Starting from an analysis of ecotourism development in Shark Bay, what can the Drentsche Aa learn from the successful practice in Shark Bay and vice versa?

A systemic approach to ecotourism development

Julia E. Polman

Groningen,

Master Thesis

Biodiversity, Ecotourism, Ecological Planning, Sustainable Development

Faculty of Spatial Sciences

University of Groningen

The Netherlands

Supervised by:

Dr. Constanza Parra

Dedication

This year has been one of the most challenging but rewarding educational years of my academic career.

I would like to thank my supervisor Constanza Parra for the great support she has given me. And even though her handwriting was an additional challenge at some points, she has pushed me to critically reflect upon my own work and opened my mind to new fields of research and a way of looking at processes through a Socio-Ecologic lenses perspective. Furthermore, the dedication Ms. Parra has shown in her own research and career has inspired me to look towards extending my research and following a new goal towards a PhD.

A little nudge to my new friend Nuria Spijker, I have had a great time working on projects together this year and I appreciate all the support. We did well.

I would like to thank my husband Kane for enabling me to go to university in The Netherlands and moving from Australia to realise our plans. And to Ethan, my son, I am thankful that you have been so patient with me at times, and that you have managed to share me with a computer… especially when writing this thesis you have been very sweet. And to my unborn son…thank you for being so good, not making your mummy sick and not coming too early so that I have been able to finish my research. We hope to welcome you soon.

Finally, I would not have been able to write this thesis, or finish my Masters if it was not for my mum and dad. Thank you for looking after Ethan and for picking up some of my responsibilities so I could focus on this research and my pregnancy. I could not wish for more, you are fantastic and I love you.

Ecotourism Development

Starting from an analysis of ecotourism development in Shark Bay, what can the Drentsche Aa learn from the successful ecotourism practice in Shark Bay and vice versa?

A systemic approach to ecotourism

Key words:

Drentsche Aa, Ecotourism, Ecological Planning, Governance, Shark Bay, Social Ecological Systems

Abstract:

This research aims at identifying the key success factors in ecotourism development in two case studies, Shark Bay and the Drentsche Aa. After identifying the success factors, taking in account theories about successful ecotourism development and SESs reflections are made upon the possibilities to improve the current processes within the ecotourism destination and the possibilities to transfer the success factors to the other case study and vice versa. As such this research aims at creating possibilities to learn from different practices around the globe. By taking a systemic approach from a SES perspective this research looks at ecotourism from a territorial perspective instead of the more mainstream economic side of ecotourism development. Through this broader approach the multi layered, multi scalar facet of ecotourism is uncovered in order to gain a wider understanding into current practices.

Table of content:

Abbreviations, contextual definitions and glossary:

CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation (now department of Parks and Wildlife & Department of Environmental Regulation)
Drentsche Aa	Drentsche Aa national park
ET	Eco-tourism
EU	European Union
Geopark	Geopark de Hondsrug
GFC	Global financial Crisis
PPP's	Public Private Partnerships
SESs	Socio-Ecological Systems
Shark Bay	Shark Bay UNESCO World Heritage Area
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WA	Western Australia

Ecotourism	"responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" (Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993)
Ecological Planning	"A way of directing or managing changes in the landscape so that human actions are in tune with natural processes" (Ndubisi, 2002)
Government	"Traditional hierarchical forms of organisation" (Bellamy, 2010)

Governance
"A process whereby societies or organisations make their important decisions, determine whom they involve in the process and how they render account" (Graham et al., 2003),

Host community
A diverse group of people who live in the vicinity of the tourist attraction and are either directly or indirectly involved with, and/or affected by the tourism activities. (Authors definition, 2014)

Socio-Ecological Systems
"Coupled human-environment systems" (Parra and Moulaert, 2013)

Stakeholder
"Any individual or group with an active interest in a common problem or issue" (Jamal and Getz, 1999)

Success factors
Processes in ecotourism that are considered as 'best practice', which are effective and efficient and lead to the desired outcomes such as sustainability (Authors definition, 2014)

Sustainable Development
"Development carried out in such way that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Report, 1987)

Zoning
A management and planning technique whereby certain are designed to meet and accommodate for or to exclude specific needs and demands from ecotourism or any other activity. (Authors definition, 2014)

1.   *A global spread of ecotourism success*

In this research I aim at identifying the success factors in Ecotourism in two different case studies with the help of theory. Furthermore, with this research I aim at identifying possibilities to learn and improve on and from current practices. Addressing ecotourism as a part of a complex socio-ecological system, it is important to note that this research does not aim at finding a panacea for success in ecotourism or to create a blueprint to improving ecotourism practises. Grounding the roots of this research in theories by Ostrom on SESs, I search to built bridges and zoom in between SESs and the governance of ecotourism destinations towards key aspects of successful ecotourism development. By Identifying the multi scalar aspects of governance in the two case studies and addressing the interaction between actors, it offers possibilities to scrutinised current practices. Furthermore, addressing the factors of each destination, which enables or hinders ecotourism allows for a generalisation of ecotourism development necessities. Reflecting on the theory and models of successful ecotourism, current practices in both case studies are questioned or praised. This research thus should be regarded as a reflective description, a cross regard of experiences, of current practices in two case studies, which might lead to insight and recognition in other practices around the globe.

The term ecotourism was unknown in the English language until as recently as the 1980's (Weaver, 2001). Since then ecotourism destinations have become popular and are popping up everywhere. Ecotourism as an extension of nature-based tourism has contested definitions. However, examination of some of these definitions reveals common characteristics. First of all, a descriptive component, ecotourism destinations should contain a nature-based element. Then three value-based components determine whether or not a destination can be considered as ecotourism, it should have an educational or learning component, a requirement for sustainability, and finally it should be regarded as a form of tourism (Beaumont, 1998; Fennell, 1999).

With ecotourism being relatively new to the tourism branch, and knowing that each destination is unique, benchmarking whether or not an ecotourism destination is successful is a difficult task. This research however aims at doing exactly that. By analysing ecotourism development in Shark Bay, Australia, a country which is well known for its ecotourism and with relatively long experience in ecotourism development, success factors are identified. Furthermore, this research looks into the possibility of projecting the success factors identified in Shark Bay onto national park the Drentsche Aa in the Netherlands, were ecotourism does not seem to be ultimately developed and utilised.

As mentioned earlier, the final aim of this research is to learn from current practices in order to provide an insight in successful ecotourism development. Through the cross-regard of experiences and analysis of practices the possibilities for the Drentsche Aa to become a successful ecotourism destination are outlined and policy advise is given in order to reach the objective.

1.1 *Personal motivation for the conducted research*

When I was living in Australia I sometimes had relatives visit from The Netherlands. To show them the natural beauty of Western Australia I often took them on a road trip to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Shark Bay. Shark Bay is one of the most historical, cultural and ecological interesting locations on the Western Australian coastline. Even though the area is remote, Shark Bay has been made very accessible and it has developed into a very popular ecotourism destination in recent years. The Department of Environment and Heritage, and the Department of Conservation and Land Management provide a wide range of brochures, one clear and comprehensive website and even have an active and engaging Shark Bay information centre in Denham.

I was born in Annen, a town on the border of the Drentsche Aa brook valley. Since I have returned to Annen a few years ago we have welcomed Australian relatives and friends in The Netherlands whom we have shown the natural

beauty of the Drentsche Aa brook valley. The Drentsche Aa brook valley is a natural park which has been added to the EU Natura 2000 ecological network of Protected Areas. The area has developed many walking and cycling facilities to make the area accessible. However my personal finding were that more emphasis has been placed on cultural-historical aspects of the area such as the hunebedden and the burial mounds. This interest in the more archaeological values of the area is enhanced through the development of 'Geopark Drenthe' and the hunebedden museum. It seems that through placing the emphasis on cultural-historical values of the area the ecological values are under appreciated by many visitors. It could be argued however, that placing emphasis on culture is not a necessarily negative; instead it should be seen as the distinctive character of ecotourism in Europe.

Knowing the Drentsche Aa region, and having witnessed and experienced 'successful' ecotourism development in Australia, I have started to wonder if there are unexplored tourism possibilities and opportunities for the Drentsche Aa region. This wondering is what has motivated me to the realisation of this research.

1.2   A brief introduction to the case studies

This research uses two case studies to illustrate the success factors of ecotourism and the possibilities for transfer from one location to another. In order to gain some general knowledge about the two case study areas I have selected general background knowledge, which is provided in this section. The first case study area selected is The Drentsche Aa, a brook or creek valley region in the Northeast of the Netherlands and my current 'home-ground'. The second region that has been selected for this research is Shark Bay, a Western Australian UNESCO World Heritage Site with a thriving tourism industry around 800 kilometres north of the Western Australian State capital Perth.

1.2.1 *The Drentsche Aa brook valley, were the ancient meets the present*

The Drentsche Aa national park is located in the province of Drenthe, in the North-East of The Netherlands. The Drentsche Aa is one of the few remaining Dutch creeks that still meanders its way through the landscape just like it has been doing for centuries. Together with the stream, the Drentsche Aa brook valley also has a well preserved 'esdorpen' landscape consisting of fields on elevated land, and old town squares which are typical of the province of Drenthe. As such, The Drentsche Aa is one of twenty national parks in the Netherlands and was added to the list in 2002. The Drentsche Aa is further more included in the Natura-2000, which is a EU network that aims to protect Europe's most vulnerable habitats and threatened species by focussing on sustainable management. The national park crosses a couple municipality borders, the borders of Tynaarloo, Borger-Odoorn and Midden Drenthe; however, most of the national park is located in the municipality of Aa en Hunze (Buro Bakker, 2012).

The Drentsche Aa national park is a popular tourist destination, especially in the warmer summer months and during spring. The national park is also a popular recreational area for the local residents. The Drentsche Aa has many activities to offer, the main sources of recreation can be found in the area are walking trails, and bicycle routes. Additionally there are many cultural historical attractions that are very specific to the region. The cultural importance of the region has been captured with the creation of Geopark de Hondsrug, which is funded by the European Union and part of a global Geopark network (Geopark de Hondsrug, 2014). The Drentsche Aa is situated on 'de Hondsrug' a mount in the landscape, which is an ancient remnant of ice-age glaciers. Because de Hondsrug was 'high and dry' Neanderthal hunters made their camps here, leaving spears and flint tools, which are still found till this day. In later ancient times the Funnel Beaker Culture built their burial tombs called 'hunebedden' along de Hondsrug, now being the 'socio-cultural' image for the Drenthe province. Furthermore tracks of wagon and carts are still visible in the landscape, illustrating the busy network of roads between towns in the middle Ages.

The future use for the Drentsche Aa as described in the "Management, Layout and Development Plan" (often referred to as "BIO plan") identifies the ideal future development of the Drentsche Aa along five guiding functions: Water, agriculture, nature, recreation and housing (National beek - en esdorpen landschap Drentsche Aa, 2014). The main aim of the BIO-plan is to use 'conservation by modernisation' as a guideline, which will offer perspective for the development of all five functions.
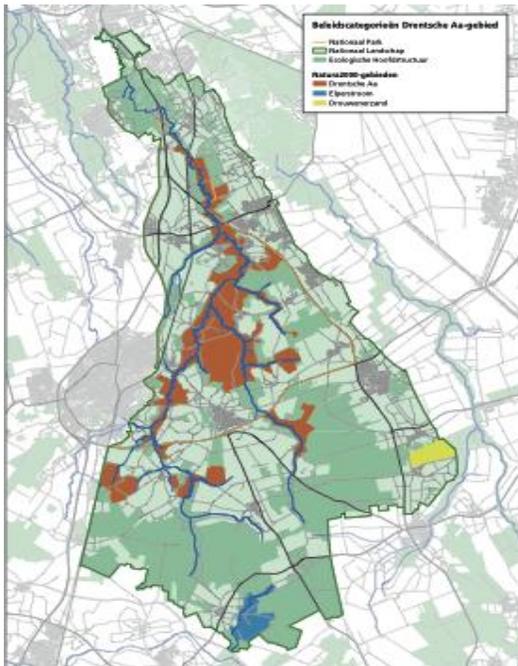
(Map 1 Drentsche Aa region, policy structures. Source BIO-Plan, 2012)

1.2.2 Shark Bay, the pearl of the Coral Coast

Shark Bay is an area located on the most Western part of Australia. In 1991 Shark Bay was added to the list of World Heritage Areas in Australia, which currently acknowledges 19 properties for their cultural and/or environmental values. The Shark Bay World Heritage Area covers 2.2 million hectares on the coast of Western Australia. Shark Bay was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its natural heritage values because it satisfied all four of the criteria; natural beauty, biological diversity, ecological processes and earth's history.

Shark Bay is renowned for it's stunning scenery of blood-red headlands, white beaches, steep cliffs, blue skies and turquoise lagoons. Further more, the existence of the worlds most diverse and abundant communities of stromatolites provide a unique and modern day insight into nature and the evolution of the world's biosphere. The living fossils are like a 3.5 billion year old time capsule. Along side the stromatolites which have played an important role in the evolution of the earths biosphere, the vast seagrass meadows have influenced and are still influencing the physical, chemical and geomorphic evolution of the regions marine environment (CALM, 2014). As a result of the rare environmental conditions in the area, numerous rare plants and animals can be found. In addition to the rare species, many endangered animals also seek refuge in the Protected Areas of Shark Bay, for example one the world's largest population of Dugongs and Loggerhead turtles.

(Map 2, Shark Bay World Heritage Area. Source: Sharkbay.org)

1.3 Research objectives

As mentioned earlier, personal curiosity into the potential of ecotourism in the Drentsche Aa brook valley has lead me to engage in this research. In order to understand why ecotourism can be successfully developed in one protected area, such as Shark Bay, whilst another region which seemingly has ecotourism potential, such as the Drentsche Aa brook valley, falls behind or fails to grasp the potential benefits, a series of questions will have to be answered. In consideration of this personal question, a more concrete research problem will be identified. Furthermore, the aim of this research will be discussed followed by a set of research questions that will be answered in this report in order to find a solution or approach to the research problem. Finally, the relevance of this research will be discussed in a broader context.

As shortly discussed earlier, the ecotourism branch has only been developed in the last 40 years and has skyrocketed over the last 3 decades. However little is known about the success factors of ecotourism development and the factors that enable or hinder sustainable ecotourism development. This has been identified as the *research problem*, which I have explored and elaborated on in this research. Not having a regular analysis of key ecotourism development success factors can lead to the missing of opportunities or failed development. Knowing and using success factors could help to determine why some Protected Areas can reach a status of successful ecotourism destination when others that possibly have potential do not seem successful.

By comparing practices in two case studies, this *research aims* at distinguishing key factors that enable or hinder successful ecotourism development. I hope to provide insight into ecotourism development, which might aid decision-makers, planners and ecotourism developers to gain understanding about the broader processes involved. Further more, this research can add ecotourism development in The Drentsche Aa and Shark Bay to the current debate on ecotourism and sustainable development, which is ongoing. Some elements of

this research might be adapted to other locations on the globe, which provides opportunities for more sustainable tourism development. However, in doing so this research keeps in mind that there is no such thing as a panacea for successful ecotourism development. Policy transfer is a complicated and fragile process, which needs to be approached with caution and discretion.

I have structured this research along a series of *questions* and I have approached these questions through a Socio-Ecological Systems perspective. I have opted to use this perspective because it allows us to look at ecotourism as a part of a larger system though which interactions and development takes place. The sub questions, which are formulated and summarized below lead to a final answer to my main research question, which is:

"Starting from an analysis of ecotourism development in Shark Bay, what can the Drentsche Aa learn from the successful ecotourism practices in Shark Bay and vice versa?"

The ultimate goal of this research for me is to identify opportunities for ecotourism in general and more specifically in the Drentsche Aa region. The following sub-questions form the spine to this research and will be answered in order to achieve the research objective.

- Which factors hinder or enable ecotourism development in the Drentsche Aa and Shark Bay?
- What is the role or involvement of the different stakeholders, and in the hands of who lays the responsibility for ecotourism development?
- In what way has formal planning and management contributed to the development of sustainable ecotourism?
- Through ecotourism, is there an active pursuit to achieve environmental, social and economical sustainability to create a more sustainable place to live, work and visit?

- How has the destination been marketed in order to attract and influence the appropriate visitors?
- Is it desirable to develop ecotourism? If so, how and what kind of ecotourism?

Ecotourism has been playing a major role towards more sustainable tourism opportunities and has gained great support over the last decades. The *research relevance* can be found in the addition of new theory to the debate of ecotourism and sustainable development. It could be argued that current ecotourism literature is often focussed on the more economic aspects of ecotourism. This research however, has a more territorial approach to ecotourism development and I have tried to incorporate a broader range of functions and values which together construct ecotourism. This research is also relevant in the field of ecological planning, governance and tourism development since some elements of the results of this research can be guiding in new policy decisions and development and influence the current mindset. The possible development of a more historical-cultural focussed ecotourism supply is not bound specifically to the Drentsche Aa region but could be seen as a distinct factor of European tourism. This provides opportunities for up-scaling this research and gaining a broader insight in possibilities for ecotourism development on national and international level. Furthermore in the theoretical framework is illustrated that development of a more resilient tourism industry can lead to a more stable economy in the region. For example the variety of small businesses could increase through successful ecotourism development.

1.4   A compendium of the research

This research is structured in five main parts. In this chapter, the introduction, I have provided a description of the case study areas used in this research. It has also discussed the research objectives, which illustrates what this research tries to achieve. Through discussing the research problem, research aims, research questions and the relevance of this research the motivation behind this work is illustrated.

Chapter two consists discussing the theoretical underpinnings of this research. First of all, I discuss the importance of theory in this research. Also, a schematic overview is provided that illustrates which theories are discussed and the interrelation between these multiple theories. The theory in this research is approached through the lenses perspective of SES. SES as described by Ostrom (2009) allows this research to place ecotourism in a broader context. It offers a tool in which it becomes possible to see a complex process such as ecotourism and ecotourism development as a part of a multi scalar system at which it interacts with multiple temporal and spatial scales. The focus of the theory discussed is on the factors that play a role in enabling or hindering successful ecotourism destinations. Finally, a selection of discussed existing theories is brought together in a guiding framework for this research. This guiding framework exists out of theories that are complementary to this research and provide for a stable background on which to build new theory about success factors in the two case study regions and in order to structure the research findings.

Chapter three contains the research methods that have been utilised during this research. A schematic overview is provided which illustrates the design through which this research has gathered information and how this information is used in the research. The methods used are all discussed illustrating and defending the motivation behind the selection of research methods. Finally, this chapter has included a listing of ethical considerations that have played a role throughout this

research and within the selection of methods that have been used.

Chapter four consists out of findings, which are constituted through an analysis of information gathered through the use of multiple methods outlined in the research design. This chapter furthermore illustrates the data gathered and provides overviews of this data in an information rich aggregated fashion.

In chapter five I conclude the research. The research questions introduced in chapter one will be answered through the use of theory collected in chapter 2, the data collected through the methods described in chapter 3 and the results of the methods used, outlined in chapter 4. Further more suggestions and recommendations will be provided in order to enable successful ecotourism development in the Drentsche Aa region. I also critically reflect on the limits of this research and the factors that have influenced the outcome. Finally, suggestions for further research are made in the hope that they will aid in the global development of sustainable tourism and add to the academic discussion on ecotourism.

2   Embedding ecotourism development in landscape planning

" In theory, theory and practice are the same, in practice they are not "

Albert Einstein

In order for me to place my findings in context, it is of importance to address the theory in which ecotourism practices are grounded. First of all, I think it is important to recapitulate what definition of ecotourism I have opted to use in this research. In this research ecotourism represents "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" (Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993). As such ecotourism practices and development, do not take place on a metaphoric island and it is important to place ecotourism in context to other practises and systems. I find it of importance to recognise that ecotourism is socio-spatially embedded. Spatial and territorial dimensions play an important role in ecotourism practices and development. With this reliance on spatial and territorial dimensions ecological planning comes into play. As mentioned earlier, ecotourism is not a single, independent entity, or just spatially defined. Ecotourism is furthermore part of a broader Socio-Ecological System (SES). Looking at ecotourism through a SES lens adds to seeing ecotourism as a solely spatial or territorial practice as in ecological planning. Using the lens of SES allows seeing the interrelationship and intertwinement of ecotourism within multiple temporal and spatial scales, and the interplay between multiple actors. So, SES offers a systemic approach in which it becomes possible to identify the multiplicity of ecotourism. Not only in the ecotourism destinations itself but also in the complexity of the stakeholder networks, interests and the different layers involved. Ecotourism can be a crystallisation of the interplay between human, social environment and the natural environment, and as such a great example of a complex SES. As it allows the identification of complex systems it enables for the differentiation between natural systems would be suited for ecotourism, and it allows differentiating between which social system is necessary for successful development of ecotourism destinations. In this social

dimension another distinction can be made. When identifying which social system is most appropriate for ecotourism and can develop in a sustainable manner, good governance comes into play. When trying to identify success factors for ecotourism it is necessary to illustrate which governance system works, what a good governance system looks like and what the key factors of good governance are. This will also enable zooming in and reflecting on the practices, policies and regulations currently applied in the case study areas. Finally, it is possible to build a bridge from governance to the theory of successful ecotourism itself. The theories developed about the success factors of ecotourism are also conceptualised in models which illustrate the importance of previously mentioned theories about governance, and how good governance forms the basis on which to come to successful ecotourism practices. A schematic overview of the theoretical framework created in this chapter can be found in figure 1. At the end of this chapter there is a short reflection on the theories discussed, and the importance of the theory in this research is reaffirmed.

Figure 1 . Schematic overview of the Theory. Source; Author
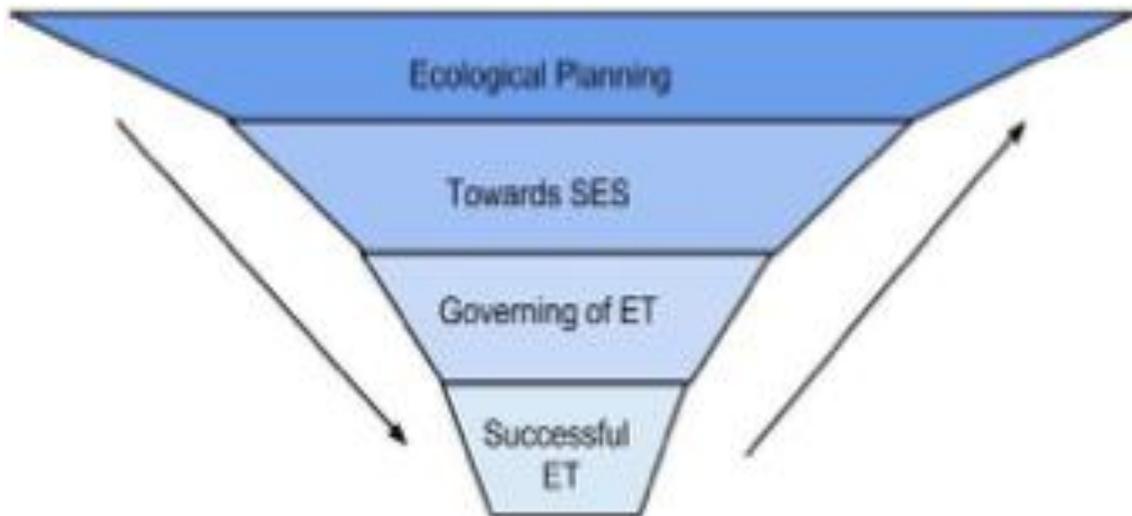
2.1 The role of theory in this research

Theories consist out of a number of elements, they abstract a set of general or specific principles to be used as a basis for explaining and acting, with the theory being tested and redefined as necessary (Allmendinger, 2009). Theory has aspects of time, principles, testing, processes and explanatory values. These aspects are the motivation for the use of theory in this report. Theory will provide a framework from within which we can try to understand the processes surrounding ecotourism and ecotourism development. By identifying and discussing multiple theories on the success factors of ecotourism it enables the projection of these theories and frameworks onto the case study areas of Shark Bay and The Drentsche Aa. For this research I have developed a theoretical framework (figure 1), which indicates the linkages between the theories discussed in this chapter, and the structure, which I have followed.

2.2 Placing ecotourism in the context of ecological planning

As mentioned before, ecotourism can be seen as a condensation of the relationship human beings have, or want to have, with their natural environment. For this reason ecological planning is used on our journey to understand the theory behind ecotourism success or failure. Ecological planning is the process of understanding, evaluating, and providing options for the use of landscape to ensure a better fit with human habitation (Nubisi, 2002). Ecological planning focuses on relationships between the environment, cultural and biological, resources that take place within a certain spatial dimension. Ecological Planning (often used interchangeably with Landscape Planning) has gained some sort of popularity elevation through the European Landscape Convention (ELC) (Council of Europe 2000). Since then, many approaches have emerged, the Landscape Suitability Approach 2 (LSA 2) being one of them.

LSA 2 offers the best prospect to analyse the success factors of ecotourism. The LSA 2 emphasises to "seek the best use of landscape in light of social, economic, political and ecological considerations" (Ndubisi, 2002, p 7).

Suitability in this context refers to the capacity of a site in its present condition to meet specific management practices (Ndubisi, 2002). Successful ecotourism development through the lens of LSA 2 would be through understanding the location, distribution and interaction among physical, biological and cultural resources. Looking at ecotourism through the lens of ecological planning and more specifically LSA 2 allows for determining the optimal location in order to develop ecotourism practices, which have a minimal environmental impact and minimal necessity of energy in order to maintain the ecotourism development.

It needs to be noted that the diversity in ecological planning approaches and practices as identified by Ndubisi (2002) reflects the complexity of the ecological problems in which it exist. But furthermore, it needs to be recognised that, even though ecological planning offers preliminary tools for understanding the success or failure of ecotourism practices, its focus lies mainly on spatial dimensions. Identifying the most appropriate location, the best use of the landscape and understanding the physical and territorial aspects are key. As such, it is only addressing one side of the ecotourism medal. Addressing the social complexity is in my opinion underdeveloped in ecological planning. In order to dive in the complex world of social- environmental relationships this theory will zoom in and discuss ecotourism in the context of SES.

2.3   SES and the road to ecotourism

Looking at ecotourism through the lens of SES offers a systemic approach (Ostrom, 2009). This opens up possibilities through which the complexity of ecotourism can be unravelled. Ecotourism and ecotourism development are complex due to the involvement of, and interaction between, multiple people and the connectedness to the environment. In order to understand current processes it is necessary to understand the connectedness and the relations between the multiple layers and aspects of the systems involved.

Ecotourism development is not an independent and disconnected process; it is a complex interplay between the eco-tourists, the host communities and the destination environment. Ecotourism should be approached as an integrated part of a broad and complex multi-scalar dynamic in which all ecological, social and economic processes take place. Human land use such as ecotourism is a major driving force in landscape change, and landscape dynamics, and this strong interaction between ecosystems and society can be better understood in the context of complex adaptive socio-ecological systems (SESs). Socio-Ecological Systems (SES) can be generically defined as "coupled human-environment systems" (Parra and Moulaert, 2013). The determination of future success in ecotourism is dependent on three of the attributes of SESs. The characteristics of SESs to be resilient, adaptable and transformable play a major role in the ability of ecotourism development to be successful (Walker et al., 2004).

Scholars have indicated that ecotourism destinations are complex adaptive systems, which often exhibit the capacity to undergo disturbance whilst maintaining their function (Lacitignola et. al, 2007, Gunderson and Holling 2002). This capacity is often referred to as resilience (Walker et al., 2004). The less resilient the SESs, the lower the capacity of institutions and societies to influence and shape change (Lacitignola et. al, 2007) and thus have the capacity to develop and maintain successful ecotourism. One of the key issues underlying these disturbances is the carrying capacity of a destination. Disturbances occur when a maximum capacity has been reached, this can be in many shapes and forms, from resource extraction to visitor numbers. Disturbances can also occur on the other end. There is a minimum carrying capacity in order to make an ecotourism destination successful. When a destination is developed it has to accumulate a certain amount of income in order to maintain and develop the natural environment on which it relies.

Since complex adaptive systems are self-organising and behave without intent (De Roo, 2010) adaptability is necessary for ecotourism success. Adaptability

can be described as the capacity of actors in the system to influence resilience (Walker et al., 2004). The ability of humans to manage uncertainty and to respond with necessary and appropriate action determines whether they can move closer to successful ecotourism. Or as described by Walker et al. (2004), their collective capacity to manage resilience determines whether they can move the current state of the system away from or closer to the threshold, move thresholds away from or closer to the current state of the system, or make the threshold more difficult or easier to reach.

The final attribute to SESs that can determine the success of ecotourism is the capacity to create a fundamentally new system when the old system is unsustainable. This accredit of SESs can be seen as the need for transformability in ecotourism. In ecotourism transformability can enable success through radical changes in order to reach social, economic or ecological objectives. Transition management as a tool to move towards sustainable development described by Loorbach (2010) could be used in order to move away from traditional mass tourism or unsustainable forms of tourism in order to start developing more sustainable nature based forms of tourism.

Ostrom (2009) argues that complex SES can be decomposable into a 'nested framework' (see figure 2) which exists out of 4 interlinked components; (a) a resource system; (b) resource units; (c) the users of that system; (d) the governance system (Ostrom, 2009). Long-term sustainability can be achieved when all the components aim at achieving sustainability at multiple levels and interact with each other within an SES in order to achieve their goal. The multilevel nested framework furthermore identifies ten subsystems that affect the likelihood of self-organisation in efforts to achieve a sustainable SES (Ostrom, 2009). This framework could also be employed to analyse why some areas are able to successfully develop ecotourism whilst others fail to do so. Ostrom argues that the ability for some SESs to be sustainable lies in the identification and analysis of relationships among multiple levels of these complex systems at

different spatial and temporal scales (Ostrom, 2009).

Figure 2, Nested Framework of SESs. Source: Ostrom 2009
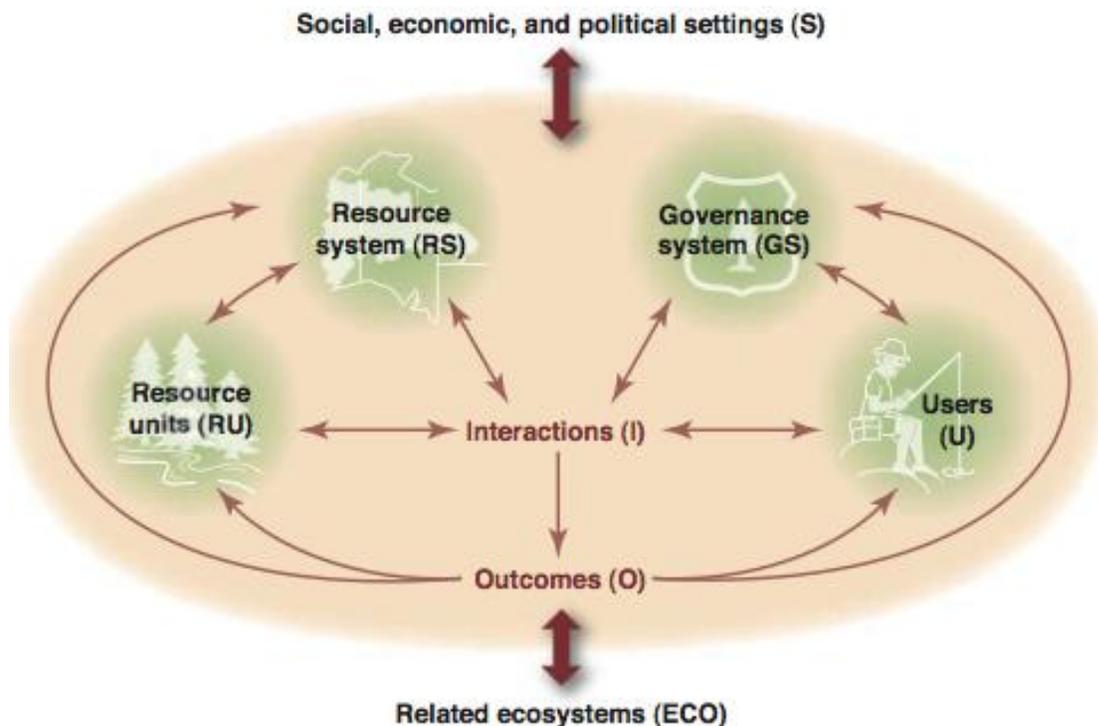
As SESs are coupled systems between human beings and their environment it is possible to zoom in ones more, making the distinction between successful landscapes for ecotourism and identifying social systems which are more likely to be supportive of ecotourism and ecotourism development. Land-use planning is important in this respect because we are looking at ecotourism from a territorial dimension.

2.3.1 Using land-use planning to come to sustainable and successful ecotourism

One of the key aspects of successful and sustainable ecotourism development is that it should be compatible with the landscape in which it is proposed. One of the most common methods through which this occurs when we look at ecotourism development is though the use of land-use planning. Land-use

planning aims at assisting responsible decision-making about the use of the land (Page and Dowling, 2002). It involves identifying the resources, expressing an appraisal of its use and implementing development strategies (Page and Dowling, 2002). As such, land- use planning connects to SES, as it is also an advocate of holistic and systemic approaches to the landscape. Landscape planning aims at acknowledging the connections and relation that exist between the human needs and wishes and the environmental needs.

Land-use planning sees the biosphere as a resource, which has to be utilised wisely (Page and Dowling, 2002). It incorporates environmental planning, focusing on environmental preservation, and resource conservation. Environmental preservation comprises the protection of the environment because of intrinsic purposes, for example, through setting aside environmentally sensitive areas or the protection of species. Resource conservation, on the other hand, wants to protect the usefulness of the environment for future generations. There are many approaches to conservation, some of which are land-use planning, carrying capacity, threshold analysis and limits to acceptable change (Stankey et al., 1984; Kozlowski, 1986). Furthermore, planning for ecotourism can occur at multiple spatial scales and between multiple institutional levels. Ecotourism planning can for example occur intra-national, for example within the European Union, national, regional, local and on a site scale. It is possible for each level to develop their own protection and conservation strategy, adding to the complexity of ecotourism development.

Land use planning is of great importance in Protected Areas, which can be defined as: "territorially embedded socio-ecological systems set aside with the purpose of preserving their unique natural quality and exceptional biodiversity, and which often also embody a significant cultural heritage" (Parra and Mouleart, 2013). Especially this 'setting aside' especially is an important aspect of land use planning in Protected Areas. This can however make it complex to combine the one area with other functions that could be developed in the same area, such as

ecotourism. Which is where SESs or nested frameworks such as proposed by Ostrom (2009) can function as a guide through the complexity and offer a more systemic perspective.

In order to come to successful ecotourism, ecotourism planning should include aspects of environmental planning, preserving and conserving the natural resources, which attract the tourists to the area. In addition to the environmental suitability of an area, ecotourism planning also requires synergies between parties involved. In other words the social suitability for ecotourism development also needs to be determined and can hinder or enable successful ecotourism.

2.3.2   Identifying successful social systems

Ecotourism is heavily reliant on compatible social systems, which support and respect the natural resource on which the ecotourism destination exists. By definition, ecotourism should improve the welfare of the local people. This should be accomplished by developing ecotourism, producing revenue for conservation and protection whilst supporting the whole of the SES. As such, ecotourism could be used as a developing strategy, which leads to sustainable development through placing the focus on the conjunction of natural resource qualities, visitor activities and the host community which all benefit from the tourism development. In order to come to this objective, it is essential to recognise the two-way interactive processes between the host community and the guest of an ecotourism destination (Wearing, 2001; Jones, 2006), as this has to be complimentary. There is a need for social and cultural sustainability which ensures that tourism development increases peoples control over their within host communities, is compatible with their culture and the values of the host community affected by it, whilst maintaining and strengthening the communities identity (Page and Dowling, 2002). The importance of a high level of social capital in encouraging residents to behave more pro-environmental has also been recognized (Liu, et al. 2014).

A host community refers to a group of people who live in the vicinity of the tourist destination and are either directly or indirectly involved with, and/or affected by the tourism activities. This group of people possibly shares a common identity, however, often there is diversity within a host community. The challenge is to work on the strength, and opportunities, created by these differences. A successful ecotourism system brings on board the diversity of wishes and ideas of the host community and tries to incorporate different visions, structures and opinions within a community. In some cases, a commonality within the host community can even lead to an increased sense of identity (Stronza and Gordillo, 2008). This identity can for example be obtained though the commonality of ethnic background, or geographic location of the community. Host communities can provide support services or be involved in the management of tourism. The host communities can also share special interest, or show concern, in preservation or conservation of local flora and fauna (Wearing, 2001). Wearing (2001) argues that host communities are rarely consulted by private operators, or planners, about their vision for the area. This exclusion of the host community in developing ecotourism can lead to an evolving tourism industry that does not suit the communities' needs or the optimal use of resources. It does however need to be noted that Wearing (2001) in his argument makes a distinction between host communities and private operators. This distinction is however, in my definition of host communities, is not a reflection of the reality. Since it could be argued that private operators are often a part of the host community. According to Murphy (1985) the long-term success of the tourism industry depends on the acceptance and the support of the host community.

Clearly, in order to develop successful ecotourism practices, it is a necessity to involve the host community in the development to gain support. Wearing (2001) notes that direct knowledge, experience and understanding from the community forms the basis for the management of socio-cultural impacts so that the host communities can engage in ongoing development and enhancement through ecotourism. Similar results are revealed by research conducted by Situmorang

and Mirzanti (2012) who argue that the development of ecotourism destinations should be based on empowering local communities through education, social entrepreneurship and cultural preservation programs. Thus in order to gain support from the communities; education, awareness, access and ongoing research play an important role. Furthermore, and reflecting on SESs, it could be said that in order for an SES such as ecotourism to be sustainable a good governance model that allows for community participation is necessary.

2.4   The role of governance in ecotourism

Reflecting on what has been discussed earlier, community involvement and an understanding collective action is the basis of support for ecotourism practices. That said…a top-down implementation of ecotourism is, arguably, doomed to fail. Governmental approaches that are associated with the more traditional 'rational planning' model have used scientific, and expertise knowledge to support land-use decisions and development. These processes do not often come to successful ends in complex systems, as there is no such thing as certainty, or an easy blue print solution, for a complex problem. Recognising these shortcomings of the rational model to deal with complexity, many planners and decision-makers have now embraced a form of communicative rationality and community planning, a process that can be regarded as a shift from government to governance (De Roo, 2010; Healy, 1997).

Looking at ecotourism though the lens of SES it could be argued that in order for ecotourism development to be sustainable there is need for a good and sustainable governance structure, since it could be argued that the governance structure is the underlying factor that connects all other systems and is the reason behind the manner in which people interact with each other and the environment. But first, it is necessary to determine what governance embodies. Governance is a process whereby societies or organisations make their important decisions; determine whom they involve in the process and how they render account (Graham et al., 2003). Since governance can be rather fuzzy and

hard to observe, often emphasis is placed on the system of governance; the procedures, agreements, conventions and policies that define who gets power, how decisions are taken and how accountability is rendered (Graham et al., 2003).

Since the 1970's governing has taken a neoliberal turn in the western world. Often placing emphasis, and aiming for, economic growth and PPP's it has arguably taken away capacity from local governments to govern. This same change has influenced the tourism industry. According to Beaumont and Dredge (2010) local tourism policy making is characterised by structures and discursive practices that are embedded with values and meanings that over time become regimes of power and knowledge that operate to filter, prioritise and promote particular local tourism policy actions and initiatives.

Therefore, an appreciation of the way local policy governance networks operate is crucial to the design of more targeted and effective tourism management structures and practices. Knowing how and which processes take place is important when analysing tourism practices. But as mentioned above, when analysing ecotourism development through the lens of SES, it is also of importance to acknowledge the principles of good governance, as that will arguably lead to sustainable development of ecotourism practices.

2.4.1   Principles of good governance for ecotourism

Good governance is becoming increasingly important in National Parks such as the Drentsche Aa and Shark Bay. This results from National Parks being subject to, and bound by, increasing numbers of international agreements and conventions, such as the World Heritage Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Fennell and Dowling (2003) even argue that ecotourism operators and eco-tourist themselves are often unaware of the extend in which institutional arrangements exist around their activity. The principles of good governance aim at achieving sustainability and development. As such, these

principles would also lead to sustainable development in ecotourism governance.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) outlines 8 general principles of good governance, which are; 1) participation, 2) consensus orientation, 3) strategic vision, 3) responsiveness, 4) effectiveness and efficiency, 5) accountability, 6) transparency, 7) Equity and, 8) rule of law (UNDP, 2010) which will lead to more sustainable governance practices. These principles should be applied when developing ecotourism in order to come to sustainable ecotourism practices.

In addition to the increasing agreements and conventions that are applied on one governance scale, multi-scale governance systems have also flourished in the last decades as a response to environmental change and need to better understand and manage socio- ecological systems (Smith, 2007; Bisaro et al., 2010). Tourism is usually characterised by a diversity of stakeholders with different expertise, interest, knowledge and availability (Wray, 2010), which results in different level of interaction and engagement. Also, the diverse values that exist within host communities and stakeholders can pay an important role in the development of ecotourism since it is the underlying motivation and explanation for decision-making and behaviour. In order to overcome the diverse values, interests, expertise's consensus building is of importance. The underlying principle of good governance is to provide a collaborative forum based on consensus building, in which all the individual actors and stakeholders can voice their core competencies and develop synergies to produce better outcomes than would otherwise be reached. Good governance is reliant to build on processes that provide opportunities for constructive dialogue, information sharing, communication, and shared decision-making, about common issues and interests (Wray 2010).

So in conclusion about the role of good governance, it could be said that sustainable ecotourism governance involves the principles of good governance, and in complex multi-governance systems the establishment and maintenance of appropriate collaborative structures and processes to manage ecotourism across governments, business and community interests is necessary. Collective action is one of the drivers of ecotourism development. However it is still debatable what this collective action should encompass. Also of importance is the ability of key stakeholder organisations involved in tourism (e.g. local governments, tourism organisations, businesses, National Parks agencies) to develop their capacity to support effective destination management systems (Wray, 2010), which can guide through and implement the good governance principles. It should be noted, that even policy developed in accordance to the principles of good governance, could work for one ecotourism destination, but it does not guarantee success for another.

2.4.2   *Pitfalls and possibilities of policy transfer in ecotourism development*

When you look at ecotourism through the lens of SES it will become evident that it exists in a complex multi-scalar network of human-environment relations. As said earlier, complexity cannot be solved with simplicity. Even though it is tempting to assume that, especially with policy based on the principles of good governance, policy transfer might offer a simple solution, applying blueprint solutions to complex issues they often result in failure. This phenomenon is what Ostrom (2009) has identified as the 'panacea problem'. However, even the assumption that one type of governance model is more successful over another can lead to a panacea problem. That is why, when trying to transfer policies or practices, it is important to follow a discretionary approach and to be drawn into the pitfall of assumptions.

Policy transfer refers to a "process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions etc. in one time and /or place is used in

the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place" (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996). Policies should be developed in a context dependent manner in order to succeed. This makes the transfer of policies complex, since policies should not be seen as a panacea that can be applied without taking the place specific context in account.

This is especially the case in complex arrangements such as SES, the more complex a policy, the harder it will be to transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996). Ostrom and Cox (2010) argue that there is no single panacea to include aspects of the SES because they are too complex. Conducted case studies have often illustrated the difficulties that accompany policy transfer (Parra and Moulaert, 2013; Van Dijk, 2003, 2005).

However, as Rose argues (in Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996) policy makers in cities, regional governments and nations can learn from how their counterparts elsewhere have responded to similar problems. Even though there are some major hurdles to overcome when trying to implement a policy transfer, there can be great benefits. Furthermore, the degree in which policy will be transferred will have strong influence on the outcome. Rose (1991) distinguishes 5 different degrees of transfer; copying; adaptation; hybridization; synthesis; and inspiration. These five degrees of transfer can play a role in determining whether or not success factors can be transferred, and whether or not they will succeed.

So, it needs to be taken in account that when people are planning for the development of ecotourism it is a tempting pitfall to 'copy-paste' successful established ecotourism practices. Overly simplified prescriptions serving a 'one-size-fits-all' purpose often fail to deliver success, especially in complex SESs within which ecotourism takes place. In order to overcome the panacea problem but still enable using the practices of one place to develop new practices in another, the degree of transfer has to be critically assessed and it should be questioned whether or not policy transfer could be applied.

2.4.3   A cross regard on Institutional Design

In order to understand the processes that surround ecotourism it is important to understand the institutional context in which the ecotourism destination is embedded. Institutional design outlines the key elements of the governance system and places emphasis on the different layers that exist within the institutional structures in society. As such, institutional design is an important part of the governance structure since governance structures are by definition multi-layered and interconnected and function as mechanisms though which humans act and interact. Institutions can be seen as the 'rules of the game' they are the humanly devised constraints, checks and balances on society. As such institutions shape human interaction through complexes of norms and techniques that consist over time and serve a collective purpose. Similar to the SES perspective, institutional design also consists out of multiple scales as is illustrated in figure 3, which can change over time and space. Alexander (2006) argues that planning for sustainability involves institutional design in two ways. First of all, through the institutional context of human behaviour, whether they support or inhibit sustainability. And second, institutions themselves can decide whether they will support sustainability (Alexander, 2006)
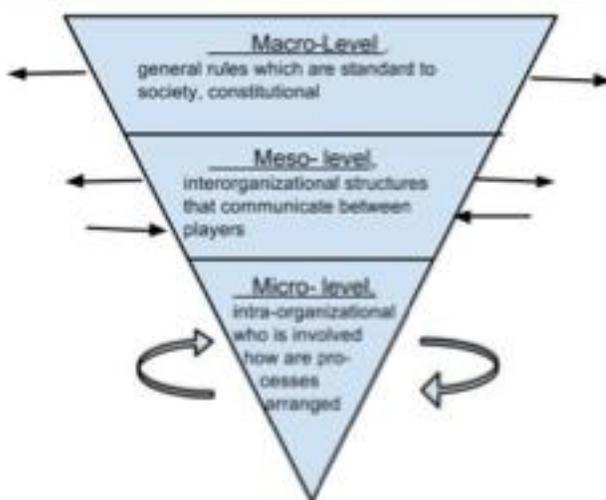
figure 3, Schematic illustration of Institutional Design, inspired by Alexander (2006). Source: Author.

The importance of institutional design is also evidence in the development of successful ecotourism. In order to plan for ecotourism it has to be taken into account that all planning for successful ecotourism takes place in an institutional environment. This limits and frames the possibilities, behaviour and actions of the actors involved. Authors like Swyngedouw (2005) have argued that the national state level, in figure 3 represented by the Macro-level, continues to be a very important scale of regulation and negotiation among actors and institutions. This existence of institutions that guide and frame ecotourism is evident clearly in National Parks and Protected Areas, where regulations are set to influence behaviour and natural development. Furthermore, the institutional context is not concrete, changes such as political climate, or natural challenges require adaptation capacity. The manner in which the institutional design is constructed determines whether or not a system can recover from, and anticipate to, these changes.

2.4.4. The possibilities for anticipatory governance in ecotourism

Anticipatory governance is emerging in the literature as a form of decision-making, which attempts to manage climate change complexities and uncertainties (Serrao-Neumann et. al., 2013). Anticipatory governance could thus be approached a possible answer to complexities found in SES. And, as such, it links back to complexities in ecotourism. Furthermore, anticipatory governance has a strong link to institutional design since the underpinnings of anticipatory governance are found in the three-step process of analysis, flexibility of strategies and monitoring and action. This three-step process can only occur though a system in which the actors can foresee future challenges and pro-actively react to these developments, by for example creating and evaluating development paths and strategic plans. This process has to occur on and through all levels of the institutional design and as a part of an interactive network. Even though the framework of anticipatory governance is developed for adaptation to climate change challenges, similar challenges are also found to ecotourism development. Ecotourism is inherently connected to the environment;

any challenges to the climate inadvertently influence the ecotourism sector. The manner in which localities can manage complexity illustrates their capacity to manage the complexity in ecotourism and come to successful development. The three-step approach of anticipatory governance can be used as a framework to investigate the adaptation initiatives by local government and provide an insight into adaptation planning at the local scale. Furthermore, by looking at the institutional design of the governance structure anticipatory governance can be applied in a broader field. To ensure that planning can overcome adaptation challenges, planning systems have to adopt more flexible approaches to deal with climate change uncertainty (Quay, 2010) this also includes planning for ecotourism development.

2.4.5 Reflecting on the role of governance in ecotourism

Governance is plays an increasingly important role in National Parks such as the Drentsche Aa and Shark Bay, especially because governance in National Parks and Protected Areas is bounded by rules and regulations set from a multi scalar network of organizations. Governance in National Parks and Protected Areas is even more complex because of these underlying judicial regulations, which frame, limit or demand involvement. Furthermore, the emphasis of governance systems has become more neoliberal and market oriented, arguably decreasing the government's authority. There has been a 'rolling out of the state' (Atkinson, 2001; Gleeson and Low, 2000) government in more neo-liberal structures are not the 'financial supporter' or the 'maintainer' of protected areas, they are mainly the facilitator of judicial guidelines. In order to steer away from the unsustainable practices that have resulted from this shift, the eight principles of good governance have been introduced. These principles of good governance lay the path to sustainable ecotourism development and opened doors for communication, participation and collaboration within governance systems. However, it has also been noted, that even though these principles lead the way to sustainability, they should not be applied as a panacea. Each ecotourism development and each ecotourism practice should be approached and

developed with discretion and a one-size-fits-all application of ecotourism development, even with the principles, should not be attempted when dealing with complex systems. When applying the principles of good governance the multi-scalar nature of ecotourism should be outlined, and the relationships and the connections should be made clear. When this institutional design is known, transfer might become an option. Finally, the institutions that are involved need to maintain their flexibility, ecotourism exist within a context of constantly changing relations and interactions between social and the environmental systems. Which is why governance systems involved in ecotourism require adaptability and flexibility in order to maintain sustainable. I find that it is important to keep in mind that; ecotourism and Protected Areas are identified as spaces where more sustainable social practices and governance in favour of sustainability might easily emerge (Parra, 2010). And as such, governance structures of ecotourism destinations can be an example of good and sustainable governance structures for other sectors.

2.5   Successful ecotourism development

So far we have been zooming in from ecological planning to SES and then even deeper into governance. In this section it will be taken one step further discussing the success factors of ecotourism development in particular. Ecotourism development is first of all linked to planning, since the decision to establish sustainable nature-based is above all, turning an idea or vision into action, and it is often underlined with a planners goal to transform existing practices (friendmann, 1987; Healey, 1997, Healey, 2006). The vision for regional ecotourism development is for a vibrant and ecologically, economically and socially sustainable ecotourism industry that can lead the way in tourism development (Page and Dowling, 2002). As such ecotourism should be planned so it can function as an exemplar for other forms of environmentally responsible tourism, promoting best practice in sustainability, behaviour, business and marketing is a necessity for successful ecotourism development.

2.5.1 Regional Ecotourism Development Planning Approach

Planning for ecotourism is the first step to developing successful ecotourism. One of many the approaches to ecotourism development is the Regional Ecotourism Development Planning Approach (REDPA). In support of ecological planning approaches such as LSA2, the REDPA approach places emphasis on determining opportunities for ecotourism development through the identification of significant features, critical areas and compatible features (Page and Dowling, 2002) within a certain region.

The REDPA framework seeks to foster environmental protection and tourism development through sustainable resource, and development planning (Page and Dowling, 2002). REDPA connects to SES because the framework acknowledges the connections between the diverse systems that are involved in ecotourism. REDPA compliments Ostrom's (2009) nested framework as it describes the kinds of interactions and relationships, which are connecting the numerous processes, systems and activities. REDPA consists out of three components. First of all, it places emphasis on the identification of significant features. Significant features can be found in either the environmental attributes, such as diversity, uniqueness or representativeness, or tourism features that are values for their resource value (Page and Dowling, 2002). Second of all, it identifies critical areas. With critical areas the REDPA tries to highlight places where environmental and tourism features are in competition and possible conflict with each other (Page and Dowling, 2002). Finally the REDPA identifies so-called compatible features. These compatible features are outdoor tourism recreational activities, which are considered to be both environmentally and socially compatible (Page and Dowling, 2002). As such the REDPA model is inherently grounded in the theory of sustainable development and SES as it aims at protecting the environment whilst facilitating community well-being and tourism satisfaction and economic integration in order to achieve environment-tourism synergy.

By identifying the significant features, critical areas and compatible features the REDPA approach allows for a good start to ecotourism development which will be more likely to lead to successful ecotourism practices. That said… having the appropriate planning underlining ecotourism development does not necessarily determine the ventures success or level of sustainability after it has been established.

2.5.2   *Chasing sustainability*

Ecotourism can be described as "responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" (Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993, p8). Similar to the notion of sustainability, ecotourism has no single definition, leading to contestation about how, and what, to define as ecotourism (Weaver and Lawton, 2007; Vicente, 2004). This contestation is not limited to the ongoing discussions between academics; ecotourism expectations and understandings vary dramatically across critical stakeholder groups (Lawrence et al. 1997). At minimum, ecotourism is an activity which aim is to minimise environmental damage.   One factor is certain, and that is that successful ecotourism practices by definition need to be sustainable.

A successful tourism destination is reached when the three pillars of sustainability - social, environment and economic - are balanced and resolved through collaboration and compromise. It is useful to conceptualise sustainable tourism as a triangle as is illustrated in figure 4.
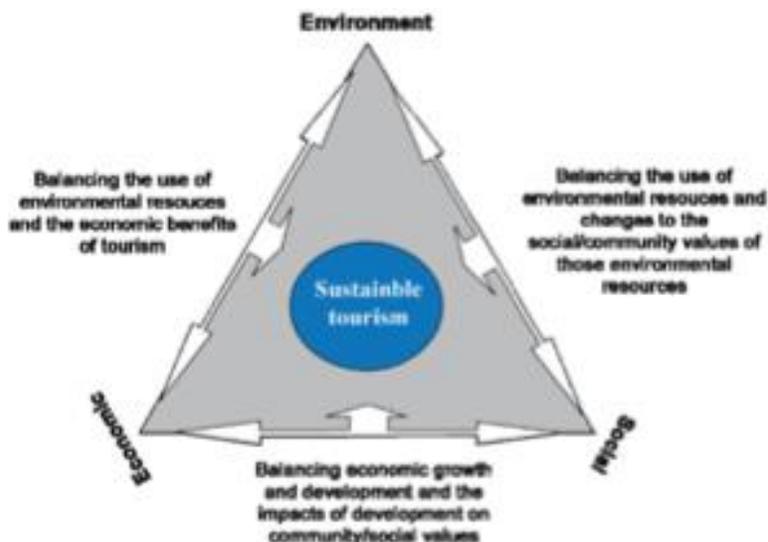
Figure 4 Sustainable tourism triangle, Source Wray et al. (2010)

Parker and Khare (2005) devised a methodology to assess key factors for successful ecotourism development in Southern Africa. The methodology is designed to evaluate three major critical success factors his paper provides a methodology of evaluation for the three major categories of critical success factors: "1) environmental (environmental quality, site boundaries, water and opportunity costs), 2) community (community partnerships, community definition, community dialogue, and poverty and social inclusion) and (3) economic (national political environment, adequate legal systems and security, infrastructure and government policy)" (Parker and Khare, 2005, p 32).

Wray et al. (2010) have developed a Sustainable Regional Tourism Destination Framework (figure 5) in which they define three dimensions of best practice in developing tourism destinations. Values that are related to good governance, and good marketing, underpin this approach.

Figure 5 - Sustainable Regional Tourism Destination Management Framework. Source, Wray et al (2010).

Reflecting on the inherent need of sustainability in ecotourism development, it can be argued that the tree pillars of sustainability all need to be optimally developed will ecotourism in a region become sustainable. Furthermore the three aspects of sustainability should be in balance, especially looking at ecotourism from an SES perspective, the intertwined network of different scales and systems need to cooperate and support each other in order for the ecotourism system as a whole to function sustainably. In order to reach cohesiveness between the human dimension and the environment there is need to reflect on more specific aspects of ecotourism, like behaviour, business and marketing also partially illustrated in the Sustainable Regional Tourism Destination Management Framework.

2.5.3 *The need for behavioural change*

In order to come to successful ecotourism development it is often argued that there is a need for (radical) behavioural change, from both the host communities' side as well as from the side of eco-tourist themselves. Some scholars (Orams, 1995; Ross and Wall, 1999) have argued that in order to measure the success of ecotourism ventures it is important to evaluate the extent of behavioural change. However, other scholars such as Weaver and Lawton (2002) refrain from making such judgements. It could however still be argued that behaviour is an important aspect of ecotourism, and should not be neglected. The role of behaviour in ecotourism development should not be underestimated, especially because it makes a rather big difference in the success and end result of ecotourism development whether actors take a reactive or proactive approach.

Orams (1995) proposed indicators, which can be used to measure the achievement of an objective of ecotourism. Orams identifies four main indicators which can be used to measure the success of ecotourism "1) satisfaction-enjoyment, 2) education learning, 3) attitude believe change, 4) behaviour lifestyle change" (Orams, 1995, p6). He finally argues that successful and desirable ecotourism development can be accomplished when the current status

of ecotourism is identifies and a shift can be realised from a mere 'ecotourism experience' towards proactive attitude change and sustainability.

In addition to the four main indicators for successful ecotourism development identified by Orams, Ross and Wall (1999) argue that synergistic relationships between natural areas, local populations and tourism are the key to successful ecotourism development. The success of an ecotourism destination is reflected through the sites capability to protect biodiversity, generate money for conservation, to attribute to the local economy and finally to educate visitors and the local community thereby "encouraging environmental advocacy and involve local people in conservation and development issues" (Ross and Wall, 1999, p 126). As such, Ross and Wall support Orams claim that a more pro-active approach of encouragement and behavioural change of local people would aid to successful ecotourism.

As mentioned above, Weaver and Lawton (2002) restrain from making judgement about the influence behaviour on the success or failure of ecotourism. After conducting surveys, Weaver and Lawton distinguish 3 groups of eco-tourist. Using the 'hard-soft' ecotourism spectrum illustrated in figure 6, they have identified; softer eco-tourist; harder eco-tourist and structured eco-tourists using the same ecotourism facilities. Weaver and Lawton conclude in their research that eco-tourist are not a homogenous group and that the largest group they identify as the structured eco-tourists cover the whole 'hard-soft' spectrum because of their diverse behaviour, making statements about what kind of behaviour leads to successful ecotourism redundant.

Figure 6, Characteristics of hard en soft ecotourism as ideal types. Source: Weaver and Lawton (2002)

```
HARD                                              SOFT
(Active, Deep)                      (Passive, Shallow)
◄───────────── the ecotourism spectrum ─────────────►

Strong environ. commitment          Moderate environ. commitment
Enhancive sustainability               Steady state sustainability
Specialized trips                         Multi-purpose trips
Long trips                                         Short trips
Small groups                                     Larger groups
Physically active                           Physically passive
Physical challenge                           Physical comfort
Few if any services expected             Services expected
Emphasis on personal experience     Emphasis on interpretation
Make own travel arrangements   Rely on travel agents and tour operators
```

Weaver and Lawton (2007) take a broader approach to ecotourism in general and do not make claims about the type of behaviour of eco-tourist or the need for behavioural change of eco-tourists in order to reach successful ecotourism. Even though in earlier work they do identify multiple behavioural perspectives (Weaver and Lawton, 2002). Weaver and Lawton (2007, p1170) argue that there is now near-consensus that ecotourism, in order to be successful, should satisfy at least three core criteria, i.e., "1) attractions should be predominantly nature based, 2) visitors interactions with those attractions should be focussed on learning or education, 3) experience and product management should follow principles and practices associated with ecological, socio-cultural and economic sustainability". The boundaries of these three criteria of ecotourism are fuzzy, as is illustrated by the tendency of ecotourism to hybridise with other forms of tourism such as adventure or cultural tourism (Weaver and Lawton, 2002).

So, in summary, it can be concluded that eco-tourist are not a homogenous group and that their behaviour cannot be expected to be similar across the board. It has also been determined that a proactive approach to ecotourism and involvement of the host community is more likely to come to successful ecotourism practices. Also, with that, the aspect of learning plays an important role. Finally, it can be concluded that pigeonholing behaviour into one certain

group of for example hard or soft eco-tourist does not reflect the reality, which is often more of a hybridisation.

2.5.4   *Ecotourism… It's all in the business*

Ecotourism is not a super formula or a guarantee for successful business. Multiple scholars have tried to explain why ecotourism businesses fail, however, just as ecotourism itself; the ecotourism business is complex too. Ecotourism ventures have to connect to both environmental systems, stay within the complex web of rules, regulations and constitutions that surround ecotourism destinations such as National Parks, and manage the complexity of human systems. When trying to identify success factors of ecotourism, the role, which is played by business and business owners, should be acknowledged.

McKercher and Robbins (1998) and McKercher (in Weaver, 2001) describe the high failure rate of ecotourism businesses in Australia and the factors underlying this high rate of attrition. They identify ecotourism (they use the term nature-based tourism interchangeably) as small, 'run-by-owner' regional businesses that lie outside the mainstream travel industry. They argue that the high failure rate of such ventures can often be found in the lack of formal business or marketing background of the owner/operators, the lack of experience in the tourism industry and an inability to link with the global tourism system (Mckercher and Robbins, 1998). In addition to these shortcomings it is often a struggle for ecotourism businesses to find staff that are sufficiently and appropriately skilled. Having identified the difficulties in developing ecotourism, the success factors, following Mckercher and Robbins line of reasoning could be found in owners having; 1) formal business and marketing background, 2) experience in the tourism industry, 3) ability to link their business to the global tourism system and 4) the ability to employ appropriate staff. Mckercher and Robbins argue that there is opportunity to share lessons learned by successful ecotourism operators to help prevent mistakes with prospective ecotourism entrants. Furthermore, it is argued that gaining an understanding of the skills, attributes and business awareness

that is seen as necessary to the development and operation of successful ecotourism venture by the established operators will help prospective operators assess their suitability for this tourism sector (Mckercher and Robbins, 1998). Existing operators identified four major themes which can hinder/enable prospective ecotourism development; 1) business planning, 2) Marketing, 3) operational skills, 4) personal attributes. These four factors are more specific on the business of ecotourism, and do not necessarily question if the business that is being established could be considered as ecotourism.

Mackoy and Osland (2004) conducted more specific research on the success of ecotourism ventures. Their conclusion adds to the findings of Mckercher and Robbins because they have not focussed so much on the general business end of ecotourism ventures, but they focussed more on the business design of ecotourism. Mackoy and Osland argue that eco-tourists value proximity to natural resources and costs as the key points of selection, and thus assuring the failure or success, of ecotourism ventures. So even if a business is run appropriately according to the factors listed by Mckercher and Robbins, according to Mackoy and Osland there is still a risk of failure if the venture not in the proximity of natural resources or too expensive.

Drumm and Moore (2002) identify the following factors as key for successful ecotourism development, businesses should have; a low impact on the ecology of the area of operation; involve stakeholders in all aspects of the planning, development and operation; generate sustainable and equitable income for stakeholders, and for conservation; and finally be economically sustainable as a business entity. This analysis does include the location of an ecotourism operation; even though proximity is still not addressed they still add the necessity and importance of stakeholder involvement and participation in ecotourism. However, it could be argued that in order to generate sustainable income and become a sustainable business participation is inevitable and a necessity (Healy, 2010).

Recapping on the role of business in developing successful ecotourism, it illustrates that the success factors do not just lie with the business owners and their personal attributes. Success of ecotourism business is also connected to the geographical location and proximity to the resource, and the ability to find the appropriate peoples to work at the venture. However, marketing, participation, business experience and ecotourism planning dominate the debate on success factors within ecotourism. Which is why marketing is an additional layer within business, which is worth extra attention.

2.5.5 *Marketing as a tool for successful ecotourism*

Good business will not become successful if an ecotourism destination is not marketed successfully. Destination marketing has traditionally been aligned to growth-oriented strategies, mainly focussing on image creation. However, recent research by Buhalis (2000) has illustrated that destination marketing should adopt a sustainable approach where marketing is integrated with sustainable destination management and development objectives to ensure the needs of both visitors and residents are met in regional communities (Buhalis, 2000).

Marketing has a 'dual responsibility' to conserve the resources of the ecotourism destination and to provide a high quality visitor experience (Jenkins and McArthur, 1996). Destination marketing can be used as a management tool to ensure that the right type of ecotourism is developed in the right area. Destination marketing should serve as a mechanism to facilitate regional development objectives to ensure that the strategic objectives of ecotourism destination are achieved (Richins and Pearce, 2000).

Destination marketing can ensure a balance between the sustainability of the destinations resources and the stakeholders' objective of regional development. As such, marketing plays a connecting role between ecotourism planning and ecotourism development. Marketing is of great importance in the chain of

sustainable ecotourism destination development, which is why in the Sustainable Destination Tourism Destination Management Framework (illustrated in image 5 section 2.5.2.) identifies good marketing as one of the grounding pillars of sustainable ecotourism development.

2.5.6   *Listing the factors*

Having discussed the success factors identified in hitherto conducted research a general set of assumptions about success factors can be made. I addition to the 8 principles of good governance, table 1 contains the key aspects of ecotourism and the major factors that play a role in the success or failure of ecotourism according to the sighted theory. It needs to be recognised that the success factors can play a role in multiple aspects and that not all of these factors need to be in place in order for an ecotourism destination to be regarded as successful. However, the more of the factors are in place, the more sustainable and successful the ecotourism development is likely to be.

Table 1, Overview of the identified success factors. Source; Author.

Aspects	Success factors
Sustainability	• Environmental sustainability • Social sustainability • Economic sustainability • low impact on ecology of the area
Behaviour	• Satisfaction-enjoyment • Education-learning • Attitude believe change • Behaviour lifestyle change • Synergistic relationships • Acknowledgement of Socio-Ecological Systems • involve participants
Business	• Business and marketing background • Experience in the tourism industry • Ability to link their business to the global tourism system • Ability to employ appropriate staff • Personal attributes
Marketing	• Marketing is integrated with sustainable destination management.

2.6 Connecting the theory

In this chapter I have placed ecotourism and successful ecotourism development within a theoretical framework. Starting from the broad perspective of ecological planning, this chapter has 'zoomed in' towards ecotourism in SESs. This transition towards the 'social' has allowed us to see ecotourism not just as a spatial phenomenon, or the more common approach to ecotourism as a business or economic activity, but also as a social-spatially embedded practice, gaining more of a territorial vision of ecotourism. Ecotourism does not just change the landscape, it changes behaviour and is connected to the people that are involved or affected. This is inherently connected to who feels responsible, who is participating and who makes the decisions. As such, the governance of ecotourism, or the plurality of actors and institutions that underpin the system play an important role in assessing the possibilities for ecotourism development in an area and assessing the success of ecotourism overall. When 'zooming in' on the governance of ecotourism I found that it is possible to distinguish four key factors that enable successful ecotourism development. These four factors, sustainability, business, marketing and behaviour, are part of the governance of ecotourism, and exist within the governance structure.

Figure 7 illustrates the connectedness between the theories and shows the multi secularity of ecotourism theory.

Figure 7, Schematic overview of the theoretical framework. Source Author.

3   *Method or madness*

"The unity of all science consists alone in its method, not in its material."

Karl Pearson

In this chapter I provide and discuss the design through which this research is conducted. In order to come to a valued conclusion the design of the research, though which the answers to the questions are found, I have tried to present the method in a transparent manner. As phronesis dictates, it is not what we know, but how we know it. Science can be seen as logico-empirical, as it rests on two pillars, that of logic and observation (Babbie, 2013). When looking for a scientific understanding of the world there is need to make sense of, and correspond to, the things that we observe (Babbie, 2013). The research questions that have been introduced in chapter one form the starting point of the research. These carefully selected questions also play an important role during the interviews. The data that has been collected previous to the interviews has also been fed back into the interviews and I have used them ex post the interviews. To conclude this research, I have comprised all data through information rich aggregation. Furthermore possibilities for further research and recommendations are issued.
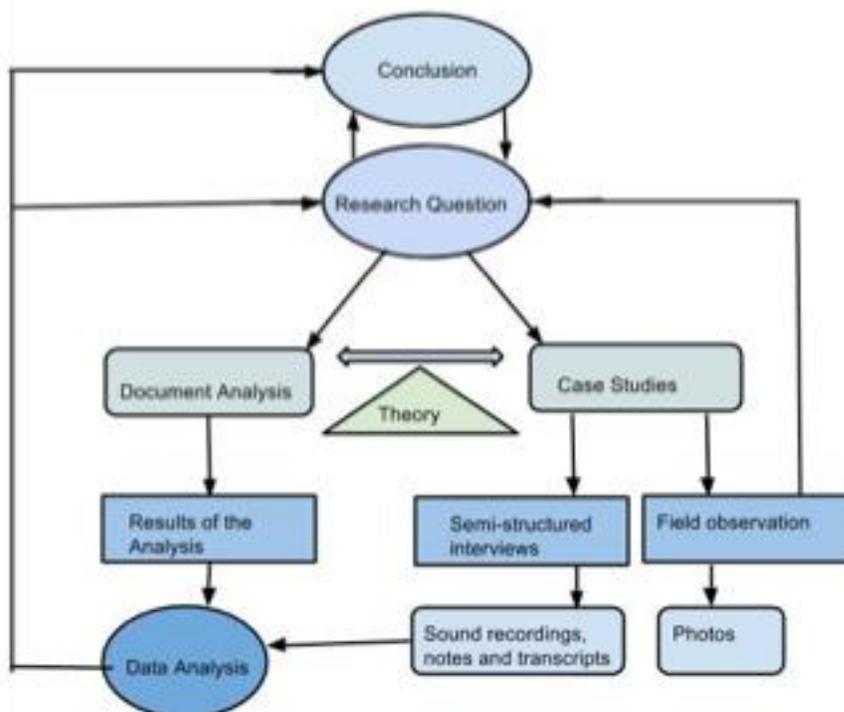
Figure 8. schematic overview of the research design structure. Source Author

In order to find the answers to the research questions I have applied multiple methods. As is illustrated in figure 8, the schematic overview of the research design structure, the document analysis and case studies are the main sources of information. The research questions were constructed through personal experience and observation and were not based on any specific back-ground knowledge, as such, the field observation in the case studies feeds back to the research question. The data analysis of both the document studies and the case studies feed back into the conclusion and answer the research questions.

3.1.1   Case studies

This research makes use of two case studies. I have selected these two case studies for multiple reasons. First of all, the case studies regions have very opposing characteristics. Not just the geographical, but also the social and environmental differences make these two case studies interesting to compare. Second, Australia, in particularly Western Australia has a long tradition in ecotourism and has well established successful ecotourism destinations. As such, it should be possible to identify the factors that have enabled successful ecotourism and possibly could be transferred onto the area of the second case study, the Drentsche Aa. The Drentsche Aa region does not have many established ecotourism practices but seems to have the potential and the basic structure for more ecotourism development. Finally, both are Protected Areas because of their natural values and because of the cultural historical importance of the area. Their policies and manner of implementation and protection however differ.

A total of 15 interviews have been conducted with people that have a broad range of interests and knowledge in the field of ecotourism, (eco) tourism development, environmental planning, Marketing, nature protection, decision-making and governance. The case study areas are not always used in the interviews specifically, especially when the participant does not have specific

knowledge about that area but is able to provide insight into other issues. In addition to the data gained from the semi-structured interviews, case study information is also found through personal observation in the field. Both areas have been visited and personally experienced to evaluate their potential and giving the ability to come across issues or successes.

3.1.2 Document analysis

For this research I have analysed several types of documents. Chapter one of this research, the introduction, has made most use of brochures and websites that provided an abundance of information about the case study areas. The website of CALM[1] is very professional and has a broad range of topics and brochures that you can download and freely access. The website of the Drentsche Aa[2] has fewer items, but has still been useful in the introductory chapter. Chapter 2, the theoretical framework is based on articles, books and research papers written by renowned scholars in their field of expertise. The academic articles were found through search engines such as Science Direct and Google Scholar. The search engines were fed the key words from this research and explorative searches, sometimes revealing book titles, were conducted on well-known academic writers. Some scientific journals, especially the *Journal of Ecotourism* and *Tourism Management* have been found especially useful in this research. These journals were provided though the online library Taylor & Francis Social Science and Humanities Library and are Australia dominated, with a wide variety of case studies in Western Australia. In the fourth chapter, the findings, data gathered through the conduced interviews and additional data is brought together. The additional data has been collected through institutes such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Dutch Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek (CBS).

---

[1] See; www.sharkbay.org
[2] See; www.drentscheaa.nl

3.2 Epistemology and methodology - Alternatives and motivation for the selected research method

There is a need to question whether or not I have selected and used the right methods for this research. In order to do so it is of importance to clarify the selection criteria and assess the possibility of using other options that might result in other findings and conclusions. This research has opted to use two research methods, document analysis and case studies including interviews. In the following section the use of these methods will be critically discussed.

3.2.1 Explaining my motivation and addressing alternatives to the methodology

In this research I have opted to use a combination of document analysis with case studies. First of all the choice for conducting a document analysis will be discussed. Second, the reasoning behind the use of case studies and semi-structured interviews is brought forward.

My motivation behind the use of document analysis can be found in two arguments. Firstly, using document analysis accommodates and creates a basis for research conducted in areas where research has previously been lacking, or absent. The document analysis has been a necessity in this case since the new research had to be built on already existing theories and frameworks in order to analyse the success factors of Shark Bay and the missing factors in the Drentsche Aa brook valley region. Secondly, the document analysis was unavoidable since ecotourism is not my personal field of expertise. Lacking personal knowledge about the topic, there was a need to gain information gathered by others in order to reflect on theory and practice of ecotourism.

There are many scientific methods used in case studies to gain information from the public and from informed individuals, participants and stakeholders. Some of these options that have been considered for this research were structured interviews, open interviews and surveys. This research has used an obtrusive

social science research method, that of semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were organised through an interview guide (see appendix)**,** which allowed roughly the same set of questions to be asked to all participants. However, the interview guide also contained some more specific questions aimed at participants with a political background or a more academic background, which allowed for a more indebt understanding of the participants view and approach. This ability to dive further into the conversation and ask further more specific questions would not be possible when a structured interview was conducted since only a set of specific questions will need answering. With the open interviews there is a risk that the participants will not answer the questions that are asked in this research. When using a survey method it is not easy to differentiate between participants and a larger number of people have to participate in order to collect reflective data. Furthermore, surveys will result in quantitative data, which would not be useful when answering the research questions introduced in chapter one, since they require qualitative answers.

3.3   Ethical considerations

The article of Vanclay, Baines and Taylor (2013) is used as a guideline for procedural and normative ethics. The Australian Government states:" Each research protocol must be designed to ensure that respect for the dignity and well being of the participants takes precedence over the expected benefits to knowledge" (quoted in Vanclay, Baines and Taylor, 2013, p 246). In this research interviews have been conducted, by which the process needed ethical considerations.

1) Respect for the participants. During the interview respect will be given to the participants in both a normative and a procedural manner.
2) The participants voluntarily choose to participate to the research and shall not be paid; they also have the right to withdrawal at any point. Also, the participants should be well informed about the research aim and the role they will be for filling in the research and the consequences of participation. This ethical consideration

is called informed consent and will be honoured in this research. The participants will orally consent to what will happen with the gathered information and how the participant will be acknowledged in the research. In addition to the consent allowing the information that is being revealed in the interview to be used in the this research the participant will be asked for a specific consent to allow audio-recording following Dutch and Australian privacy laws.

3) The participants must not be harmed. This research must not have adverse consequences to the people who have participated in the interviews. To minimise the risk of negative consequences to participating in the interview anonymity will be offered to the participants. Participants can decide whether or not their names will be used.

4) The interview will only discuss subject matter to avoid undue intrusion. People should be able to talk about confidential or personal matters but they will not be used in the research and the confidential data will be handled and stored securely. The participants have the right to see and modify the transcript to make sure that they are addressed in the right manner (or anonymous) and if confidential matter is not included.

5) Australia has very proud Indigenous Peoples that care about their county and base their beliefs on the landscape. So when discussing the implications of ecotourism in Australia it is important to also consider the implications to the Indigenous communities who might not actually live in the area but might have religious sites near ecotourism destinations.

6) The interviews have been reviewed by the research supervisor. They are checked to assure that the appropriate methodology is used and the ethical considerations are followed. Finally, the transcripts are available on request.

4   Placing the case studies in juxtaposition

> "*Knowing comes from learning,*
>
> *finding from seeking*"
>
> Vaddey Ratner

At this point you, the reader, must be wondering what exactly has been found during this research. Will it be ground breaking? Will it be controversial? Will it illuminate processes previously left in the dark? You will soon find out, because in this chapter a story will be told, explaining the findings and connecting the dots. I will discuss and reflect on the collected data supported by quotes from participants (see text box 1) answers in the conducted interviews and additional literature. In addition, in this chapter I will reflect and link the findings to relevant theories discussed in chapter 2.

Text box 1, Short description of the function or field of expertise of the participants.

Participant		Function / relevant expertise
Anonymous,	07-03-2014	Australian Academic, Urban development as collective action, Discourses
Anonymous,	01-08-2014	Member of the advisory committee for the Shark Bay World Heritage Area with a knowledge and history of the World Heritage site
Ms. J. Affonderbach,	27-02-2014	Academic, Social economy, Environmental Policy
Mr. A Brasse,	11-06-2014	Coordinator communication and education, IVN Drenthe, member project group round table participatory body
Mr. E. van der Bilt,	12-06-2014	Director Drents Landscape foundation
Ms. M. Chetty,	27-05-2014	Investment manager, Tourism WA
Ms. Y. Cornax,	07-03-2014	Senior Project Manager Tourism, Marketing Drenthe
Mr. H. Hartog,	02-06-2014	Director Recreatieschap Drenthe and director Tourist Info Drenthe
Mr. R. Jones,	14-03-2014	Australian Academic, Regional disadvantage, tourism and leisure with a focus on heritage and cultural issues
Mr. G. Middle,	18-03-2014	Australian Academic, EIA, Environmental Planning and governance, Coastal Planning and Management, sustainability, regional environmental planning
Mr. R. Munniksma,	31-05-2014	Politician, Provincial executive of the Province of Drenthe,

		member round table participatory body
Mr. E van Oosterhout,	02-06-2014	Politician, Major of the Council of Aa en Hunze
Ms. C. Posthumus,	04-06-2014	Project leader Geopark de Hondsrug
Mr. A van der Tuuk,	12-06-2014	Politician, Provincial executive of the Province of Drenthe
Mr. H. Wolters,	03-06-2014	Director Geopark de Hondsrug

4.1   The creation of a jewel

That Shark Bay and the Drentsche Aa are special and important regions when it comes to natural resources cannot be denied. Both regions have gained celebrity status when it comes to National Parks and they are recognised nationally and internationally by important actors such as the EU and the UN. However, the historical development of both areas has taken rather different paths and underlying processes. Using the REDPA framework the findings surrounding the different developments over time regarding the significant features, the critical areas and the compatible features can be discussed.

4.1.1   What makes the areas so special?

Shark Bay has been developed mainly because of the prestige natural environment, meeting all the four environmental requirements to gain world heritage status (Sharkbay.org, 2014). Even when the first settlers arrived in the region they recognised the significant features of its environment, even conducting Australia's first anthropological research in the area. Back in those days, anthropologists argued that the Aboriginal people were a missing link in Darwins evolution theory, and were often considered as closer to fauna (Riseman, 2013). Even though that could be considered as a dark page, identifying the value of flora and fauna in the area has played a dominant role in the preservation of the Shark Bay marine park and its hinterlands. This is confirmed by Ms. Chetty from Tourism WA who stated that; " *the most significant features of shark bay are the bay itself and the abundance of native flora and fauna that you find up there, and it is also the actual site of Francois Peron*" (Chetty, 27-05-2014). This acknowledgement of Shark Bay's natural values was

crystallised when Shark Bay gained its UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1991.

The Drentsche Aa, just like Shark Bay, contains multiple significant features. Where flora and fauna play an important role in Shark Bay, hydro morphological processes and systems are dominant in the Drentsche Aa region. As one of The Netherlands most original creek deltas and landscapes, the Drentsche Aa has great environmental significance. This has been recognised by awarding the region 5 stars in 2005, making it one of only two 5 star regions in The Netherlands (DrentscheAa.nl, 2014). Furthermore, the region has been given National Park status in 1965 and has been included in the EU Natura 2000 listing since 2013 (Ministerie van Economische Zaken, 2014). Director of Geopark the Hondsrug Mr. Wolters and project leader of Geopark de Hondsrug Ms. Posthumus also pointed out that, in the same year, the Drentsche Aa has been appointed as part of the "*first Geopark in The Netherlands, Geopark de Hondsrug, which is connected to the Department of Earth Science of UNESCO*" (Wolters, 03-06-2014; Posthumus, 04-06-2014). In addition to the environmental significance and authenticity of the landscape which has been recognised by many participants (Munniksma, 31-05-2014; van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014; van der Bilt, 02-06-2014; Brasse, 11-06-2014; van der Tuuk, 12-06-2012) the Drentsche Aa region also distinguishes itself through cultural significant factors, which is why, instead of just labelling the area as a National Park, they have opted to add an additional layer, called the '*Nationaal Beek en Esdorpen Landschap*' which encompasses the natural significance of the creek delta, '*beek*' in Dutch, and the cultural importance and historic significance of the towns called '*esdorpen*', within the National Park. Furthermore, the existence of an "*active agricultural sector*" in the region is seen as a significant feature by many participants (Munniksma, 31-05-2014; van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). So it is fair to state that there is a wide consensus about the natural and cultural significance of the region. Bio-Plan the Drentsche Aa (2012) identifies the 'small scale development'; the meandering of the creeks; and the complex system of '*essen*' (elevated fields, forests and consolidated land), as the three core values of the

Drentsche Aa. However, the industry and activities in the area also create critical areas, as I will discuss next.

4.1.2   Identifying the critical areas

Shark Bay has always been a scarcely populated area; currently the region has a permanent population of a less than 1000 inhabitants (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Being over 800 km North of Perth it could be considered remote. As a result of the remote conditions of the region, critical areas or conflicts between the needs of the local population and the protection and conservation has, in itself, not been a dramatic issue. This has not always been the case. Back in the early 1900's the region was full of agricultural activity, karts used to drive over the stromatolites in Hamelin Pool, which was then known as Flagpole Landing, in order to have easy access to vessels close to shore, and to load them with wool from hinterland stations (Sharkbay.org, 2014), as is still visible (Photo 1). Nowadays, Shark Bay's main industry is tourism, but fishing, pearling and pastoralism also occur in the region. The farm activities in the region can however be regarded as minimal with only 153 sheep remaining in the area and less than 2000 heads of meat cattle (ABS, 2008). Since these industries rely on the natural environment, conservation management additionally offers significant source of employment in the region. As a result of being listed as a World Heritage Area, there is an obligation to ensure that the regions environmental values are not compromised, diminished or destroyed (SharkBay.org, 2014). I think that the remoteness of the location is in itself a bonus to conservation and an asset to ecotourism, since often the 'wilderness experience' is what people are looking for "*ecotourism in Australia generally means remote experience*" (Middle, 18-03-2014), which limits the critical areas in the region. That said, while it is good for conservation; it could also be seen as detrimental or hindering for ecotourism development, since the additional costs resulting from the remoteness can lead to ecotourism being a niche market challenging it's core notion of social sustainability, not reflecting equity and justice. The remoteness to other resources in the region, as is stated in the

theory by Mackoy and Osland (2004), makes successful ecotourism development critical. This is why infrastructure development plays an important role in further development, as is stated by Ms. Chetty who argued; " *there is a need to improve access and connection to the airport*" (Chetty, 27-05-2014). Also, as a result of the remote location of Shark Bay, visitor numbers are limited; this balancing on the minimal carrying capacity of the region makes it "*difficult to create a strong sustainable tourism industry*" (Anonymous, 01-08-2014). Furthermore, the role of recreational fishing should not be underestimated, since it can have a larger impact on the environment than commercial fishing and it is harder to control and limit environmental damage since it is open access, and often re-active policy in the form of setting quotas (McPhee, et al., 2002). So even in Shark Bay, managing the effects of commercial fishing could be insufficient and fish stocks might become over-exploited. This of course should be regarded as a critical issue, but as stated by McPhee et al. (2002) the ecological impacts of recreational fishing are not being addressed. Australian academic Mr. Middle, also mentioned these questionable forms of 'soft ecotourism' stating; "*there is a lot of activity in that sort of places which really does push some of the environmental boundaries to the limit, you know a lot of people go fishing there…*" (Middle, 18-03-2014)

Photo 1, Kart tracks on the stromatolites in Hamilton Pool. Source: The missing year (2014)

The area of the Drentsche Aa, in contrast to Shark Bay, has always battled contradicting and competing activities. Being located in a traditionally agricultural region, the rope pulling between the agricultural sector, tourism and natural preservation and conservation has been ongoing. This is confirmed by the Major of the council of Aa en Hunze, Mr. E. van Oosterhout, who stated that;" *In the foundations there is always that contradicting triangle of agriculture, tourism and nature*"(van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). Provincial Executive Mr. R. Munniksma stated, " there is a definite tension between agriculture and nature protection" (Munniksma, 31-05-2014). The agricultural sector plays an important role in the Drentsche Aa region as it is culturally connected to the landscape. According to Mr. Munniksma (31-05-2014) and Mr. van Oosterhout (02-06-2014) it is inconsiderable to remove agriculture from the landscape. However, with the growing demand and to feed the population, farmers in the region want to expand and grow. Current practices of land consolidation offer a compromise through which the natural landscape in the Drentsche Aa region can increase, which is an aim of the Natura 2000 guidelines (Ministerie van Economische Zaken, 2014) for the region, whilst the agricultural practices can intensify elsewhere. As mentioned by Mr. Munniksma who stated "*the current process of land consolidation reliefs the critical areas and offers a more robust nature and agricultural development perspective*" (Munniksma, 31-05-2014). I found that tourism development is often considered as a threat to the Drentsche Aa's, vulnerable natural environment or social stability. As is for example stated by Coordinator communication and education for IVN Mr. Brasse; "*We also need to take in account the wishes of the local population, they are not keen on having busloads full of Japanese people in their front yard, furthermore these people do not know the vulnerability of the area and might start picking rare orchids*" (Brasse, 11-06-2014). In this research I found that this, more conservative attitude towards tourism growth, is not taking into consideration the inherent nature of ecotourism to be sustainable. In the Drentsche Aa there seems to be an ongoing struggle between regional (tourism) development and conservation, with 'nature conservatism' lying at the basis. This 'nature conservatism' is not

supported across the whole of the governance system in the region as is noticeable when reflecting on statements like "*the best thing we have managed to do is to make sure that the locals do not experience tourism and recreation as a threat, but as a source of pride*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). This attitude leads us to the next step of the REDPA framework, the identification of compatible features.

4.1.3   Finding compatible features

One of the most recognisable compatible features in Shark Bay is ecotourism. *"Tourism is a very important industry locally and given the limited opportunities for employment in other industries it is critical to the future of a sustainable local economy"* (Anonymous, 01-08-2014). Feeding the dolphins at Monkey Mia (photo 2) almost metaphorically illustrates how SESs, the human and the natural systems, can physically interact, learn, support and gain from each other. Recognising the research potential, the Australian government developed multiple ongoing research programs in the early 1980's, an in the mid 1980's the first visitor facilities were developed in order to protect the dolphins (Monkey Mia, 2014). With the growing number of people visiting the dolphins, up to 700 per day, further protection was developed in the 1990's (Monkey Mia, 2014). In 2001, the current visitor centre was constructed, aiming at educating the tourists and placing emphasis on protection management and research. Monkey Mia is now one of the main tourism attractions in Western Australia, and with the aim of becoming more sustainable through educating visitors and locals, conducting research to improve further protection and supporting the local economy, I see it as a good example of ecotourism through the definition used in this research. However, improvements could be made to increase the involvement of the local community. Also, when Monkey Mia was established there was a lot of resentment from the local community; *"It is ironic, people in Denham were unhappy about Monkey Mia and 'anti-anything' established there, as it was going to compete with local business"* (Anonymous, 01-08-2014).

The existence of agriculture has made the Drentsche Aa region what it is today, maintaining the, now so valuable, small pastures, meandering creeks and '*esdorpen*'. As Mr. Munniksma argued; "*it is obvious that the practices of the agricultural sector have lead this area to remain intact*" (Munniksma, 31-05-2014). However, the conservation of the landscape was not a conscious decision made by the agricultural sector, as is confirmed by Mr. Munniksma (31-05-2014) who stated: "*poor soil quality has played an important factor in the preservation of the natural landscape making the region unsuitable for large scale agriculture*". Today's compatible features in the agricultural sector could be found in organic farming and regional produce production and sales, which is recognized by director of the Drents Landscape foundation Mr. van der Bilt who argued; "*I think that you have to look further than just ecotourism when it comes to regional development, sustainable agriculture with regional products which might even aid water quality can also be a way to make the Drentsche Aa region sustainable*" (van der Bilt, 20-06-2014). Furthermore, the cultural-historic background of the region has allowed for the development of new cultural events, often combining culture with the landscape. An examples of such an event that tries to compliment nature with culture and vice versa is the 'Festival der Aa' which is depicted on photo 2. It should however be noted that this festival has only recently been regarded as compatible to the Drentsche Aa region by all parties.

As is stated by Mr. van Oosterhout who stated "*festival der Aa, a 3 day culture/nature spectacle for thousands of people, we have had such a struggle to realise it, just because of 'nature conservatism'*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). In addition to festivals, ATB'ing, and more traditional recreational activities like cycling and walking are also compatible features which are practiced in the Drentsche Aa region. I argue that ecotourism is a compatible feature of the Drentsche Aa, it is however still under developed. I have to agree with Mr. van Oosterhout who stated; "*I think that one of the strengths of the regions can be found in the balance which nature, agriculture and tourism sectors have found, however, they are not yet optimally complimenting each other*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014).

Photo 3, Acting at the Festival der Aa. Source: www.zeemeringmedia.nl (2014)

Finally, the Drentsche Aa has many business ventures that can be complimentary to each other. By creating arrangements "*between different sectors and through the living visitors network*" (Brasse, 11-06-2014) and through creating arrangements, or 'tourism packages' as is discussed by Mr. van der Bilt; "*linking routing and arrangements, an option is connecting for example unique*

historic buildings with heritage stays, extenuating the artistic and cultural sides of the region" (van der Bilt, 12-06-2014).

4.1.4 Reflecting on the REDPA application

After applying the REDPA framework it has become evident that the development of ecotourism destinations does not always take the same path. However, the identification of the significant features illustrates the basic resources on which ecotourism could be based or extended. Knowing the activities that might become, are, or have been, conflicting in a region allows for more suitable development in the future. Reflecting on Shark Bay, the end of wool production in the area has increased the biological diversity since sheep are now banned from the site, and different modes of transport for the wool produced in hinterland stations stopped destruction of the stromatolites. Agriculture however has never been of great and dominant cultural importance to the region. However, as a result of fluctuating visitor numbers and the nature of most visits being of short-term, Shark Bay has not been able to optimally develop to the capacity that it could, considering the opportunities and features of the area. This has also been the case in the Drentsche Aa, and in order to develop sustainable the cultural- historical aspect of the region should be incorporated, even when it sometimes challenges other significant features of the region like nature conservation. Creating hybrid activities combining both the environmental features with agriculture and cultural history offers great possibility for future ecotourism possibilities in the Drentsche Aa region. In Shark Bay, future developments should not necessarily focus on the cultural historical background of the region but more so on the minimal carrying capacity that can support further development in the region and sustain local business. Furthermore, the inclusion of the 'social' should play an important role in Shark Bay, increasingly incorporating the local population. To guide and decide over these processes, an appropriate governance system needs to be in place.

As has been identified earlier in this research, governance systems are an important part of SESs (Ostrom, 2009) since they regulate the interactions between humans and the environment and determine the outcomes of these interactions. As such governance structures play an important role in the success or failure of ecotourism development. In order to answer the research question; what is the role or involvement of the different stakeholders, and in the hands of who lays the responsibility for ecotourism development? I have decided to divide this section into 5 sub-sections. The existing structure is first unravelled, shining a light into the deep and complex structures of governance in the two case studies. Second I identify who feels responsible, and who takes responsibility in the case study areas. Third, one of the ways to determine final responsibility is often just to 'follow the money' in this sub-section I outline who pays the bills. Fourth, the functionality of the current governance structure is outlined and finally, I have created a table, which illustrates the case studies success or failure in implementing the 8 principles of good governance.

4.2.1 Identification of the involved institutions

Shark Bay has relatively few involved institutions if you compare them to Ecotourism governance structures in European national parks (Parra, 2010). In Australia the government plays an important role, "*In WA, in the ecotourism the government is a very strong player, in particular the nature conservation agency who looks after national parks, and who promotes them as both recreation and conservation areas has been an important player in the development of ecotourism throughout WA*" (Anonymous Australian Academic, 07-03-2014). The main authority in the Shark Bay World Heritage site is the Department of Parks and Wildlife. This Government body falls under the authority of the Western Australian Government and operates conform guidelines set by UNESCO. Ms. Chetty who stated; "*the main organizations in the areas are the department of Parks and Wildlife, the Shire of Gascoyne, basically the local government of the area, ourselves, tourism Western Australia and the native Aboriginal community*"

confirms this. Recently, a project has started which aims at increasing the involvement of the native Aboriginal peoples in the Shark Bay region. Also tourism WA is involved in the governing of ecotourism in the region. Reflecting on the governance structure in Shark Bay, I find that the existing governance structure in Shark Bay is rather top-down. Only select groups of people are invited to participate, and with that the Department of Parks and Wildlife seems to control the decision-making process. This is however changing, with the Department starting to take more of a 'back seat' position and handing over responsibilities to other (private) operators, as is stated by Mr. Middle; "*they are sort of getting out of the business of ecotourism and allowing other people to do it*" (Middle, 18-03-2014).

In the Drentsche Aa a broader institutional network exists. One of the main aspects of this governance structure is the '*overleg orgaan de Drentsche Aa*', which is a round table participatory body. This participatory body exists out of many parties with many different aims and interests. This broad involvement and high level of participation adds to the complexity of the Drentsche Aa's governance. This complexity however sometimes leads to decision making being hindered, as is stated by Mr. Munniksma; "*Maybe it is almost too participatory, almost all the stakeholder groups are involved*". Or the multi-scalarity is identified as a problem "*there are many, layers…almost too many layers*" (van der Bilt, 12-06-2014). Also, some stakeholder groups can feel marginalised, like Geopark de Hondsrug stating "*The Drentsche Aa is an island*" (Wolters, 03-06-2014), or identify an unbalance in the representation of interests *"Nature conservation organisation are too heavily represented*" (Hartog, 02-06-2014). I further more would like to argue that the existence of the multiple organisational levels and geographical scales of the Drentsche Aa region adds to the governance complexity. The Drentsche Aa is not geographically bound to one municipality, or has one established geographical border. This choice to deter from one geographic location called 'Drentsche Aa' results in additional complexity because the National Park for example covers a different area than the national

'beek and esdorpen' landscape the Drentsche Aa, and in addition it is only a small part of the Hondsrug, and parts of the '*Ecologische Hoofdstructuur*' or ecological main structure, are scattered through the region, plus there are different allocations of the Natura 2000, as is illustrated in map 3. It is thus understandable that decision-making can be hindered in 'grey' areas. Furthermore, the multiple levels and many involved institutions can create unsustainable practices. For example; different organizations have trained and employ professional guides that provide tours in the region, it would be more sustainable if only one organization would take on that responsibility. Also, many organizations place signs at the same locations (parking lots, entrance points) it would be more sustainable if these individual signs would become one, which includes all institutions, this will reduce maintenance costs.
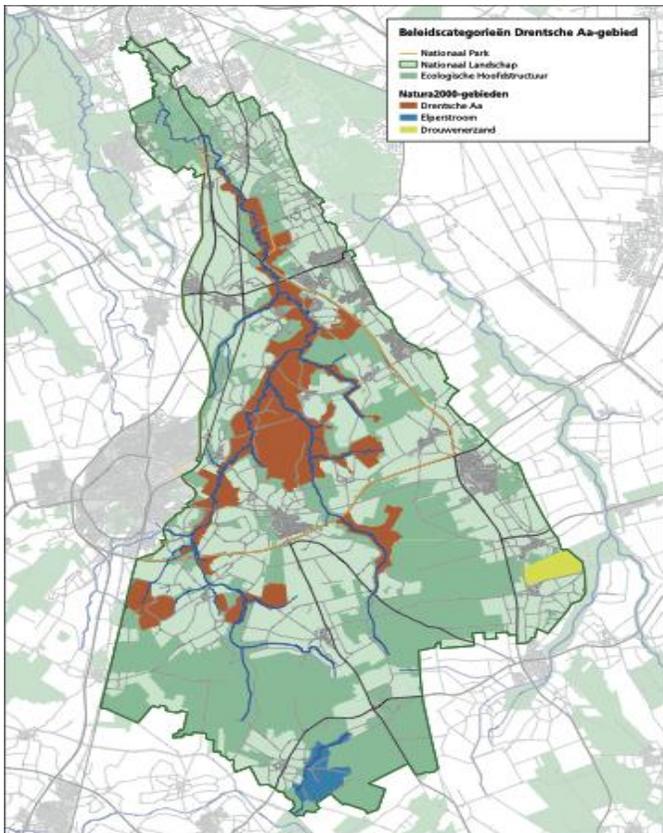
Map 3, National Park the Drentsche Aa, National 'beek en esdorpen landschap', ecological main structure and Natura 2000. Source: Bioplan (2012)

However, it needs to be acknowledged that, even though the Drentsche Aa has over time created a complex governance structure, sometimes perceived as 'too complex', many participants also recognize the success of the system. This perception of a good working governance structure is reinforced by Mr. Van Oosterhout who claimed "*the strength of the round table participatory body is that we manage to find common grounds and work on each others strengths*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). For a National Park that has been in existents for over 50 years and which has managed to make some drastic improvement to the region, through collaboration and consensus building, I have to agree. The Drentsche Aa has created a governance system which seems to manage the complexity of the area well, and is able to address the challenges which this complex SES brings.

Furthermore, with the creation of the so called '*levend bezoekers netwerk'* translated in English as 'living visitors network' the local residents and business owners are encouraged to become involved in the area and getting tourists personally involved in the area during their stay. The living visitors network turns local residents into an educated real host community. It enables locals to become involved in tourism and share their knowledge and love for the region, it makes *"the residents tell their story of the Drentsche Aa"* backed up by education provided by the IVN (Brasse, 11-06-2014). I think is a promising move in the direction of ecotourism development, especially since hybrid forms, as has been identified by Weaver and Lawton (2007), will allow more institutions and sectors to be incorporated. And since connecting a story to the landscape and to tourism is an important aspect of ecotourism. Table 2 illustrates some the mainly involved actors and the main function they fulfil in the Drentsche Aa.

Table 2, stakeholder identification, functions and roles within the Drentsche Aa. Source Author.

Organisation/ agency	function / role
Province of Drenthe	- Funding
Council of Aa and Hunze	- Funding , implementation
"Recreatieschap Drenthe"	- Network agency with tourism businesses
Tourism Info Drenthe	- Tourism agency, tourism information
Marketing Drenthe	- Marketing, image building for the province of Drenthe
Geopark	- Raising awareness for the (cultural) history
National Park	- Conservation and preservation
Staatsbos Beheer	- Nature protection organisation, Conservation and preservation
Living visitors network'	- Accommodating, informing and welcoming tourists
RECRON	- National recreational organisation which also has a Drenthe department
Waterschappen	- Waterboard, responsible for the water quality in the area.
Commissies van Dorpsbelangen	-Committees representing the towns and villages
Agricultural Organization LTO-Noord	- Representing the agricultural sector and safeguarding their interests.
IVN	- National Institute for nature education and sustainability. Provide insight into vulnerabilities of the area and the role humans

4.2.2   Who feels responsible and who takes responsibility?

There is no question about the main authority in Shark Bay, with only a few organizations involved and the roles being clearly divided it should, in theory, work smoothly. However, since Shark Bay World Heritage Area is relatively young, there are still some teething problems. These teething problems are mainly found in identifying the sets of roles each organisation needs to fulfil and what is expected from all actors involved. This is confirmed by Ms. Chetty, who stated: "*there have been some teething problems in the sense that the department of Parks and Wildlife had their criteria of preservation of the environment and returning to the environment, we have our own criteria wanting to develop tourism, even though in a sustainable manner, and the Shire of*

Gascoyne would want both in a way" (Chetty, 27-05-2014). Even though these teething problems are not easy to overcome, in Shark Bay it seems, that the responsibility is divided, not taken. Tourism Western Australia invites people and groups to participate in new projects, and it is in cooperation with the Department of Parks and Wildlife that new projects involving the local population are developed, as has been realised with the Miriuwung and Gajerrong Aboriginal People in the Kimberley's (Tourism Western Australia, still in press).

In the Drentsche Aa however, this division of responsibility is not as clear. There is not always consensus on the roles and responsibility between the involved organizations, even though these are divided in the Bio-plan (2012). This is illustrated by different responses from several participants about who plays the most important role in the region. The Province found that they were the main authority in the area, as is states by Provincial Executive Mr. Munniksma "*if plans from the round table participatory body need to be approved they place it with us for approval*" and "*The council places their main focus on urban development and the built environment which does not leave them much financial means for the development of the natural environment, which is why we take the responsibility, it is not just judicial, it also feels like the Drentsche Aa is the province's responsibility*" (Munniksma, 31-05-2014). This contradicted the statement made by the Major of the council of Aa en Hunze, Mr. van Oosterhout who argued; "*The political answer is that we do it together, however, at the basis we are, as the council, the ones who pull the strings*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2012). Both did agree on the conservative attitude of the nature reservation organisations in the Drentsche Aa region.

4.2.3   Its all about the money, who pays the bills?

Shark Bay is one of Western Australia's main tourist attractions. In addition to government funding, it has also developed a camping fee system[3], which takings are being fed back into the heritage site for conservation purposes. But what really distinguishes Shark Bay from the Drentsche Aa is that Shark Bay receives private investments in order to develop the region. The ability and willingness to receive private investments opens up different development possibilities. Furthermore, this involvement is not just limited to Australian investors, Ms. Chetty mentioned foreign investors in ecotourism development. Stating: "*we have identified this new site and I was involved in the pre-release and release… now they have a Russian new chairman and owner*" (Chetty, 27-05-2014). One could argue that it is complementary to state funding. Especially in times when government budget cuts are necessary. The environment has a weak profile and in times of budget cuts nature protection and conservation becomes vulnerable, as it cannot 'defend' for itself. It needs to be mentioned that the political climate in Shark Bay favours ecotourism, the reasons behind this support have been well described by Mr. Jones, who stated; "*until about 2010, Shark Bay had a set of local councillors who were either pastoralists or local business owners. At the election of 2010 the composition of the local council shifted entirely to the one made up by representatives of the Department of Environment and Conservation an eco-tourist operators. And the person who became Shire president is the individual whose role in DEC in Shark Bay is to liaise with the federal government over the world heritage statu*s" (Jones, 14-03-2014). This can be identified as a personal attribute, however knowing the system and working together with the right people also provides benefits in the sense that people know where to get to in order to attain the sufficient funding and budget.

In the Drentsche Aa region the funding is again complex. In contrast to Shark Bay, the Drentsche Aa is very "*reliant and vulnerable to the political climate, after*

---

[3] For an overview of the camping fees see;
http://www.sharkbay.org/assets/20130231%20park%20visitor%20fees.pdf

an election you can start over" (Brasse, 11-06-2014). Since the organizations involved in the Drentsche Aa are dependent on government funding, it is necessary for these organizations to 'sell' their plans in order to get budget from the province or from European funds. This research shows that it is visible that the competition for subsidies leads to fragmentation of the organizations and a decrease in cooperation and communication. This notion that the competition for subsidies can lead to a decrease in complementarity and communication between the different governance organizations is confirmed by Mr. Brasse who stated; "*There is a noticeable shift within the involved organizations, partially because of the economic recession, that people construct new policy and visions, which can lead to organizations engaging in activities which are out of their normal portfolio, keeping their cards closer to their chest, in order to be eligible for more subsidies*" (Brasse, 11-06-2014). A Drentsche Aa fund has been set up, profits from the guided tours and other activities in the National Park are being fed back into the park in order to fund protection and conservation affords. This strategy of making the park 'pay for itself' is very typical and a pre-requisite for successful ecotourism practices, and it shows the potential for ecotourism development in the Drentsche Aa.

4.2.4   *Unravelling the web, discussing the governance functionality*

When considering the main differences in governance systems I have to conclude that the current governance system in the Drentsche Aa is well suited for the complexity of the socio-ecological system which exists. It has a high level of participation, is innovative, especially when you look at initiatives like the living visitors network, and has good connections and communication between the multiple governance levels and spatial scales. Shark Bay however is more straight forward and top down, reinforcing the point made by Swyngedouw (2005) that (nation) state level is still a highly important scale of regulation and negotiation. This approach works well in the Shark Bay area since the regions governance structure is not as complex and multi-layered as the institutional design in the Drentsche Aa. In addition, it needs to be recognised that, even

though the local political climate is in support of ecotourism development "*Australia has a very conservative neo-liberal government which has lead to a dominant position of the mining industry in the Australian economy which is creating all sorts of problems for nature based tourism, as well as for nature in particular*" (Anonymous Australian Academic, 07-03-2014). This neo-liberal governance structure created additional pressure on the conservation strategies and the successful development of ecotourism. In the Drentsche Aa, this research reveals that there could be some improvements in the governance system in the Drentsche Aa to get the area into gear towards ecotourism. As mentioned earlier, I found that some of the involved organizations do not feel as involved as they would like to be, as is the case with the Geopark. Furthermore, findings of this research show that some of the involved organisations themselves see room for improvement; Marketing Drenthe for example sees benefits in a closer collaboration with Tourist Info Drenthe. Ms. Cornax stated: "*It would be beneficial for the efficiency if Marketing Drenthe could work together or merge with Tourist Info Drenthe*" (Cornax, 07-03-2014). However, we can conclude that the critique on the governance structure is minimal when you regard the difficult task at hand. And that the only improvement possibly could be found in addressing the division of responsibilities and making sure that work is not done twice, limiting the efficiency.

4.2.5 *Projecting the case studies onto the principles of good governance.*

As I have discussed earlier in this research, research conducted by Wray (2010) identified the importance of good governance in the success of ecotourism. Reflecting on the topics discussed in this section it has become possible to illustrate the case studies incorporation of the principles of good governance and to illustrate this in a table. In table 4 I have outlined the eight principles as identified by the UNDP (2010) as general principles of good governance, and reflected upon the case studies, in order to compare them. Table 3 indicates that the Drentsche Aa, in theory, incorporates more of the principles, whilst Shark

Bay's results clearly indicate the rather limited involvement and top-down structure.

Table 3, Projection of the Principles of good governance. Source: Author

Principles of good governance	Shark Bay	Drentsche Aa
participation	(-) Limited involvement selected Indigenous groups	(++) Living visitors network, broad stakeholder involvement
consensus orientation	(-) Teething problems	(++) Find common ground and build on strengths
strategic vision	(++) Strategic Management Plan	(-) Bio-plan not always incorporated / acknowledged
responsiveness	0	0
effectiveness and efficiency	0	(-) Sometimes 'too' participatory
accountability	(++) Final responsibility and thus accountability is clear	(++) Clearly outlined in the Bio-plan
transparency	(+) Limited stakeholders makes the process transparent	(++) Clearly outlined in the Bio-plan
Equity and rule of law	(+) Limited stakeholder involvement does not provide full equity	(+) Stakeholders do not always feel equal

++ excellent - room for improvement 0 no clear data collected

+ good - - principle of good governance not applied

4.3   Planning and management

As has been outlined in the theory by Wray (2010) and additionally by Orams (1995) and Weaver and Lawton (2002), formal planning and management play an important role in the development and the success of sustainable ecotourism. In this section I will discuss my findings regarding the planning and management of both case study areas and compare the current approaches in order to assess whether or not they contribute to the development of sustainable ecotourism.

4.3.1 Planning for the future, or managing the past?

Shark Bay has created one single development plan, called the *Shark Bay World Heritage Property Strategic Plan 2008-2020*[4]. This plan is developed by the Western Australian Government in collaboration with the department of Environment and Conservation (now department of Parks and Wildlife) and the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. The strategic plan provides a planning framework for managing the property and meeting the international, national and state obligation set on Shark Bay. The plan is a representation of the requirements and legislation that operate across Shark Bay and finally, it aims at assisting community members, land and marine managers and World Heritage Property Committees to understand their roles and responsibilities in managing the World Heritage of Shark Bay (McCluskey, 2008). This plan is a statement about what all levels of government and the community want the future of Shark Bay to be, and how this can be achieved (goals, objectives and strategies). It provides management direction and guidance for those agencies, organisations, committees and individuals whose actions will determine whether the vision is reached. This includes all those with an interest in the property; the local people, the wider community, industry, the researchers, educators, governments, and the decision makers (MacCluskey, 2008) As such, this approach could be considered top down, but it does appear holistic. It does include all stakeholders and allows for participation, as long as the guidelines are followed. Furthermore, reflecting on the theory, consultation and clear and concise guidelines decreases the possibility of private developers or planners developing something, which is not in line with the host communities, or protected area's, wishes.

---

[4] For more information, the Shark Bay World Heritage Strategic Development Plan is available online from;
http://www.sharkbay.org/assets/images/shark%20bay%20world%20heritage%20strategic%20plan.pdf

The round table participatory body has developed the 'Bio-Plan Drentsche Aa'[5]. This document contains the vision for the Drentsche Aa between 2012-2020 and, as mentioned earlier, it focuses on 5 guiding functions; water, agriculture, nature, recreation and housing (Bio-Plan, 2012; Nationaal Beek-en Esdorpen landschap, 2014). However when conducting interviews this document has rarely been mentioned. Mr. van Oosterhout stated that; "*One of the most important decisions made in the participatory body is that no specific long term decisions have been made*" (van Oosterhout 02-06-2014). Ms. Cornax argued that in marketing, a long term strategic plan is not beneficial since the world of marketing is "*dynamic and changes rapidly*" (Cornax, 07-03-2014). Even though the Bio-plan sometimes feels forgotten, the participants of the round table participatory body establish it out of consensus and a shared vision. The fact that they have established such plan prevents situations described by Wearing (2001). Wearing (2001) argues that communities are rarely consulted by private operators or planners about their vision for the area. This will especially be the case if no consensus is reached between the host communities and the other stakeholders in the protected area. I agree with Weaver (2001) that failure to come to such shared vision can lead to a less than optimal use of the resources. The participatory body, by developing the Bio-Plan, is trying to minimise negative and unwanted development in the future. However, in the Bio-plan there is no specific aim for the development of a more sustainable tourism sector and increasing the quality of the existing tourism sector, which is one of the main aims at the Strategic Development Plans in Shark Bay.

4.3.2 Managing ecotourism, beliefs and attitudes

Orams (1995) claims that attitudes and beliefs need to be changed in order to achieve successful ecotourism. This research shows that this claim for attitude and belief change lies as a foundation to the success of ecotourism development and is often recognised and addressed by participants when discussing the

---

[5] For more information, the Bio-Plan 2.0 is available online from:
http://www.drentscheaa.nl/documents/documenten/bio-plan-drentsche-aa-2.0-2012-2020.pdf

management of ecotourism. This research shows that not just the management of the ecotourism destination itself, the Drentsche Aa or Shark Bay, but also the management of the hospitality facilities and the accommodation, and the attitude of the owners, within the Protected Areas plays an important role in the perception of success and possibilities.

Shark Bay seems to have developed a tourism industry that follows Weaver and Lawton (2002) principle for successful ecotourism by having product management follow principles of sustainability. Shark Bays industry has, as mentioned earlier, always relied on the natural environment and people have always worked in harmony with nature. As such, it is understandable that ecotourism development was a logical next step. Also, the community has grown as a result of the ecotourism sector as it has fostered regional development, creating new jobs and opportunities in a remote area. I found that the beliefs and attitudes of the people who are in a managing function within Shark Bay are almost inherently set on sustainable development. In addition It could be argued that because Shark Bay as a world heritage site is relatively young (1991), the development of the tourism sector has been with the "Brundlandt report' fresh in the minds of the developers and business owners. However, as is stated by Anonymous (01-08-2014); "*Shark Bay remains a limited, single experience and the success of businesses is highly dependent on the tourism numbers, which are currently unsustainable*" (Anonymous, 01-08-2014).

This inherent belief that sustainability is the way forward is not clearly found in the Drentsche Aa. Sustainability is on everyone's agenda, but it is not 'the' agenda, as is the case in Shark Bay. This is visible when you look at the BIO-plan, which does not specifically focus on a sustainability aim (Bio-plan, 2012). I believe that it relates back to the attitudes and beliefs. In the Drentsche Aa there does not seem to be an ability or attitude with the majority of business owners and managers to make the transition towards more sustainable business practices. Which is a pity since, as I have mentioned earlier in the research,

promoting best practice in sustainability, behaviour, business and marketing is a necessity for successful ecotourism. The majority of tourism businesses in the Drentsche Aa region are run by owners who have a "*wait-and-see mentality*" (van der Bilt, 12-06-2014) and are characterised by other participants as "*mum and dad businesses*" (Cornax 07-03-2014; van Oosterhout 02-06-2014). These small, 'run-by-owner' regional businesses, are identified by McKercher and Robbins as one of the reasons behind the high failure rate of ecotourism ventures (1998). In this situation, personal attributes, as identified as a key success factor by McKercher and Robbins (1998) and McKercher (in Weaver, 2001), play an important role. The role of personal attributes is clearly identified by Mr. van Oosterhout and Mr. Munniksma who mention the owners of two successful ecotourism campsites and identify the success of these ventures to be the owners themselves "*Look at a man like Mr. Glas, he is someone who just fits like a glove in the region*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). Ecotourism in the Drentsche Aa has to come from the existing businesses within the tourism sector since there is no broadly carried plan or aim for ecotourism development on a wider scale, for example in the Bio-plan. However, building on personal attributes to develop ecotourism is difficult since, the owners of these businesses often lack the formal tourism and marketing background which is needed for successful ecotourism business and development, as identified by McKercher and Robbins (1998) and McKercher (in Weaver, 2001).

4.3.3 Creating a proactive environment

Drumm and Moore (2002) identify economic sustainability as a key factor for successful ecotourism development. However, many of the participants have mentioned that; "*many tourism oriented businesses in the Drentsche Aa are currently struggling to stay afloat*" (Hartog, 02-06-2014; van der Bilt, 12-06-2014). The current struggle of businesses in the tourism sector is crystallised by the fact that Recreatieschap Drenthe has developed an expert team whose goal is to safe businesses from going under. Director of the 'Recreatieschap' Mr. Hartog (02-06-2014) even stated; "*there is a waiting list for the expert team*" illustrating

that there is a high demand for their services. However, it is not all a grim story. First of all, it is positive to see that there are agencies that offer to help the tourism industry in times of hardship. Second, in the Drentsche Aa there are some businesses who have taken a pro-active approach in their business. They are distinguishing themselves as sustainable businesses and who can possibly function as examples of future development in the region. Mr. van Oosterhout recognises the potential of ecotourism in this regard and states; "*ecotourism is a very strong economic concept which we should not disregard as a possibility for sustainable regional development*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014).

In addition to the personal attributes and business, I have to agree with Orams (1995), who claims that successful ecotourism can only be reached when there is a change from just 'experiencing nature' to a more proactive attitude change. This proactive attitude change, in my opinion can only be reached through an intensive educational network, which focuses on teaching the intrinsic values of an area to the host community and the tourists. This educational network still is not optimally realised in Shark Bay, as confirmed by Ms. Chetty who stated; "*there's a gap there for this sort of education …there is not enough knowledge even from within, of the assets and how best to manage those assets. We, and the department of Parks and Wildlife have an out station there which provides some education, but really it's more of an ad hoc thing*" (Chetty, 27-05-2014). In the Drentsche Aa the participants seem to agree on the good level, type, functionality and management of the system that is currently in place (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014; A. Brasse, 11-06-2014; H. Hartog, 02-06-2014; Wolters 03-06-2014). I found that the emphasis in the Drentsche Aa is being placed on the 'experience' of the Drentsche Aa. This is confirmed by statements such as "*we want people to experience Drenthe*" (Cornax, 07-03-2014). However, there seems to be no consensus about the best practice of 'experiencing' the Drentsche Aa, and how to approach this 'experience', as is illustrated in figure 13. This lack of consensus creates a 'gap' between the theory and practice of what the round table participatory body wants to achieve, since there is

consensus about the importance on experiencing the Drentsche Aa, however there is a gap in how each involved stakeholder interprets this 'experience'. I argue that in order to properly educate people about the value of the landscape, and to come with appropriate management strategies for a more pro-active approach consensus will first have to be reached about how people should 'experience' the Drentsche Aa. The emphasis on experience will make a come back in section 4.5 where I will discuss the role of marketing.
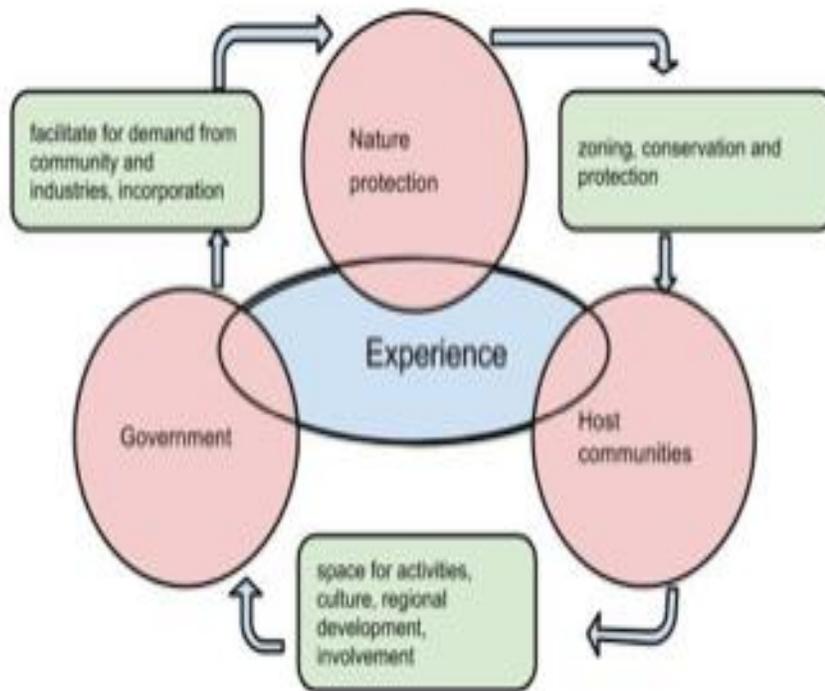
Figure 9, Schematic overview of the Experience, and demand cycle in the Drentsche Aa region. Source; Author

Shark Bay has created one single guideline; this illustrates a common vision and development strategy for the World Heritage site until 2020. I have also identified that the Bio-plan Drentsche Aa, which has been developed by the round table participatory body is not often recollected. But that it has been developed through consensus building and cooperation between all the involved stakeholders and that it does provide a clear vision into the direction that the Drentsche Aa wants to focus in the upcoming years, it does not however include a vision that incorporates ecotourism. When discussing the management of both case studies I have addressed the inherently sustainable nature of Shark Bay and the agenda

of the Drentsche Aa, where sustainability does not seem to be playing a leading role. The beliefs and attitudes in the Drentsche Aa which can lead to success or failure of ecotourism have been diverted to personal attributes. Finally, the economic sustainability of businesses in the Drentsche Aa and the shift from experiencing nature to a more pro-active approach has been discussed and education is pointed out to play an important role in this shift.

4.4   Moving towards a sustainable future

When I looked at the case studies I asked myself if there is an active pursuit to create a more sustainable place to live, work and visit though ecotourism development. This is not an easy question since sustainability is such a contested notion (Elliot, 2012; Connelly, 2007, McManus, 1996, Williams, 2001). However, In order to find why ecotourism develops in one location and does not develop in other locations with a valuable natural landscape, this question needed an answer. To avoid the contestations of the sustainability debate I have decided to frame my findings through the factors which make SESs, of which ecotourism is a crystallisation, sustainable; resilience, adaptability and transformability (Walker et al., 2004)

In Shark Bay there seems to be an active pursuit to achieve sustainability in live, work and tourism. Ecotourism is a well-accepted and important contributor to Western Australia's economy and sustainable development in rural and regional areas (Wray, 2010). This is confirmed when you look at the overall goal of the strategic development plan which aims at achieving just that. Reflecting on the findings, it will be hard for Shark bay to become completely sustainable since the remoteness of the area makes it reliant to unsustainable practices like the import of food and supplies by road or plane. As such, Shark Bay is not so much a resilient destination. As a result of the remote location it will remain dependent on the current structures and infrastructure, which makes it difficult for Shark Bay to maintain its function during or after a major disturbance, such as a fire, which is the definition of resilience according to Lactignola et al., 2007 and Gunderson

and Holling (2002). Furthermore, the remoteness of Shark Bay, and the competition of other well-developed ecotourism destinations on the west coast can result in visitor numbers can drop below the carrying capacity, making the destination unsustainable. I found that the Drentsche Aa does not need to worry too much about these extreme events or the development of crisis management plans to come to a more resilient protected area. *"Such extreme events do not occur here"* has been a common response (Munniksma, 31-05-2014; van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). The Drentsche Aa is less reliant on (eco) tourism as a source of income, which has also been confirmed by Mr. Munniksma who stated: "*there is no economic motive for ecotourism, most people that live in the Drentsche Aa work elsewhere*" (Munniksma, 31-05-2014). This makes the Drentsche Aa economically more resilient, since the main income is not coming from within the National Park.

When addressing the adaptability of both case studies I conclude that the Drentsche Aa has the benefits. Shark Bay has a strong top down governance structure and has invested in PPP's, in addition; Shark Bay works with long term strategic development plans developed by only a few involved organizations. This can, in my opinion, work against flexible approaches to unforeseen challenges since it risks becoming rigid, but it does create a buffer zone against changing political climates and budget fluctuations. The Drentsche Aa is quite flexible, as is also identified by Mr. van Oosterhout, stating "*we are quite flexible, we can reflect and switch to different approaches*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). However, I do think that because of the high level of participation the flexibility of the Drentsche Aa governance structure is not capable to make quick decisions and come to quick implementation. Mr. Munniksma, stating; *"sometimes it takes a long time to decide on simple issues"* (Munniksma, 31-05-2014) clearly illustrates this issue.

Transformability is clearly visible in the Drentsche Aa. It could be argued that the Drentsche Aa has successfully managed to transform from a predominantly

agricultural area to a national landscape which has been actively trying to combine the environmental values with the social, cultural historical aspects. Shark Bay is limited in the possibility to transform itself since the region is remote and there are limited options to come to the same level of regional development.

Finally, it could be argued that the Drentsche Aa and Shark Bay both have different approaches to anticipatory governance, but that they do not differ radically in their execution. Serrao-Neumann et. Al. (2013) argued that if there is a process of analysis, flexibility of strategies and monitoring and action, decision-makers are increasing their ability to manage complexity. I find that this is done adequately in both case studies. However, in some cases for example in the Drentsche Aa I find that there is room for improvement implementing the research findings. Which is for example the case in the gap between demand and supply of quality accommodation for young families as is outlined by Mr. van der Tuuk (12-06-2014). Furthermore, using big theoretical constructs such as 'sustainability' or 'resilience' might lead to an overall consensus within governance, but since it can be interpreted in many different ways, becomes meaningless. As stated by Anonymous Australian Academic; "*there is a degradation of theoretical constructs, which aught to be useful, ones they enter the arena of policy development and are used in a way that is obviously divorced from the theory that uses those concepts*" (Anonymous Australian Academic, 07-03-2014).

4.5   Placing the destination in the spotlight

As has been identified by Wray (2010) and Buhalis (2000), one of the key factors for sustainable tourism development is sustainable tourism marketing, which pushes marketing to take a dual responsibility to conserve resources of the destination and provide high quality visitor experience (Jenkins and MacArthur, 1996), Furthermore, marketing should serve to facilitate regional development objectives and ensure that the strategic objectives are achieved (Richins and Pearce, 2000). This theory places rather a lot of pressure on the organizations

involved in marketing. But on the other hand this pressure is necessary since it does not need explaining that when you develop a beautiful ecotourism destination, but don't let people know about it, success can be far away. In this section I will outline my findings regarding the marketing of both case studies and identity whether or not the destination has been marketed in order to attract and influence the appropriate visitors.

4.5.1 Selecting the target market

Shark Bay has gained international recognition over the years. As such, Shark Bay has been marketed world wide, with images representing the whole continent. Shark Bay's marketing does not focus on one specific target group, such as active elderly or young families. Shark Bay's marketing strategy, as this research has shows, instead tries to focus on; what do we want to offer people, and how do we want to be represented. By creating one website for the Shark Bay World Heritage area which has been funded by the Department of Parks and Wildlife it tries to offer activities and entertainment for all demographics. People who come to visit Shark Bay are primarily interested in the natural environment, which already determines the kind of people that come to visit and how Shark Bay is being marketed. However, the marketing is not focussed on attracting people who are willing and able to spend more time in Shark Bay. This weakness in the marketing strategy is recognized by Anonymous who stated; *"The types of people that are attracted are not sufficient to get a strong and sustainable tourism industry, the focus should be on getting people to stay longer"* (Anonymous, 01-08-2014). Furthermore, the destination is as a result of its remote location, relatively expensive. As such, ecotourism in Shark Bay can be seen as a niche market. This is confirmed by Mr. Middle who stated; "*Ecotourism is expensive, places like Shark Bay are difficult to get to, they are really nice but very expensive for what you get. So ecotourism will be a niche market rather than main stream*" (Middle, 18-03-2014). Ms. Chetty found that with the marketing of Shark Bay there is room for further development. She stated; "*When you look at the marketing of Shark Bay at present it has got a lot of destination potential but*

it needs to develop to the next stage in order to make the most of the fact that it is in a world heritage site and to attract tourists, as well as to integrate the tourists with the community that live there" (Chetty, 27-05-2014). In Shark Bay they use the 'uniqueness' of the region to market the destination and also adjust the types of development accordingly (Chetty, 27-05-2014).

The Drentsche Aa does not have a specific marketing strategy, but is part of the Marketing strategy of Marketing Drenthe. This research has revealed a gap between theory and practice when it comes to the marketing of the Drentsche Aa. There seemed to be consensus that the Drentsche Aa should be marketed in order to promote the "*natural beauty, open space and serenity of the region*" (Cornax, 07-03-2014). Which is also reflected through the images shown on websites like Drenthe.nl and the website of the National Park. However, there seems to be a disconnection between group of people targeted in the marketing strategy, "*young families*" (Cornax, 07-03--2014) and the perception of the stakeholders in the Drentsche Aa about their main visitor demographics *"elderly people with electric bikes*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014), "*active elderly*" (Munniksma, 31-05-2014), "*55+ demographic, and in the weekends families*" (Brasse, 11-06-2014). I do have be nuanced and acknowledge that this perception can also be reality, however, as mentioned earlier, Marketing Drenthe creates their strategy to fit the whole of the province, not just the Drentsche Aa. Furthermore, a "*surprising disconnection between the identified visitor groups, their interests, and the available accommodation was identified*" (van der Tuuk, 12-06-2014). This disconnection ultimately results in a difficult task for marketing, When developing a marketing strategy aiming at ecotourism, but the accommodation facilities are not in place, the shift towards more sustainability oriented nature-based tourism will be unlikely to succeed. In addition, I found that there seems to be consensus about activities that should be regarded as 'undesired' in the Drentsche Aa region. One of which is the use of "*all terrain motorbikes*" (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014). I found however, that some of the marketing techniques that are being applied are contradicting this consensus

about the undesired activities. Marketing Drenthe (as illustrated in Photo 4) chose to promote the province, and with that the only 5 star national landscape and Natura 2000 listed National Park, at one of the busiest motoring events in Europe, the TT Grand Prix in Assen, which is bordering the National Park and National Landscape. Furthermore, the historic TT route has been developed, which crosses the Drentsche Aa, as a historic-cultural link to the motor sports.

Photo 4, Marketing Drenthe at the TT in Assen: Source author.

4.5.2   Attracting the visitors, abroad or locally?

Shark Bay is marketed "*State wide, nationally and internationally*" (Chetty, 27-05-2014). Furthermore, Shark Bay consciously uses marketing strategies to enhance tourism and regional development. "*Both the Regional Tourism Organisation and the Regional Development Commission are involved in marketing*" (Chetty, 27-05-2014). This is not the case in the Drentsche Aa region.

Marketing is utilised as a tool for the promotion, and image building of the whole province of Drenthe, but there seems to be an attitude towards marketing the Drentsche Aa arguing that regional marketing would not be beneficial mostly because, currently visitors are locals, coming from within a 30 Km radius (van Oosterhout, 02-06-2014; Hartog, 02-06-2014; Munniksma, 31-05-2014; Brasse, 11-06-2014). However everyone does not share this notion. Ms. Posthumus and Mr. Wolters argue that economic benefits could be conceived with marketing the region. Stating; " *The Drentsche Aa is the only region in Geopark which does not want to be marketed*" (Wolters, 03-06-2014) and "*The current attitude towards marketing is fearful, they do not want to attract too many people into the region, however, they should keep the regional economic development as a stra*tegy" (Posthumus, 04-06-2014). The liveability within the towns and villages plays a role in the division not to market the region more broadly. Mr. Brasse stated: "*we are not actively marketing the region because we want the towns to remain liveable and we do not want to get them flooded with tourists*" (Brasse, 11-06-2014). Mr. Brasse furthermore acknowledged that when they do decide to promote the national park on a larger than local/regional scale it is often in magazines promoting a certain desired activity like walking or cycling in order to attract the appropriate visitor. It seems that there is no clear direction when it comes to marketing, and since no single approach is taken, different directions are being developed within the Drentsche Aa. "*The round table participatory body just does not make it clear what they want with the marketing of the Drentsche Aa*" (Brasse, 11-06-2014) is a statement which clearly illustrates the lack of consensus, about the need for marketing, and direction that surrounds the marketing strategy of the Drentsche Aa.

In the sections above I have discussed the findings that, according to the theory, lead to successful ecotourism. Taking a step back to regard the findings from a more distant perspective this research illustrates that the success of ecotourism development is about perspectives. For example, for the agricultural sector the development of more ecotourism can lead to stricter regulations, which could not be beneficial to the farmer. For a small local hospitality business however, ecotourism development could improve the visitor numbers and thus the customer numbers. So it depends from which perspective ecotourism development is approached in order to see whether is it the best next step in regional development. Furthermore, when people contemplate about ecotourism development, they do not just look at the natural values of a region. This is also mentioned by Mr. Jones who stated; "*when you work in ecotourism you do not look much at what places really are, you look at how people perceive them*" (Jones, 14-03-2014) and also the whole SES, the interrelationship between the eco-tourists, the landscape and the social network that supports the ecotourism sector needs to be included and incorporated into the development. In this section I will reflect on my findings and outline the possibilities and opportunities that this research has identified for ecotourism in the Drentsche Aa and Shark Bay. In Table 4 and 5 I have outlined the main identified success factors that exist in the Drentsche Aa and Shark Bay.

Table 4, Existing success factors and opportunities in the Drentsche Aa.

Drentsche Aa	success factors
Governance	- living visitors network, an original initiative which strengthens and creates personal involvement of the local population with the region and its visitors - Round table participatory body, high level of participation of a broad selection of stakeholders, creation of Bio-Plan
Marketing	- room for improvement, emphasis not placed on sustainable tourism, emphasis on quality not quantity, but the network is there.
Sustainability	- Bio-Plan could incorporate specific sustainability goals. - Drentsche Aa fund, income from activities in the area are donated in the fund and used to benefit the Drentsche Aa.
Business	- Business mentality needs a shift from reactive to proactive - Creation of more arrangements can link businesses to the cultural-historic and environmental values and create ecotourism opportunities
Behaviour	- No economic drive for ecotourism, good educational network in place to enhance local awareness. - "Zoning" strategies are in place in order to 'manipulate' visitors behaviour.

Table 5, Existing success factors in Shark Bay

Shark Bay	success factors
Governance	- Major who is supportive of ecotourism development and has played a role in the development of the site as World Heritage.
Marketing	- National and international recognition, and a good holistic website.
Sustainability	- Main aim in the strategic development plan.
Business	- PPP's, and international involvement. Many People work in the ecotourism and conservation industry.
Behaviour	- Not always sustainable (fishing) but great awareness of the natural value.

When I look at all the basic tourism structures and the governance of the Drentsche Aa region I have to conclude that the underlying structure of the Drentsche Aa would lent itself quite well for ecotourism purposes. There is a broad participatory body, education of the local population and of the visitor

population is well developed, and the natural and cultural-historical values of the region are well suited for ecotourism, especially when creating hybrid ecotourism forms by including cultural-historical activities. When taking in account the systemic landscape approach, ecotourism is all about creating a story and 'selling and telling' this story in order to make people aware of the natural environment. Aiming to change behaviours and attitudes through education, in order to protect and preserve the values of the landscape, community and environment in a sustainable manner. The Drentsche Aa offers this opportunity, with the rich cultural- historical aspects that tell a story about the development of the landscape over thousands of years, and natural values that enable telling stories about biodiversity and species protection it offers promising opportunities. This story telling is central to Geopark de Hondsrug, who have developed multiple story lines. However, as Mr. van der Tuuk noted "*there has to be a reason why ecotourism is not yet in place in the Drentsche Aa*" (van der Tuuk, 12-06-2014). Which is where I find that the statement made by Mr. Munniksma is explanatory "*there is no economic drive to shift to ecotourism*". Furthermore, Ms. Posthumus had a strong explanation, stating; "*Decision-makers do not always seem to be aware of the currently more conservative attitude towards tourism development*" (Posthumus, 04-06-2014). Even though tourism is acknowledged as a vehicle for economic development in the region, radical changes and measures to increase the numbers of tourist, even selective tourist groups, are not developed. Finally, there could be strong support for the opinion of Mr. van der Bilt (12-06-2014) who argues that; "*it is also the responsibility of business owners to be innovative and pro-active*" (van der Bilt, 12-06-2014), and with academic Ms. Affonderbach, who stated that; "*ecotourism development seems to be a supply side rather than a demand side trigger*" so if no one takes the first step to develop, the demand will not grow (Affonderbach, 27-02-2014).

5   Concluding on the research, issues, opportunities and reflection

"In research and in life we ultimately pursue,

not conclusions, but beginnings "

S. Tanenhaus

In this chapter I conclude my research. I hope this research has invited you to reflect on ecotourism practices and possibilities that still exist around the globe. In order to come to a final conclusion on this research I will start of with answering the main question of this research, and provide suggestions for each of the identified success factors. Furthermore, I will outline some key issues and opportunities that I have come across during this research. Finally, I will critically reflect on my research, and identify possibilities for further research. Because, as the quote states, this is not an ending, merely a beginning.

5.1   Answering the research question

In this section I will answer my main research question, dividing the answers in categories which are linked to success in ecotourism, some of which have been identified in Shark Bay; governance, marketing, behaviour, sustainability and business. This section of the research will reflect on the previous chapters that have lead to this conclusion. I do however stress that regional tourism destinations such as Shark Bay and the Drentsche Aa are dynamic places which are, SESs characterised by complex sets of relations between the communities, tourists, the environment, government and governance systems. As such, no two destinations are the same and consequently, a blue print; panacea strategy for ecotourism development is not appropriate. However, an approach taking into account a broad spectrum of factors, as I have tried to do in this research, makes it possible to illustrate the interrelation between the factors and value them equally. This opens up the possibility to speculate about possible policy transfer and the level of transfer that might be appropriate.

5.1.1 *Possibilities to learn from the existing Governance structures*

Shark Bay has a top-down governance structure in which government and government organizations play a dominant role. This has made Shark Bay's ecotourism development rather dependent on the political climate; also, local governments might not have the tourism expertise and knowledge to foster effective leadership and coordination in order to manage the multi-sectoral activities surrounding ecotourism. This is however not the case in Shark Bay, since the Major of the Council is very supportive and knowledgeable in the field of ecotourism development. Also, because of the realised PPP's, the Shark Bay region is less dependent on government funding. However, I see possibilities for possible transfer from the Drentsche Aa to Shark Bay in the idea of the living visitors network. Shark Bay now only has one main visitors centre, which is located in Denham. It would be an additional value for the region if a living visitors network were created along the WA coast since it also includes the population that is not connected with the tourism sector but who is connected to the landscape, this will increase local pride and feelings of responsibility. Looking at policy transfer as outlined by Rose (1991) I would argue that copying the living visitors network might be a possibility since the structure and idea is solid and successful in the Drentsche Aa and would not encounter an additional range of complexity when adapted in Shark Bay. Furthermore, the Shark Bay region might be interested in looking into the round table participatory body structure of the Drentsche Aa, this typical Dutch governing structure of the 'poldermodel' where everyone has the opportunity to participate, and for everyone to express their views (Linden and Voogd, 2004) could be an inspiration to Shark Bay, making the management of the World Heritage area more participatory and hence more sustainable.

Recommendations	
Shark Bay	-Existing government structures should recognize the importance to liaise with other sectors (in addition to the tourism sector) to broaden the participatory body in tourism development.

	-A participatory body should be formed in order to streamline all the involved stakeholders and set one agenda based on consensus and consensus building
Drentsche Aa	-There should be more attempts to develop PPP's. PPP's would decrease the pressure and competition for state budget, which would allow a more open and collaborative cooperation between stakeholders.

5.1.2   Examining the possibilities for the existing marketing strategies

The marketing strategies from Shark Bay and the Drentsche Aa are worlds apart. Where Shark Bay markets state wide through agencies such as Tourism WA and (inter) nationally through the wide spread of images of the bay, the Drentsche Aa tries to 'keep it local'. Only releasing communications within a 30 km radius, it could be argued that the Drentsche Aa has no real marketing strategy which is either aimed at increasing tourism or the regional economy. So the Drentsche Aa could possibly be inspired by the marketing strategy of Shark Bay. A possible shift could occur, moving away from the current more 'nature conservative' attitude which sees marketing as tool which has the negative effect of bringing more people to the Drentsche Aa, and towards recognising the potential of regional marketing to increase the number of tourists and thus the regional economy whilst still protecting the environmental and cultural values since the right type of visitor is attracted.

Recommendations	
Shark Bay	-Market for sustainable practices, and discuss limiting the marketing of non-sustainable practices -Marketing in order to attract more visitors to make the tourism sector stronger and more sustainable, link marketing with Ningaloo.
Drentsche Aa	-Develop strategic marketing plans for tourism and a destination marketing structure in order to guide cooperative marketing efforts -Market a select target group of sustainable tourists to shift from the current dominant tourism sector and tourist groups

5.1.3   Room to increase the destinations sustainability

In order to answer the research question, I looked at the level and manner in which the case studies were in active pursuit of sustainability. Using the level of resilience, adaptability, transformability and the approaches to more anticipatory governance, I have to conclude that even though Shark Bay has sustainability as a priority and is in active pursuit to achieve sustainability in tourism, the Drentsche Aa has developed sustainable strategies without having sustainability as their main aim and goal for the region. Shark Bay's remote location thus far has limited the achievement of true sustainability since it will remain a destination which is more for a niche market, arguably not reaching the equity level required for social sustainability. And further more, Shark Bay will remain reliant on unsustainable modes of transport and mobility in order to survive as a tourist destination and has no options to transform to another market or to adapt to more sustainable practices on top of the current structures. This room for improvement does still exist in the Drentsche Aa, where sustainability is almost unconsciously pursued by means of education, activities, funds, participation and zoning. However, the accommodation of tourists arguably falls behind which also affects the role of other factors such as marketing in achieving sustainable tourism practices in the Drentsche Aa.

Recommendations	
Shark Bay	-Plans should be developed to be flexible, allowing tourism to adapt to changing (environmental or social) circumstances
Drentsche Aa	-Tourism sector should focus on sustainable (eco) tourism practices in order to be able to accommodate possible eco-tourists. - A strategic tourism development plan should be developed focusing on the (sustainable) future of the tourism sector.

5.1.4 Reflecting on business practices

Shark Bay has a well-developed ecotourism sector; a high percentage of the regions population is dependent on ecotourism and nature conservation. Furthermore, PPP's are being developed in order to improve the regions economy. Shark Bay's businesses has developed quickly over the last decades, which required a business owner to be pro-active, and set up a business often from scratch. Over the years, the businesses that did not incorporate best practices for ecotourism disappeared leaving a majority of stable and sustainable business initiatives. Which are however still vulnerable as a result of the remote location and visitor numbers which balance on the minimal carrying capacity necessary for successful ecotourism. This is not the case in the Drentsche Aa. The region has been a national park for many decades, and tourism has become a part of the Drentsche Aa ever since. As a result there are currently many 'mum and dad' tourism ventures, which maintain to practice a more 'traditional' not necessarily sustainable form of business. This is evident in the kind of tourist accommodation that is available in and around the Drentsche Aa and the reactive, 'wait and see' mentality which is prominent with many business owners. Recently a few businesses, which have geared towards ecotourism, have been developed in the Drentsche Aa, which might illustrate the increasing awareness of ecotourism as sufficient income and a tool for regional development.

Recommendations	
Shark Bay	-Annual reflections on the business practices need to be conducted to ensure sustainable practices - Business should be linked to other ecotourism destinations in Mid.- and Northwest WA, possibly as tourism packages, to ensure sustainable visitor numbers in the region.
Drentsche Aa	- Arrangements should be created between businesses in multiple sectors, in order to connect tourists to the region and which places emphasis on to the environmental, cultural and historical practices

	-Create a business network which could then in turn be successfully linked to the living visitors network

5.1.5   *Changing behaviour*

During the research I did not find a need for radical behavioural changes in Shark Bay. Apart from questioning the sustainability of some practices, mainly fishing, Shark Bay is geared towards sustainability and has almost reached their sustainability potential. As I mentioned earlier, the living visitors network might become a tool to make Shark Bay's governance more inclusive, also incorporating locals from outside the tourism industry, and adding to the visitors experience and local pride. Educational networks can also be extended through the living visitors network creating a more hybridised form of education, also including other sectors. Furthermore, the notion that Shark Bay ecotourism could be regarded as a niche market will be difficulty to resolve through behavioural change, since it is linked to the geographical remoteness of the destination. In the Drentsche Aa however, behavioural change can still have an impact in the shift towards ecotourism. As I have mentioned, the basic structures on which ecotourism is theoretically built are existing in the Drentsche Aa. However, the link between ecotourism development and regional development is rarely made, and if it is mentioned, no further or concrete steps are taken this is where the Drentsche Aa could be inspired by Shark Bay's practices, where ecotourism is seen as the tool for sustainable regional development. The educational networks that are in place in the Drentsche Aa function well, they enlightening locals and tourists about the natural and cultural-historic values of the Drentsche Aa thereby preventing unfavourable behaviour.

Recommendations	
Shark Bay	- Extend the educational network, this will broaden the knowledge of the locals and visitors and compliment conservation efforts.
Drentsche Aa	- Placing emphasis on the role ecotourism can play in sustainable regional development will change the behaviour from more nature conservatism towards a pro-

	active attitude towards ecotourism development.

5.2   Key issues that currently affect tourism development

In this section I will outline some of the key issues that both case study areas are being affected by when it comes to ecotourism development. These issues directly or indirectly hinder or enable development of ecotourism and should be taken into consideration.

5.2.1   Global Financial Crisis and access

Contrary to the Netherlands, tourism is one of Australia's more important industry sectors. In both countries the global financial crisis (GFC) has had a major impact on the tourism industry, this as a result of the multi-scalarity and interconnectedness of tourism with other sectors. Many of the tourism ventures in the Drentsche Aa are currently struggling to keep their businesses running, since the visitor numbers have decreased, and people have less money to spend on leisure. The access to the Drentsche Aa has not suffered from the development. This has occurred in Australia, where domestic tourism accounts for 75% of the industries volume (Wray, 2010). In the aftermath of the GFC domestic tourism in Australia experienced an unexpected poor performance. This was due to an increase in outbound travel as a result of heavy discounting of international airfares, and a strong Australian dollar, making traveling overseas relatively inexpensive (Wray, 2010). Furthermore, in Australia regional airports have moved from federal to local responsibility, resulting in a decrease of funding (Wray, 2010). For places like Shark Bay it is critical that the regional airport facilities are being maintained, since the economic benefits are significant.

5.2.2   Product and experience development

In the Drentsche Aa there seems to be a disconnect between tourism planning, marketing, development and economic planning. There is no set goal in the tourism planning, which could be structured towards ecotourism, the marketing is

disconnected to the region, even though it is acknowledged by many that marketing could be a tool to improve the quality of the tourism industry in the Drentsche Aa. However there is no clear responsibility, or role in marketing the Drentsche Aa since it is not currently occurring. In Shark Bay there is still need for improvement in the provision of an educational network. This results in limited opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in the destination in order to experience the way of life of people and fully experience and understand the landscape.

5.2.3   Climate change

The current development in the world's climate might become, or arguably is, the greatest challenge to ecotourism development. Climate change makes nature increasingly vulnerable, especially areas that are currently experiencing, pressure like both case studies. This will result in the need for stricter regulations and conservation measures in order to maintain the resilience that is necessary for the environment to survive. The necessary climate change mitigation or adaptation policies will have a significant impact on how the regional tourism industry will be allowed to develop. Especially small tourism enterprises, which are often on hard financial times already due to the GFC, will have difficulty reducing their carbon footprint without support. In order to successfully adapt to climate change, tourism ventures need to follow the steps of anticipatory governance and create pro-active, pioneering and innovative solutions.

5.3 Reflection on this research

In this section I will reflect on the research that I have conducted. I will address the methodology and the theoretical framework that I have opted to use and discuss the shortcomings or benefits, which I have encountered with my approach.

5.3.1 Reflecting on the methodology and theoretical framework

In the later stages of this research I changed the research from identifying the gap between theory and practice in ecotourism to the current, more positive outlook of, possibilities of ecotourism. This change was motivated by the challenges in brought me in identifying which theory and practice I actually wanted to research, there were too many options. So instead I focussed on the success factors of ecotourism and the possibility to transfer that success. This has however brought along its own challenges.

As a result of changing my approach I had to conduct a number of the interview twice. Luckily the first interview guide had overlapping factors to the new interview guide, so not all interviews needed a 're-sit'. The selection of semi-structured interviews has in my opinion been an appropriate one. I have learned a lot from the participants who provided me with interesting insights and personal knowledge. However, I do regret not being able to fly to Western Australia to conduct some of the interviews face-to-face. Reflecting on the research, face-to-face conversations would have lead to even more constructive interviews with more personal stories and insights, which is confirmed when looking at the duration of the interviews, 40 min for interviews over the phone (Skype) and up to 1 hour and 20 min when I conducted the interviews face-to-face. Also, I have struggled to find appropriate participants in Shark Bay who were willing to be part of my research. This has, resulted in a disproportional representation of the case studies and has made the research more focussed on the Drentsche Aa.

Since ecotourism processes take place in a contested theoretical environment coming to the final theoretical framework was a very complex process. Not just because ecotourism itself is often contested, but also the underlying pillar of sustainability and ecological planning are. In addition to that, my aim has been to approach ecotourism from a more territorial perspective, as ecotourism has a strong spatial dimension in compliance with an, in the literature often dominant, economic dimension. As such, the theory had to address the complexity of the SESs in which ecotourism processes take place, including the complexity of governance structures. Because ecotourism is a crystallisation of the many facets and processes of SESs it was sometimes difficult to make a selection of the theory that was going to be necessary in this research. Reflecting on the framework I found it to be complete, however I can imagine that principles of good management and good marketing would also have been appropriate.

5.3.2   Possibilities for further research

During my research I have come across multiple processes and practices, which could motivate to conduct further research. Because Shark Bay is not proportionally and optimally represented, there is room for more research in the Shark Bay region to identify the success factors of ecotourism. Also, in this research I have not looked at the financial side of ecotourism. Especially the impact of the financial crisis has not been taken into account, even though insufficient financial means were often given as an explanation for the lack of ecotourism in the Drentsche Aa. So I find that there is a research opportunity by looking into the effects of the financial crisis on (eco) tourism development in the Drentsche Aa or elsewhere. In addition, the existing level of sustainability of the regions has not played an important role in this research since I have focussed on sustainable ecotourism development only. This could however provide a different insight into the two case study areas; as for example recreational fishing might be illustrated as very unsustainable where the Drentsche Aa's main outdoor activities, cycling and walking will be illustrated as very sustainable. Such research might tip the scales of sustainable development towards the Drentsche

Aa instead of Shark Bay which might motivate both regions towards more sustainable decisions. Furthermore I think that it might be complimentary to this research when the reasoning behind the turning point between conservation and ecotourism development is identified in a region. This could be based on carrying capacity but also on perception. It will be interesting to know how people on different sides of the world in Protected Areas balance these two sometimes-contradicting aims. This also feeds into the question whether regional development is more important than conservation. And at which point does one or the other become more important, what are the drivers, the push and pull factors of this transition? I find that this is a very interesting question which could lead to very interesting further research. And finally, the gap between theory and practice still intrigues me. How is it possible that vast difference between opinions exist? I found in this research that the perception of some people about certain processes is not coherent with reality, and that consensus can exist on what the most optimal process or practice should be but that this can be difficult to realise. I would like to understand how these gaps occur and how to minimise the damages whenever they occur. I thus feel that further research on the gaps between theory and practice in ecotourism governance is still a very important field to conduct further research.

5.4   Food for thought and an over-arching reflection on the research

Having looked at the, more detailed, recommendations and having answered the main research question, it is time to take a step back and to provide you with a conclusion to this research. In this section I will outline the main findings about ecotourism development in general in order to make you, the reader, question current assumptions and conventions. This section tries to place emphasis on the findings that conflict, compliment or contradict the general theory of ecotourism success.

5.4.1   *Disputing the assumptions*

Reflecting on the literature, successful ecotourism development should depend on good marketing, business strategies, high natural values, good governance, sustainability and behavioural aspects. All these qualifications apply to the Drentsche Aa region, however, even though the Drentsche Aa seems to have the best suited characteristics of the two case studies, ecotourism has not been optimally developed. Ecotourism literature traditionally places great emphasis on the economic- regional development benefits of ecotourism, especially in less developed countries in the world. The Drentsche Aa region is a European tourism destination, which prides itself on the great abundance of cultural-historical values and natural beauty and authenticity which could bring additional tourists and thus regional income. Furthermore, in theory, all the right institutional structures are in place to make the Drentsche Aa a successful ecotourism destination. The Drentsche Aa still draws on more traditional outdoor activities which can however be seen as accommodating and compatible with ecotourism practices. So… why is ecotourism not actively being developed or lobbied? This research shows that 'ecotourism willingness' plays an important role. There is a plurality of values involved in ecotourism, social, economic and natural values which are as diverse as the population who holds these values, reflecting the complexity of the diverseness of stakeholders and their interrelation with the natural environment. Economic values in the case of the Drentsche Aa are not a very important driving force for ecotourism development, mostly because the region is not dependent on the tourism industry. This is making the push for ecotourism in order to increase regional development, without the sense of urgency, unlikely. Social values, based on the cultural-historic aspects and preserving the tranquillity of the area and the way of life for the residents have been found to be dominant factors. This adds another dimension on the conceptual discussion on successful ecotourism, making willingness to develop ecotourism the first prerequisite for successful development of ecotourism practices.

5.4.2 A question of social equity and justice

With the Drentsche Aa only marketing to the 'locals' in a 30 km radius it could be questioned if this 'environmental concealing' of the Drentsche Aa is conform with the notions of social equity and justice. Who decides, or has the authority to decide, that the Drentsche Aa should only be preserved and conserved for the local population to enjoy? Regional culture could explain, in part, this attitude; especially the agricultural history on which the national 'beek en esdorpen' landscape is based. The decision to preserve the region for the local population and not invite 'outsiders' to enjoy the natural, culture-historical values has been made in order to ensure that the 'local population' is minimally disturbed by tourism activities. However, the local population is very diverse, so it could be questioned which part of the population is being represented by such decision. The disturbance to the traditional culture in the region as a result of ecotourism development will be minimal since it has transitioned and there is not much of this traditional culture remaining in day-to-day activities, however, the influence of the development of ecotourism on the agricultural sector could be significant since even more emphasis will be placed on zoning for nature protection and preservation. Since it is 'setting aside' parts of the environment, it could be considered as socially exclusive land-use planning.

5.4.3 Sustainable stakeholder involvement

Literature argues that stakeholder participation and community involvement are important aspects of successful ecotourism development. This research however has allowed us to question these notions. Is Shark Bay less sustainable because there are fewer organizations, stakeholders and community groups involved? Reflecting on the Drentsche Aa's governance system it can be questioned whether having such a large participatory body has been beneficial to sustainable ecotourism development. First of all, the effectiveness and efficiency decreases when a high number of stakeholders are participating in the decision-making. Second of all, when not all stakeholders are trying to reach the same goal, contradicting activities can be developed. Third of all, the Drentsche Aa is

embedded within a very complex institutional design, with multiple layers on multiple scales which has become a challenge to the sustainability of the system. Actors have overlapping responsibilities and activities, which makes the execution of many of the developments unsustainable. Shark Bay has a small community, which can in some cases also hinder sustainable stakeholder involvement because the community can feel 'over consulted' and lose interest in participating.

5.4.4   No need for trade-offs

Ecotourism literature, especially literature about success factors and best practice, can be rather black or white. First of all, this research has illustrated that in practice this is rarely the case. Ecotourism development should involve the creation of synergies. Activities should be created that link behaviour to the story that an area wants to tell and the carrying capacity of a region, stimulating desirable more sustainable outcomes. This story however still needs to be 'sold' which is where marketing plays an important role in helping to create the story and 'telling' it to the people in order to attract them to a region. Second of all, this research identifies the possibilities of hybrid structures in ecotourism development. Where Shark Bay's ecotourism is mainly developed on sustainable nature based tourism, the Drentsche Aa has opportunities to create hybrid sustainable nature-culture based soft ecotourism practices. This possibility to develop hybrid ecotourism practices limits the need for trade offs since multiple significant aspects of the region can be sustainably incorporated.

5.4.5   Can you make a distinction in success?

In the introduction of this thesis I claimed that in the Drentsche Aa ecotourism does not seem to be ultimately developed and utilised. I also claimed that in Shark Bay ecotourism seems to be rather well developed. Then, reflecting on existing theory, success factors were identified which should determine whether or not, and how, successful ecotourism is developed. Through interviews with stakeholders and experts and through literature reviews I found data which

revealed something surprising. Shark Bay, even though well known for its ecotourism on a global scale, does not optimally utilize its possibilities and environmental features, mostly because of unsustainably low tourism numbers and also because of competing ecotourism destinations in the region. So, even though Shark Bay has been very successful in regional marketing, since it is well known worldwide, and in terms of being a sector that brings economic benefits to the region, its success is questionable when it comes to further development. Looking at the Drentsche Aa, a whole other picture emerges. The Drentsche Aa ticks almost all the boxes, and is very promising, when it comes to the theory of successful ecotourism development. However, the region is not economically dependent on the tourism sector. This is not a negative aspect of the region, tourism only contributes to a small part of the regional economy and most people are employed in other sectors. However, the decision to not further develop the tourism sector could be seen as a missed opportunity for additional growth in the region. Furthermore, the 'nature conservatism attitude', too complex governance systems, and cultural-historic motives that come to play in the region makes pro-active decision-making and deeper change close to impossible. However, apart from pro-active sustainable accommodation and being marketed as ecotourism, the Drentsche Aa could be labelled as a 'soft' ecotourism destination, but only for the enjoyment of the locals. So can the region then be regarded as an ecotourism destination if only the 'local' population is really seen as welcome? And can a seemingly sustainable system be seen as successful when the existing governance structure is not willing to optimally benefit from the additional economic possibilities ecotourism can bring to the region?

5.5 The importance of a territorial vision addressing ecotourism development opportunities in European regional landscapes

When reflecting on the results of this research it becomes clear that ecotourism, and ecotourism development, does not happen in isolation. They are part of a much more complex system and in order to understand the processes which take place, an approach is necessary which includes a broad range of aspects. This territorial vision of ecotourism takes in consideration all territories that constitute certain characteristics of ecotourism. This is where the strength of using the SES approach comes to show. In this research I have approached ecotourism, not just from a regional development and economic motivation, but I have placed ecotourism in the centre, as a crystallization of human-nature interactions and as a arena of human interaction at multiple scales. In this research the behaviour, cultural aspects, environmental values, social practices and economic drivers, in their combination, all come to show and are approached with similar importance. Through this approach the issues that surround ecotourism development in regional areas in developed countries in the world, such as the case studies, have been identified and addressed. Having discussed the challenges of carrying capacity, willingness, attitude and culture environmental planners and landscape planners can take in account these hurdles when looking at the possibilities of ecotourism. Ecotourism, as illustrated by this research is not a panacea solution that ensures regional economic development or more sustainable development prospects. Ecotourism again, is too complex to blueprint plan on a region, even if the necessary infrastructure and institutional networks seem promising. Nevertheless, this does not prevent us from keeping on reflecting on the lessons learned from these two case studies.

(page left blank on purpose)

References :

Allmendinger, P. (2009), *Planning Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, United Kingdom

Alexander, E.R. (2006), Institutional design for sustainable development, *The Town Planning Review*, Vol . 77 issue 1, pp. 1-27

Atkinson, A.B. (2001) *The Economic Consequences of Rolling Back the Welfare State,* CES, Cambridge, United States

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008), National Regional Profile: Shark Bay (S) (Local Government Area), code LGA57770, from abs.gov.au

Babbie, E. (2013), *The Practice of Social Research, Engage learning*, Belmont, CA, United States

Beaumont, N., Dredge, D. (2010), Local Tourism Governance: A Comparison of Three Network Approaches, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 18, issue 1, pp. 7–28

Beaumont, N. (1998), The meaning of ecotourism according to… is there now consensus for defining this "natural" phenomenon? An Australian perspective, *Pacific Tourism Review* , Vol 2 (3/4), pp 239-250

Bellamy, R. (2010), *From Government to Governance,* Ashgate, London, United Kingdom

Bio-Plan de Drentsche Aa 2.0 (2012), *Het Nationaal beek- en esdorpenlandschap Drentsche Aa BIO-plan 2.0 ,*2012 - 2020, Arcadis, developed by Overlegorgaan Drentsche Aa, Assen, The Netherlands

Bisaro, A., Hinkel, J., & Kranz, N. (2010) Multilevel water, biodiversity and climate adaptation governance:Evaluating adaptive management in Lesotho, *Environmental Science & Policy*, Vol.13, pp. 637–647

Buhalis, D. (2000), Marketing the Competitive Destination of the Future, *Tourism Management,* Vol. 21, pp. 97–116

Buro Bakker (2012),*Voortoets Natuurbeschermingswet in verband met de uitbreiding van Suichies Mechanisatie te Ekehaar,* Buro Bakker adviesburo voor ecologie BV, Assen, gemeente Aa en Hunze

Connelly, S. (2007) Mapping Sustainable Development as a Contested Concept, *The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability,* Vol. 12, Issue 3, pp.259-278

Council of Europe, (2000), *The European Landscape Convention*, Strasbourg: council of Europe

Department of Conservation and Land Management (2014), Why World Heritage? *Four key reasons for Shark Bays World Heritage Status*, CALM Shark Bay district, Denham, WA, Australia

Dolowitz, D., Marsh, D. (1996), Who Learns What from Whom: a Review of the Policy Transfer Literature, *Political Studies*, Vol. 44, Issue 2, pp. 343-357

Drentsche Aa, (2014), www.drentscheaa.nl

Drumm, A., Moore, A. (2002), *Ecotourism Development: A Manual for Conservation Planners and Managers,* The Nature Conservancy, Arlington, United States.

Elliott, J.A. (2012), *An Introduction to Sustainable Development,* Routledge, London, United Kingdom

Fennell, D. (1999) *Ecotourism an Introduction,* Routledge, London, United Kingdom

Friedmann, J. (1987), *Planning in the Public Domain,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, United States

Geopark de hondsrug (2014), http://www.geoparkdehondsrug.eu

Gleeson, B., Low, N., (2000), Revaluing planning: Rolling back neo-liberalism in Australia, *Progress in Planning,* Vol. 53, Issue 2, pp. 83-164

Graham, J., Amos, B., Plumptre, T. (2003) for the Institute of Governance, Principles of good governance in the 21st century, *Policy Brief No. 15,* IOG, Ottawa, Canada

Gunderson, L.H., Holling, C.S. (2002), *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems,* Islands Press, Washington, DC, United States

Healey, P. (2006), Transforming Governance: Challenge of Institutional adaptation and a new politics of space, *European Urban Studies,* Vol. 14, Issue 3, pp. 299-320

Healey, P (2010) *Making Better Places; The Planning Project in the Twenty First Century,* Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, United Kingdom

Healey, P (1997), *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies,* Macmillan Press, London, United Kingdom

Jamal, T. & Getz, D. (1999) 'Community Roundtables for Tourism-Related Conflicts: The Dialetics of Consensus and Process Structures', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 7, issue 3 (4), pp. 290–313

Jenkins, O. H., and McArthur, S. (1996), Marketing Protected Areas, *Australian Parks and Recreation*, Vol. 32, Issue 4, pp.10-15

Jones, S. (2006), Community Based Ecotourism: The significance of social capita, *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 32, Issue 2, pp. 303-324

Kozlowski, J.M. (1986), *Threshold Analysis to the definition of environmental capacity in Poland's Tatry National Park,* Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington , United States

Lacitignola, D., Petrosillo, I., Cataldi, M., Zurlini, G. (2007) Modelling socio-ecological tourism-based systems for sustainability, *Ecological Modelling,* Vol. 206, pp. 191-204

Lawrence, T. B., Wickins, D., & Phillips, N. (1997) Managing Legitimacy in Ecotourism, *Tourism Management,* Vol. 18, Issue 5, pp. 307-316

Lindberg, K., Hawkins D. E. (1993), *Ecotourism: A Guide for Planners and Managers*, Vol. 1. The Ecotourism Society, Bennington, VT

Linden, G., Voogd H., (2004) *Environmental and Infrastructure Planning,* Geo Press, Groningen, The Netherlands

Liu, J., Qu, H., Huang, D., Chen, G., Yue, X., Zhao, X., Liang, Z.(2014), The role of social capital in encouraging residents' pro-environmental behaviours in community-based ecotourism, *Tourism Management,* Vol. 41, pp. 190-201

Loorbach, D. (2010) Transition Management for Sustainable Development: A Prescriptive, Complexity-Based Governance Framework. New mode of

Governance for Sustainable Management, *Governance Journal of Policy, Administration and Institutions,* Vol. 23, Issue 1, pp. 161-183

Mackoy, R., Osland, G. (2004), Lodge selection and satisfaction: Attributes values by ecotourists, *Journal of Ecotourism Studies,* Vol. 15, pp 13-25

McCluskey, P. (2008), *Shark Bay World Heritage Property Strategic Plan 2008-2020,* Department of Environment and Conservation and Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Perth , Australia

Mckercher, B., Robbins, B. (1998), Business Development Issues Affecting Nature-based Tourism Operators in Australia, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism,* Vol. 6, issue 2, pp. 173-188

McManus, P. (1996) Contested terrains: Politics, stories and discourses of sustainability, *Environmental Politics,* Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp 48-73

McPhee, D.P, Leadbitter, D., Skilleter, G.A. (2002), Swallowing the bait: Is recreational fishing in Australia ecologically sustainable?, *Pacific Conservation Biology*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, pp. 40-51

Ministerie van Economische Zaken (2014), Drentsche Aa gebied, *Beschermde natuur in Nederland: soorten en gebieden in wetgeving en beleid,* accessed on 15 Dec. 2013 from http://www.synbiosys.alterra.nl/

Monkey Mia, (2014), www.monkeymia.org

National beek - en esdorpen lanschap Drentsche Aa (2014), *Because there is only one Drentsche Aa,* National Park Drentsche Aa, accessed on 10 Nov. 2013 from http://www.drentscheaa.nl

Ndubisi, F. (2002), *Ecological Planning: A Historical and Comparative Synthesis,* John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, United States

Orams, M.B. (1995), Towards a more desirable form of ecotourism, *Tourism Management,* Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 3-8

Ostrom, E. (2009), A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems, *Science,* Vol 325, pp. 419- 422

Ostrom, E., Cox, M. (2010), Moving beyond panaceas: a multi-tiered diagnostic approach for social-ecological analysis, *Environmental Conservation,* Vol. 37, Issue 4, pp. 451-463

Page, S.J., Dowling, R.K., *Ecotourism*, Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, United Kingdom

Parker, S., Khare, A (2005), Understanding success factors for ensuring sustainability in ecotourism development in Southern Africa, *Journal of Ecotourism*, Vol. 4 , pp. 32-46

Parra, C. (2010), *The governance of ecotourism as a socially innovative force for paving the way for more sustainable paths: The Morvan regional park case,* University of Lille, Lille, France

Parra, C. (2010), Sustainability and multi-level governance of territories classified as Protected Areas in France: the Morvan regional park case, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management,* Vol. 53 ,Issue 4, pp. 491-509

Parra, C. and Moulaert, F. (2013) The Governance of the Nature-Culture

Nexus: Literature and Lessons to Learn from the San Pedro de Atacama case ,*Nature+Culture* (forthcoming).

Quay, R. (2010) Anticipatory governance, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 76, pp. 496–512

Richins, H. and Pearce, P. (2000), Influences on Tourism Development Decision-making: Coastal Local Government Areas in Eastern Australia, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism,* Vol. 8, Issue 3, pp. 207–225

Riseman, N. (2013), Racism has a long history we must all understand, *ABC news,* 30th May 2013, accessed on 20-05-2014 from www.abc.net.au/

Roo, de G. (2010), *A planners encounter with complexity,* Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham, United Kingdom

Rose, R. (1991), What is Lesson-drawing?, *Journal of Public Policy*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, pp. 132-134

Serrao-Neumann, S., Harman, B.P., Low Choy, D. (2013), The Role of Anticipatory Governance in Local Climate Adaptation: Observations from Australia, *Planning Practice and Research,* Vol. 28, Issue 4, pp. 440-463

Shark Bay, (2014), www.sharkbay.org

Situmorang, D.B.M., Mirzanti, I.R. (2012), Social Entrepreneurship to Develop Ecotourism, *Procedia Economics and Finance,* Vol. 4 pp. 398-405

Smith, A. (2007) Emerging in between: The multi-level governance of renewable energy in the English regions, *Energy Policy*, Vol.35, pp. 6266–6280.

Stankey, G., Cole, D., Lucas, R.,Petersen M., Frissell, S. (1984), *The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) System for Wildernis Planning,* General Technical Report, INT-176, Ogden, United States

Stronza, A., Gordillo, J., (2008), Community views of ecotourism, *Annals of Tourism Research ,* Vol. 35, Issue 2, pp. 448-468

Swyngedouw, E. (2005) Governance innovation and the citizen: the janus face of governance-beyond-the-state, *Urban Studies,* Vol. 42, Issue. 11, pp. 1991-2006

Tourism Western Australia (still in press), *Kimberley Ecotourism Opportunity, on Conservation Lands Jointly Managed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Miriuwung and Gajerrong Aboriginal People of Far North Western Australia,* Tourism Western Australia, Perth, Australia

United Nations Development Program (2010), *A Guide to UNDP Democratic Governance Practice,* UNDP, New York, United States

Vanclay, F., Baines J.T., Nicholas Taylor C. (2013), Principles for ethical research involving humans: Ethical professional practice in impact assessment, Part 1, *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp 243-253

Van Dijk, T (2003) *Dealing with Central European land fragmentation: A cricital assessment on the use of Western European instruments*. Dissertation. Delft: Eburon. ISBN 90 5166 996 8

Van Dijk, T. (2005) The dangers of transplanting planning instruments: the case of land fragmentation in Central Europe; *European Journal of*

Spatial Development, 16

Vicente de, J. (2004), *Demand for Certification: Tourist Industry and Marketing Experts,* Centre on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, The InternationalEcotourism Society, From: http://www.responsibletravel.org/projects/documents/certification_reports/ Consumer_demand_final_1Dec04.pdf

Walker, B., Holling, C. S., Carpenter, S. R., Kinzig A. (2004), Resilience, adaptability and transformability in social–ecological systems. *Ecology and Society,* Vol 9, Issue 2, Art. 5

Wearing, S., (2001), in Weaver D.B., *Encyclopedia of Ecotourism,* CABI publishing, Wallingford, United Kingdom

Weaver, D.B, Lawton, L.J. (2007), Twenty Years On, The State of Contemporary Ecotourism Research, *Tourism Management,* Vol. 28, Issue 5, Oct. 2007, pp. 1168-1179

Williams, D.R. (2001) Sustainability and Public Access to Nature: Contesting the Right to Roam, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism,* Vol. 9, Issue 5, pp. 361-371

Wray. M., Dredge, D., Cox, C., Buultjens, J., Hollick, M., Lee, D., Pearlman, M., Lacroix, C. (2010), *Sustainable regional tourism destinations: best practice for management, development and marketing,* CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd, Gold Coast, Australia

Appendixes

Transcripts and notes available on request from Author

Anonymous   (Australian Academic)

Anonymous   (Member of the advisory committee for the Shark Bay)

J. Affonderbach   (Academic)

A. Brasse   (IVN, NP Drentsche Aa)

E. van der Bilt   (Director of het Drentse Landschap)

M. Chetty   (Tourism Western Australia)

Y. Cornax   (Marketing Drenthe)

H. Hartog   (Director of Recreatieschap Drenthe)

R. Jones   (Australian Academic)

G. Middle   (Australian Academic)

R. Munniksma   (Provincial Executive province Drenthe)

E. van Oosterhout (Major, Council of Aa en Hunze)

C. Posthumus   (Geopark de Hondsrug)

A. van der Tuuk   (Provincial Executive province of Drenthe)

H. Wolters   (Director of Geopark de Hondsrug)

Appendix 1, Interview Guide Dutch

Introductie	Motivatie van de geinterviewde voor het werk wat zij/ hij doet.	Wat is de opleiding van de participant? Wat zijn de stappen in de carriere van de participant tot nu toe?
Ecotoerisme ontwikkeling in de Drentsche Aa	Welke factoren belemmeren de ontwikkeling van ecotoerisme, en welke factoren maken ecotoerisme ontwikkeling mogelijk in de Drentsche Aa	Wat zijn de kern kwaliteiten van het drentsche Aa gebied en wat zijn daarbij de ondersteunende activiteiten? Vind U dat deze kwaliteiten genoeg worden benadrukt? Zijn er activiteiten die elkaar tegen werken (met elkaar concurreren)? Worden er activiteiten ontwikkeld die zowel sociale als natuurlijke/ landschappelijke waarden hebben? Denkt U dat ecotoerisme in het Drentsche Aa gebied door de omgeving word ondersteund en dat de gemeenschap open staat voor gedragen verandering? Denkt U dat de instituties ecotoerisme zouden steunen? Is het huidige beleid in staat tot adaptatie en is het veerkrachtig?

Goed bestuur	Welke partijen zijn bij het ecotoerisme betrokken en welke rollen dragen zij?	Wat is uw visie van goed bestuur als het gaat om (eco)toerisme ontwikkeling?
		Welke overheids instanties zijn bij het gebied betrokken?
		Is er een duidelijke eindverantwoordelijke overheid? En met welke visie?
		Zijn er momenteel verschillende beheers modellen aan de orde?
		Is er een duidelijke verdeling van de verantwoordelijkheid en de rol die daarbij hoort.
		Is de gemeenschap actief betrokken? Waar bestaat die betrokkenheid uit?
		Is er een netwerk waar kennis en ervaring gedeeld word?
		Zijn er kansen om opgedane ervaringen te implementeren in beleid en uitvoering? En gebeurt dit met voldoende flexibiliteit?
		Word er ook onderzoek gedaan naar de ervaring van de bezoekers aan het drentsche Aa gebied? Zo ja: beschikt u over de gegevens van recentelijk onderzoek?
Duurzame gebieds marketing	Op welke wijze leid de marketing tot het aantrekken en invloeden van de gewenste bezoekers groep	Wat vind U van de rol van marketing bij het ontwikkelen van een gebied?
		Is de marketing gericht op het aantrekken van een specifieke bezoekers groep?
		Is de marketing gericht op de wensen van de bezoekers en op de bewoners van het gebied?
		Is er bij de marketing sprake van duurzame gebiedsontwikkeling?
		Word de marketing gebruikt als een middel om het toerisme gericht te ontwikkelen?
		Op welke schaal richt de marketing zich? Nationaal- internationaal- regionaal/ provinciaal of lokaal

Success van ecotoerisme bedrijven in het D.A gebied.		denkt U dat er gedrags verandering nodig is bij de lokale bevolking om ecotoerisme te laten slagen in het D. A. gebied? Is er momenteel een goede relatie tussen het Nationaal Park, de bevolking en de toeristen? Is het huidige belik reactief of proactief? wat is de instelling en bedrijfsvoering van de toeristische bedrijven in het gebied? (hebben eigenaren formele bedrijfs achtergronden?- ervaring in toerisme? - goede marketing strategieën? persoonlijke vaardigheden?)
Duurzame gebieds planning en management	Draagt de planning en management bij aan de ontwikkeling van ecotoerisme , zo ja op welke wijze?	Zijn er (meerdere) meerjarige ontwikkelings plannen voor de toekomst van het Drentsche Aa gebied? Zo ja: speelt duurzame ontwikkeling daarbij een rol? Is er een effectief integraal management beleid voor de Drentsche Aa? Is er een sterke subsidie relatie? Zo ja: met welke overheid? En welke ontwikkelingen doen zich hierin voor? Is er voldoende ondersteuning vanuit de organisatie van de Drentsche Aa? Is er een actieve locale/ provinciale of regionale organisatie voor toerisme die zich richt op het betrekken van bedrijven? Word er vaak onderzoek verricht die ondersteuning bied voor besluitvorming over ecotoerisme? Is er een educatief systeem die nadruk legt op de natuurlijke waarde van de Drentsche Aa en de locale waarden van de Drentsche Aa? Bestaat er een crisis management plan voor tourisme in het Drentsche Aa gebied?

Duurzame gebieds ontwikkeling	Is er een actief streven om ecologische, sociale en economische duurzaamheid te bereiken in het wonen, werken en leven het Drentsche Aa gebied?	Is er recent nieuwe infrastructuur ontwikkeld om (eco)toerisme te bevorderen? Is er samenwerking tussen verschillende vervoer methoden? Zijn er PPP's ontwikkeld in het Drentsche Aa gebied om nieuwe projecten te ontwikkelen en financieren? Wie is er verantwoordelijk voor de publieke faciliteiten in het gebied? Zijn er uitstapjes / dagtrips die toeristen aanmoedigen om andere aanliggende gebieden te bezoeken? Is het gevoel van betrokkenheid versterkt of zal het gevoel van betrokkenheid versterken als ecotoerisme (verder) word ontwikkeld? Bestaat er een keurmerk en een controle autoriteit voor ecotoerisme bedrijven en aanbieders?
Success factoren van ecotoerisme (terug blik op de vragen)	Welke factoren hebben een belangrijke rol gespeeld in de ontwikkeling van de tourisme industrie in het Drentsche Aa gebied?	Wat kan worden geïdentificeerd als de specifieke factoren die van belang zijn voor het succes van toerisme in de Drentsche Aa? Zijn er factoren die verder ontwikkeling verhinderen? zo ja: welke?

Appendix 2, Interview Guide English

Introduction- start of the interview.	- Motivation of the participant to become interested in his/her line of work	-What is the participants educational background? -What are the steps taken in the participants career so far?
Ecotourism development Shark Bay	-Which factors enabled or hindered ecotourism development in Shark Bay	- What can be identified as the core (and supporting) resources of Shark Bay? (e.g. mix of visitor activities, experiences and infrastructure for tourism)
Good Governance	Who is involved in ecotourism and what are their roles and responsibilities?	-Which government authorities are involved? -Is there a clear vision and leadership? Are there scenarios developed? -Are there clear roles and responsibilities - Are the communities engaged and participative? - Is there an open network for sharing expertise and knowledge? - Is there opportunity for self-learning, flexibility and adaptive management? - Has a tourism visitation analysis been conducted recently?

Sustainable Destination Marketing	How has the destination been marketed in order to attract and influence the appropriate visitors?	-Does marketing aim at developing objectives to ensure that the needs of both tourists and residents are met? -Is marketing integrated with Sustainable Destination Management (regional development, sustainable resource use, high quality experience) -Is marketing used as a tool to ensure that the right type of tourism is developed in the right location? -Is Shark Bay marketed internationally or mainly nationally/ regionally/ State?
Sustainable destination Planning and Management	Did planning and management contribute to sustainable ecotourism development? If so, How?	-Are there multiple long-term strategic plans? - Is there an effective destination management structure? -Is there a strong level of (financial) support from the state? —> and local government? - Is there a good level of support from Parks agencies and other relevant government organizations? -Is there an effective regional / local tourism organization that lead and organize business involvement -Is research continuously conducted in order to support decision-making for ecotourism? - Are there educational systems in place to educate the significance of Shark Bay and its local values?

		- Has a crisis management plan for ecotourism been set up?
Sustainable destination development	Is there an active pursuit to achieve environmental, social and economical sustainability for a place to live, work and visit?	-Have there been additional infrastructure developments to facilitate ecotourism? -Is there collaboration between large transport services? (Airport, roads, maintenance) -Have Public Private Partnerships been developed to fund infrastructure? - Who takes responsibility and is accountable for the public facilities? - Are drive routes / day tour packages available to encourage visitors to experience the broader region? - Are special events organized that match the destination character and values? -Is the feeling of ownership improved by the local population with the development of ecotourism? -Is there a benchmark and a controlling authority for (eco)tourism operators
Success factors (Looking back at overall questions)	- Which factors can be identified as having played an important role in the Shark Bay tourism industry?	-What are the distinctive factors that have made Shark Bay successful -Are there still factors hindering or possibly enabling further development?