists that complained about sexual harassment and aggressiveness by traders, mentioning the danger to discourage tourism.

SEX AND ROMANCE TOURISM

As to understand further the host-guest contact, this study will be about one specific form of host-guest relationships. Romantic and sexual relations that exist between Tunisian men and female tourists are considered as part of the scope of host-guest contact. These relations can vary in motivations of tourists, locals, the length of the relationship and voluntarily or commercially based, as well as how both tourists and locals perceive the relation they have (Herold, Garcia, & DeMoya, 2001; Meisch, 1995; O'Connell Davidson, 1996; Pruitt & LaFont, 1995). Sometimes these encounters are experienced as positive, sometimes as negative. Some of these relations for example have been problematized by organizations and governments that emphasize mostly the financial and emotional exploitation that female tourists undergo that serve the goal of gaining money or immigration papers. As it seems from previous literature on host-guest relations in Tunisia, male sex workers in Tunisia and from internet forum and other websites regarding sex and romance tourism (bezness-land.com, beznessalert.com, retrieved 25th of September 2013, Bleasdale, 2006; Lévy and Feki, 1997), these relations are highly conflictive, as they have consequences for the directly involved ones, however side-effects might exist on indirect involved parties, which are not taken into account.

Impact tourism sector

A research by McCombes (2012) in the Gambia has shown that tourism stakeholders see the danger of sex and romance tourism on their business and the tourism industry in its whole, as it endangers the tourism experience, leading to changes in tourism demand and tourism development. This is problematic to the tourism industry in the Gambia, but there has not been such research conducted within the context of Tunisia. McCombes (2012) identified that tourism stakeholders perceive problems in four areas, which were negative impacts on the reputation of the country, the tourist experience, the profit-making of tourism stakeholders and the incongruence of the presence of sex and romance tourism with the wider aspirations of the community. The perceptions of local tourism stakeholders in the Gambia seem to be helpful, in the sense that its unique findings on the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders show that this group has the capacity to give insights on how a form of tourism (like sex and romance tourism) could influence the rest of the tourism sector.

There are reasons to expect that these impacts might also be perceived by tourism stakeholders in Tunisia. Sex and romance tourism in the Gambia and Tunisia are comparable cases as both countries are economically highly reliable on the tourism sector. Also do they seem to have overlap with the dominant type of sex and romance tourism present (female tourists, local men, ambiguous romantic/sexual encounters) (Bleasdale, 2006; Lévy et. al, 1997; McCombes, 2012; Pattison, 2012; Poirier, 1995). This leads to the question whether the impacts found in the Gambia (considered negative), are also perceived and interpreted by tourism stakeholders in Tunisia as threatening, which is exactly the focus of this study.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Most research on sex tourism and romance tourism has focused on the sexual and romantic relations between tourists and locals, without considering further influence or consequences (Herold, Garcia, & DeMoya, 2001; Meisch, 1995; O'Connell Davidson, 1996; Pruitt & LaFont, 1995). Other research discusses how sex tourism is the consequence of the emergence of tourism, and how sex tourism negatively affects a society (like Ghana) (Teye, Sirakaya, & F. Sönmez, 2002).

Sex and romance tourism is framed in how it could affect involved locals or tourists, or a society at large. The question that does not have a clear answer so far, is how the presence of sex and romance tourism functions within the larger tourism and how it could possibly impact the larger tourism industry (on aspects like the tourist experience, tourism demand). This is especially relevant in the context of Tunisia, where host-guest relations are often conflictive and might harm the tourism sector. Romance and sex tourism will be the main focus within the scope of host-guest relations. This form of host-guest relations could negatively affect the tourism sector, while this sector is in Tunisia a very important income resource and provider of employment (Robinson and Boniface, 1999). This study will shed light on the dynamics of host-guest sexual and romantic relations and the larger tourism sector in Tunisia.

This study will give insight in what impacts sex and romance tourism could have on the tourism industry and makes use of the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders in Tunisia as in the case study of the Gambia, perceptions of local tourism stakeholders in the Gambia seemed to give insights on how a sex and romance tourism as a form of tourism could influence the wider tourism sector. These dynamics will be analysed in the field of tension that exists among tourism stakeholders and between hosts and guests and do not only describe possible negative impacts, but merely addresses the field of host-guest relations present in Tunisia.

Research questions

This knowledge gap led to the following main research question and subsequently the research sub questions:

What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders of romance and sex tourism and how this impacts the tourism industry in Tunisia?

1. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the impact of sex and romance tourism on the reputation of Tunisia and the Tunisian people?
2. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the impact of sex and romance tourism on the tourist experience?
3. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the impact of sex and romance tourism on the possible changes in profit-making?
4. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on possible other impacts on the tourism industry?
5. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the wider aspirations of the community for tourism development, and how does sex and romance tourism take place within these wider aspirations?

Objectives

The internal goal of this study is to shed light on the field of tensions that exist within the tourism industry in Tunisia, as it influences the lives of the local people and the tourists. This field of tension does not only link to sex and romance tourism, but needs a renewed attention especially in the light of host-guest relations.

The external goal of this study is to protect the tourism industry in Tunisia firstly for itself (as certain practices and types of tourism could be harmful). Coming from the belief that Tunisia is a country that could provide additional value to the lives of local people, and also its visitors in social and cultural ways. Next to that, it is a country that has strongly depended on the tourism industry in economic terms. It provides employment and raised the GDP, which has a strong influence on the daily lives of many Tunisians. Next to that, the tensions that result from romance and sex tourism, relate to the host-guest relations. Previous research (Theobald, 1998; Satani, 2003; George et. al, 2009) has shown that a tense host-guest contact could have influences on an international scale, as prejudices and misunderstandings evolve. A more harmonious host-guest contact could lead to a more peaceful situation, where cultural and social differences are acknowledged and accepted as such.

Outline structure

Firstly the theoretical framework will be discussed as well as relevant literature for this topic. Selected theories and concepts on sex and romance tourism and its impacts are used to frame the thesis are presented and explained.

Then, the method section describes in which way data was gained and analyzed with the help of semi-structured interviews. The challenges along the way will be mentioned to provide extra insight in the practical study field. Results will be given objectively in which later on in the discussion will be reflected on and interesting findings will be elaborated on. The conclusion provides a general overview of the study and how it can take place within the research field of host-guest relations and the field of sex and romance tourism. It also provides an idea for why and how practical applications could take place, with regards to the objective of the study.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining sex and romance tourism

The term sex tourism can be easily associated with a form of tourist prostitution. However, in the research field of sex tourism the definition of sex tourism embraces more than just the provision of sex for the exchange of money in an exotic place. Countless of studies on sex tourism in places like Jamaica, Barbados (de Albuquerque, 1998), Cuba and Dominican Republic (Herold et al., 2001), Egypt (Cabezas, 2004) and Thailand (Cohen, 1971) came to a more nuanced and ambiguous understanding of what sex tourism is, often because the motivations of locals and tourists are less clear-cut than expected. Also might romance tourism be often associated mixed couples, love and long term relationships (Pruitt and La Font, 1995). However, sex tourism goes together romance tourism, as Herold et al.(2001) have theorized motivations of locals and tourists to be involved. These authors have shown that romantic and sexual motivations are not mutually exclusive but rather the two ends of a continuum of motivations. Motivations are often ambiguous and all different kind of relations imagined are possible. In these, sex or romance, or both exist can exist, therefore we speak generally about sex and romance tourism.

Previous research shows that tourist motivations to be involved in relations with locals, are mainly about the search for or the maintenance of a romantic love relation (de Albuquerque, 1998), sexual excitement and novelty. For tourists, concepts of a simple experience, a friendship, romance, companionship and sex are very often highly intertwined and have vague borders in between (Pruitt & LaFont, 1995).

For locals, there has been a more broad range of different motivations to be involved with tourists sexually or romantically. It can be about direct or indirect financial gain, recreation, travel, marriage and migration. Often the long-term social-economic benefits are taken well into account (Herold, Garcia and De Moya (2001). While the situation of tourist sex workers has often been linked to poverty and the dependence on the tourism industry to make a living, the establishment of relations with tourists (whether the focus might be on sex or other activities/services) seems to have a strong relation with migration, especially in cases where finding satisfying work is difficult or poverty is present (Cohen, 1971). However, there have been other contexts, for example where it's hard to establish sexual or romantic encounters, leading to the motivation of locals to engage in sexual encounters with tourists. In Egypt for example, there is a strict cultural control on pre-marital sex for women. Local men therefore look for sexual or romantic contact with tourists. In that case, the primary reason for these men to engage is mostly hedonistic (DeCosta, 2012). Clearly, there is a broad range of motivations or combinations of motivations that could relate to short-term or long term benefits. Benefits could be more sexual, romantic or emotional, while economic aspects in some contexts take the overhand.

Tunisian context

Lévy et al. (1997) has done one of the very few researches on sexually and romantically involved Tunisian men. He makes use of the categorization of Cohen (1982). Cohen (1982) has theorized his findings sex tourism in Thailand and is applicable for the understanding of the context of romance and sex tourism in Tunisia, as this framework shows the different possible sexual and romantic encounters in Tunisia, thereby including the ambiguities of these relations. Cohen (1982) has categorized these encounters as following:

I. A form of sex tourism in which sexual services are being compensation with money and affection is absent. This is often the case with the relation between older women and younger men, as older women are considered to be less attractive by them. It also happens in the case of sex tourism that is between a male sex worker and a male sex tourist.

II. A mixed form in which the sexual relation also comes along with money and gifts mostly spontaneously offered or on the request of the 'seducers'

III. A more affective form where the relationship is based on an interpersonal attraction and romantic feeling

IV. The fourth category can be added which would be only an erotic relationship based on pleasure from both sides.

It is important to understand the ambiguities and diverse motivations of these encounters as they can be considered to be different realities, all falling under the label of 'romance and sex tourism'. The diversity of encounters should be included and constantly referred back to, also as for the involved ones might emphasize more on certain types of encounters (like more exploitative male prostitution) than encounters that are fairly 'innocent' (where affection is mutual e.g.). As romance and sex tourism cannot be taken as one single objective reality, no definition of sex and romance tourism will be given, but the one that is eventually given by the participants of this research. The focus of this study is on the impact of these relations, and not on the actual practices and what is-what is not. As theory on sex and romance tourism provides a broad range of motivations, activities, relationship-types, this broad range will be adopted as to refer to sex and romance tourism and to have an open mind for all the possible encounters between men and tourists in Tunisia.

The involvement of the Tunisian men in sexual or romantic relations with tourists confirms that, especially since they mention to not always have the goal to gain money or go abroad. Emotional or hedonist reasons for Tunisian men play part in this practice too. This results in different types of sexual relations between hosts and guests. Therefore, the broad range of motivations, activities, relationship-types are taken into account, as to have an open mind for all the possible encounters between men and tourists in Tunisia.

POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF SEX AND ROMANCE TOURISM ON THE LARGER TOURISM SECTOR

Host-guest encounters in Tunisia have been conflictive. Sexual harassment of tourists or the presence of male prostitution (due to tourism) are problematized as they are felt as disrespectful for the local culture but also discourage tourism development (Robinson and Boniface, 1999). The impacts of sex and romance tourism will be further discussed as they are the main focus of this study.

Like mentioned in the introduction, research by McCombes (2012) on the Gambian tourism sector has found that tourism stakeholders perceive negative impacts of sex and romance tourism on the overall tourism sector in the Gambia.

The perceptions of local tourism stakeholders in the Gambia seem to be helpful, in the sense that its unique findings on the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders show that this group has the capacity to give insights on how a form of tourism (like sex and romance tourism) could influence the rest of the tourism sector.

The Gambia is suitable for use for the theoretical framework for this study on Tunisia because is a destination that is comparable with regards of type of tourist and tourism (mostly

package tours and mass tourism). It also has a comparable socio-economic situation, in which unemployment, comparative poverty, the lack of economic opportunities, economic disparities, a lack of linkages are national issues, and in both countries tourism is the second largest employer and provides a significant proportion of the national income. Tourism (development) is therefore economically important and both countries therefore have an interest in protecting the tourism industry (Bleasdale, 2006; Lévy et. al, 1997; McCombes, 2012; Pattison, 2012; Poirier, 1995).

The issues that are perceived by tourism stakeholders (that sometimes have been confirmed by tourists and the community), are related to the impact on the Gambia as a holiday destination, which links to a threat to tourist demand and tourist development. The four points that therefore have come out of the research in the Gambia, are four major topics that lead this research. Each point will be explained, as well as a review of its relevance to the Tunisian context will be given, to show the research worthiness of these subtopics.

1. A REPUTATION OF A SEX DESTINATION

The Gambia has been promoted in some ways as a sex destination, leading the frustrations of many, that are not only uncomfortable with this promotion, and fear the attraction of sex tourists. In Tunisia, it has been shown that for example Tunisians are very aware of their reputation as 'womanizers' (some decide to mention the topic, others don't (like the big hotel 'Africa' that denies its presence on their website).

In divers media sources on sex and romance tourism in Tunisia, terms like the 'mariage gris' (grey marriage) are used, a term for the description of marriages that serve to migrants to gain the right to residence papers and who 'trick' locals who were actually in love with these migrants (France2, 2010; Vakantie-info.org.,2013; Stevens, N., & Tardio, N., 2011, Beznessalert.com, Bezness-land.com, Tunisianloverats.com, all accessed: 15th September 2014). In diverse internet forum the word 'bezness' is a common term, that are very cynical on the financial gaining and the faking of romance as aspects of sex and romance tourism present in Tunisia. This portrays Tunisia as a typical place where one risks this 'trick', this 'playboy' and websites continuously warn about the damage that Tunisian men might inflict on female tourists. The choice of exclusively showing Tunisian crooks even led to negative stereotyping of Arab men (while also women were portrayed as sex-greedy cougars who should have known better). The warnings for these tricks might be at their place, at the same time Tunisia as a holiday destination might become a scary place and as in the case of the Gambia, this, in some cases, could lead to a more careful, cautious interaction with locals (that might not be interested in financial gains, migration or even sexual or romantic encounters) or leads to no host-guest contact whatsoever.

The question arises whether the sexual and romantic encounters happening in Tunisia might lead to a bad reputation of the locals and the place, like has been the complaint that McCombes (2006) found in the Gambia. This might be researchable through looking at the different media sources, the opinion of the tourists, in this study we focus on the view of tourism stakeholders. As they have an interest in protecting this, they see tendencies of tourism demand and the type of tourist back in their business, as so they are a stakeholder that are very close to the 'consequences' of having a certain reputation abroad, tourism stakeholders see how the reputation of Tunisia, as well the reputation of the Tunisian men is endangered (or improved) by the presence of sex and romance tourism and in what ways.

2. HARMING THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE

Tourism stakeholders have shown awareness on the impacts of sex and romance tourism on the tourist experience in the Gambia as they stated that harassing and scamming tourists will negatively affect the holidays experiences and deters repeat custom. Despite that the tourism stakeholders showed understanding for the situation of many bumsters (as they have a relatively poor economic background and are looking for quick social mobility), they criticized bumsters for the behaviour of harassment and scamming.

Their concern might have been based, or is at least confirmed by a survey in 2006 by the Gambian government. The Gambian Tourism development Masterplan has found that the bumster (term for local sexually or romantically available men) syndrome as the biggest threat to tourism. This came out of a research with 2000 respondents, of which 68% saw it as a substantial disappointment (on places like the airport, the beach or on the street) and 43 % suggested that the bumsters should be stopped. The 'bumster' syndrome was mostly described as a form of sexual harassment that was found to be very disturbing. Further research on sex and romance tourism in the Gambia showed that tourists do not appreciate sexual attempts, describing them also as harassment. It stated that a sexual or lustful approach was a factor contributing to their negative experience with bumsters (McCombes, 2012).

The realization of the threat that sex and romance tourism could have on the tourism business sometimes results the discouragement of sexual and romantic encounters (by restricting access possibilities in tourism zones) or spreading information about the harassment and scamming so that tourists avoid a bad experience (and even hassling has become illegal in the Gambia). This shows that the fear for negative consequence from the presence of sex and romance tourism and the tourist experience is very much present, since it even leads to official measures (McCombes, 2012).

Related to the complaints on harassment and scamming, in the Tunisian context the emotional and financial exploitation that is sometimes the result of a romantic or sexual encounter, also could influence the tourism experience negatively. It happens that these 'womanizers' that are being hold accountable by tourists and are seen as scammers (in internet forums, websites, books). Even as the sexual or romantic encounters have been appreciated firstly by female tourists, in some cases when the relationship seems to be eventually 'fake' and one feels manipulated, disappointments are inevitable. A distrust between locals and tourists seems to be created based on information available on the sexually and romantically available Tunisian men. Research has shown that female couchsurfing tourists that have sexual or romantic encounters seem to be puzzled about the 'real' intentions of their hosts (Carpenter-Latiri and Buchberger, 2010), but also internet forums are full of questions on whether or not to trust the local person that they are seeing. Next to that, issues of sexual advances or even harassment (Poirier, 1995; Carpenter-Latiri and Buchberger, 2010) been raised repeatedly in Tunisia (Carpenter-Latiri and Buchberger, 2010), which could be just like in the Gambia a threat to the tourism demand, the tourist experience and eventually the tourism demand. Next to that, these encounters have resulted in Tunisia in some cases to be that the host community seems to carry prejudices on the countries of the tourists, as socio-sexual local norms show many differences compared to the behaviour of tourists. These prejudices might also be felt by tourists, leading to change the tourist experience in Tunisia.

The most important aspect of these issues is the negative experiences that are given to tourists, as this might influence the tourism demand. This especially as in the Gambian case

this as a negative tourism experience could be threatening tourism demand and repeat custom. This might be the case in Tunisia but there has not been any study on these dynamics so far.

3. INCONGRUENT TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY

In many studies it has been shown that the practices that come with sex and romance tourism, which make its presence visible, are not appreciated by the community (Bleasdale, 2006; Lévy et. al.,1997; McCombes, 2012; Teye et. al.,2002). It comes down to that it is not in line with traditional values, that are felt to not be respected, nor by tourists nor by locals.

In the Gambia for example, tourism is seen as an influence on acculturation in the society, in which the community mentions that traditional values are replaced by values that relate to individual and material possessions (McCombes, 2012). Next to that, there is a disapproval of the behaviour of men that are involved in romance and sex tourism, as they imitate western clothing styles, start drinking alcohol with tourists, disrespect traditional authorities and show sexuality in public, which causes acculturation (framed negatively). Also in Tunisia has tourism been associated with male prostitution, change in dressing and drinking alcohol by local men with tourists, which is not welcomed by other parts of the community, that sees a discrepancy between the behaviour of these men and the Islamic principles or other traditional habits (Bleasdale, 2006; Poirier, 1995; Robinson and Boniface, 1999). Contact between hosts and tourists has shown to be harmonious, in situations where tourists show respect and interest for the culture and traditions. In other situations this contact is rather conflictual, as for example tourists dress offensive and are being referred to as rude and disrespectful (Bleasdale, 2006). Communities in Tunisia and the Gambia have trouble with the presence of sex and romance tourism, as it shows in many cases the gap between local (more traditional and also Islamic) values and norms and the values and norms of tourists. This includes the lifestyle, behaviour and expressions of sexuality in public.

In both the Gambia and Tunisia there has been a concern on the sexual activities of men who are involved with tourists. This relates to a health concern as well as a cultural concern. Firstly, the concern relates to the danger of a person getting an STD by intercourse with tourists, as for example in Tunisia it has been found that men judge their partner on a 'healthy' appearance and would therefore assume the absence of a risk on STDs, resulting in unprotected sex. This involves a health aspect, however it has also to do with stigmatization of the profession of a sex worker. Many involved Tunisian men are being rejected by their family, who consider their encounters with different persons shameful and unacceptable (Lévy et. al., 1997; McCombes, 2012).

In the study on the Gambia, it has shown that key informants (described as 'stakeholders in the tourism industry in the Gambia with extensive knowledge and experience with bumsters') feel that contrary to the aspirations that many in the community have for the tourism industry in this country. This is done by the hand of looking for gaps between values and norms of locals and tourists, what issues are perceived resulting out of sex and romance tourism and how practices are related to the aspirations for tourism development.

4. WOMANIZERS STEALING THE TOURISM BUSINESS

In the study on the Gambia, primary tourism stakeholders in the Gambia have criticized bumsters for stealing tourism business, for example when they play as a tourist guide and therefore official tourist guides are influenced financially. This has been shown a small point of conflict, compared to the other complaints of tourism stakeholders on bumsters

(McCombes, 2012). Though, it forms part of the theoretical framework, as in this study, the findings of the study of the Gambia will be assessed whether they are present (and in what form) in Tunisia too, and therefore taken as a part of the impacts that sex and romance tourism could have on the rest of the tourism sector, as this has been found in earlier studies as an impact.

Tourism stakeholders are aware of the problems that sex and romance tourism bring. They have spoken for the wider community and for tourists that indeed had complaints, so this shows their insight in the situation and how they are an important stakeholder group that might even advocate for other groups, while at the same time it can be in their personal interest as well. For example, studies showed that tourists in the Gambia saw the sexual approaches of local men as a factor contributing to a negative experience. Also have tourism stakeholders in the Gambia widely acknowledged that sex tourism destination is bad for business, and also contrary to aspirations of wider community, that has been indeed confirmed by the wider community of the Gambia (McCombes, 2012). With regards to profit-making and sex or romance tourism in Tunisia, no sources have been found that discuss the relation between these. However, in the study of McCombes, this was an important finding. As the other findings could be applicable in the context of Tunisia, it is research-worthy and relevant to also assess the aspect of profit-making in the tourism sector in relation to sex and romance tourism.

Despite that the research questions are based on a single case study in the Gambia (McCombes, 2012), these findings might correspond to a lot of information on the impacts of romance and sex tourism in Tunisia's tourism sector. Many media sources and previous literature on Tunisia's tourism sector might indicate that there are impacts on the reputation of Tunisia, the tourist experience of Tunisia's visitors. This is the case with regards to the dynamics of sex and romance tourism and reputation, tourist experience and wider communal aspirations.

Sex and romance tourism is a complicated social phenomenon that influences people in their personal lives, influences the society in general and the way tourism is received. As problems have been perceived by tourism stakeholders (that have a significant level of awareness on the points of conflict), the question remains whether these problem are also perceived in a comparable country like Tunisia.

The reputation of country and people, the tourism experience, the division of economic benefits and the repeated tensions and conflicts between involved and non-involved tourists, local sexually and romantically available men and the host community all show to be feared by tourism stakeholders as they are perceived as threats to the tourism industry. There is a need for insights in these conflicts, as to understand and improve the existence of sex and romance tourism within a bigger tourism sector.

OTHER IMPACTS ON TOURISM

This sub question is not supported by literature, however from a personal point of view this question is perceived as highly contribute to this study.

It can put the impact of sex and romance tourism on the tourism sector into a right place and scale when making conclusions. This will also place this whole study in the right place of impacts that this specific type of tourism can have on the larger tourism industry. The theoretical framework of this study considers sex and romance tourism, however that does not mean that sex and romance tourism and it's impacts are necessarily an isolated field of study and a broad lens is therefore adopted.

3. METHODS

This research has been executed in Tunisia's capital Tunis and the touristic region that is most close to it, the Coasts of Carthage (see appendix 1). In this zone I have interviewed respondents in the highly popular places of Sidi Bou Saïd and Gammart. Tunis and the Coasts of Carthage are in the north-eastern part of Tunisia the most advertised places to visit, reviewed from the brochures of the ministry of Tourism (Ministere de Tourisme, 2014).

This region is already familiar to me, as I have lived in Tunis for a year. It is also a region that is full of restaurants, cafés and hotels. In order to make a choice where to find respondents, I used a travel website which mentions that most frequently visited touristic places (Tripadvisor.nl, 2013). Also did I visit places that I already happen to know beforehand and places that were advised to me to go to. Some of my interviewees have helped to find other potential interviewees, so therefore I have also visited hotels that were in principle not on my list. Eventually I have held interviews in hotels in Tunis, Sidi Bou Said and Gammart, cafés in Tunis and Sidi Bou Said and the medina and tourist market of Tunis, but also in tourism institutes like the ministry of tourism and related to the ministry, the national office of tourism.

Tunis was the most suitable research location to find tourism stakeholders and institutes like the ministry of tourism and its national office of tourism, all located in the centre. My network (friends family and acquaintances) in Tunisia has helped to gain first access to these stakeholders and to gain their time and attention for this topic, which I expect to be different if I would not have this network.

I have also been told by family members and acquaintances that actually Tunis and Sidi Bou Said were the right places to go to outside the summer season. This is an area where tourism is still partly present outside the summer season, whereas many hotels and touristic places in other tourism zones (like highly visited Hammamet, Nabeul, Djerba) stop working outside the summer season and are therefore not available as respondents.

Data and respondents

Data has been compiled from 19 semi-structured interviews which have provided me with understanding the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders. Qualitative interviews are suited to provide answer for this research as it gives access to information about people's views, attitudes and ideas about a certain phenomenon. This is argued by the definition of Maso (1987) that describes the method of qualitative interviews as 'a form of conversation in which one person- the interviewer- restricts oneself to posing questions concerning behaviours, ideas, attitudes and experiences with regard to social phenomena, to one or more others- the participants or interviewees-who mainly limit themselves to providing answers to these questions' (Maso, 1987:63).

I believe that an interview is the best way to give answer to the sub questions, as there hasn't been much research on how tourism stakeholders perceive impacts on the tourism industry. With interviews a lot of space is given to the respondent to express his/her perceptions and interpretations on the topic of this study. The interviews have been done in French and/or Tunisian Arabic dialect. Tourism stakeholders were found through personal network or by visiting tourism zones where the aim of this study was explained to potential tourism stakeholders. Of all potential respondents approached, two people refused but helped me to find another person within the company.

Whereas some interviews took around half an hour, other interviews were extended and took over two hours. One of the respondents proposed to stop the interview and continue another time, for which we met another time later. Before each interview, I provided the respondent with a statement from the university that shows that I am an MLE student of Wageningen University and Research Centre (see appendix 2). Also it was stated that I do not give a financial compensation for the interview, that all information given during the interviews will be held anonymous, and used for the writing of my master thesis (and maybe an academic article). This letter is partly written out in attachment two (in French). The aim of handing out this statement was to gain trust among the tourism stakeholders. They were able to contact me whenever they changed their mind afterwards and were immediately made clear that the aim of the interviews was for a master thesis and therefore academic research. I have felt that respondents took their time to express themselves and often situations were created in which the respondent was able to stop his or her work for the interview, in which his/her colleagues took over. This is important to know, they have expressed themselves consciously and without rush.

I was given the advice by a family member to take notes during the interviews. She believed that it would create a relation in which it was a clear sign to respondents that the interview was for study and research reasons, as she was highly concerned about the topic of sex and romance which I would discuss. I have done this along with the interviews in which I also took recordings, that not a single respondent was having an issue with. From the records I made have made transcripts, which I later used for analysis.

A list is provided of the involved tourism stakeholders and a short description of who they are, so that the reader has an idea and can be critical to what the respondents of this study have stated. This list can be found in appendix 4.

Positionality

In reflection on my own positionality, I find that I am positioned in different contexts, which are sometimes only to me obvious but can also influence the way respondents have treated me.

Firstly, I am middle class Dutch-Tunisian woman, with two passports. I grew up in the Netherlands but over the years, I have gotten to know Tunisia and it's culture better and I have felt more embedded and at home in the Tunisian environment as well. This was mostly during summer and winter holidays, which are exceptional to the 'daily life' of many Tunisians. This also means that I do not have any work experience in Tunisia. However, I have lived in the capital of Tunis for over 10 months for education. This has allowed me to get insight in the daily life outside the summer season, which I experienced as being very different. Also with regards to the place, where normally I have stayed in tourism zones (like Hammamet, Nabuel, Tabarka) or more inwards the country (El Kef), Tunis was a different, in my view, more raw environment.

However, it was both in tourism zones as well as outside tourism zones that I felt being threatened by being perceived as a 'foreigner' or a 'European' girl coming from a place where things go very differently and where my behaviour was sometimes misinterpreted. Obviously I was confronted with many prejudices on Europe, European people and especially European girls (who are considered as 'liberated'). All of these confrontations have given me some a lot of input to think about what is 'the right way' to behave and to talk, which is very different in Tunisia than for example the Netherlands, for which I was forced to be very clear in my communication.

It was also in my Dutch environment where I have heard from tourists who were telling me about their trips to Tunisia, but also Morocco, Turkey and Egypt, where female tourists have felt very uncomfortable with the way they have been approached in markets or on the street. This has been rather hurtful to me personally because for myself I have found the so-called cultural codes. Once knowing how to behave and what are the do's and don'ts, I knew that there are many nice things to be found. Sometimes, from the tourist side, I felt that there was a lack of interest in the country of Tunisia, where the holidays were mostly described by the typical 'beach tourist'. I have felt that due to a lack of understanding of Tunisia's cultural context, the risk on creating misunderstandings and prejudices on countries in the region of North-Africa is high and generalizations are easily made. This might even be worse for the visitors of Tunisia's sun, but not for Tunisia's culture and customs, which scream for the attention and acknowledgement of tourists.

I see many benefits in tourism, however if there is so much noise on the host-guest communication line. It was also a reason for me to understand better, so I became interested in the topic. It might be that this has influenced my findings, as I perceive two groups of different backgrounds in which the communication line is highly disturbed. This is for me almost a given fact. I have been faced with the consequences as there exist prejudices on Europe, European culture, European values in Tunisia, but also in the Netherlands these prejudices exist on maybe not Tunisian but Islamic or Arabic culture and values. Knowing this, I have entered my research with a rather open-mind. The fact that Tunisia's culture and people's mindset have changed over a short period of time, because of major changes (politically) is an extra reason to not stick to my previous experiences necessarily, however a researcher can try to be, but will never be a hundred percent objective.

4. RESULTS

The dynamics between sex and romance tourism and the larger tourism sector have been assessed. In this section, results are presented in an objective way, a description of the answers is given. Sometimes a short reflection is given, as this has a major influence on the presentation of the results. However, all in-depth analysis is kept for the part of discussion.

All the following research questions will be fully addressed. Each question will be addressed in a separate chapter, except for research sub question four. This question will be discussed in relation each research question one, two and three. To come again to the research sub questions:

1. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the impact of sex and romance tourism on the reputation of Tunisia and the Tunisian people?
2. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the impact of sex and romance tourism on the tourist experience?
3. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the impact of sex and romance tourism on the possible changes in profit-making?
4. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on possible other impacts on the tourism industry?
5. What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the wider aspirations of the community for tourism development, and how does sex and romance tourism takes place within these wider aspirations?

REPUTATION AND EXPERIENCE

Results have been found that relate to both research question one, on reputation as well as on sub question two, the tourist experience. Therefore there will be a section which discusses the fields of experience and reputation, which are perceived by tourism stakeholders as two fields that cannot always be isolated from each other with regards to the impact of sex and romance tourism. This is because whenever possible impacts of sex and romance tourism on reputation were being discussed, the line of argument would often first relate to the impact on the tourist experience to eventually move on to how a tourism experience is related to the reputation of Tunisia or the Tunisian people.

Bad experience leads to a bad reputation

It has been argued that a possible negative impact on reputation. This is possible when the experience resulting out of the presence of sex and romance tourism was perceived by tourists as a negative experience.

Mourad, a student in tourism, explains to me that it is possible that a European girl comes to Tunisia and feels very uncomfortable by any attempts or unwished-for attention, it could lead to a bad experience. This experience will be told about to her friends and family who change their mind on Tunisia as a pleasant tourism destination and might change possible plans to visit to Tunisia. He makes a link between experience, reputation and tourism demand.

What also gives a bad reputation, is the presence of non-professional workers in Tunisia's tourism sector, argues Bilal, a retired hotel manager. They have a negative impact on the tourist experience. From time to time, there have been interventions to 'remove' the peo-

ple that are considered as disturbing for tourists. However, Bilal explains that some people present themselves as a tourism worker by selling hats or guide camel tours to approach tourists to engage in a relation with them and states; "Those people are bad for the image of Tunisia and for tourists (...) because they do not know how to behave well with tourists". He also argues that professional tourism workers do not cross certain boundaries, whereas non-professional (in his definition: untrained) workers do. Non-professionals however can also work as animators or pool attendants of the hotel, the same type of workers that are likely to disturb tourists, not knowing how to treat tourists in a professional way. For example he gives an anecdote in which a student, who worked as a pool boy, was very indiscrete about his relation to a female tourist, as they were having sexual intercourse in the public pool of the hotel. This, as a practice of sex and romance tourism, was not considered a problem to the directly involved ones (the tourist or to the pool boy), however Bilal explains that he considers this highly problematic to the other tourists in the hotel, who do not have or want to be confronted with these sexual encounters. He argues that the pool boy did not understand how it functions in the hotel as he is untrained and eventually fired him. Next to the way some people try to enter the tourism sector to engage with tourists, non-professionals also enter the tourism sector because non-professionals like animators are cheaper to hire. Unlike trained tourism staff, who need to be hired based on a contract, untrained staff can be hired for only the busy summer season, which is economically beneficial for hotels managers. This serves as an explanation for why untrained staff is often working in tourism, even though tourism stakeholders perceive the risk for harming the tourist experience and reputation of the destination or people.

Emin, also an experienced hotel manager, has worked in several areas of Tunisia, where beach tourism is the dominant type of tourism. He argues that bad experiences often lead to generalizations, which could shape the reputation of the country or people. He states: 'One experience is enough to become the rule. One bad experience is enough to generalize the impression that Tunisians are all the same, that they are liars, that they want to profit from tourists and that they are all 'shitty'. And even when they would get into a real relation, they will only want some papers and quit their country. That is unfortunately an idea about Tunisians that exists.' This leads him to making a series of links. Firstly, he explains to me that despite the existence of this negative idea on Tunisians, it does not mean that the whole tourism sector is 'unhealthy'; "That is unfortunately an idea about Tunisians that exists. This idea is also existing on Egyptians and Moroccans, but it doesn't mean that all Tunisians are like that. It doesn't mean that the whole tourism industry is sick". This indicates that he perceives bad experiences leading to generalizations on Tunisia and its people, as a part of the unhealthy practices within tourism. However, the discussion on this unhealthy aspect of tourism leads him to criticizing beach tourism, the area in which he has always worked, and to how beach tourism encourages these type of practices; "I have to say unfortunately that beach tourism is a choice which does not value a country, in which the type of clients is of bad quality. The tanning clients, because they are a well determined category who come only for sun and sex, even if they come for other reasons, they are not artists, engineers, managers who could add something more to the country by being in contact with the locals, to exchange their cultures. You see, it's a type of sector which encourages these practices." Later he explains that a bad experience is not always possible to be completely avoided. However he has hosted other types of tourists like journalists, who were making a lot of contact with all types of local people, and who were able to break free from locals that were perceived as disturbing. He concludes that there is a possibility to hold on a 'stop' to these disturbances, however beach tourists are often, in his words "not the ones that know how to, do not know normality or are in many cases even looking for

this type of contact". He attributes a role to the type of tourist who is attracted by beach tourism. The beach tourist easily shapes an image of Tunisia, however that is according to him, because his or her contact with Tunisia or Tunisians is very superficial; few contact or only 'unhealthy sexual or romantic encounters' that they are looking for.

Emin and Bilal, who are both hotel managers, have touched two sides of the same coin. Beach tourism, characterized in Tunisia by its seasonality, has been part of the explanation of unprofessional and untrained staff who risk harming the reputation of Tunisia by showing troublesome behaviour. However, beach tourism, Emin argues also is related to an easily harmed reputation, as it attracts a certain type of client that is more likely to attract certain experiences and a certain type of contact (no contact or unhealthy contact), as their interests are assumed to be sun and sex.

The general argument that is put forward is that a bad experience leads often to a bad image for the visitor itself. The image of the visitor could also influence a wider environment (like his/her personal network). However, to see it from the bright side, Ibrahim, hotel manager states that it is often the case that people who perceive Tunisia's bad reputation, actually often change their minds about that, after they still would visit and enjoy nice tourist experiences. This could indicate that tourism stakeholders perceive that a bad experience influences negatively the reputation. However a bad reputation does not necessarily influence tourist experience, and actually a good experience can still 'heal' a bad reputation.

REPUTATION

This section discusses solely the impacts of sex and romance tourism, described by tourism stakeholders. Then other possible impacts (outside sex and romance tourism) on reputation will be discussed.

The image of Tunisia as holiday destination for sex and romance seekers

The interest of many tourists is assumed to be in many cases the involvement in sexual or romantic encounters. Whereas Emin was highly critical on beach tourism and the interests of beach tourists, and in some cases there was a taste of judgment, most respondents stated rather plain and objective that many female tourists, but also male tourists in some cases, come to Tunisia because they know about the presence of sex and romance tourism and therefore would like to gain access to these intimate encounters. Five respondents argued that tourists know about the presence and high possibility to engage in sexual or romantic encounters with Tunisian people, before they have even visited the country, which touches upon having a reputation as tourism destination which provides for this type of tourist experience. One respondent explained that with Internet or either through media sources, tourists could get an idea of the type of holiday they could have in Tunisia, that being a reason for some to come and visit, stated by Mourad: "They know and that is why they come".

However, it is also possible that a sexual or romantic tourist experience plays a role in shaping Tunisia's reputation. Two respondents argued that it was sometimes only after a first visit this was known among sex or romance tourists, this is supported by the quote of Meriam, hotel manager: "Tourists might not know this the first time, but especially when they have visited, they know that Tunisia has the option of these easy encounters". This shows in both knowing beforehand or after the holiday, that a part of the reputation of Tunisia as a holiday destination is formed by the probability or expectation of sexual or romantic encounters with locals. The latter describes how a sexual or romantic experience could shape Tunisia's reputation as a place where this can be found. The latter also shows

the difficulty to separate impacts of sex and romance tourism on reputation and experience, as they are highly interlinked.

Contested impact of sex and romance tourism

Emin, the hotel manager who described sex and romance tourism and their negative sides as an unhealthy part within a bigger tourism sector, explains that this is certainly not the only component which constructs Tunisia's reputation. He mentions other components that affect the reputation in a positive way, outweighing this negative impact; "It does not affect the international reputation of the country, because there are a lot of positive side, like beautiful history, it's events, a good international reputation, it's nature, it's intellectual competences, cultivated people, where education is obligatory, it has great potentials." Bilal, also a hotel manager, agrees with the statement of Emin, but also emphasizes the positive aspects (like hospitable, warmth, happiness, open-mindedness, beautiful nature) that affect mostly the image of Tunisia as a nice holiday destination, confirmed by three other respondents who agreed with a general positive reputation. Government official Kader thinks that even a harmed reputation could still attract tourists, that eventually will change their mind on the country and the people as he states: "By coming here, you will have a different image (...). People come and are surprised by the welcoming and the mentality that is among young people the same as in Europe (...) There is a freedom and tourists come, they see that and they like the country. They come back one or two times more."

Whereas most respondents were explaining the dynamics between reputation and the presence of sex and romance tourism, four respondents were very quick and short in their answer denying a possible impact of sex and romance tourism on Tunisia's reputation and changed the discussion. A major reason for this, is that sexual and romantic relations that are full of interests happen everywhere (not only in Tunisia). They do not relate issues arising to Tunisia's conditions as a country or as a holiday destination. Another reason given by them is that many tourists do not have a problem with the presence of sex and romance tourism, as it is generally accepted. This was for these respondents the first step away from sex and romance tourism, towards a discussion on other dynamics influencing the reputation or image of Tunisia or other topics.

OTHER IMPACTS ON REPUTATION AND EXPERIENCE

This section forms part of research sub question one and two (on reputation and tourist experience) as well as question four (other impacts). Two respondents who denied any impact of sex and romance tourism on Tunisia's reputation or experience, have touched upon other negative impacts on these. Other tourism stakeholders have also mentioned these topics later on in the discussion on impacts on reputation and tourist experience.

Beznessa

'Beznessa' a term that is often used in the Tunisian language, coming from the English word business and according to Carpenter-Latiri and Buchberger (2010) refers to young locals in Tunisia preying female tourists for material gain. However, in my personal experience, confirmed by several Tunisian people in my network, beznessa is a word that is used in general for just 'preying on girls' or just being interested in material gain from tourists (which could come back in buyer-seller relations or even friendships), therefore not a term solely used in combination with sexual and romantic encounters or even tourists. The term has been used by respondents most of the times to refer the latter, so the interest of sellers to gain as much as they can from tourists. Different respondents have stated the same phenomena being part of this kind of 'beznessa', apart or in combination with each other, which are

firstly, the aggressive or insistent behaviour of sellers leading to a lot of discomfort, leading to a negative effect on the tourist experience. Secondly, asking too high prices for their craft and thirdly the deals that are with tourism workers (e.g. hotel staff or taxi drivers) and shopkeepers, who aim to direct tourists towards certain shops, which is assumed to not be appreciated by tourists as they are not left free to walk around.

The two respondents who denied any impact of romance and sex tourism, have argued straight after that beznessa was a phenomenon that does (unlike romance and sex tourism) touch upon the image of Tunisia. Halima, working in the ministry of Tourism, states that it is a form of harassment, where tourists are made uncomfortable because of the aggressiveness and the high prices. Also Kader, working as well in the ministry of tourism, states that it's problematic for tourists and thus the image of Tunisia. Another colleague of them, Abdul, confirms this being problematic to the tourism sector in Tunisia, however also perceiving a possible negative impact of sex and romance tourism on reputation and the tourist experience.

The problem of beznessa has been also discussed by respondents who did touch upon the topic and impact of romance and sex tourism as well. This shows that beznessa is considered in general as a negative impact on Tunisia's reputation as it creates tension between tourists and sellers (and was not a reason to change a taboo topic). Bilal, retired hotel manager, perceived possible impacts of sex and romance tourism, but also argues that beznessa is a phenomenon that is very problematic for tourism and especially reputation. This is because it has happened sometimes that tourists have been going through the media to report on beznessa practices. This media attention shapes reputation in a negative way, he argues and adds "there are a people that pass by the media, there are many problems". This shows that a negative experience, not only in sex and romance tourism, is influential for the reputation of Tunisia.

Another interesting statement has been made by government official Adel, who perceives the link between sex and romance tourism and any negative impact on reputation to be the visual presence of poverty. He states that romance and sex tourism present in Tunisia is often understood as a sign of poverty, as he refers to it as a form of prostitution. Prostitution, he explains, is 'selling your body' and understood by people as a sign of poverty. However, poverty in general is something that negatively impacts reputation, as he also refers the issue of poverty to 'beznessa' which is also a sign of poverty. He states; "It's poverty, the negative influences of that are too much. We have lost the reputation of Tunisia already." This shows that a tourism stakeholder like Adel does not perceive sex and romance tourism as an isolated field with negative impacts, but rather part of a group of practices (like tourist prostitution and beznessa) that show poverty, in which visitors feel less comfortable, affecting the tourist experience and which has a big role in shaping Tunisia's reputation.

Security

Another issue that has been touched by tourism stakeholders is the issue of security in Tunisia. This was mostly argued as harmful for the reputation of Tunisia, leading to decreased tourism demand (e.g. many canceled visits). Whereas Mourad is one of the tourism stakeholders that does address the impact of sex and romance tourism on reputation, he addresses the impact of security issues as well. He creates a bridge between these two topics by stating that sex and romance tourism could attract certain locals to tourism zones, who might look like they are interested in the tourist (for whatever reason possible) while they actually are trying to gain access to highly secured zones where they could do a terrorist attack. However, the problem of security has also been addressed by many other tourism

stakeholders of different characters and also those who do not perceive an impact of sex and romance tourism, mentioned this important role of security.

This has been mentioned by the same respondents who have mentioned the issue of *beznessa* as well as other respondents who came to discuss this issue mostly on their own initiative. This shows that this issue currently is highly at stake. Whereas some two respondents mentioned a lack of security being problematic to the reputation of Tunisia, six other respondents mentioned that it was mainly because of the exaggeration and prejudice of media sources, that portrayed Tunisia as a dangerous country, like café owner Rachid states: They are making so any misrepresentations and bad images on Tunisia! Like the country is not good and dangerous. But the point is that it's not true. You see, the tourists are here, the ferries, there are there. What did you notice here in Tunisia? All is well here!". The (fear of) lack of security refers in all cases to the risk of terrorist attacks on tourism zones considered as high, as on the 30th of October 2013 there has been suicide bomb attempts done in touristic areas or refers to security issues with Islamists, which are reported to not be under control. (Al Jazeera, 2013). It is sometimes the governments that warned their citizens before leaving on their trip to Tunisia leading tourists that still come but are scared for no reason, states Selma (hotel receptionist). In general this bad image has led to the loss of many tourists to other destinations, so argues Ibrahim, financial director of a hotel (or cancelled holidays, like Selma states).

Tourism workers show understanding for the fear of tourists. Halima, a female respondent explains that she was also afraid of going to Egypt, because she heard about the issues of security especially for women, however it was not as bad as expected. This implies that a reputation is influenced by security issues in countries like Tunisia and Egypt, however that is considered to be problematic because it degrades the tourist experience and a bad reputation (caused by experience or media) in general decreases tourism demand.

TOURIST EXPERIENCE

In this section it will be discussed how tourism stakeholders perceive and interpret the impact of sex and romance tourism on the tourist experience. Partly, negative impacts of sex and romance tourism have been discussed in the first section 'Reputation and experience'. Respondents have argued that a possible negative impact on reputation, is possible when the experience of the presence of sex and romance tourism was perceived by tourists as a negative experience. This shows also that they perceive the possible negative impacts of sex and romance tourism on the tourist experience. Furthermore, they have discussed these dynamics, but did not involve impacts on reputation, which will be discussed here.

A contribution to a positive experience

Many tourism stakeholders have argued that in case the motivation of the tourist is in line with the presence and possibility of sexual and/or romantic encounters with locals, this actually is a positive impact on the tourist experience as it positively contributes to and fulfills the tourist experience. The presence of romantic and sexual encounters is often a reason for tourists to come back again to Tunisia. This shows that a positive experience is perceived as contribute to repeat custom. Hotel managers Meriam and Bilal mentioned that these experiences might be giving a lot of self-confidence to women, which is nice, or to some visitors to which these experiences are actually really important to have in their lives, the experience of being in Tunisia is perceived to highly positive. A lot of emphasis has been put on the involvement being a conscious choice that many female tourists make, even when there have been very emotional situations gone wrong. Ridha, also a hotel manager

at a beach resort near Tunis, explains that he has warned many tourists in the beach resort (that he manages) for the real intentions of their boyfriends, like sex or money, assuming that it is not really what the tourists were looking for. However, tourists have many times responded that it does not matter and continue with their relation. Ridha concludes that this shows that apparently tourists are mature and in control of their own experience. Them being involved therefore is voluntarily and would be part of having a good holiday experience as they choose for it. Seven other respondents have argued along the lines that this experience is voluntary and a choice and something that tourists want and makes them happy, therefore should be a positive contribution to the tourist experience in Tunisia.

Two respondents have stated most clearly that the aspect of voluntary involvement in these encounters is an important element which decides the impact on the tourist experience. Like mentioned before, if the attention, attempts or encounters are wished for, they actually contribute to the tourist experience. This becomes even more clear as tourism stakeholders give the example of cases of rape. So have Bilal (hotel manager) and Ridha (involved in cultural tourism) argued that that is the most extreme example of a result of these encounters or contacts made, as it is something that is obviously involuntary and in that case, would be absolutely harmful for the tourist experience. The aspect of voluntary involvement therefore is a condition set by many tourism stakeholders to perceive and explain whether sexual and romantic encounters can be a positive contribution for the tourist experience.

The very different impacts perceived by tourism stakeholders might be explained by the diverse views they have on these relations. For example, tourism stakeholders Kader and Ramzi have argued that this is often a very positive holiday experience. They explain that sex and romance tourism mostly are relations that are like a summer love, in which many nice memories are made and sometimes friendships are maintained. Clearly, respondents are talking about different kind of sexual and romantic encounters. Whereas certain respondents refer to short summer fling relations, other refer to female tourists who decide voluntarily to stay longer in Tunisia (like French students who do research in Tunisia), where it is considered to be also very positive as they enjoy the sociability of Tunisia's people and where these female students decide to be involved with Tunisian men as a way to 'discover the South', have elaborate networks and to become part of Tunisian families, argues Hana, sociologist and tourism expert. Not all tourism stakeholders therefore are negative on the presence of sex and romance tourism, obviously because sex and romance tourism is a very broad term.

Disturbance

However some respondents that described sex and romance tourism as positive for the tourist experience, mentioned that it is not always the case. There have been other respondents that only argued that sex and romance tourism is problematic to the tourist experience. This is explained by different reasons.

Firstly, romance and sex tourism is harmful for the tourist experience, when the tourist does not have the motivation to be involved in encounters alike. This relates to the tourists that are involuntarily involved in a context of sex and romance tourism (e.g. by an attempt of a local). Tourism student Mourad, hotel manager Emin and government official Adel all have described issues of security for tourists. The insistent behaviour of some men (as Emin stated: "They cling too much, like ants!") or by others put as harassment can create a feeling of insecurity. This leads to tourists that feel highly uncomfortable and disturbed. This is either by the attempts for sexual and romantic encounters. However, like mentioned be-

fore, Adel argued that tourists also understand that some of these relations are perceived as a form of prostitution is a way of selling your body. He relates this to the presence and mostly visibility of poverty, which indirectly makes tourists also feel unsafe in Tunisia, which negatively impacts the tourism experience. Emin adds that also the competition between local men is sometimes too much present, which is considered to be rather disturbing for tourists. The presence of sexual and romantic encounters therefore can create discomfort and a feeling of insecurity.

Respondents argue that interventions are needed, as the tourist experience might be harmed. The interventions described might be considered as an answer to the perceived negative impacts on tourism or more specifically, the tourism experience. Tourism student Mourad states: "It's also a reason to intervene, one would not want to lose clients". This is supported by the quote of Emin; "You see the reaction, when we are supervising on the moment that it happens (...) When they (tourists) are disturbed, you see the reaction and you would warn them or explain to them one, two or three times and if not, fire them". This shows the awareness of the possibility of a negative impact on the tourism experience, as the tourism stakeholders explained straight after that it needs to be protected by having certain interventions (like having increased security on clubs, beaches, hotels, restrict access to these places, talking to staff and locals about unwanted behaviour, firing staff members).

Tourism stakeholders also perceive another problem for the tourist experience, which is the lack of discretion. This was described by two hotel managers. Discretion is sometimes lacking in the way some locals approach tourists. Ridha, hotel manager however explains that, even though he understands the tourist and is not fond of this 'style', it might be that the approach might look more 'aggressive, for example when locals make comments in the street to tourists. For tourists this is considered as a form of harassment. However, Ridha states: "Tunisians are flirts and maybe in Tunisia, we understand each other. (..) Because it's not meant in a mean way". This relates to a lack of tact or considerateness for the tourists' background which could affect the tourist experience negatively. Another example of lack of discretion, was merely about the impression of these relations to other clients. Hotel manager Bilal illustrated the problem of sex and romance tourism, by a lack of discretion by the two persons involved. One of his staff members, a pool boy, approached a female tourist to have sex in the pool at night. This was problematic for Bilal, not the relationship, however the fact the lack of consideration of other clients (e.g. who are there with their families). This was, to the believe of Bilal, hurtful for the tourist experience of the other clients, who are not interested in being confronted with these encounters in this way.

BRIDGES BETWEEN IMPACTS ON THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE

Other issues have been mentioned by tourism stakeholders which negatively impact the tourist experience. Like explained before, 'beznessa' is a phenomenon in Tunisia's tourism sector which negatively affects reputation. However, it has been argued to also be negatively impacting the tourist experience.

Hotel manager Ridha and café manager Said mentioned out of their own initiative that beznessa takes away the confidence of tourists when they are trying to buy souvenirs. It was for him one of the most important issues to talk about, as it chases away tourists and thereby repeat custom is out of the question. Said mentions that there are quite some tourism workers in the souq (market) that do not know how to treat tourists and how to sell their crafts to them. He also concludes that it makes tourists rather scared. Meriem, a hotel manager but originally not from Tunisia, shows a comparative perspective. She mentions

that she has often dealt in the market with locals who treat her like a tourist, in which she felt rather uncomfortable. As soon as she dropped a few words of Tunisian, many locals would understand and change their behaviour with her, in which she felt better treated. She concludes that this behaviour is very bad for tourists and agrees with a loss of confidence from tourists in locals.

The negative impact of beznessa on the tourist experience has also been mentioned by other hotel managers in and outside Tunis as well as by government officials and tourism workers who are in direct contact with tourists. One quote by a female government official Halima states clearly here the point of consensus on the negative impact of beznessa: "It's not good for tourists, they are uncomfortable, it's not their style, they won't have a nice experience."

Beznessa is a topic that sometimes evoke comments on the interventions that have been taken earlier. These interventions however relate not only to beznessa but also to the negative impacts coming from sex and romance tourism, which in many cases was summarized as disturbing behaviour, harassment or clinging. These practices are therefore a common space in which sex and romance tourism take a place, but actually the whole tourism sector does (and therefore these issues are not especially attributed to sex and romance tourism). For example, interventions mentioned by Emin (hotel manager) were having a guide when visiting the market, so that harassment or clingy behaviour (for selling or for hooking up with tourists) by locals would decrease. The topic of interventions were a bridge to switch from sex and romance tourism impacts that should be tackled to other issues like beznessa that should be tackled and provide tourists in general with a sense of safety.

There have been more of these kind of bridges between sex and romance tourism impacts and beznessa or safety issues, all practices that could negatively impact the tourist experience, according to the tourism stakeholders. Bilal (hotel manager) makes a bridge not constructed by the interventions, but by the nature of certain practices. The practices that are considered negative, for example in romance and sex tourism issues like rape or harassment are practices which, in case they are already inflicted, the damage is already done and irreversible, argues Bilal. There are also other issues that he later describes of which interventions come often too late. This is in relation to for example someone that has been ripped-off, damage is irreversible, even to his trust in others. This therefore connects practices resulting from romance and sex tourism to other practices that are also considered negative.

Another bridge that connects negative practices within these host-guest encounters, is the bridge of profit-making. Ramzi shows that sexual and romantic relations are often build on the interest of profiting (sexually/financially) and this profit aspect comes also back in tourism in general for example in bad selling techniques, where people are too aggressive. He states that it has anonymized the tourist, in which locals perceive the tourist solely as a body or a bank account, which is worth profiting from. He states literally: "If it's not the money, it's sex. It's always about profiting". Another bridge that has been addressed earlier on, is the bridge of poverty. Here tourism stakeholder and government official Adel states that this form of tourist prostitution (as he refers to when speaking about sex and romance tourism) can be perceived as a form of poverty by tourists. Also poverty comes back in the way people are disturbing tourists to sell their stuff, knowing that this poverty is present, makes the tourists feel less safe and less comfortable and this influences their experience.

Tourism student Mourad makes a bridge between issues within sex and romance tourism and issues of security, likewise government official Adel. They explain both that the feeling

that can be given to tourists from sexual attempts (as well as beznessa) by locals can be negative, as tourists might feel unsafe and unprotected. However, this relates to him to other issues of security, that might make a tourist feel unsafe, in which he explains the possible attacks on tourism zones. Also cafe manager in the market of Tunis, Said, tells about the lack of security in some parts of the market. He relates this to problems of sexual harassment as well as general disturbing behaviour coming from sellers in the market and explains that this leads to a lack of trust by tourists who will not feel at ease anymore. Security issues are not only an issue outside sex and romance tourism, but also an issue within sex and romance tourism. This shows that this issue is isolated in one type of tourism practice or field and leads to statements by for example government official Halima who identifies a general need for more security. This has been a conclusion based on all the practices that could negatively impact the tourist experience as they can be scary to them.

Other impacts on experience

Beznessa and security are impacts that have been mentioned to influence reputation, have also argued to influence the tourist experience. It is hard to draw a line between impacts on reputation and experience, however two issues have been addressed as harmful in relation to the tourist experience. Firstly, the lack of knowledge of tourists on the Tunisian context and their behaviour. Secondly the all-inclusive system is problematic according to stakeholders to the tourist experience.

Firstly, Ramzi, involved in the development of alternative forms of tourism, mentions that many tourists visit Tunisia, however do not know how to behave or dress. This was for him a cause of many bad experiences, especially for beach tourists. The latter is stated because he believes that beach tourists are mass tourists that can come from any layer of society. Because of the cheap holidays offered to Tunisia, he believes that many tourists that come to visit Tunisia are from a low cultural and social level as they are also in their own society. He explains: "Many tourists who visit, come from a low social-cultural level, they are not well educated. Once in the holy month of Ramadan in Tunis a woman walks around in shorts this short (points above the knee). I went up to her to tell her: Please madam, would you accept me making a few comments. Just nicely. So it was Ramadan, in this environment, you are a woman and you also smoke. I believe that it is too much. Is it maybe to not smoke and change your dressing so that you will avoid any aggressions, because it is likely that you will be harassed! She told me: Oh, is it that bad? I told her: Yes, it's bad, because now you are in the big street, but if you would go to more isolated areas, it's likely that you will be aggressed or harassed. She said thanks and she would go to the hotel to change. I told her to pay attention. She didn't know at all, she was just behaving naturally." He explains that tourists that do not know the do's and don'ts when visiting Tunisia, there is a risk for them to be also treated badly and gives thereby a role to tourists themselves to improve their experience by showing behaviour that is accepted by Tunisians.

Another issue that has been mentioned which negatively influences the tourist experience, is the emergence of the all-inclusive system, according to hotel manager Ibrahim. He explains that this system has gained popularity as there have been attacks in tourism zones, leading to a preference of staying in secured areas. However, this system is not good for the tourist experience because there is very few service and a lot of untrained tourism workers work in this system. There are few opportunities to guide and help tourists to find their way around (e.g. To make trips to other regions), leading to a very limited experience he argues.

PROFIT-MAKING

In this section it will be discussed how tourism stakeholders perceive and interpret the impact of sex and romance tourism on the possible changes in profit-making. Due to time limitation during the interviews, none of the respondents were directly asked about the relation to sex and romance tourism and changes in profit-making. Only tourism student Mourad mentions out of own initiative that a benefit of sex and romance tourism, is that hotels and tourism workers receive a higher revenue. He explains that: "In a way or another they can bring us into the hotel, and then they will pay for us. So automatically, the expenses that she will make, that is part of the turnover. (...) So the expenses that they make, that they will pay for us, they will increase.(..) Yes, just my personal view. (..) So we are predators and they are in our view our victims. Because we are profiting from them. (..) For example in food, they will pay us our lunches, they will for us for dinner. (..) They let us enter in the nightclubs of the hotel. So that all enters to the turnover of the hotel and increases the revenue. (..) That has a positive impact."

Two other respondents however have clearly stated that encounters within sex and romance tourism happen in order to make profit. However, this is meant when thinking in a terms of a more wide definition of profit. The definition of profit is being extended from revenues in the tourism industry to a profit-making by locals who are directly involved in sex and romance tourism. So profit can be financially, materially, legally (gain papers), sexually or upward mobility, for different involved ones. As Ramzi states: "Of course people profit, because people do this to profit." Amel, a cleaner in a hotel, also puts clearly forward that the profit-making mentality is dominant and overrules many relations. She adds to that that it does not have to be between locals and tourists, but can also be among Tunisian people themselves: "The problem is that there is a lot of greediness. It even exists among us, we are like this among Tunisians as well. He is looking for a future, he cares about that same thing too, with Tunisians or with tourists. It exists really a lot. Not everything thinks like that, but it exists so much. People know very well how to act and to lie. So it's not only that Tunisians would be disrespecting tourists, Tunisians do this to each other as well. They act, as to improve their lives favorably to themselves." This shows that the profit-making is an issue within the scope of sex and romance tourism, but actually within the topic of sex and romance (and marriage) as a strategy to profit and create upward social-economic mobility.

Low tourist expenses

Whereas some respondents did mention the economic benefits of tourism explicitly, more respondents have mentioned that most tourists do not spend anymore much money in Tunisia (Abdul, Adel, Mahdi, Slim, Selma, Ridha, Said).

Firstly this is explained by the presence of 'beznessa'. It has been argued that people are scared off by these unwelcome selling techniques. Hotel manager Ridha argues that even the National Office of Tourism in Tunisia has done research on the effects of beznessa and one of the findings was that tourists decrease their expenses; "It's a really bad problem, because at the moment the tourist loses their confidence, he loses confidence in all people. He will be ripped off by a seller and in that way he will put a brake on his expenses for the rest of his stay. The ONTT (national office of tourism) has done a study concerning this. They found that the client takes around 200 dollars, but spends only 50 dollars, because he has lost his trust in others (..) He says: I will be ripped off like I was ripped off before, so I cannot trust them. And then stops buying and that is bad for tourism and our economy. It's a big problem."

Said, working in one of the cafés in the market of Tunis, also confirms the belief of Ridha. He states that due to *beznessa*, people are scared off and stop buying. However, he also mentions the other aspect of *beznessa*, which is the deals that are made between guides or travel agencies and the seller in the market, causing a lower profit for other sellers who do not make those deals. He states: "The shops in the lower part are losing then you see. Well the shops in the high part say that they are following the policies and all that, but it's just an excuse. I mean they are not even friends with the travel agencies, they just pay for example one of the agencies a sum of money so that they guide them to their shops, it just bribery." He argues therefore that profit-making is lower for some sellers and higher for others, because of the deals. This is perceived to be a part of the problem of '*beznessa*'.

Some tourism stakeholders see the need for the development of attracting other kind of clients (who would spend more) or the need to develop other types of tourism, as Slim (café manager) states: "You see there is a difference between a businessman and an unemployed tourist, or students. The latter, they don't spend any money, you for example, you don't have a salary right? So these students, they bring 500 euro, those from Barcelona, it took them 2 years to gather that money, and it's few. They stay here for less than a week. But a businessman with his wife, two children, he could spend up to 1,000 euro a day." And makes therefore a distinction between different 'qualities' of tourists, related to their spending pattern. He also discusses how certain kinds of tourism have attracted customers that create less revenue or a less equally divided revenue. Whereas cruise tourism in his view creates a concentration of revenues, as cruise tourists only come to the Northern parts of Tunisia and do not travel further within the country, this form of tourism is not beneficial to tourism stakeholders in general.

He later moves on how all inclusive tourism has a negative impact on profit-making. This view is supported by other tourism stakeholders. That again relates to the attraction of a type of client who have rather low expense patterns, for which respondents like Ramzi who are involved in other types of tourism, argues that the dominant types of tourism in Tunisia, beach tourism and mass tourism are attracting clients who even back home do not have a lot of money to spend and 'high class' clients come for other types of tourism. He perceives the development of tourism in the coastal zones of Tunisia as an investment done that expecting immediate revenues, however in this stage, the revenues are rather low because of the mass tourists. The low revenues coming from the all-inclusive system have been also problematized by hotel manager Ibrahim and café manager Slim. They have mostly related this to the seasonality which creates a difficult financial situation for tourism workers outside the summer season and also the lack of quality of service that goes along with the all-inclusive system, leading to a loss of revenues. Also does the all-inclusive system encourages people to stay in the hotel, where the profit outside the hotel is low, despite the presence of many tourists. Ibrahim states; "The all-inclusive is the total death of tourism".

Government official Adel, who works on alternative forms of tourism, perceives the need as well as the opportunity to develop alternative forms. This is firstly because most visitors stay in the coastal zones (where beach tourism is present). However, there are other zones with a lot of potential, for example cultural tourism, so that tourism can be more divided over the country, but also the identification of a possibility to attract tourists who would spend more than the current tourists. This need has been linked by him to profit-making, however many tourism stakeholders would agree on the need to develop other forms of tourism, for many other reasons (which will be elaborated on in the section wider aspirations).

Another impact that has in general created less profit, is the media's reporting on security, argues hotel manager Kader. He links this with the revolution of 2011 that changed the political and economic situation in Tunisia, as has affected the tourism industry; "Tourism demand was very booming, before. Now after the Revolution, people hear fake information (...). People are scared of what they hear on the television." The decreasing tourism demand that took place after the Revolution therefore has a lot of impact on the profit-making in tourism. He links media and reputation with a lower profit and lower tourism demand. Also has a negative experience, resulting from beznessa, been linked to a decreased profit. So has Emin (hotel manager) that research has shown that tourists spend less as they do not trust the sellers for example in the market. They put a hold on their expenses, which is a negative impact on the profit-making, resulting out of bad experiences.

The two last points show that there are links between profit-making and tourist experience or reputation perceived by tourism stakeholders. Whereas these have been divided upon different research sub questions, it is sometimes not possible to also divide the results over these sub questions.

WIDER ASPIRATIONS

This section discusses the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the wider aspirations of the community for tourism development, and the way they perceive the place sex and romance tourism takes within these aspirations. This part consists of two subparts, of which one is the way sex and romance tourism is congruent to the values of Tunisian people, as perceived by tourism stakeholders. The second part is on how tourism stakeholders perceive tourism development.

VALUE JUDGMENTS

In general, value judgments have stayed very personal. Firstly, tourism stakeholders have not often expressed a value judgment on the presence of romance and sex tourism, and if they did, they did not mention any value judgments necessarily on behalf of a wider community. It has been stated that certain developments in tourism would be beneficial on a wider scale, this is considered to be an aspiration of tourism stakeholders that does take into account possible wider community benefits (e.g. stable employment).

Value judgments have been expressed by few respondents. One respondent, hotel manager Bilal, who was negative on firstly the presence of gay sex tourism, which he considered as 'too desperate' now that the mentality of Tunisians on pre-marital sex has become more liberal. He did not see the need to become involved within homosexual relations. Also was he critical on the type of involved locals and their background. He mentions that in some areas of Tunisia the people have 'a mentality of profiting' of which he is negative about. This counts for locals who are involved with tourists for financial benefits. He explained the presence of this mentality by a lack of perpetuation of the Islamic religion. The mentality of profit, has also been mentioned by Amel cleaning lady. She tells me about her own experiences: "Me I have been 10 years together with a guy, and I loved him and he too. (...) He did not choose me. He chose a girl and he said it himself that she studied at university and her family is ok, so who am I? I am not suited for marriage, in his view. Even if he doesn't love her, it's not a problem.(..) The problem is that there is a lot of greediness. It even exists among us, we are like this among Tunisians as well. He is looking for a future, he cares about that same thing too, with Tunisians or with tourists. It exists really a lot. Not everything thinks like that, but it exists so much. People know very well how to act and to lie. So it's not only that Tunisians would be disrespecting tourists, Tunisians do this to each other as well. They act, as to improve their lives favorably to themselves. The mindset has turned

to become 'all about me', 'me me me!', 'I need to get somewhere, I need to travel, I need to be better, be good, I don't want people to have pity on me, even he could fall down totally, he could go crazy, he doesn't want people to have pity on him, so people think about what they must do in order to get further in life and avoid this pity, avoid this looking down by others. One needs to get somewhere." Whereas at one hand she admits that if she would meet someone that could provide her with this financial freedom, she would go for it. At the same time, she is very critical on the mentality of profit, that is according to her, a mentality that has developed over the years and which is to her unfortunately a dominant way of thinking. Therefore, she gives a value judgment, however it has been nuanced with understanding for the situation of many locals (including herself) that would not refuse an option for upward financial mobility.

There is a huge variety of possible sexual and romantic relations, which could serve as an explanation why some respondents were highly positive about these, whereas others were rather negative. Café manager Said for example tells about the mixed couples he meets in the market of Tunis and in his café. He tells me: "These couples they come back to my café, after 5,6,7 years they still come back to say hello and they are together, they read the Koran; they are religious, the foreign guys with the girls. I mean off course, if it was for another reason to start the relationship but it needed some trust building between them. So they are not talking about money, that is not the focus, they are trying to evolve a relationship with the tourist, but still they are adapting to the culture of Tunisia and all that." He was very positive about these couples and his quote also shows and confirms the variety of relations possible. Money and sex is not always the interest that dominate host-guest relations, which leads him to a positive attitude towards mixed couples. Hotel manager Abdul also had a positive attitude towards these kind of mixed couples.

Not everyone showed a value judgement. Many respondents were rather objectively stating that 'it is what it is' and moved on to giving explanations of what kind of sex and romance tourism exists, what relations evolve out of this contact, what interests lie under and how roles between tourists and locals are divided. Mostly factors like unemployment and migration wishes were then discussed as to explain the side of the locals.

Two respondents however have touched the topic of the European background of female tourists. Whereas tourism student states that the European women are 'more easy' compared to the 'bent bladi' (literally: a girl from my country (own translation)) and compares the Tunisian mentality with the one tourists have; "We have the idea since X time that tourists are easier than Tunisians to hook up with them. Our mentality is not like theirs, they are really open (...). A girl that turns eighteen, they tell her: 'Go live your life in your own way. You see, you are an adult and vaccinated, go out and live your life', they don't care about her. They know that she will go with X or Y and they see her, but they do not see it as something 'haram' (sinful)." Hotel manager Ridha also expressed his view on the background of female tourists, of those who are often encountering Tunisian men and states: "If I tell you I love you, just when I have met you, do you believe me? (..) It's a noble word, you don't believe that straight away. (..) Girls who have been tricked in these relations, of those failed marriages, they are girls that are abandoned in their place. They miss affection and they search for it. From the moment that they find someone who takes care of them, they fall in love and they stick to him. She let herself be guided by her feelings, not by ratio. (..) It happens. (..) European women however, they are adults and vaccinated, they have enough experience to know how to distinguish someone serious and someone who just wants to sleep around." Ridha was mentioning how most female tourists in his hotel are women that miss affection and look almost desperately for it, causing false expectations and disap-

pointments, or so he calls it 'being sentimentally ripped off'. He explains that he sees that these women should normally be careful with themselves and should be critical on the people they meet, however the tourists do not follow that advice as they do not believe him for the explanation of the interests he gives.

Both Ridha and Mourad talk about the background of female tourists as an explanation to how sexual and romantic encounters are evolving and what kind of encounters this creates. Their background serves also as an explanation for the way Tunisian people generally perceive female tourists as easy targets. Whereas Mourad attributes this 'easiness' to the European mentality, Ridha sees it more in the direction of a naivety and need of female tourists of the relations and their nature. There has not been a strong value judgment on this, however these respondents have felt the need to explain their perception of some of the causal variables at least on the 'tourist-side'. It shows that tourism stakeholders also try to see for explanations and understanding of the gap of the behaviour and mentality of Tunisians versus tourists, and also the different behaviours and backgrounds between tourists.

It also shows that there is a lot of understanding of the locals but also the tourists side, whereas many tourism stakeholders take personally a distance from sexual and romantic encounters with tourists. Aspirations and value gaps have not been brought forward by tourism stakeholders.

EDUCATION

In relation to problems arising out of sex and romance tourism, two tourism stakeholders have mentioned that training and education were needed. However, this was a need in relation to problems in relation to sex and romance tourism, but also to other tensions within host-guest relations, like for example buyer-seller relations.

Ramzi, involved in alternative types of tourism, explains that education would be beneficial to improve the host-guest contact. This is because he believes that many locals do not perceive a different type of relation with tourists than an economic or sexual one. He gives a story in which he had a platonic friendship with a female tourist, where he was stopped by the tourist police, who could not believe that he was not trying to profit from her. He believes that this says more about the way many Tunisian people think in terms of 'bank accounts and bodies' in relation to tourists, where profit is the leading interest to be involved with these. He argues furthermore that this certain image on tourists is because there are 'cultural codes', which relate to behavioural differences between locals and tourists and the way both parties understand each other can be based on misunderstandings (e.g. A smile understood as more than just politeness). There is need identified by Ramzi for locals to understand the cultural background of tourists so that misunderstandings are less likely to arise within host-guest contact. Another tourism stakeholder identified the need to educate tourism workers on the right selling techniques. This related to his view as he perceived *beznessa* as highly disturbing and negative for the tourist experience.

Both tourism stakeholders see the need to train people in their behaviour with tourists. Whether this comes from a different cultural background or not, they do see that the behaviour of some locals is a cause for problems between host-guest relations and see training or education in different areas as a solution to these fields of tension. These comments have been framed in the context of future aspirations of tourism, which lies close to the question of how eliminate negative impacts, so that the tourism industry will be improved.

ASPIRATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE TYPES OF TOURISM

As mentioned earlier, different tourism stakeholders have argued for the need of developing other types of tourism. This was next to a low profit coming from the current tourism and tourist type also for other reasons that correlate to profit, but also to the other benefits from tourism like employment but also social or cultural benefits.

For example, in relation to sex and romance tourism, hotel manager Emin has argued that sex and romance tourism in Tunisia exists within beach tourism. He explains that beach tourism is a type of tourism that encourages these encounters or relationships, and is therefore also the cause of the problem of these sometimes 'unhealthy' relations between tourists and locals. The beach tourist is a tourist who is not interested in culture or true contact with locals and he argues that this sustains the relations that often result within the context of beach tourism. He states that he is not a fan of beach tourism for that reason. However, he gives other reasons as well, which were mainly critics on tourism development, like other tourism stakeholders also did. Beach tourism was highly promoted and developed by the Tunisian government as from the beginning beach tourism was identified as a type of tourism that could bring immediate revenues. Faycal and Tlili mentioned the way tourism development was rather arbitrary and without profound research. The speed of the development of this sector also was an explanation for the problems it caused on societal level, but also environmental level.

Also the all-inclusive system that is present in Tunisia's tourism sector has been argued to be very bad for tourism as it attracts little profit. (like mentioned before?). Different tourism stakeholders have argued that the all-inclusive system attracts poor tourists, as it's rather cheap, and chases away tourists with higher standards and who would spend more, as they expect a certain level of service, which cannot be found back in all-inclusive systems and hotels.

In general, the dominant tourism types or systems, which(are beach tourism and the all-inclusive system that is often part of it, are perceived as low profit-makers, whereas there is a need to attract a high class who can increase profit coming from tourism. The all-inclusive system is also perceived as negative as it discourages the tourists to leave the hotel and spend their money outside the hotel in other tourist places. Other examples are given. For example, cruise tourism has been argued by Slim (café manager) that it keeps the profit in general rather low. Tourists come of the cruises and have a stroll in the areas close by. However they do not visit other tourism zones, leading to a very concentrated profit-making of cruise tourism.

PROFIT-MAKING CONCENTRATION

Multiple stakeholders have touched upon the topic for the tourists to travel around Tunisia. This would spread economic benefits of tourism better among tourism stakeholders. This is relevant for tourists who stay a lot in the same environment of the hotel, due to all-inclusive systems in many beach resorts. This also counts for tourists who are in the view of multiple stakeholders 'free to do their walk and buy wherever they would like', so that clients and profit are not being manipulated by either beznessa or bribery. The encouragement for tourists to travel around Tunisia was touched in relation to cruise tourism, which does not encourage tourists to go further than the nearest places, leading to profit concentration, in all three examples.

Tourism stakeholders do not understand why certain types of tourism (that have an obvious economic benefit) are not supported. Ibrahim gave the example of the music festivals in the North of Tunisia which have been canceled, even when the government was able to make money out of it, as it was highly popular and well-visited. Also does Ramzi talk about how cultural tourism in interior Tunisia was highly popular until the government decided to invest more in coastal areas where the focus was on sun, sea and sand tourism. This shows in both cases that tourism stakeholders perceive the role of the state as rather decisive for how tourism development took place and how certain types of tourism therefore have gained less attention (even when it was considered to be beneficial by tourism stakeholders).

PROFESSIONALIZE THE SECTOR

The wish for different types of tourism also relates to the wish to 'professionalize' the tourism sector. Currently, tourism in Tunisia has its highest peak in the summer season. This is a problem according to highly experienced hotel manager Bilal, who states that it does not provide real jobs to the locals by the quote: "The problem is that it's seasonal. We have some health tourism, but the beach tourism is so much more, and it cannot employ the people well. « This view has been supported by other tourism stakeholders like Ibrahim who linked the huge unemployment problem in Tunisia with the potentials of tourism, as he stated: "There is a lot of unemployment, if they start working all year through, they can reduce the unemployment. One hotel in Hammamet for example takes up to 250 staff members. A lot of people work in areas that relate to tourism, they all benefit! We should have more professionals that can work all year through."

The seasonality however of beach tourism mostly results in hiring staff who are not trained to work in tourism. This is firstly, as Bilal explains that usually the relation between tourism workers and tourists is very well because the tourism workers are trained for this. However, he explains that there are a lot of untrained tourism workers, who have been hired for the summer season, like animators. He states: "We find a group of young people, students or high school students, they do not ask for a lot of money. (...) Hotel managers take them because usually every tourism workers has the right to work permanently. It's not temporary or part-time. To be working permanently, the tourism in Tunisia is seasonal, a bit in December (..) in march, and in summer.. then it's completely full. (..) So in between there are periods that there is no job, and he (the hotel manager) would pay without having any clients, that is why they look for whoever during the summer."

He states that it is mostly these people who cause problems, as they would like to profit from their position and have not been trained in how to deal with the clients. He blames them to think only about their own profit, instead of reflecting on what would be beneficial for tourists, the hotel, the image of Tunisia and Tunisians and tourism in general.

One of the respondents, Said, who works in the souq has also addressed the perpetuation of tourism workers in the market who, like Bilal states, 'do not care about the future of tourism'. As Said states: "You know the good guys, they understand the tourist. Really, for example the tourists buys from him for 100 dinars, it is a lot. Then he gives a gift with it, so that the tourists goes home and feels good about it. He goes and tells his family back home that Tunisians are nice, and then he wants to come back. He will be positive about them. He will talk good. But then the young generation..... they think: 'Give me money today, kill me tomorrow'. They don't think about making the tourist happy, increasing the chance that he comes back, increasing the chance he will talk good about us, they don't care, they work anything, any work that comes to them, they don't care about the work itself, about the fu-

ture of the work. Like these guys that give an extra gift, they want to make profit but they also think about tomorrow, not like these younger guys they want to get money, even if it would be 10 dinar a day, and then spend the money on smoking and drinking, without thinking about tomorrow. They are just passing their time here.. and they couldn't find another job that maybe they were educated for, or just couldn't find something. They don't care about the tourism future, especially in the souq apparently."

These tourism stakeholders shed light on the problem of unemployment from different angles. Whereas Bilal shows that tourism could provide jobs for the locals, the dominant type of tourism does not allow for that. At the same time, Bilal as well as Said state that by having tourism workers who do not foresee a future career in tourism as it's rather temporary, the 'untrained' or temporary tourism workers do not perceive the need to protect the tourism industry from negative impacts and are even argued to be the cause of many problems related to tourist disturbance (in sexual and romantic encounters, but also selling techniques).

Changes after the Jasmin Revolution

Next to all the reasons given, with regards to unemployment, seasonality, the all-inclusive system, the concentration of profit and a general low profit from the current dominant tourism type there have been also expressions on preferring alternative types of tourism, simply because tourism stakeholders like Hana, teacher in sociology and tourism, are happy that not only the economic aspect of tourism is present, but the environmental and social aspects of tourism have now gained more space to develop and gain importance. That is, she explains, because there are since the Revolution, loads of initiatives that happen outside the control of the state (as the political regime has changed). She expresses her joy several times for the recent development of other ideas and mind-sets within the tourism sector.

The current situation in Tunisia has been addressed by different respondents. It can be considered that there was a period in tourism before the Jasmin Revolution, and the period after this political change. The period before the Revolution is perceived as positive, where this sector was booming. Whereas currently, the government has identified other national issues which have taken priority over tourism development and the management of negative impacts on the tourism industry (like beznessa, corruption among tourism stakeholders, security issues in tourism). Tourism stakeholders view the period before the Revolution more positively and some have stated clearly that they would like to go back to 'those times'. This also relates to the security issues that have arisen after the Revolution, which are considered to be harmful for tourism demand.

OVERVIEW OVERALL RESULTS

So to come to conclude on the results, a table has been made which gives a description of the impacts mentioned of sex and romance tourism and other forms of tourism (see next page).

	Related to romance and sex tourism	Related to other issues within tourism
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A positive experience leads to a positive input in reputation. ▪ A negative experience is harmful for the reputation. ▪ There are other highly positive impacts on reputation other than the presence of sex and romance tourism. ▪ It does not affect reputation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beznessa ▪ Security
Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voluntary involvement signifies a positive experience ▪ Repeat custom of romance and sex seekers indicates a good previous tourist experience ▪ There can be harassment, disturbance for tourists that are not interested in sex and romance tourism. ▪ There is a lack of discretion of couples, which is disturbing to other clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beznessa ▪ Security ▪ Lack of knowledge on right behaviour on the tourist-side ▪ All-inclusive system does not contribute to a good tourist experience
Profit-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism revenues increase as tourists pay for locals in tourism zones. ▪ Definition of profit is wide: sex and romance tourism has the reason of existence of profiting. Profit increase (of directly involved locals). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dominant forms of tourism have low revenues ▪ Concentration of profit in certain areas ▪ In relation to media reporting on security: less tourists, less profit. ▪ In relation to bad experiences coming from beznessa, less profit because tourists stop expenses.

5. DISCUSSION

AMBIGUOUS RELATIONS, AMBIGUOUS IMPACTS

The main research question investigates how tourism stakeholders in Tunisia perceive sex and romance tourism and how these forms of tourism impacts the wider tourism sector. Whereas during this study, emphasis has been put on the perceived impacts of romance and sex tourism, the first part of the main research question also includes in what ways tourism stakeholders perceive sex and romance tourism in the first place. This is highly relevant for the way this group perceives possible impacts. This ambiguity needs to be addressed in relation to the possible impacts of sex and romance tourism, as these impacts are as ambiguous as the phenomenon sex and romance tourism.

Cohen (1982) has given a framework on this ambiguity of sexual and romantic relations between tourists and locals, which includes a form of sex tourism in which sexual services are being compensation with money and affection is absent, mixed forms in which the relation comes along with money and gifts mostly spontaneously offered or on the request of the 'seducers', more affective relation forms, where is based on an interpersonal attraction and romantic feeling or erotic relations based on sexual pleasure. The involvement of the Tunisian men, as discussed in literature by Lévy et al. (1997) addresses the broad range of motivations by locals (economic, sexual, hedonistic, emotional reasons).

Tourism stakeholders have referred to sex and romance tourism in different ways, which could fit these categories very well. Whereas some refer to summer loves or flings, friendships, other refer to older tourists that come to exploit locals and at the same time locals who try to exploit tourists. They have referred to sexual and romantic encounters in diverse ways. The 'innocent' relationships are being told about (absence of economic interests) as well as relationships that have emotionally and financially ruined tourists however have benefitted a local that they personally know. When talking about sex and romance tourism or encounters, even rape was considered to be part this term, which was personally unexpected to be discussed in the interviews. This broad definition of sex and romance tourism goes contrary to idea sketched in many media sources, where with regards to Tunisia, mostly relations are being described under which tourists have suffered financially or emotionally and other types of relations are not given attention (France2, 2010; Vakantieinfo.org, 2013; Stevens, N., & Tardio, N., 2011, Beznessalert.com, Bezness-land.com, Tunisianloverats.com, all accessed: 15th September 2014).

It can be stated that the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on romance and sex tourism and what it means, were very broad. This serves partly as an explanation for the way the impacts of sex and romance tourism are perceived. Where romance and sex tourism can be highly positive for the tourism experience, could increase tourism demand and repeat custom, it highly depends on the nature of the sexual or romantic relationship. This is because also negative impacts have been described, like a feeling of insecurity, disturbance and harassment. As the term sex and romance tourism is highly ambiguous, likewise it's impacts on the tourism industry. Therefore a single 'package' of impacts from sex and romance tourism on the tourism sector cannot be given nor is it placeable in the dichotomy of negative or positive impacts. What can be given is rather a range of different realities coming from host-guest relations which all take part of the arena which shapes the tourism industry.

IMPACT ON REPUTATION

Previous literature on the Gambia (McCombes, 2006) showed a fear of tourism stakeholders of the Gambia gaining a reputation as a sex destination. This was however not a fear among tourism stakeholders in Tunisia. They did address that Tunisia might have a reputation among certain tourists as a tourist destination which provides for a sexual or romantic tourist experience. Tourism stakeholders have argued that Tunisia attracts sex and romance tourists who know about the presence of sex and romance tourism and therefore would like to gain access to these intimate encounters. This comes close to what Gambian stakeholders perceive as the reputation of a 'sex destination' or in Tunisian context a 'romance and sex destination'. It was also mentioned that possibly a sexual or romantic tourist experience plays a role in shaping Tunisia's reputation, because this experience creates an expectation and thus an image of Tunisia and the type of relation one could encounter during their stay. In as far as this perception, there is overlap between the Gambian and Tunisian stakeholders. However, Tunisian stakeholders did not express this as a fear or concern. Unlike the Gambian tourism stakeholders, this image or reputation was not considered to be problematic.

Tourism stakeholders have shown awareness on the image that some Tunisian men have as 'womanizers'. This image was again acknowledged, but not perceived as problematic. Even again this has been related to the motivations tourists are expected to have, which are the quest for a romantic or sexual experience during their stay. The image of Tunisia being a place where one could have easily this kind of experience was not a problem, as many tourism stakeholders saw that this actually adds to the tourism demand. The attraction of sex and romance tourists was not considered a problem. This leads generally to the idea that sex and romance tourism might impact the reputation, however it does not *endanger* the tourism sector, as opposed to the view of tourism stakeholders in the Gambia. This might be explained by the desire of Gambian tourism stakeholders to attract other kind of tourists than sex and romance tourists, whereas in Tunisia emphasis was put on the increased tourism demand thanks to these tourists.

However, to contextualize the impact of sex and romance tourism, two lines of argument have been used. Firstly, the impact of sex and romance tourism was contextualized with other factors which shape the image of Tunisia as tourism destination. Other factors mentioned were hospitality, warmth, happiness, open-mindedness and beautiful nature, which are considered to have more impact on Tunisia's image as a tourism destination, than solely the sexual and romantic encounters that happen between tourists and locals. This might serve as an explanation for why Tunisian tourism stakeholders are not afraid of the presence of sex and romance tourism as an impact on reputation, whereas in the Gambia this fear was present. The second line of argument was that these sexual and romantic encounters were normal as they are always present there where tourism exists. These forms of tourism are perceived to be not unique for Tunisia's tourism industry and are therefore not necessarily associated with Tunisia. The impact of romance and sex tourism on the reputation of Tunisia is therefore not as big when considering other influential factors and within the context of the international scale of romance and sex tourism.

IMPACT SEX/ROMANCE TOURISM ON EXPERIENCE

In the Gambia, tourism stakeholders have identified the behaviour of sexually and romantically involved locals as rather disturbing. It was described by them as a form of sexual harassment, mainly because of their 'lustful' approach to tourists. This was argued by them to contribute to a negative tourist experience and deters repeat custom. However in the Gambia, a national questionnaire among tourists has been executed by the ministry of tourism. This questionnaire found that tourists had many complaints on sex tourism, especially as they described the behaviour of locals as 'lustful' and disturbing, which might be a basis for some stakeholders to express their concern on the negative impacts of sex tourism on tourists and the tourist experience.

Tourism stakeholders in Tunisia have argued that in case the motivation of the tourist is in line with the presence and possibility of sexual and/or romantic encounters with locals, this actually is a positive impact on the tourist experience as it positively contributes to and fulfills the tourist expectations and experience. They were therefore focused on the different tourists present in Tunisia and understood that not all tourists are affected in the same and single way by sexual or romantic attempts or the presence of sex and romance tourism, as this might even be a positive contribution to their stay. A positive experience however was always on the condition of voluntary involvement of tourists in sexual and romantic encounters with locals. A positive tourist experience has even been argued to increase the chance of repeat custom. This has been described in the case of a fulfilled experience of a sex or romance tourist, who is willing to come back to Tunisia. This is contrary to the beliefs of tourism stakeholders in the Gambia, who were merely focused on non-sex and non-romance tourists, who were not fulfilled in their tourist experience. It is also contrary to the description of sexual and romantic relations in media sources which have been described earlier. Whereas relations are often depicted as a sort of emotional and financial exploitation of the tourist by the local, there are many different type of relations possible within the context of Tunisia's sex and romance tourism.

However, tourism stakeholders have also understood that it might be negative for the tourist experience. Sexual advances or harassment are addressed in literature as issues for tourists (Porier, 1995; Carpenter-Latiri and Buchberger, 2010). Tourism stakeholders have also understood that there are situations in which tourists could feel unsafe or disturbed. Romance and sex tourism is considered to be harmful for the tourist experience, on the condition that the tourist does not have the motivation to be involved in encounters alike. This relates to the tourists that are involuntarily involved in a context of sex and romance tourism, for example by unwanted attention or attempt of locals. A lack of discretion of sexual and romantic relations was also argued to be negative, as it can be that other tourists are not interested in being confronted with these encounters during their stay.

Respondents argue that interventions are needed, as the tourist experience might be harmed. This relates to the addressed need of interventions in the Gambia by the tourism stakeholders. The interventions described might be considered as an answer to the perceived negative impacts on tourism or more specifically, the tourism experience. Tourism student Mourad states: "It's also a reason to intervene, one would not want to lose clients". The interventions mentioned by Tunisian and Gambian tourism stakeholders have overlap, for example decreased access for locals in tourism zones and the discouragement of host-guest contact. In any case, many Tunisian tourism stakeholders did show an understanding for locals to be engaged for whatever reason possible with tourists. Many times explanation

was provided before moving on to the impacts of these relations on the tourism sector. This understanding was also among Gambian tourism stakeholders.

BLURRED IMPACTS ON REPUTATION AND TOURIST EXPERIENCE

Whereas reputation and tourist experience have been treated in theoretical framework as two different parts within the larger tourism sector, results have shown that tourism stakeholders do not necessarily make a clear distinction between impacts on reputation and the tourist experience. This is for the impacts of romance and sex tourism, as well as other impacts possible impacts on the wider tourism sector.

Impacts of sex and romance tourism on reputation and experience

Results have been found that relate to reputation and experience, which are consequently research question one and two. Many times whenever possible impacts of sex and romance tourism on reputation were being discussed, tourism stakeholders would first argue about the impact on the tourist experience. Eventually they moved on to how a tourism experience is related to the reputation of Tunisia or the Tunisian people. It has been argued that a possible negative impact on reputation is possible when the experience resulting out of the presence of sex and romance tourism was actually perceived by tourists as a negative experience.

Mourad, a student in tourism, explains to me that it's possible that a European girl comes to Tunisia and feels very uncomfortable by any attempts or unwished-for attention which could lead to a bad experience. This experience will be shared with her friends and family who then change their mind on Tunisia as a pleasant tourism destination. This might change possible plans to visit Tunisia. He makes a link between experience, reputation and tourism demand. The general argument that is put forward by tourism stakeholders is that a bad experience leads often to a bad image for the visitor itself, which could also influence the wider environment.

This does match the theoretical framework, where negative impacts are perceived on the tourist experience and the reputation in the Gambian case (McCombes, 2006). Sex and romance tourism were argued to have a negative influence on the reputation, as tourism stakeholders feared a reputation of a sex destination, whereas Tunisian tourism stakeholders don't fear or problematize that image. Also they believe that this was only negative whenever tourists were not interested in sex and romance tourism, which can only be found out by a bad experience. The Gambian tourism stakeholders however believed that a sex destination image would decrease the tourism demand of tourists. This is contrary to the findings of this study. This might be explained by how Tunisian tourism stakeholders have consciously included the motivation of tourists (that being sex or romance) whereas in the Gambian case study tourism stakeholders might have based their view on the study of the ministry of tourism, of which it is unknown what kind of tourists were interviewed (it might be that these were tourists that were not at all interested in sex and romance tourism, whereas sex and romance tourists were not involved in this study).

Other impacts on reputation and tourist experience

Beznessa was for these respondents the first step away from a discussion on the impacts of sex and romance tourism towards a discussion on other dynamics influencing the reputation or the tourist experience. The term has been used by respondents most of the times to the interest of sellers to gain as much as they can from tourists. Different respondents identified the same impacts when speaking about sex and romance tourism, as about beznessa.

For example, they described aggressive or insistent behaviour of sellers leading to a lot of discomfort, whereas this was also a problem with locals who try to make contact with tourists for sexual or romantic encounters (so in the context of sex and romance tourism). It relates to reputation as it has happened sometimes that tourists have been going through the media to report on business practices. He argues that this media attention shapes reputation in a negative way and he adds: "there are a people that pass by the media, there are many problems".

Another issue which has been touched by tourism stakeholders as having an impact on reputation and tourist experience, is the issue of security in Tunisia. This has either a relation to a feeling of insecurity or the image of Tunisia as a dangerous place to visit. For the latter, the media was ascribed to play a role in this as media reports on security issues are perceived to be exaggerated and not relevant to the safety of tourism zones.

BRIDGES HOST-GUESTS ENCOUNTERS

A highly interesting finding in this study is the so-called bridges that were found. Several bridges between practices within or characteristics of sex and romance tourism and other host-guest practices have been found, which are considered to be negative by tourism stakeholders. Each bridge will be discussed.

Disturbing behaviour

The issues that have been mentioned as influential for the tourism industry are the disturbance of local people towards the tourists. However, this disturbance was often discussed not solely in relation to sex and romance tourism, but also in buyer-seller contexts like the market, where behaviour of sellers was considered to be disturbing and harmful for the tourist experience. Forms of behaviour that fall under the label of 'disturbing' have been either called harassment or 'clingy behaviour', where there was not a clear distinction between sexual attempts or selling attempts.

Disturbance in this study is seen as a bridge that would connect a negative aspect within host-guest encounters, either them being sexual, platonic or professional. Other bridges were made that showed. These shows that within host-guest encounters there is a range of practices that are undesired by tourism stakeholders as they are perceived to be harmful for the tourism industry. Also do these bridges provide explanations for why they are considered harmful. These practices are therefore a common space in which sex and romance tourism take a place but is not dominated by sexual and romantic relations between tourists and locals, but rather fall under a bigger umbrella which covers host-guest encounters.

Interventions

For example, the topic of interventions were a bridge to switch from sex and romance tourism impacts that should be tackled to other issues like business that should be tackled and provide tourists in general with a sense of safety. Here, certain interventions serve to protect tourists not only from sexual attempts or harassment, but in general clingy behaviour of locals.

Irreversibility

There have been more of these kind of bridges between sex and romance tourism impacts and business or safety issues, all practices that could negatively impact the tourist experience, according to the tourism stakeholders. One stakeholder has constructed a bridge between sex and romance tourism which relates to the nature of certain practices. The prac-

tices that are considered negative, for example in romance and sex tourism issues like rape or harassment are practices which, in case they are already inflicted, the damage is already done and irreversible. There are also other issues for which interventions come often too late. This is in relation to for example someone that has been ripped-off, damage is irreversible, even to his trust in others. This therefore connects practices resulting from romance and sex tourism to other practices that are also considered negative and fall under practices of which, once they happened, the damage to the tourist experience is already done and despite interventions it might be too late to 'cure' the negative experience.

Profit-making

Another bridge that connects negative practices within these host-guest encounters, is the bridge of profit-making. Sexual and romantic relations are seen as often based on the interest of profiting (sexually/financially) and this profit aspect comes also back in tourism in general for example in bad selling techniques, where people are too aggressive because profit-making is a dominant interest for sellers. This argument goes as far as the tourist who has become an anonym source of profit, either being 'bank account or a body' worth profiting from.

Poverty

This is to come to a slightly related issue which is the bridge of poverty. Tourist stakeholders stated that sex and romance tourism is a form of prostitution. This form is perceived as a visible aspect of poverty, assuming that prostitution is a form of 'selling your body'. Poverty however comes back in the practices of beznessa, in which tourists understand that beznessa is related to poverty. The visibility of poverty, coming back in either sexual and romantic encounters as well as in buyer-seller relations, creates according to tourism stakeholders, a feeling of discomfort and lack of safety.

Insecurity

Lastly, the bridge of insecurity was built by one tourism stakeholder who perceive that issues of insecurity are the core of the discomfort of tourists. These tourists can either be the 'victim' of what is considered sexual harassment coming from sex and romance tourism. However, one can also feel insecure in relation to disturbing behaviour coming from sellers in the market. The feeling of insecurity has been related to a decrease in trust between locals and guests. This again shows that security issues are not only an issue outside sex and romance tourism, but also an issue within sex and romance tourism.

These bridges all together show that issues resulting from sex and romance tourism are not isolated in this field of practice but rather fall under the umbrella of host-guest relations and noise between these parties. This sheds a whole different light on the use of the term 'sex and romance tourism' as an isolated field of study within tourism studies. Especially in relation to the dynamics, like its impacts, consequences and causes, studies on sex and romance tourism might need to provide more context on host-guest relations, than the unique focus on sexual and romantic encounters.

IMPACT ON PROFIT-MAKING

Unfortunately due to time limitation during the interviews, none of the respondents were directly asked about the relation to sex and romance tourism and possible changes in profit-making. One respondent however mentioned as soon as the interview started, the increase of profit due to the presence of sex and romance tourism. This is explained as tourists pay for locals' expenses in tourism zones, leading automatically to a higher revenue in the places where these couples come.

This is contrary to what Gambian stakeholders (McCombes, 2006) have mentioned. A decrease in economic benefits has been a complaint of tourism stakeholders in the research in the Gambia, as they blamed bumsters 'stealing their business', for example when they play as a tourist guide and therefore official tourist guides are influenced financially. However this has been shown a small point of conflict, compared to the other complaints of tourism stakeholders on sexually and romantically involved locals.

The definition that some respondents have given to the term profit was also more extended. Whereas Gambian tourism stakeholders perceived profit as a form of tourism revenues, profit to the Tunisian tourism stakeholders was mostly on any form of profit made by locals (sexually, financially). This shows that the profit-making is not only a form of tourism revenues but also seen as to create upward social-economic mobility. clearly stated by the quote: "Off course people profit, because people do this to profit." (Ramzi). This is interesting as it shows that profit is perceived to be the nature and reason of existence of many host-guest relations, whereas Gambian tourism stakeholders see this contact as harmful for profit-making, especially for tourism stakeholders.

ASPIRATIONS TOURIST STAKEHOLDERS

In the study on the Gambia, it has shown that tourism stakeholders feel that practices resulting from romance and sex tourism are contrary to the aspirations of the community.

In the Gambia tourism is seen as an influence on acculturation in the society, in which the community mentions that traditional values are replaced by values that relate to individual and material possessions. Next to that, there is a disapproval of the behaviour of men that are involved in romance and sex tourism, as they imitate western clothing styles, start drinking alcohol with tourists, disrespect traditional authorities and show sexuality in public, which causes acculturation, framed negatively (McCombes, 2006).

There is reason to expect that tourism stakeholders in Tunisia would also perceive these same issues, as previous tourism studies in Tunisia have shown that male prostitution in relation to tourism, a change in dressing and drinking alcohol by local men involved with tourists are two examples of practices that are not welcomed by parts of the community. A discrepancy between the behaviour of these men and the Islamic principles or other traditional habits is perceived by the community (Poirier, 1995; Robinson and Bonifance, 1999).

When comparing this to the results of this study, the findings show different viewpoints. Firstly, tourism stakeholders have not often expressed a value judgment on the presence of romance and sex tourism, and if they did, they did not mention any value judgments necessarily on behalf of a wider community, but kept it rather personal. Sometimes they moved on to giving explanations of what kind of sex and romance tourism exists, understood as a need to explain rather a judgement. Also they might not perceive themselves as representatives of a wider community. Negative comments were mentioned two times. On gay sex

tourism and the profit mentality that has been developed among Tunisian people, whereas both respondents did show an understanding of the situation as it was for involved locals.

There is a huge variety of possible sexual and romantic relations, which could serve as an explanation why some respondents were highly positive about these, whereas others were rather negative. Money is not always the interest that dominates host-guest relations which leads to a positive of many tourism stakeholders towards sex and romance tourism.

Respondents however have touched the topic of the European background of female tourists and would explain female tourists should normally be careful with themselves and should be critical on the people they meet, however the tourists do not follow that advice. Addressing their background serves also as an explanation for the way Tunisian people generally perceive female tourists as easy targets. Whereas some attribute this 'easiness' to the European mentality, others call it naivety and the need of female tourists which shape these relations. It shows that tourism stakeholders look for explanations and understanding of the gap of the behaviour and mentality of Tunisians versus tourists and also the different behaviours and backgrounds between tourists. This was done instead of giving a ready-made opinion on what is happening. In general, few tourism stakeholders expressed a negative attitude towards sex and romance tourism and most of them did not express any value judgments.

Coming from a more constructive way of arguing, some tourism stakeholders mentioned that training and education were needed as solutions for the problems discussed. This was a need identified by them, in relation to problems within sex and romance tourism, but also to other tensions within host-guest relations, like for example buyer-seller relations. This is considered to be beneficial to the host-guest contact. They mentioned that it is important for locals to understand the cultural background of tourists so that misunderstandings are less likely to arise within host-guest contact, also on the right selling techniques. This related to his view as he perceived *beznessa* as highly disturbing and negative for the tourist experience. The same was needed for the tourists, so that they understand what is accepted behaviour so that they increase their chances on having a good time in Tunisia. The need to improve the host-guest has been framed in the context of future aspirations of tourism, which lies close to the question of how eliminate negative impacts, so that the tourism industry will be improved. Whereas Gambian tourism stakeholders mentioned mostly the undesired practices and behaviour related to sex and romance tourism, there was more of a focus by Tunisian tourism stakeholders on trying to understand this kind of host-guest encounter. This leads to a reflection on main question of this research but also the theoretical framework, as both in the Gambian case and this study, sex and romance tourism are taken as an isolated field of study. This perspective however is not held by tourism stakeholders in Tunisia.

As mentioned earlier, the bridges that have been built between the different impacts of sex and romance tourism and other issues related to *beznessa* and security all had to do with the trust between hosts and guests and the way they address to each other. Undesirable behaviour has been related to the way many locals perceive tourists and how tourists perceive locals (as they expect to get a sexual or romantic experience with a local when visiting Tunisia, so tourism stakeholders have argued). The bridges that have been built by tourism stakeholders were discussions on the behaviour of locals and tourists. This was further than just sexual and romantic encounters, but rather on how two parties understand each other. This places sexual and romantic relations within a context of wider host-guest relations, in which sexual or romantic relations, buyer-seller relations and for example friendships or

short meetings and even host-guest contact on distance (perceptions of each party of the other) that all could be pleasant or experienced as forms of disturbance and harassment, or create trust or destroy trust between hosts-guests. This shows, as one of the major findings of this study, that romance and sex tourism is not perceived and interpreted by tourism stakeholders in Tunisia as an isolated field of study, but rather as a set of practices within host-guest contact and relations.

Next to that, it might be that in the Tunisian context, sexual and romantic relations are taken naturally to be present and do not have to be exaggerated as a present thing now due to tourism in the society. Some tourism stakeholders would argue that these things exist and they are rather part of life, making the topic of this study slightly less exceptional.

Tourism stakeholders were given the option to discuss next to sex and romance tourism impacts, other impacts on reputation, experience, profit and were asked in general on their aspirations for tourism. This has given them the freedom to talk about sex and romance tourism and to jump and create links with other practices, leading to interesting findings on how to place sex and romance tourism within a bigger field of host-guest relations. Whereas many studies investigate sex and romance tourism as a type of tourism on its own, this study was, partly because of the inclusion of sub research question four, a study that did give space to other practices within tourism. There was space to contextualize the impacts of sex and romance tourism, as avoid the risk of overestimating or underestimating the impacts of sex and romance tourism on the wider tourism sector.

Contextualization or discomfort?

The topic of romance and especially sex was expected to be hard to discuss with the respondents of this study. Whereas a lack of responsiveness on the topic of sex and romance tourism might be an indication of the difficulty of the topic, as some respondents would discard the topic and mention other impacts on reputation or the tourist experience. However, the great majority of the respondents were willing to discuss the topic of sex and romance tourism but also expressed how it should be contextualized within the wider range of tourism practices. Space was provided in the discussions where other tourism practices might be more harmful for the reputation or tourist experience. It is therefore my conviction that the difficulty of the topic was not a reason to address other issues (and change the discussion), but rather a clear view of tourism stakeholders on the existence of a broad range of issues and their impacts that they felt like expressing during this discussion, in which the impacts of sex and romance tourism took their space. Also were there no tendencies found of stakeholders who specifically excluded either of the impacts or topics of this study.

6. CONCLUSION

IMPACTS ON EXPERIENCE AND REPUTATION

Tourism stakeholders have discussed impacts on experience and reputation. These have been perceived as two different fields, which were also discussed apart from each other. However very often when it comes to discussing the impacts of sex and romance tourism, impacts cannot be isolated to one of these fields, but many links between reputation and tourist experience exist. This is because whenever possible impacts of sex and romance tourism on reputation were being discussed, the line of argument would often first relate to the impact on the tourist experience to eventually move on to how a tourism experience is relation to the reputation of Tunisia or the Tunisian people, whether this was on good or bad impacts on experience or reputation. When talking about bad experiences, this would lead to bad reputations and eventually a decrease in tourism demand. This was mainly attributed to the bad behavior by locals or the presence of non-professional workers in Tunisia's tourism sector. The latter group is engaged in tourism, despite their perceived impact, because unlike trained staff they are hired for only the busy summer season, which is economically beneficial. Next to that, due to the unemployment problem in Tunisia, unemployed people work in the tourism industry as a temporary job, in which they assumed by stakeholders to 'not care' about the future of tourism (especially in the market). The general argument that is put forward is that a bad experience (caused by locals or untrained staff) leads often to a bad image for the visitor itself, which could also influence the wider environment. In relation to bad experiences and bad reputation, beach tourism was argued to an unhealthy form of tourism. Beach tourism has been argued to attract tourists which are rather limited in their contact with Tunisia or Tunisians. This is either few contact or the single interest of having a 'unhealthy sexual or romantic encounters' with locals. This has led to critics on how beach tourism encourages these type of 'practices' resulting from sex and romance tourism. Also does beach tourism has a seasonal character and therefore fails to provide real jobs that people can foresee a future career in.

Arguments have been given for a positive impact on the tourist experience resulting from sex and romance tourism. Most respondents stated that many female tourists, but also male tourists in some cases, come to Tunisia because they know about the presence of sex and romance tourism and therefore would like to gain access to these intimate encounters. A part of the reputation of Tunisia as a holiday destination is therefore formed by the probability or expectation of sexual or romantic encounters with locals. This is an argument for a positive tourist experience, as many tourists are understood to come for this, this is a contribution to their stay (and a reason to come back sometimes). The reputation of Tunisia as a place where sexual and romantic encounters can be found, was not problematized by tourism stakeholders. There are other impacts which affect the reputation positively, and when it comes to negative impacts on reputation and experience, there have been other impacts mentioned (beznessa, security) that affect experience and reputation much more than sex and romance tourism.

OTHER IMPACTS ON TOURISM

The other impacts that were mentioned to be more influential on the reputation of Tunisia, the tourist experience and profit-making were beznessa and security issues. The problem of beznessa and security has been discussed by respondents who did and who did not touch upon the topic and impact of romance and sex tourism. This shows that beznessa is considered in general as a negative impact on Tunisia's reputation as it creates tension between

tourists and sellers (and not a strategy to change the topic). Different respondents have stated the same phenomena being part of this kind of 'beznessa', apart or in combination with each other, which are firstly, the aggressive or insistent behaviour of sellers leading to a lot of discomfort. Secondly, asking too high prices for their craft and thirdly the deals that are with tourism workers (e.g. hotel staff or taxi drivers) and shopkeepers, who aim to direct tourists towards certain shops.

In relation to security issues, it has been argued that media reports exaggerate the danger in Tunisia, especially as security issues are mostly in non-tourism zones. Especially since the Jasmin Revolution, attention of the media went to security issues in Tunisia. In general this bad image has led to the loss of many tourists to other destinations or a feeling of insecurity by tourists that still come to Tunisia. Reputation is influenced by security issue, however that is considered to be problematic because it degrades the tourist experience and a bad reputation in general decreases tourism demand. It was also related to a drop in profit-making.

BRIDGES BETWEEN IMPACTS

Stakeholders have argued in such a way that their view on sex and romance tourism and the negative impacts it could have, cannot be isolated from the impacts of beznessa or security. A description of bridges has been provided which show that issues resulting from sex and romance tourism are not isolated in this field of practice (of sexual and romantic encounters) however fall under the umbrella of host-guest relations and noise between these two parties. These practices therefore are part of a common space where sex and romance tourism practices take place together with other contact practices (buyer-seller, friendships and other forms of human contact within tourism). The bridges that were provided in the discussion were on forms of behaviour of locals perceived as harassment or disturbance. Discussing the need of interventions between locals and tourists was a bridge build to describe the negative impacts of disturbing behaviour. Another bridge was the characteristic of negative host-guest contact which could lead to a irreversible damage of the tourist experience, where in the case of an intervention, it may be sometimes too late to cure the experience and turn it into a positive one again. An interesting bridge which connected the negative impact of sex and romance tourism with the negative impact of other forms of encounters was the underlying interest of profit-making, which mainly decided upon the host-guest contact. This was problematic for tourism stakeholders who know that perceiving the tourist as either 'a bank account or a body' can be problematic for the tourism sector. This relates to the bridge of poverty, which was a theme to jump between explaining the presence of sex and romance tourism and for bad selling strategies, which both unveil the presence of poverty in this tourism destination. This could lead to an unsafe feeling or discomfort, so have stakeholders argued. The last bridge was insecurity, which was perceived by tourism stakeholders as the core of the tourist experience. Insecurity can be caused by either practices fitting to sex and romance tourism, like forms of sexual harassment. However, insecurity can also come from selling techniques or previous terrorist attacks on tourism zones, which in all cases lead to insecurity, which is considered to be highly problematic for the tourist experience and in general for the tourist sector. This is a highly interesting finding of this study as it shows that sexual and romantic encounters within tourism are not a isolated field of practices, but rather form part of a wider spectrum of host-guest encounters, where issues of behaviour, interventions, irreversible damage, profit-making, poverty and insecurity all come forward. These issues are therefore not especially part of sex and romance tourism, implying that sex and romance tourism is hard to study as an isolated field.

WIDER ASPIRATIONS

Tourism stakeholders have been asked about their aspirations with regards to sex and romance tourism. Most respondents did not give themselves the role of representative of the community and kept their view rather personal, others did not show any value judgement on practices of sex and romance tourism. Many respondents were rather objectively stating that 'it is what it is' and moved on to giving explanations of what kind of sex and romance tourism exists, what relations evolve out of this contact, what interests lie under and how roles between tourists and locals are divided. Mostly factors like unemployment and migration wishes were then discussed as to explain the side of the locals. Also was there attention for the background of female tourists from Europe. This served often as an explanation to how sexual and romantic encounters are evolving. The attitude of tourists towards sex and romance tourism is rather easy and naive, or even needy and is being related to what kind of encounters this creates with locals.

It shows that tourism stakeholders also look for explanations and understanding of the gap of the behaviour and mentality of Tunisians versus tourists, and also the different behaviours and backgrounds between tourists. Many tourism stakeholders take personally a distance from sexual and romantic encounters with tourists.

Education

Tourism stakeholders see the need to train locals in their behaviour with tourists. However, this was a need in relation to problems in relation to sex and romance tourism, but also to other tensions within host-guest relations, like for example buyer-seller relations. This education or training would broaden the (currently limited) view that locals have on tourists from which there is profit to be gained. Also would it address the behaviour of locals being appropriate and create more comfort for tourists. At the same time, education was needed for tourists, because that would avoid negative experiences and treatments of locals.

They express that they do see that the behaviour of some locals is a cause for problems between host-guest relations and see training or education in different areas as a solution to these fields of tension. These comments have been framed in the context of future aspirations of tourism, which lies close to the question of how eliminate negative impacts, so that the tourism industry will be improved.

Alternative forms of tourism

As mentioned earlier, different tourism stakeholders have argued for the need of developing other types of tourism. This was next to a low profit coming from the current tourism and tourist type also for other reasons that correlate to profit, but also to the other benefits from tourism like employment but also social or cultural benefits. Beach tourism was criticized as it has been argued to be a type of tourism that encourages these encounters or relationships, and is therefore also the cause of the problem of these sometimes 'unhealthy' relations between tourists and locals. The beach tourist is a tourist who is not interested in culture or true contact with locals is argued therefore to self-sustain the relations that often result within the context of beach tourism.

In general, the dominant tourism types or systems, which are beach tourism and the all-inclusive system that is often part of it, are perceived as low profit-makers, whereas there is a need to attract a high class who can increase profit coming from tourism.

The wish for different types of tourism also relates to the wish to 'professionalize' the tourism sector. Currently, tourism in Tunisia has its highest peak in the summer season. This is a

problem according to tourism stakeholders who linked the huge unemployment problem in Tunisia with the potentials of tourism. Within tourism, the problem is unprofessional tourism workers, while for the workers, tourism does not provide real future perspectives. If tourism would be less dependent on one season, tourism could actually provide many benefits to the locals. The staff would in that case also be more professional leading to better host-guest relations (as locals are trained).

These tourism stakeholders shed light on the problem of unemployment from different angles. Whereas tourism could provide jobs for the locals, the dominant type of tourism does not allow for that. At the same time, tourism workers who do not foresee a future career in tourism as it's rather temporary, the 'untrained' or temporary tourism workers do not perceive the need to protect the tourism industry from negative impacts and are even argued to be the cause of many problems related to tourist disturbance (in sexual and romantic encounters, but also selling techniques).

On wider aspirations outside the discussion of sex and romance tourism, some tourism stakeholders see the need for the development of attracting other kind of clients (who would spend more) or the need to develop other types of tourism. Certain kinds of tourism have attracted customers that create less revenue or a less equally divided revenue. Frequently mentioned, all-inclusive tourism has a negative impact on profit-making. Beach tourism and mass tourism are attracting clients who even back home do not have a lot of money to spend and 'high class' clients are assumed to be attracted by more luxurious types of tourism. In general, the low revenues coming from the all-inclusive system, beach tourism and mass tourism and have been also problematized more than sex and romance tourism.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were to shed light on the field of tensions that exist within the tourism industry in Tunisia, especially in relation to host-guest relations. This would be beneficial to the protection of the tourism industry in Tunisia firstly for itself (as certain practices and types of tourism could be harmful) and could lead to a more harmonious host-guest contact.

The findings of this study have given major insight in the dynamics of sexual and romantic relations between tourists and locals and their relations in general. The bridges that have been shed light on in this study give a true reflection of the perception of tourism stakeholders and the way they contextualize sex and romance tourism in the general tourism industry and its host-guest relations. The true nature of the noise of host-guest can be found in some of these bridges, where (dis)trust and (un)safety, but also (a lack of) mutual understanding have come forward. This however clashes with the dominant type of tourism, which does not allow for a lot of cross-cultural understanding. It becomes complex acknowledging a lack or limited contact that there is between hosts and guests in Tunisia, these are two parties that cannot live isolated from each other and will always be confronted with each other's backgrounds. This is in my personal view a reason more to find ways in which cross-cultural understanding can take place within the context of Tunisia's tourism sector.

With regards to the attempt to shed light on sex and romance tourism, it is firstly hard to talk about this term. The term is perceived very broadly. The ambiguity of the relations also creates a lot of ambiguity when talking about their causes and impacts. This does not give a clear description to what kind of impacts relate to what kind of relations (within sexual and

romantic relations, but host-guest relations in general too). There is more understanding needed to how sexual and romantic encounters relate to other forms of host-guest encounters, so that more bridges between these can be found and the core characteristics of host-guest contact and contact disturbance can be dug up and further analyzed, also in other contexts. Future research might dig more into the provided bridges as to come to understand the true nature of the friction within host-guest relations. This however needs more understanding of the consequences or impacts that these frictions have. Multiple perspectives from tourists, locals and tourism stakeholders would be highly beneficial, also in relation to tourism management, an understanding of the friction of other parties, will give insight as to adapt to the situation.

As for the explorative character of this study and research field, qualitative interviews are highly recommended. This serves the freedom for respondents to express themselves and has in this study led to unexpected findings. The practical application of the results of this study can come forward in education programs or campaigns for locals and tourists on cultural differences and diverse backgrounds and behaviours which they will be confronted with. This is beneficial in the view of several tourism stakeholders. However, why this education is beneficial, might be rather the first step to try to remove the friction. As for tourists, education on the context that they are about to visit, can improve their tourist experience (and feel more safe, know how to respond to disturbances) so that a pleasant stay will be ensured and a better access can be gained to the population. For locals in Tunisia, the tourism industry can be beneficial, so there is a need to protect this industry. However, this also requires forms of tourism that are actually truly beneficial to the future careers of locals, so that the benefits of tourism are actually present and can be enjoyed. This is actually a very important step, before a majority of locals would actually be interested in improving host-guest contact and understanding.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 MAP OF RESEARCH LOCATION



APPENDIX 2 STATEMENT OF UNIVERSITY



WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY
WAGENINGEN UR

For quality of life

Lettre de motivation et d'explication

Je m'appelle Noura Harrath et je suis une étudiante à Wageningen University and Research Centre (Université et centre de recherche de Wageningen), en Hollande. J'ai 23 ans, je suis néerlandaise par ma mère et tunisienne par mon père.

J'ai préparée et obtenue déjà le Diplôme de Bachelor spécialité : Développement Internationaux. Etudes axées sur les problèmes globaux vus sous une perspective de sociologie (comme la pauvreté, les problèmes de l'environnement, l'iniquité économique et politique et l'exclusion sociale des communautés).

En ce moment je prépare au sein de la même université, un Masters universitaire, spécialité : Tourisme et Sociologie. Il s'agit d'étudier les influences du tourisme sur les pays à grande affluence touristique, les influences de ce même tourisme sur les peuples et sur leur environnement, et également le tourisme et son interaction avec le développement durable (à savoir : économique, sociologique, environnemental, l'écologique...).

Ma langue maternelle est le hollandais, ma deuxième langue est l'anglais (langue d'étude et de communication), mais je parle également le français. Je peux également parler un peu l'arabe tunisien.

Pour ces interviews, elles se feront à titre volontaire. Donc je ne demande pas à avoir une compensation financière. Je ne peux aussi accorder aucun remboursement qui en découle.

Le but de ces interviews/questions est simplement d'amasser des informations et des avis qui m'aideront à écrire ma mémoire de Masters.

Je cherche à faire donc des interviews sociologique pour mieux comprendre comment les 'stakeholders' dans le secteur de tourisme (c'est-à-dire: chacun qui travaille dans le tourisme), comment voient-ils :

- Le tourisme tunisien
- Les problèmes sociologiques qui existent dans le tourisme tunisien et sa conjoncture
- La relation hôtes-visiteurs et comment elle est peut-être liée à particulièrement:
 - o La réputation de la Tunisie à l'étranger
 - o L'expérience touristique en Tunisie
 - o Les aspirations de la communauté tunisienne
 - o La relation entre la relation hôtes-visiteurs et les revenus venant de tourisme
 - o ...et d'autres influences de cette relation
- Des façons d'améliorer le secteur de tourisme en Tunisie

Pour questions d'éthiques et de déontologie, je m'oblige à garder toute information communiquées par les répondants comme anonyme et confidentielle. Les informations seront uniquement utilisées pour cette mémoire de mastère, ou au cas où cette mémoire sera publiée comme article scientifique (toujours anonyme).

Mes contacts personnels:

Noura Harrath
noura.harrath@gmail.com
numero de telephone: 54 18 66 85

Vous pouvez toujours me contacter pour des questions/commentaires/etc.

Le contact de mon université :

Tel: +31 317 48 0100
Droevendaalsesteeg 4, 6708 PB Wageningen

Ma directrice de mémoire, Madame Lauren Wagner, de département de Géographie Culturelle, a signé ci-dessous. Si vous avez des questions pour elle directement sur cette recherche, vous pouvez lui contacter par email : lauren.wagner@wur.nl

A _____, le _____

Noura Harrath

A Wageningen, le 28 nov 2013

Lauren Wagner, PhD

APPENDIX 3 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH

RESEARCH SUB QUESTION ONE

The impact of sex and romance tourism on the reputation of Tunisia and the Tunisian people

1. How would you describe the general reputation of Tunisia abroad, and how can you explain this reputation?
2. What impacts could sex and romance tourism have on the reputation of Tunisia and the Tunisian people? (in Europe focus)
3. Related to this reputation, what do tourists expect for example when they come here?
4. How would you describe the way sex and romance tourism is perceived and interpreted by tourists (male, female)?
5. How and to what extent do you inform tourists about sex and romance tourism in Tunisia (warnings or prefer to not discuss), and why? (group has resources to inform on scale) (before they come, during their stay, or on websites or something or maybe not at all?)

RESEARCH SUB QUESTION TWO

What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the impact of sex and romance tourism on the tourist experience?

1. How would you describe the behaviour of local men that are sexually or romantically interested towards tourist? (think of sexual) approaches + imagine tourists' view)
2. Have you heard about complaints from tourists on the behaviour of sexual and romantically available men (and what was exactly the problem)? (before/during/after possible encounter)
3. Do you think that the tourist experience in Tunisia changes as a result from the presence of sexual and romantic encounters, eventually the tourism demand will change, and if yes, how?

RESEARCH SUB QUESTION THREE

What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the wider aspirations of the community for tourism development, and how does sex and romance tourism takes place within these wider aspirations?

1. How would you describe the most common types of tourism present in Tunisia?
2. What goals does tourism have for you?
3. Could you describe how you see the tourism industry in Tunisia? What are the positive and negative sides of it?
4. What does it add for the tourists and for the Tunisian people?
5. What can be improved as to have less problems/issues resulting out of tourism?
6. What is in general your view on sexual and romantic encounters and what do you think of it?

RESEARCH SUB QUESTION FOUR

What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on the impact of sex and romance tourism on the possible changes in profit-making?

♣ For you and your enterprise, does the income change with the presence of sex tourism? (more or less clients, etc.)

RESEARCH SUB QUESTION FIVE

What are the perceptions and interpretations of tourism stakeholders on possible other impacts on the tourism industry?

♣ With which problems and issues do you deal in this moment? How do you consider the development of tourism in general?

APPENDIX 4 OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS

Name	Sex	Profession
Abdul	Male	Government official
Adel	Male	Government official and works on alternative forms of tourism
Amel	Female	Cleaning lady in hotel Sidi Bou Said, used to work as a secretary for a lawyer
Anouar	Male	Kitchen staff hotel Tunis and has been involved in relation with a European woman working in the same hotel (who lives in Tunisia)
Bilal	Male	Retired hotel manager, involved since '60 in tourism development and entrepreneur currently
Dali	Male	Tourist guide in Tunis and Djerba
Emin	Male	Hotel manager Gammart and teacher at hotelschool
Halima	Female	Government official in department 'Quality of tourist product'
Hana	Female	Sociologist and teacher at University in Tunis and tourist expert
Ibrahim	Male	Hotel manager Sidi Bou Said
Kader	Male	Hotel manager Tunis
Meriem	Female	Hotel manager Tunis (originally not from Tunis)
Mourad	Male	Tourism student and is regularly involved with female tourists for hedonistic reasons
Rechid	Male	Retired café owner
Ramzi	Male	Archeologist and volunteers in NGOs for tourism development
Ridha	Male	Hotel manager Gammart
Said	Male	Café manager
Selma	Female	Receptionist Sidi Bou Said, however academic diploma in English
Slim	Male	Café manager