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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

Multi-stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism development
An investigation of stakeholder collaboration and perception of sustainable tourism in
Ethiopia

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van Doctor of Philosophy aan de

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

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prof.dr. V. Subramaniam,

in het openbaar te verdedigen

ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie

van de School of Business and Economics

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geboren te Wollega, Ethiopië

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Aliye (my late husband Alamrew Kore), who was with me at the start of my PhD programme and suddenly passed away a few months later. Aleko, I cannot imagine how happy and proud you would be if I were lucky to have you till this day. Your unconditional and irreplaceable love, dedication, and confidence will remain the basis for my self-determination. I will always love you, my dear.

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Contents

Acknowledgements.....	vii
Acronyms	xv
Summary	xvii
Chapter 1. Introduction	2
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Background to the study.....	2
1.3 Research context.....	9
1.3.1 Ethiopia as tourist destination	9
1.3.2 Tourism in Ethiopia	12
1.4 Problem definition	15
1.5 Research objectives	18
1.6 Academic and social relevance of the study.....	19
1.6.1 Academic relevance	19
1.6.2 Social relevance.....	20
1.7 Outline of the thesis.....	21
Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework and Research Questions	24
2.1 Introduction	24
2.2 From sustainable development to sustainable tourism	24
2.2.1 Sustainable development	25
2.2.2 Sustainable tourism	29
2.3 Operationalising sustainable tourism	31
2.3.1 Concept of sustainable tourism	31
2.3.2 Ethiopian policy framework	35
2.3.3 The three dimensions of sustainable tourism	37
2.3.4 Conclusion.....	41
2.4 Defining stakeholders and stakeholder collaboration	42
2.4.1 Definition of stakeholders.....	42
2.4.2 Definition of stakeholder collaboration	46
2.5 Theories of collaboration	48
2.5.1 Social exchange theory	48
2.5.2 From stakeholder theory to stakeholder collaboration.....	52
2.5.3 Stages of development of collaboration.....	54

2.6	Factors influencing stakeholder collaboration	59
2.6.1	Recognition of legitimacy and mutual interdependence	59
2.6.2	Power	61
2.6.3	Trust	63
2.6.4	Leadership and governance	65
2.7	Sustainable tourism and stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia: Empirical evidence	67
2.7.1	Economic sustainability.....	68
2.7.2	Socio-cultural sustainability	70
2.7.3	Environmental sustainability.....	72
2.8	Conceptual framework	73
2.9	Research questions	75
Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology		78
3.1	Research design	78
3.1.1	Aim and research questions in brief	78
3.1.2	Methodological approach.....	79
3.2	Case study sites.....	82
3.2.1	Addis Ababa	83
3.2.2	Awash National Park	84
3.2.3	Gondar	85
3.2.4	Bishoftu	86
3.3	Selection of research participants	87
3.4	Data collection	91
3.4.1	Semi-structured face-to-face interviews	91
3.4.2	Focus group discussions.....	96
3.4.3	Field notes.....	99
3.5	Data analysis	99
Chapter 4. Multi-stakeholder Collaboration and its Determinants in Ethiopia.....		102
4.1	Introduction	102
4.2	The stage of development of stakeholder collaboration.....	102
4.2.1	Antecedents of collaboration	103
4.2.2	Problem setting.....	104
4.2.3	Setting a common direction.....	113
4.2.4	Structuring/implementation.....	115
4.2.5	Conclusion.....	118
4.3	Stakeholders' perceptions of collaboration.....	119
4.3.1	Important, but not necessary	119

4.3.2	A way of getting support.....	119
4.3.3	A means of control by the government	120
4.4	Influencers of the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia	122
4.4.1	Awareness.....	122
4.4.2	Professionalism	123
4.4.3	Trust	125
4.4.4	Power imbalance.....	127
4.4.5	Supervision (leadership and governance).....	128
4.4.6	Geographic location	130
Chapter 5.	Stakeholder Collaboration and Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism	134
5.1	Introduction	134
5.2	Perceptions of sustainable tourism	135
5.2.1	Local tour guides	135
5.2.2	Hoteliers.....	135
5.2.3	Tour operators	137
5.2.4	Park management team.....	138
5.2.5	Public sector (government).....	138
5.2.6	Summary	139
5.3	Attitude towards the three elements of sustainable tourism	140
5.3.1	Economic sustainability.....	141
5.3.2	Socio-cultural sustainability	145
5.3.3	Environmental sustainability.....	150
5.3.4	Summary	155
5.4.	Perception of sustainable tourism and stakeholder collaboration	155
Chapter 6.	Discussion of Main Findings	158
6.1	Introduction	158
6.2	Understanding stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism in Ethiopia.....	158
6.2.1	The evolution of collaboration.....	159
6.2.2	Stakeholders' perceptions of collaboration.....	165
6.2.3	Factors influencing stakeholder collaboration	165
6.3	Stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism and the current level of development of collaboration in Ethiopia.....	170
6.3.1	Stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism	171
6.3.2	Perceptions of sustainable tourism and the level of stakeholder collaboration	174
Chapter 7.	Main Findings and their Implications	180
7.1	Main findings and the revised conceptual model.....	180

7.2	Implications.....	181
7.2.1	Theoretical implications.....	182
7.2.2	Practical implications	187
7.3	Limitations of the study	189
7.4	Suggestions for further research	190
	References	192
	Annex 1. Interview Questions.....	212
	Informed consent.....	212
	Interview questions	213
	Annex 2. Focus Group Discussion Questions	220
	Informed consent.....	220
	Discussion questions.....	221
	Annex 3. Data Matrixes.....	222
	Annex 4. Sample of Coded Themes for the Factors Influencing Collaboration.....	224
	Annex 5. List of Participants.....	226

Acronyms

AATOA	Addis Ababa Tour Operators Association
ETOA	Ethiopian Tour Operators Association
ETO	Ethiopian Tourism Organization
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDP	Gross domestic product
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MoCT	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STMP	Sustainable Tourism Master Plan
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

Summary

Collaboration between stakeholders to advance sustainable tourism in developing countries is an under researched, but vital topic. This study was conducted to understand multi-stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism development in Ethiopia, including the perceptions and initiatives of governments, tourism operators, and local communities. It is hoped that this research will fill the gap in our understanding of this topic and contribute towards cooperation to advance the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability of tourism in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is the most populous landlocked country in the world, as well as the second-most populous nation on the African continent, with a population of 102.4 million. It is home to over 80 ethno-linguistic groups, each with its own built heritage, cultural space, and distinct living expressions and practices (UNESCO 2015). In addition, Ethiopia has some unique natural tourist attractions, including national parks with endemic wildlife and the Danakil Depression, which is one of the lowest points on Earth at 160 metres below sea level, as well as one of the hottest places with temperatures exceeding 60°C (MoCT 2017). Nine of Ethiopia's attractions are World Heritage listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Until recently, the country does not appear to have benefited from tourism, although the government and local communities are now focusing on how to maximise these benefits. However, if it is not properly managed to minimise negative environmental and cultural effects, tourism could become a polluter of the environment and result in the unfair distribution of benefits (Choi and Sirakaya 2005). Minimisation of the negative effects of tourism and maximisation of its potential benefit calls for the support of stakeholders (Brown 2004; Choi and Sirakaya 2005). Collaboration among tourism stakeholders is vital to the sustainable development of tourism. Although many studies have been carried out on this topic (Jamal and Getz 1995; McComb, Boyd, and Boluk 2017; Waligo, Clarke, and Hawkins 2013), most of them do not appear to have linked stakeholder collaboration with sustainable tourism. The balance of discussion is weighted towards either stakeholder collaboration or sustainable tourism. Against this background, this research aims to analyse multi-stakeholder collaboration and its influence on stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia.

In order to arrive at a better understanding of stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism, four different destinations – Addis Ababa, Awash National Park, Bishoftu, and Gondar – were

selected for this study, as representative of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental elements of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. The analysis was guided by specific issues related to the stage of collaboration among stakeholders, the factors influencing multi-stakeholder collaboration, and the stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. In order to fulfil the objectives of this research, a qualitative multiple case study approach was used. Multiple stakeholders, drawn from the public sector (central government and regional government offices), private sector (tour companies and accommodation providers), and grassroots community (including local residents found at the destination), were involved.

Thematic analysis of the stage of stakeholder collaboration was performed based on the theory of stakeholder collaboration (Graci 2013; Gray 1985; Selin and Chevez 1995a). The theory of stakeholder collaboration describes collaboration as an emergent process emanating from certain conditions, such as observable environmental problems and an already existing association or proactive leader that takes the initiative to trigger collaboration. After this initiation, collaboration progresses to problem identification, the stage at which legitimate stakeholders are identified and the domain-level problem or issue is determined. This stage leads to the direction setting stage, in which the stakeholders articulate the domain-level problem and set a common vision and direction to guide them. Based on the nature of the domain-level problem and the willingness of stakeholders, collaboration moves to the fourth stage: structuring. At the structuring stage, the relationship among the stakeholders is formalised and institutionalised, in order to facilitate monitoring and any follow-up activities. In addition, roles and responsibilities are clarified by the stakeholders. At the fifth stage, the success of the collaboration is assessed in terms of its outcomes.

Analysis of the stage of collaboration reveals that collaboration among Ethiopian tourism stakeholders appears to have advanced to a high level, evidenced by the existence of certain formal institutions (e.g., the Ethiopian Tourism Organization). However, the actual relationship among stakeholders seems to be at the initial stage, as stakeholders do not seem to have identified each other as legitimate stakeholders and have not developed a common vision or consensus about the reason for their collaboration. Therefore, it was not possible in this study to describe the stage of collaboration among the stakeholders in a sequential manner, as framed by the theory of collaboration.

The study then looked at the factors influencing stakeholder collaboration. The influence of these factors was explained using the social exchange theory (Blau 1964; Cropanzano and

Mitchell 2005; Emerson 1976). Power, which is described as a stakeholder's capacity to influence decisions, the geographic location of the stakeholder, and the level of support the stakeholder receives from the government, as well as the economic capacity of the stakeholder, were found to influence the stakeholder's willingness to collaborate with other actors in the tourism system.

The outcome of the collaboration, which constitutes the fifth stage of collaboration, was investigated in terms of stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. The study found that most of the stakeholders in the case study destinations had not reflected on 'sustainable tourism', in terms of its economic, socio-cultural, and environmental elements. The perceptions of stakeholders related more to the particular tourism resource that they are exposed to and the position that they assume they have. For example, in terms of its position, the government understands sustainable tourism in terms of the contribution of tourism to the main development goal of the country, i.e., poverty alleviation, while private sector stakeholders focus on the economic benefits of tourism in terms of generating foreign exchange and lengthening the stay of tourists. Only the community at the tourism destination understood sustainable tourism in terms of the conservation of resources (environmental sustainability). Those community members located near cultural heritage sites also relate the sustainability of tourism to the conservation of their cultural heritage (socio-cultural sustainability) and receiving benefits from the resources (economic sustainability). Community members located near a park tend to associate sustainability with the conservation of the park (environmental sustainability) and the sharing of benefits gained from the park (economic sustainability).

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the top-down approach to tourism management in Ethiopia has influenced the nature of collaboration among stakeholders. In other words, the top-down approach in which directives are imposed on stakeholders has apparently created reluctance (ignorance) at the grassroots level and resulted in a difference in the perception of sustainable tourism by the government (top) and those at the grassroots. As a result, tourism stakeholders tend to view sustainable tourism based on their individual interests, instead of promoting it as a common agenda for the common good. In relation to the elements of sustainable tourism, it appears that the economic aspect of tourism dominates, over the conservation of cultural and environmental resources. This finding is similar to the findings of other studies in developing countries where the economic focus dominates the other elements of sustainable tourism (Kim 2013).

As this study is based on case studies, the findings cannot be generalised to other destinations. However, the findings may provide insights for researchers, policy makers, and tourism stakeholders and indicate areas for further research. A potential area for future research is the factors influencing stakeholder collaboration in developing countries and how to mitigate the problems that arise.

Despite its limitations, the findings of this study contribute to filling the research gap on the link between stakeholder collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. It identifies the factors influencing stakeholder collaboration, which sheds light on how stakeholder collaboration influences stakeholders' perceptions about the elements of sustainable tourism. In addition, this research provides insights for policy makers on the importance of stakeholder engagement in policy making and implementation. The identified factors influencing collaboration also inform policy makers on how to mitigate the problems faced in collaboration and move towards the sustainable development of tourism.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

When I was a young girl growing up in the village of Horro Guduru Wollega in Ethiopia, tourism was not in my vocabulary. Sure, we had leisure time, but most of that was spent visiting relatives and participating in community activities. For Ethiopians like myself, tourism was a fad that we were unfamiliar with. When I became a student and met foreigners visiting Ethiopia, I became more aware of the natural and cultural beauty of my country, which I had not given much thought to before. Now I think about things like traffic congestion and crowds in my home, Addis Ababa, from the perspective of a tourist. I also think about the millions who gather in Bishoftu in September to celebrate Irreecha, the Oromo people's thanksgiving, and the growth in the number of hotels surrounding the natural attractions and lakes in Bishoftu. I have seen the dark side of tourism, such as the ecological toll paid due to uncoordinated building activities. This has led me to ask what can be done to preserve the great beauty of Ethiopia, while at the same time opening it up for visitors worldwide in such a way that it benefits society, the economy, and nature. Back then, I did not know the difference between 'collaboration' taught at university and practices on the ground, but still I felt that collaboration between stakeholders, like communities, the government, and the private sector, could provide a solution. It is to this that I dedicate my research, as presented in this dissertation.

In this chapter, I provide a general background to this study based on the academic literature, including context-specific studies conducted in Ethiopia, so as to highlight the importance of conducting research on stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism in Ethiopia (section 1.2). In section 1.3, I describe the context of this study, in terms of the tourist attractions in, and tourism performance of, Ethiopia. This is followed by sections 1.4 and 1.5, which define the problem and present the research objectives. Finally the relevance of this study for academics, as well as in the social context of Ethiopia, is covered in section 1.6, followed by a presentation of the overall organisation of the thesis in section 1.7.

1.2 Background to the study

Tourism is an important global phenomenon. Increasing numbers of people now have the time and resources to spend on vacations and leisure travel. The tourism sector creates significant employment opportunities, which is reflected in tourism's share of the global economy.

Tourism now accounts for 10.2% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 10% of all jobs (Scowsill 2017). International tourist arrivals, which increased from 25 million in 1950 to 1.186 billion in 2015, is projected to reach 1.8 billion arrivals by 2030 (Glaesser, Kester, Paulose, Alizadeh, and Valentin 2017). It is mainly because of its economic contribution that tourism is considered a strong force for development in many countries. Governments worldwide consider international tourism an attractive development tool. As a result, governments in developed and developing countries have increasingly shifted their attention to tourism as an engine of development (Choi and Sirakaya 2005; Huttasin 2013).

Developing countries, in particular, have a strong interest in developing tourism as an alternative to traditional sectors such as agriculture and raw materials, which have shown weak development (Kelly 1988; Zappino 2005; Croes 2006). In addition, governments in developing countries have shifted their attention to tourism as a result of its contribution to unemployment and poverty reduction, as well as its ability to generate foreign exchange (Meyer and Meyer 2015). Tourism is seen by some as a ‘smokeless industry’, requiring lower levels of investment and creating less environmental damage than manufacturing (Choi and Sirakaya 2005).

However, this relatively positive view of tourism as a ‘good’ form of development has been challenged (De Kadt 1979; Budeanu 2005; Nunkoo 2016). The growth of tourism has had many negative effects, including environmental degradation, the commodification of traditional cultures, and the loss of social cohesion (Kelly 1988; Brohman 1996; Choi and Turk 2011). These issues have stimulated calls to reduce the negative effects of tourism, while continuing to promote its potential as an engine of growth. This is effectively the concept of ‘sustainable tourism’, which seeks to balance the need for growth with the need to conserve the environment and support social and cultural systems. By ensuring that the resources used by tourists are conserved, sustainable tourism seeks to balance the interests of the current generation with the needs of future generations in terms of their economic, social, and aesthetic needs, without compromising natural ecological processes (Budeanu, Miller, Moscardo, and Ooi 2016).

Sustainable tourism can ensure viable long-term operations, to the extent that it takes account of its environmental and socio-cultural elements. The sustainability of tourism depends on the tourism system’s¹ ability to engage stakeholders, such as the private sector (accommodation

¹ The term ‘tourism system’ refers to the set of locally-based destination stakeholders, such as the public sector (central- and regional-level officers), private sector (tour companies and accommodation providers), and destination residents, who interact and collaborate with each other towards the sustainable development of tourism.

providers and tour companies) and destination communities (individuals and groups of residents that are found around tourist attractions), and ensure that they are able to meet their own needs, without affecting the ability of future generations to meet their needs, by accessing stable and equal opportunities in revenue and income-generating activities, while maintaining the competitiveness of the destination to tourists (Brohman 1996; Wondowossen, Nakagoshi, Yukio, Jongman, and Dawit 2014).

Sustainable tourism also depends on the sustainability of the environmental and socio-cultural elements of tourism. Socio-cultural resources can be sustained if the stakeholders in the tourism system work to conserve and use the cultural elements of the society – its tangible and intangible heritage – like its lifestyle and cultural norms (Choi and Turk 2011). Similarly, the sustainability of the environment is ensured through the conservation and protection of natural attractions, including the scenery, wildlife, and environmental resources (e.g., water and air), which help the natural ecosystem to function (Huttasin 2013; Martina and Sonja 2014; Mowforth and Munt 2015).

The need for the sustainable development of tourism has received much attention in the last two decades. The idea of ensuring the economic viability of tourism without severely affecting its environmental and socio-cultural dimensions is well acknowledged by different scholars (Aas, Ladkin, and Fletcher 2005; Byrd 2007; Getz and Timur 2005; Hardy and Beeton 2001; Waligo, Clarke, and Hawkins 2013) and development promoters, such as the World Tourism Organization (UNEP and WTO 2005); however, it is difficult to achieve in practice.

The development of tourism in low-income economies² faces a number of challenges related to the position of these countries, the ambiguity of the concept of sustainable tourism, the vast range of stakeholders involved in sustainable development, and the nature of the collaboration between them. The first challenge relates to the outward orientation of developing economies, which is characterised by foreign dependence for investment and management activities, a loss of control over cultural and natural resources, and the substantial leakage of tourism earnings (Brohman 1996). This outward orientation of developing countries can be attributed to the need to attain their basic development goals. However, the ownership of resources by developed countries could strengthen their power position over developing countries. Such power

² See: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups> (accessed 6 September, 2018).

imbalances can influence the developing country's ability to control its own resources and its capacity to develop and fairly benefit from tourism (Mowforth and Munt 2015).

Moreover, in developing countries the economic focus and dependence on international tourism has influenced the development of tourism in peripheral areas (Tosun 2000). The economic concentration and investment in services of an international standard in metropolitan cities to meet the needs of tourists from the West limits the participation of local communities at the tourist destination in tourism activities, as well as the development of cultural and natural attraction destinations in the periphery (Britton 1982; Brohman 1996; Tosun 2000). For example, the recent study by Manyara and Ndivo (2016) on hoteliers' perceptions of tourism development revealed how the private sector's unwillingness to invest in tourism activities influenced the balance of regional economic development. Manyara and Ndivo indicate that the reluctance of the private sector to invest in tourism activities in peripheral areas means that certain regions lack basic tourism infrastructure, such as hotels. Consequently, tourism activities are concentrated mainly in capital cities, where the majority of hotels are located, which leads to the unbalanced development of tourism. This creates a negative spiral, with tourism and investment concentrated in capital cities, leading to a lack of investment in peripheral regions. It can also reduce the resources available for community tourism initiatives. Such an unbalanced regional distribution of the supply of tourism resources also contributes to the unequal distribution of benefits between people living in the capital cities and those living in the periphery (Manyara and Ndivo 2016). Moreover, the concentration of economic activities in the metropolitan areas can lead to unregulated development in rural areas and the overexploitation of cities as tourist sites, while the tourism resources in peripheral areas remain underutilised.

Second, the complexity involved in attaining the goal of sustainable tourism development is increased by the multi-dimensionality of sustainable tourism. The conceptual evolution of sustainable tourism is often linked to sustainable development, which is highly criticised for its lack of clarity (Hunter 1997; Liu 2003). Sustainability is a multi-dimensional construct with multiple definitions. In addition, the elements of sustainability – economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability – all have specific definitions. For example, economic sustainability can be defined in terms of its specific elements, such as employment creation. Employment can be further defined according to what type of employment is being talked about and for whom. Further questions include how employment can be made sustainable and how long it should last to be considered sustainable. These dimensions of sustainability and

the operationalisation of specific elements of sustainability may cause further debate (Butler 1999; Liu 2003). Collaboration could help stakeholders to work together and create a shared meaning (perception) and understanding of sustainable tourism, which could facilitate the achievement of sustainable tourism (Butler 1999; Drita and Alkida 2010; Jackie Ong and Smith 2014; Waligo et al. 2015).

Third, the attainment of sustainable tourism is influenced by the involvement of a vast range of stakeholders. Stakeholders in tourism are those actors who affect the development of tourism and are also affected by the development of tourism (Byrd 2007). Among the stakeholders affecting the development of tourism are the government, the private sector, and local communities. Each of these stakeholders has an important role to play in ensuring the sustainable development of tourism, which contributes to the development of tourism in a number of ways. Tourism products provide different services (accommodation, transport, tourist guides, food and drinks) and tend to place significance on private sector stakeholders (such as hoteliers, tour companies, and tourist guides) and only sometimes on the local community or destination residents at the attraction site (Mitchell and Coles 2009; Hansen and Mossberg 2017). The tangible and intangible heritage is another component of tourism, which can give tourists an experience related to the lifestyle, culture, history, and norms of the destination society. Natural environmental attractions are also important components of tourism. The destination community and private investors can play a large role in the conservation and maintenance of culture and environmental resources (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Sintayehu 2016).

It is clear from this that sustainable tourism development needs a guiding policy framework within which stakeholders operate to meet their own needs, while also contributing to the general goal of sustainable tourism development. The need to develop such a policy framework, as well as the provision of basic infrastructural facilities, makes the government at the central and regional levels a major stakeholder in the development of sustainable tourism. The successful implementation of any sustainability policy depends on the willingness and interest of stakeholders to support the goal of sustainable tourism, which is determined by the extent to which stakeholders are involved in the planning process (Shani and Pizam 2012; Kim 2013; Hardy and Pearson 2016). If not involved, there is a risk of stakeholders impeding the execution of sustainable tourism development initiatives.

It can be inferred from the above discussion that no single stakeholder can control the development of tourism. It can also be inferred that the multiplicity of stakeholders in the tourism domain can pose a challenge to the development of tourism at a particular destination (Jamal and Getz 1995). This multiplicity of stakeholders also means that there are heterogeneous interests (objectives), expectations, and contributions to sustainable tourism development (Richards and Hall 2003). The difference in expectations and interests could emerge due to the proximity of the stakeholder to the tourism destination, their role, and their share of the costs and benefits of tourism (i.e., those who conserve tourism resources and those who benefit from tourism may not share the costs of tourism proportionately). Such differences may result in conflict and affect the attainment of the goal of sustainable tourism (Getz and Timur 2005). Collaboration helps stakeholders to collectively address their concerns and mutually determine their goals, which helps to ensure the development of tourism in a sustainable manner (Getz and Timur 2005; Jamal and Stronza 2009; Graci 2013). Moreover, collaboration can bring stakeholders together to reach a common consensus and share responsibilities, costs, and benefits (Getz and Timur 2005; Savage et al. 2010; Waligo et al. 2013). Hence, it can be understood that the collaboration of stakeholders is an important factor in developing a common understanding of the concepts and in the successful implementation of sustainable tourism. However, the success of collaboration depends on the ability of the process to overcome various factors, including asymmetry of interests among stakeholders (Savage et al. 2010), the degree of shared power and trust (McComb, Boyd, and Boluk 2017), and other factors, including structural issues (such as an appropriate legal system that involves stakeholders and considers cultural issues related to the capacity of the community at the destination) (Tosun 2000; De Araujo and Bramwell 2002).

The current research explores the factors that facilitate the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism related to the level of collaboration. Through this investigation, the current study hopes to fill a gap in the research. Although many studies have been undertaken on stakeholder collaboration for the sustainable development of tourism (Aas et al. 2005; De Araujo and Bramwell 1999; Arenas 2010; Bramwell and Sharman 1999; Byrd 2007; Getz and Timur 2005; Graci 2013; Waligo et al. 2013), most were conducted in a different geopolitical, economic, and cultural contexts, which may not allow the findings to be used in other countries. In a similar manner, related to the investigation of sustainable tourism, most academic studies were conducted in developed countries, such as those in northwest Europe, Oceania, and North America, with little research

on Central and South Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, South and Central America, the Arctic, and Antarctica (Lu and Nepal 2009; Ruhanen, Weiler, Moyle, and McLennan 2015), resulting in a general shortage of academic research on countries in Africa, including Ethiopia. Moreover, although sustainable tourism is considered to be a multi-dimensional concept, many previous studies on the topic focus only on one dimension of sustainable tourism, such as the economic dimension (Briedenhann and Wickens 2004), socio-cultural dimension (O'Sullivan and Jackson 2002; Landorf 2009; Salazar 2012; Durovic and Lovrentjev 2014), or environmental dimension (Erkus-Ozturk and Eraydin 2010; Hardy and Beeton 2001; Okazaki 2008; Tsaur, Lin, and Lin 2006), without looking at the inter-relationship between the different dimensions of sustainability.

Most of the previous studies on collaboration have focused on project-based tourism organisations, such as community-based projects (Graci 2013; Tesfaye, Berhanu, Molla, and Bires 2015; Waligo et al. 2013, 2015; Woldu 2018); few have looked at the communities and residents located near the tourist attraction (Jamal and Stronza 2009). For example, the multi-stakeholder involvement analysis of Waligo et al. (2013) was based on a sustainable tourism project. This study investigated the involvement of stakeholders who are members of an organisation, but it did not consider the view of non-member communities (residents). In addition, the study did not indicate the role of stakeholders in the different elements of sustainable tourism. Similarly, a study conducted by Graci (2013) on an ecotourism project in Indonesia did not involve non-member communities, which could serve as guardians of the destination and influence tourism development activities. Furthermore, most studies on stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism fail to link stakeholder collaboration to sustainable tourism; that is, they do not make it clear how and why collaboration influences the sustainable development of tourism by reflecting on the elements of sustainable tourism in a holistic way.

Methodologically, some previous sustainable tourism research has used the case study approach (Ruhanen et al. 2015). According to the bibliometric analysis conducted by Ruhanen et al., the largest percentage (35%) of the articles published in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* over the 25 years of its publication draw on research based on a case study design. This marks the importance of case studies for tourism research. However, most of these studies were based on a single case study, highlighting the scarcity of work done on multiple destinations (Bramwell, Higham, Lane, and Miller 2017).

Against this backdrop, the current study explores and analyses tourism stakeholder collaboration in order to understand the development of such collaboration and the influence of collaboration on stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. This is achieved using multiple case studies and multiple stakeholders drawn from different sectors: the private sector, public sector, and destination community. The analysis of this research relies on data collected from four case study areas in Ethiopia: Addis Ababa, Bishoftu, Awash National Park, and Gondar.

The analysis of stakeholder collaboration and the influence of stakeholders' perceptions on sustainable tourism is carried out within the framework of stakeholder collaboration and social exchange theory. The study consists of mutually related parts: First, the factors which influence the development of stakeholder collaboration in the Ethiopian tourism system is analysed based on the development of collaboration between tourism stakeholders; second, how collaboration influences stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism, in terms of the economic, environmental and social-cultural elements of sustainable tourism, is elaborated on. It is hoped that this research will contribute to filling the gap in the research on stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism.

1.3 Research context

1.3.1 Ethiopia as tourist destination

This section looks at Ethiopia as a tourist destination and outlines the role of stakeholders in the tourism sector. Ethiopia is located in the Horn of Africa, bordering Eritrea to the north and northeast, Djibouti and Somalia to the east, Sudan and South Sudan to the west, and Kenya to the south. It is the second most populous nation in Africa and the most populous landlocked country in the world, with a population of approximately 102.4 million (UNESCO 2015). It is also home to over 80 ethno-linguistic groups with their own culture and heritage, as well as their own distinct way of living (UNESCO 2015). The country is spread across an area of 1.1 million square kilometres, with Addis Ababa as its capital (Meseret 2016).



Figure 1.1. Map of Ethiopia with major tourist destinations

(Source: Lonely Planet <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/africa/ethiopia/>)

Ethiopia has unique elements that make it different from other African countries and the rest of the world. Among the factors contributing to its uniqueness is that it is the only independent country in the Horn of Africa never colonised by foreign powers. As a result, Ethiopia has maintained its traditions and languages; for example, Ethiopia uses its own language (Amharic) with a unique alphabet (the Amharic alphabet), which is not found as an official language elsewhere (UNESCO 2008).

Furthermore, unlike the rest of the world, Ethiopia has 13 months in a year. The first 12 months (running from September up to August) have an equal number of days each (30 days). The 13th month, which falls at the end of August, is called *Pagumie* and has five days, which become six days every 4 years. Ethiopia also follows its own calendar, which lags behind the rest of the world by 8 years. For example, when this thesis was written the year was 2010 in Ethiopia, but 2018 in the rest of the world. In order to emphasise the uniqueness of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian National Tourist Office used the slogan ‘13 months of sunshine and the cradle of mankind’ (EFDRE 2016), which has changed recently to ‘Land of origin’ on the basis that:

...the country is believed to be [...] the origin of humankind, home of the earliest remains of human ancestors named 'Lucy', the origin or birthplace of the wild coffee plant, 'Arabica', the origin of the Blue Nile, longest river of [sic] the planet. Ethiopia is also believed to be the depository of the lost Biblical Ark of the Covenant, stored in the securely guarded Chapel of the Tablet next to the St. Mary of Zion Church in ancient Aksum. (Kassa 2017)

Besides these unique features, Ethiopia has many natural, cultural, historical and archaeological attractions. Among the natural attractions are Simien National Park, which contains the second highest mountain in Africa (4,620 metres) and is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site, Awash National Park, Nechisar National Park, Mago National Park, Omo National Park, and Gambela National Park. The Danakil Depression in Ethiopia is one of the world's lowest points at 160 metres below sea level, as well as one of the hottest places on Earth, with temperatures exceeding 60°C (MoCT 2017).

Among the important cultural attractions in Ethiopia are practices such as Irreecha (the Oromo people's thanksgiving), Meskel (the finding of the true cross), Timket (the celebration of the Epiphany), Fitcha Chamballala (a traditional new year celebration among the Sidama people), Ashenda (a festival celebrated in August in the Tigray and Amhara regions to honour the Virgin Mary) and other cultural traditions. The culture of the Omo people and the Konso people attract a large number of tourists in different seasons. The walled city of Harar in eastern Ethiopia and the palace of Gondar, Lalibela, and the obelisk of Axum in northern Ethiopia are among some of the major historic attractions (MoCT 2017). Besides Addis Ababa, nearby cities such as Bishoftu (Debrezeit), Hawassa, Bahirdar, and Gondar are becoming major tourist destinations, especially for conferences, meetings, and other social activities, including wedding ceremonies at the local level. Eight cultural sites – Aksum, Fasil Ghebbi (Castle of Gondar), the fortified historic town of Harar Jugol, the Konso Cultural Landscape, the lower valley of Awash, the lower valley of Omo, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, and Tiya – and one national park, Semien National Park, are registered as World Heritage Sites (UNESCO n.d.). Among these tourist attractions, the current study is based on four destinations: Gondar, Addis Ababa, Awash National Park, and Bishoftu. Details of these case study areas and the justification for their selection will be discussed in Chapter 3 (in the research design and methodology).

The sustainability of these and other destinations in Ethiopia depends to a large extent on the implementation of sustainable tourism policies and the volume and nature of tourism demand

and supply. These factors, which are broadly related to the structure of Ethiopian tourism, are considered in the following section.

1.3.2 Tourism in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, tourism began to attract the attention of the government (the imperial regime) in the 1960s (Asmare 2016). However, at this time, the service industries, particularly the tourist sector, received little support. The small government budget allocated to tourism development, the image of the country, poor infrastructural development, and Ethiopia's privatisation policy were among the factors that affected the development of tourism (Getachew 2015; Shanka and Frost 1999; Wondowossen et al. 2014; Yetnayet and Getaneh 2018).

Government recognition of the tourism sector increased when tourism came to be seen as a tool for meeting the general development needs of the country, particularly poverty alleviation goals (Woldu 2018; Wondowossen et al. 2014). Among the indicators of the government's commitment to developing tourism is the institutional reform that took place in 2005 to manage tourism and culture separately from sport (MoCT 2009). The government also established the Tourism Transformation Council, a body accountable to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT), the main responsibility of which is to provide leadership and set directions for the development and marketing of the country's tourist destinations, and, more recently, the Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO), which takes sole responsibility for promoting and marketing tourist destinations in Ethiopia.

Tourism is considered by the government as an input to economic growth and transformation. During the period of the Growth and Transformation Plan I (2010–2015), tourism generated about USD 2.9 billion annually, close to a million jobs, and about 4.5% of GDP. Accordingly, in the Growth and Transformation Plan II (2015–2020), the government has set a goal to triple foreign visitors to more than 2.5 million by 2020 and make Ethiopia one of the top five tourist destinations in Africa (FDRE 2016). In relation to the performance of tourism in terms of its contribution to economic development, the recent reports of the World Travel and Tourism Council state that the Ethiopian tourism and travel sector contributed a healthy 9.8% to GDP in 2015. This was forecasted to rise by 3.5% of GDP in 2016, but actually dropped to 5.7% (Turner and Freiermuth 2016, 2017).

Past trends in Ethiopia's performance and the challenges inherent in tourism development could make the goal of tourism development ambitious. This is surprising at first sight, because

the Ethiopian Tourism Organization was established as far back as 1960, before the Kenya Tourist Development Corporation, which was established in 1965 (Ondicho 2000), and before the Egyptian Tourism Authority, which was established in 1981 (Rady 2002). However, as evidence indicates (Kester 2011; World Economic Forum 2013), tourism performance does not appear to have been championed at the time of the establishment of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization.

Ethiopia appears to be weak in terms of tourism competitiveness, compared to some of its neighbouring countries. For instance, in 2007, Ethiopia's share of tourist flows to 17 East African countries was 0.7%, highlighting the low level of tourism development in the country (MoCT 2009). In 2009, among 20 African countries, the share of tourist flows to Ethiopia was only 1% (Kester 2011). According to the World Economic Forum report (2013), Ethiopia ranked 120th out of 140 countries and 17th out of 31 Sub-Saharan Africa countries in terms of tourism competitiveness. The 2014 World Economic Forum report shows a slight improvement, ranking Ethiopia 118 out of 141 countries. However, during both years Ethiopia ranked below neighbouring countries like Kenya and Tanzania, which have the same international source markets and similar types of tourism products (World Economic Forum 2014).

There are various possible reasons for the poor competitiveness of Ethiopia in tourism. Scholars (Wondowossen et al. 2014; Getachew 2015; Tamir 2015; Mohammed 2016) argue that tourism has been highlighted for its ability to reduce poverty. In fact, the contribution of tourism to poverty reduction is over emphasised, at the expense of the development of tourism itself (Wondowossen et al. 2014; Woldu 2018). In addition, it appears that the Ethiopian government is focusing on the electric power sector and electric power projects, like the Grand Renaissance Dam, the expansion of financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies, and manufacturing industries, not tourism. In terms of development, the country seems to be moving from an agro-led economy to an industrial one. The focus of the education system on engineering and science is also an indicator of the government's industrialisation drive.

A number of scholars have identified the general opportunities, such as the hospitableness of destination communities and the availability of tourist resources (Ajala 2008; Tamir 2015), as well as the challenges facing tourism development in Ethiopia. Some of the major findings are that: drought and famine have influenced the Horn of Africa in general and Ethiopia in

particular (Shanka and Frost 1999; Getachew 2015; Mohammed 2016); there are poor infrastructural facilities and services and a lack of diversity of tourism products; and there is also a shortage of quality recorded information, which could help in the analysis of tourism performance (Mitchell and Coles 2009; World Bank 2009; Wondowossen et al. 2014). In addition, there is a lack of resources, weak coordination of institutions, and a failure of various stakeholders to play their respective roles (Mohammed 2016); there are weak public-private partnerships (Getachew 2015); service quality is low; there is inadequate protection, development, and use of tourist attractions; the quality and quantity of handicrafts and other creative cultural products is inadequate; and the interpretation of attractions is based on non-credible facts and knowledge (Tamir 2015; UNECA 2015). Furthermore, there is a lack of implementation capacity among stakeholders (Tamir 2015; UNECA 2015) and an ill-defined policy direction (Woldu 2018).

The ownership and management of tourist products by the local people has also been identified as contributing to the low competitiveness of tourism in Ethiopia. Mitchell and Coles (2009) emphasise that the management of tourism products by indigenous people, who have less international exposure, hampers the competitiveness of tourist products at the international level and results in fewer tourists being attracted. On top of that, attempts to provide training and awareness creation by the government are slow and ineffective in enhancing the sectors' competitiveness. As a strategy to mitigate this problem and enhance the competitiveness of the tourism sector, these scholars suggest importing hospitality skills from other countries and supporting Ethiopian owners, managers, and staff with international direct investment.

In addition to these directly observable indicators of poor tourism development, the shortage of scientific research³ can be considered an indirect indicator of poor tourism development and a reflection of the lack of attention given to the tourism sector in Ethiopia. It has been argued by scholars that a shortage of research in a given country indicates a low level of development of the tourism sector in that country; where tourism is less developed there is often a lack of awareness about tourism and a shortage of research in that area (Lu and Nepal 2009; Ruhanen et al. 2015).

³ When searching journal articles published on tourism in Ethiopia, it was hard to find any articles on the research databases such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, Science Direct, and others. The articles on Ethiopia used in this thesis are mostly obtained from Google Scholar.

To recap, although Ethiopia has incredible potential as a tourism destination, it appears from the performance of the sector and the general challenges and problems it faces that the country is not effectively using its tourism resources. The current study focuses on stakeholder collaboration and its influence on the perceptions of stakeholders of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia, based on its economic, social-cultural, and environmental dimensions.

1.4 Problem definition

Tourism has been viewed as a development engine in both developed and developing countries for its contribution to GDP and the improvement of the livelihood of people through income generation and the creation of employment opportunities (Richards and Hall 2003; Mowforth and Munt 2009; Huttasin 2013; Ali 2017). However, deriving such benefits from tourism necessitates the protection and conservation of the social, cultural, and environmental elements upon which tourism depends (Barbier 1987; Berkes and Folke 1998). This also ensures the development of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is holistic and made up of different elements including economic, socio-cultural, and environmental elements (Hunter 1997; UNWTO 2013). The sustainable development of tourism depends on the extent to which these different elements are used and conserved by stakeholders to meet the needs of current and future generations (UNWTO 2013).

The holistic nature of the relationships between these different aspects of sustainability means that no single institution or individual can shoulder responsibility for sustainability issues. Rather, this requires the involvement and collaboration of different stakeholders who can directly and indirectly influence the sustainable development of tourism (Arnaboldi and Spiller 2011). On a larger scale, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the goals in all countries, particularly in developing countries (SDG 17.16) (UNWTO and UNDP 2017). In light of this argument, this thesis looks at stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism in Ethiopia.

As can be seen from the discussion in the previous section (section 1.3), the competitiveness and performance of Ethiopian tourism is slow. Studies have attributed the slow development and performance of Ethiopian tourism to different reasons, among which is the weak link between stakeholders. Among the few studies that have reflected on the engagement of stakeholders are the investigation by Mitchell and Coles (2009), based on northern (Lalibela

and Axum) and southern (Arbaminch) destinations and Addis Ababa. They identified a weak link between tourism and the poor communities around tourist attractions. These authors focused on investigating the extent to which pro-poor tourism is serving its purpose at the grassroots level. As such, the investigation did not deal with the underlying reason for the linkages (relationship) between pro-poor tourism actors and the destination community. However, it can be understood that, from the perspective of serving the socio-economic needs of the destination community, tourism has not been successful in Ethiopia and has failed to meet the economic sustainability goal of poverty alleviation (Mitchell and Coles 2009).

An investigation conducted by Getachew (2015) related to public-private partnerships in Ethiopia reveals that inadequate and unclear legislation and weak public-private dialogue contribute to weak public-private partnerships in terms of investment in tourist facilities. Weak public-private partnerships have a direct effect on the sustainability of tourism, particularly the economic element of tourism, in a sense that poor partnerships with the private sector means that the private sector, which could contribute to the development of tourism by investing in tourism facilities and offering employment opportunities is not very involved in tourism activities. However, this study does not attempt to explore the underlying reasons for the inadequacy of policy related to public-private partnerships or explain the implications of weak public-private partnerships for the sustainability of tourism. It also does not identify why stakeholders have failed to play their role in the implementation of the national Tourism Development Policy of Ethiopia (Mohammed 2016) or which particular stakeholders are lagging behind.

A recent study conducted by Woldu (2018) addressed the problem of stakeholder collaboration in Lake Tana. It found that the development of tourist attractions, products, and services at the destination is experiencing serious problems due to the lack of a collaborative approach among stakeholders (administering bodies, the communities that own the resources, and religious institutions). He argues that the problem is related to a lack of clarity in the Tourism Development Policy, which does not indicate a clear direction for the initiation and implementation of community-based tourism activities. He points out that although Ethiopia's Tourism Development Policy includes stakeholder involvement and collaboration among the guiding principles for the development of tourism, it does not clarify how stakeholders can be practically involved in community-based tourism.

What can be observed from the above case is that, like Getachew and Mohammed, Woldu also seems to attribute the problem of stakeholder partnership to the problem with the Tourism Development Policy. However, the investigation by Woldu, like Mohammed, is based on personal observations, policy document analysis, and interviews with the destination community, which may not directly represent the views of the stakeholders in charge of policy implementation. Another case study conducted in Bale Zone of Ethiopia, an area known for its natural attractions, adds that the absence of good governance and lack of cooperation between stakeholders are among the most important factors stopping the area from becoming an important tourist destination (Bayih and Tola 2017).

The Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy and the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (STMP) (2015–2025) also point out that Ethiopian tourism is facing various challenges, including:

- Inadequate protection, development and use of tourism attractions
- The interpretation of attractions based on non-credible facts and knowledge, as well as inconsistent and distorted presentation
- Poor quality services and poor quality and quantity of manpower
- Capacity limitations among tourism stakeholders, weak mutual support, and weak coordination among stakeholders (MoCT 2009; UNECA 2015)

At the official level, these are the problems identified as relating to the general development of tourism. Each of these problems can have a negative effect on the sustainable development of tourism in economic and socio-cultural terms. The STMP contains strategies to address these problems (UNECA 2015). However, it does not seem to have adequately investigated the root causes of these problems, especially in relation to mutual support and coordination. Moreover, the environmental sustainability issues related to responsibility for the impact of tourism on the natural environment (such as water and air) are not well addressed in the document.

In general, the above studies mentioned the weak link between stakeholders and the inability of stakeholders to play their respective roles. This indicates that the investigation of the development of stakeholder collaboration and its relationship with sustainable tourism is worth attention. Although most studies are concerned with sustainable tourism, the analysis in these studies appears to be only partial: Some studies focus on sustainable tourism from the perspective of its economic contribution, such as competitiveness and income generation (Ajala 2008; Wondowossen et al. 2014), others look at the contribution of sustainable tourism

to livelihoods in terms of poverty reduction (Fetene, Bekele, and Tiwari 2012; Mitchell and Coles 2009; Tamir 2015; Woldu 2018), and some others focus on eco-tourism development (Kauffmann 2008; Sintayehu 2016; Bayih and Tola 2017). Furthermore, these studies were conducted at the community level at the destination and among tourism governors at the regional level, with some exceptions that have focused on policy document analysis (Mohammed 2016; Woldu 2018), and the entrepreneurial behaviour of tour operators (Eyana, Masurel, and Paas 2017).

In a nutshell, these studies reflect the growing interest in sustainable tourism in Ethiopia, although they do not appear to link the influence of stakeholders to sustainable tourism in a holistic manner. Hence, for the current study a multi-stakeholder, multiple case study research, involving various stakeholders from different sectors (the public sector, private sector, and destination communities) was conducted at selected tourist destinations in Ethiopia in order to create a better understanding of the importance of stakeholder collaboration and its influence on sustainable tourism.

1.5 Research objectives

As can be seen from the discussion in the previous section, poor stakeholder collaboration has been reported to be among the factors that have influenced the development of tourism in Ethiopia. However, existing studies have not gone far enough in exploring the factors that facilitate the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and how collaboration influences stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. Based on these points, the current research sets a general objective to analyse stakeholder collaboration and its influence on stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the stage of development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia, and explore the evolution of this collaboration over time
2. To examine stakeholders' perceptions about such collaboration
3. To determine the factors that have facilitated or hampered the development of such collaboration
4. To examine stakeholders' perceptions about sustainability and sustainable tourism
5. To understand the stakeholders attitude about the specific elements of sustainable tourism

6. To examine how perceptions of sustainable tourism are related to past or future collaborations

The attainment of these objectives will help answer the main research question of this study: How does the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration influence the perceptions of stakeholders about sustainable tourism in Ethiopia? The answer to this question will help create understanding about the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and stakeholders' perceptions about sustainable tourism, in light of the development of collaboration among them.

1.6 Academic and social relevance of the study

This section presents the academic relevance of this study, followed by its social relevance in the context of Ethiopia.

1.6.1 Academic relevance

The academic relevance of this study lies in its attempt to link stakeholder collaboration with sustainable tourism. The specific implications of this research can be explained from different perspectives. Primarily, previous studies have focused on either stakeholder collaboration or sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism has also been only partially analysed in most studies, which focus on either the economic, environmental, or socio-cultural dimensions of sustainable tourism. Unlike other studies, which have focused on specific elements of sustainable tourism, this research considers all three elements (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental) together in an integrated manner to contribute to the discussion on sustainable tourism. In other words, the discussion on the elements of sustainable tourism will highlight the synergetic nature of the elements of sustainable tourism (Hák, Janoušková, and Moldan 2016). In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 17, advocate for partnerships among stakeholders in order to facilitate the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, to date, no academic research has attempted to explore how partnerships work in the attainment of the SDGs. In light of this, the current research considers partnerships (collaboration) between tourism stakeholders and attempts to analyse the development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia in terms of its evolution and the factors that influence its development, as well as stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in light of the stage of development of collaboration. It also operationalises sustainable tourism in terms of its economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions and, finally, link the discussion of

stakeholder collaboration with stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. It aims to provide a holistic view of sustainable tourism that elaborates on how the partnership SDG and the other SDGs are interrelated. Furthermore, the current research extends the discussion of the influence of stakeholder collaboration on sustainable tourism, based on the inter-linkage of stakeholder theory and social exchange theory, in order to explain the role of stakeholder collaboration in the development of sustainable tourism.

Secondly, the context of the study makes it academically relevant in that the application of the framework to stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia may provide a different view of the applicability of the framework in different contexts. Moreover, the discussion about some factors that could influence collaboration, such as power, trust, and shared goals, could provide different explanations of the stage of stakeholder collaboration in the context of Ethiopian tourism. Thirdly, the multiple case study nature of this research, which is based in different geographical locations, and the involvement of multiple stakeholders from different sectors (public sector, private sector, and destination communities) may highlight how different stakeholders perceive sustainable tourism. Understanding stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism could help to anticipate the level of effort stakeholders are willing to make towards the implementation of the principles of sustainability.

1.6.2 Social relevance

Besides its academic contribution, this thesis is also believed to have social relevance. Primarily, this study can help Ethiopian policy makers and other stakeholders, such as private sector stakeholders engaged in the tourism industry, to see the practical relevance of the inclusion of stakeholders, including grassroots communities, in the development of sustainable tourism. In addition, the analysis of sustainable tourism, based on the perceptions of stakeholders and the policy framework related to sustainable tourism, may also shed light on the practical challenges involved in policy implementation. Secondly, the identification and explanation of the factors that affect the collaboration of stakeholders in the Ethiopian tourism sector could help policy makers and private sector actors deal with these factors for better collaboration. Thirdly, the holistic analysis of sustainable tourism and the operationalisation of specific elements of sustainable tourism may help to broaden stakeholder understanding of sustainable tourism and further its development. Finally, this research indicates potential research areas for scholars who may be interested in carrying out similar studies on the topic and on Ethiopia.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This thesis has been organised into six chapters. Chapter 1 has been presented in the above sections. The following paragraphs outline the remaining chapters in order to provide an overall picture of the thesis.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical framework of the research. It opens with a discussion of sustainable development and sustainable tourism, illustrating how sustainability principles have been adopted in the field of tourism. This chapter also identifies the main dimensions of sustainability based on a review of the academic literature, before exploring the three dimensions operationalised in this study. It then looks at how sustainable tourism is dealt with in the Ethiopian policy framework. The stakeholders' approach to the sustainable development of tourism is discussed along with its importance. In order to be able to show the nature of stakeholder collaboration, which could contribute to sustainable tourism development, a framework of collaboration is identified to assist with the analysis of the stage of development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia. Based on academic literature, the factors that affect stakeholder collaboration are also discussed in order to investigate the influence of these factors on stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. The empirical literature on Ethiopia is then reviewed and discussed, especially in relation to the nature of the relationship between stakeholder collaboration and the elements of sustainable tourism. This chapter concludes with a presentation of the conceptual framework and the questions addressed in this research.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology and strategies employed in conducting this research. A qualitative case study design has been adopted to deal with the complexity of the Ethiopian tourism system. In order to elaborate on the nature of stakeholder collaboration and the elements of sustainable tourism, multiple case studies are used. The case studies and the rationale for selecting cases, the selection of respondents in each case, and the data collection and analysis methods are also described in this chapter. Finally, some potential limitations of the study related to the process of the research are indicated.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the findings of the interviews and focus group discussions with different stakeholders, focusing on stakeholder collaboration and the sustainability of tourism in Ethiopia. These chapters apply the framework of stakeholder collaboration within the theory of stakeholder collaboration, as set out in Chapter 2. They look at the development of collaboration, based on the data collected in the four case study areas. In relation to the process

of development of stakeholder collaboration, the factors that have influenced the nature of collaboration between tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia are presented. These chapters also present the response of stakeholders in relation to the influence of collaboration on the attitude and perceptions of stakeholders about sustainable tourism in light of the attitude of stakeholders towards the elements of sustainable tourism (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions), in relation to past or future collaborations.

Chapter 6 presents a discussion of the main findings based on the results presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusions drawn from the research in relation to the basic research questions raised in this thesis. The implications of the results of this study in relation to stakeholder collaboration, the factors which influence stakeholder collaboration, and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism are outlined for academics and Ethiopian policy makers, as well as other stakeholders interested in the tourism industry. This chapter closes by putting forward some research directions for further study.

Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical basis for analysing stakeholder collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. In order to explain how stakeholder collaboration contributes to perceptions of sustainable tourism, a theoretical framework and conceptual model was developed and research questions formulated, based on different academic approaches. This chapter commences with a description of the concepts of sustainable development and sustainable tourism in order to derive the dimensions of sustainable tourism that may be applicable to Ethiopia (sections 2.2 and 2.3).

Next, the theories and concepts related to stakeholders and stakeholder collaboration are described in sections 2.4 and 2.5. The stakeholder collaboration framework (Wood and Gray 1991; Selin and Chevez 1995a; Graci 2013) is used to analyse the evolution of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia. In order to link stakeholder collaboration with sustainable tourism, the social exchange theory is used (Blau 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012), as it explains the nature of the relationship among multiple stakeholders based on the factors that influence stakeholder collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. Possible factors influencing the relationship between stakeholders are discussed in section 2.6 based on the academic literature. A review of empirical studies on the importance of collaboration for sustainable tourism in Ethiopia is presented in section 2.7. Finally, section 2.8 presents the conceptual model used in this study, and section 2.9 concludes by presenting the research questions.

2.2 From sustainable development to sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is believed to have evolved from the concept of sustainable development, but there is contention about the relationship between sustainable tourism and sustainable development. This section discusses the general concepts and issues related to sustainable development, its critics, and its contribution to the evolution of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is then discussed, and the elements of sustainable tourism used to explore the nature of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia are identified.

2.2.1 Sustainable development

Economic development attracted a lot of attention in the 1950s and 1960s, with a particular focus on less developed countries. During these ‘optimistic early decades’, development was simply associated with modernisation and equated with Westernisation (the source of ‘rationality’, science and technology) (Elliott 2006). The spatial diffusion of modernity from Western to less developed countries was believed to stimulate development and provide a solution to the problem of underdevelopment. However, development was seen only as economic growth (Tekra 2007), and issues such as societal welfare and environmental wellbeing were generally ignored.

Following this early phase, increasing economic, social, and environmental challenges made it clear that economic growth was not only uneven, but could also have negative consequences. An awareness of the need to balance economic growth with environmental and social concerns emerged in different ways. For example, the Club of Rome was one of the movements of the 1960s that warned about the potential dangers of development (Meadows, Meadows, and Randers 2005). The Club of Rome was established by a group of individuals who took the initiative to foster a better understanding of the political, economic, natural, and social systems that together constitute the global system. The members of the Club of Rome highlighted the effect of development on the carrying capacity of the environment.

According to the Club of Rome, developed countries had already started thinking about the environment and working to create innovative technologies that could mitigate the environmental impact of economic development early in the 1960s. However, developing countries were in the process of finding the means through which they could catch up with developed countries, regardless of the effect of their actions on the environment. In addition to environmental issues, the growth in world population was also worrisome. As a result, the members of the Club of Rome suggested long-term and holistic planning that balances development with the environment’s carrying capacity by involving citizens of all nations, regardless of their culture, economic status, and level of development, rather than focusing just on technological remedies to enhance development (Meadows, Meadows, and Rander 2005).

Concern for the fulfilment of human needs and the protection of the environment is encompassed in the economic idea of ‘small is beautiful’ in the book by Schumacher, which was initially published in 1973 (Schumacher 2011). This idea supports the possibility of making sustainable development a reality by creating opportunities for human beings to operate

on a human scale and with appropriate technology, instead of focusing on mass production through industrialisation, which leads to the destruction of the environment.

Following the emergence of nascent sustainability concepts in the 1960s and 1970s, different development institutions such as the United Nations started echoing the basic idea of balancing development with environmental conservation. In 1972 the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden, in order to create awareness about global environment challenges. This conference produced 26 principles on the environment and development. Among the conference's declarations, Principle 2 states that 'The natural ecosystem must be safeguarded for the benefit of present and future generations through careful planning and management' (Sohn 1973). In addition, Principle 4 states that 'Man has a special responsibility to safeguard and wisely manage the heritage of wildlife and its habitat' (Sohn 1973). This principle places importance on the role and participation of people in conservation and their responsibility to use heritage and natural resources carefully. Through the development of such principles, the Stockholm Conference laid the groundwork for a follow-up conference held in Norway in 1987.

One of the reasons why the Norway conference was initiated by the UN was to establish an independent organisation, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), to work on issues related to the environment and development (Borowy 2013). This conference was chaired by the prime minister of Norway at the time, Gro Harlem Brundtland, who has been called the 'Mother of Sustainability' (Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations, n.d.). Afterwards the WCED was named the 'Brundtland Commission'. The main concern in the 1980s was how to balance prosperity with environmental degradation. This necessitated the re-definition of development as 'sustainable development', which aims at balancing human interests with environmental wellbeing (Borowy 2013).

The Brundtland Commission criticised previous perceptions of the relationship between the environment and development, which saw the 'environment' as a space separated from human action and 'development' as a political term representing the economic progress of countries. The WCED argued that development and the environment are inseparable notions and defined sustainable development as follows:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The most important points focused on in this definition are the concept of 'needs', in particular

the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs. Thus the goals of economic and social development must be defined in terms of sustainability in all countries developed or developing, market-oriented or centrally planned. (UN 1987)

This definition advocates for the need to consider the interests of human beings now and in the future, giving particular attention to the needs of the poor in developing countries, which could also help in mitigating the environmental impact of development. The Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainability, however, has been criticised in a number of ways. Some scholars argue that this definition was created in industrialised countries (Robinson 2004; Blewitt 2015) and may not fit the context of developing countries. Firstly, because of the difference in the level of development of these countries, the interests and orientations of developed and developing countries may differ. Robinson (2004), for example, criticises the definition of sustainable development in relation to representation. He argues that the definition set by the WCED was set by representatives mostly from developed countries whose concerns may not fully represent those of developing countries. He adds that the adoption of the WCED's definition of sustainable development may pose challenges in the conceptualisation and implementation of the principles of sustainable development. It follows that developing countries, with their lower levels of economic development, would be more concerned with economic growth in order to meet the day-to-day needs of their rapidly growing population. On the other hand, developed countries have arguably reached a level of economic development where basic needs are largely met and more attention can be paid to other forms of growth, such as individual expression or social capital. This suggests that the needs of current and future generations in the developed and developing worlds could be different, and that sustainability agendas could also vary.

Secondly, the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development is considered to be an expression of the responsibilities of institutions and of social responsibility, rather than addressing the role of individuals (Robinson 2004). The principles established by the Brundtland Commission simply indicate the general obligations of humankind, without indicating how individuals should participate in development and environmental protection. Similarly, Seghezze (2009) also added his concern about the possible misrepresentation of the concept of 'sustainability' coined by the WCED for developing countries. He emphasises that the idea of sustainable development, which is conceived as balancing the concern for

environmental, economic, and social issues, is self-contradicting. He argues that the economic dimension of sustainability has been over-emphasised, while the environmental and social dimensions have not received equal attention.

Seghezze proposed another approach to defining sustainability in terms of the three 'Ps': 'place', as a space which is physically, geographically, and culturally bounded; 'permanence', as the long-term effect of human action; and 'persons', as the individual members of the society. None of these 'Ps' are mutually exclusive. In relation to the notion of sustainable development, Seghezze added more specific issues, such as the consideration of both naturally and socially-constructed definitions of place, which is affected by the action of human beings and needs to be considered in a particular situation, rather than following a general approach of defining the environment. Moreover, he claims that individuals should be treated separately, rather than as part of a group; i.e., Seghezze advocated for the customisation of the concepts related to a particular community and member of that community.

What can be concluded from the above discussions is that the need for sustainable development has been well acknowledged, although there has not been a complete consensus reached about the definition and practice of the concept. However, it seems that some basic concepts of sustainable development, such as ensuring economic development without affecting environmental conservation and meeting the needs of the current generation without restricting the potential of future generations, have been accepted.

Despite criticisms of the conceptualisation of sustainable development, the United Nations is still working on how to end poverty and promote sustainable development. The United Nations Development Agenda (2015–2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals can be considered part of a continuing effort to enhance development (UNWTO and UNDP 2017). The 17 SDGs aim to ensure the attainment of sustainable development in a balanced and integrated manner. Tourism contributes to sustainable development, specifically to SDG 8 (creating decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 17 (the enhancement of partnerships to achieve the goals) (UNWTO and UNDP 2017). This shows that sustainability is a pervasive concept that is applicable to different sectors and could enhance the attainment of development in general. In the following section, the specific ways in which the principle of sustainability has been extended to tourism will be discussed.

2.2.2 Sustainable tourism

The need of people to be ‘tourists’ increased after World War II, which has had positive economic effects in the destinations that tourists visit. On the other hand, there have also been some negative consequences in terms of environmental pollution and destruction. It was this observation that brought about the emergence of the concept of sustainable tourism (Paul 2014). Sustainable tourism was perceived as a positive approach to the development of tourism aimed at reducing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment, as well as built and natural heritages (Bramwell and Lane 1993). Beginning from the early movements of environmentalists, most scholars have agreed that sustainability is a promising tool to deal with the negative impacts of tourism and to maintain its long-term viability (Bramwell and Lane 1993; Job, Becken, and Lane 2017; Liu 2003; Qureshi, Hassan, Hishan, Rasli, and Zaman 2017). However, there is a wide range of arguments about the conceptualisation of sustainability, and a single approach to sustainable tourism has its critics. Over time, several definitions of sustainable tourism have been suggested, which are introduced in this section. The definition adopted in this dissertation is then presented.

Swarbrooke (1999) defines sustainable tourism as a means of delivering tourism resources to future generations, while ensuring economic viability and without destroying the resources on which the future of tourism will depend. This fairly general definition sticks closely to the definition of the WCED. Hence, one cannot easily grasp the difference between sustainable tourism and sustainable development from Swarbrooke’s definition.

Hunter (1997) supports the need to base the definition of sustainable tourism on the concept of sustainable development. He argues that the conceptualisation of sustainable tourism within the framework of the general definition of sustainable development helps to broaden the understanding of sustainability and its adaptation to specific local contexts. Hunter suggests that one has to consider the dynamism of the conceptualisation of the ‘root’ of sustainability, i.e., sustainable development, and define sustainable tourism in a flexible way. It can be understood from this definition that the flexible approach to defining sustainable tourism, by considering the flexible approach to sustainable development, may yield fruitful ideas and concepts related to sustainable tourism.

On the other hand, Butler (1999) does not agree that the definition of sustainable tourism should be linked to that of sustainable development. He elaborates on the inapplicability of the principle of sustainable development to tourism. He says that tourism is an activity that

contributes to environmental degradation, and that the limited carrying capacity of a tourist destination cannot withstand such negative impact and be sustainable. In addition, he argues that the different forms of tourism (such as mass tourism) and the specialised forms of tourism (such as ecotourism) cannot, by nature, be sustainable. Butler claims that the growing demand for any form of tourism gradually leads to expansion in an attempt to meet the needs of the tourists. He further adds that sustainable development by itself does not have an accurate parameter that helps to conceptualise, measure, and monitor its progress. As a result, the concept and its application to sustainable tourism remain open to debate. He then suggests the need to view sustainable tourism differently from sustainable development in order to monitor its progress. Liu (2003) also appears to favour the separation of sustainable tourism and sustainable development. This scholar argues that the separation of the definition of sustainable tourism from that of sustainable development may suit policy makers, but this does not guarantee its applicability in practice.

It can be inferred from the above discussion that the conceptualisation of sustainable tourism is an emerging topic and there are different views as to its definition. The editors of the Journal of Sustainable Tourism appreciate the evolution of these diverse views and interpretations of sustainable tourism, arguing that such an approach enhances the power and capability of sustainable tourism to be applied in all tourism practices (Bramwell et al. 2017).

More recently, the application of sustainable tourism seems to have attracted attention. Scholars (Franzoni 2015; Tanguay, Rajaonson, and Therrien 2013) are diverting their attention away from the enduring and cyclical debate related to its definition, to testing and applying theories in empirical studies (Ruhanen et al. 2015). Sustainable tourism is not linked to a particular type of tourism or considered a particular type of tourism; it is instead understood as a goal that all types of tourism should achieve (Lu and Nepal 2009; Paul 2014). This thesis follows this contemporary approach, which advocates for the normative orientation of sustainability and views sustainability as a guiding principle for all forms of tourism, regardless of their size or type (Butler 1999; Liu 2003; Seghezze 2009; Paul 2014; Ruhanen et al. 2015). It follows the definition that views sustainable tourism as tourism that meets the economic, social, and aesthetic needs of the present and future generations, while taking full account of the ecological processes (Paul 2014; UNEP and WTO 2005)

It is important to mention here that it appears that the investigation of sustainable tourism requires the ongoing monitoring of the progress of tourism development, which is beyond the

scope of this study. The aim of the current research is to investigate the nature of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia, based on stakeholders' perceptions about sustainable tourism.

2.3 Operationalising sustainable tourism

In order to investigate and understand the perceptions of stakeholders, this section explores the dimensions of sustainable tourism. After looking at the various dimensions of sustainable tourism identified in the literature, it then goes on to explore the three main dimensions that will be used in this study: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability.

2.3.1 Concept of sustainable tourism

As observed in the academic debates, the concept of sustainability is vague. However, most recently, scholars are shifting their attention from dealing with the fluidity of the concept to focusing on identification of the tools and methods that can help analyse sustainable tourism (Gourdon and Cernat 2007; Durovic and Loverentjev 2014). The contemporary approach to sustainable tourism research appreciates the relevance of redefining the concepts and specifying the sustainability indicators, on the basis that such an approach leads to growth in our knowledge of sustainable tourism (Lu and Nepal 2009; Bramwell et al. 2017).

In tourism, sustainability is considered a holistic concept that embraces social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental issues (Bramwell et al. 2017). However, these elements of sustainable tourism are not always considered together. The components (dimensions) of sustainable tourism are different depending on the perspective of the researcher, politician, environmentalist, economist, policy maker, or development practitioner, who all stress the importance of certain elements of sustainability from their perspective (Mowforth and Munt 2015).

A number of studies have been carried out to develop more specific indicators of sustainable tourism (Choi and Turk 2011; Durovic and Loverentjev 2014; Lozano-Oyola, Blancas, González, and Caballero 2012; Mikulić, Kožić, and Krešić 2015; Tanguay, Rajaonson, Lefebvre, and Lanoie, 2010; Tanguay et al. 2013) related to a particular element of sustainability. For example, Choi and Turk (2011) reviewed 38 academic studies on tourism and determined 6 sustainability indicators for community tourism development. Tanguay et al. (2010) analysed 17 studies and 188 indicators of sustainable tourism development based on Western developed countries, out of which they identified 29 indicators as the most common, representing the environmental, economic, social, and institutional dimensions of sustainable

tourism. Following a different methodological approach, in a later study, Tanguayet et al.(2013) reviewed 507 indicators recognised by experts and derived a list of the 20 most important indicators of sustainable tourism. Similarly, Durovic and Loverentjev (2014) identified six sustainability indicators for the socio-cultural dimension, seven indicators for the economic dimension, and nine indicators for the environmental dimension.

What can be seen from the above is that the academic investigation of sustainable tourism in terms of the development of tools for its monitoring is booming. However, the large number of sustainability indicators identified by scholars indicates the complexity of the task. The specific operationalisation of sustainability indicators could help to investigate the nature of sustainable tourism in a particular case. The focus of the current study is on the common dimensions of sustainable tourism: the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. This thesis focuses on these dimensions in order to have a clear understanding of the perception of stakeholders from the point of view of their involvement and collaboration in the development of sustainable tourism. In order to operationalise the elements of sustainable tourism for this study, how some scholars have specified the pillars of sustainable tourism, based on the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions, is investigated.

First, Mowforth and Munt (2015) describe sustainability as a multidisciplinary concept that embraces diversified views, based on different perspectives such as environmental, socio-cultural, economic, or development perspectives. They describe the elements of sustainability as follows: Economic sustainability is the ability to gain economic benefit from tourism activities that is sufficient to cover the costs incurred in offering the tourist services, or mitigate the negative effect of tourisms, or offer an income appropriate to cover the inconvenience caused to the community at the destination being visited (Mowforth and Munt 2015). This definition of economic sustainability focuses on the ability to recover the costs of tourism activities; it does not address the issue of employment creation or the sharing of benefit. Mowforth and Munt describe cultural sustainability in terms of the ability of people to retain or adapt elements of their culture that distinguish them from other people (lifestyle, customs, and traditions). They also talk of the dynamism of culture, which should adapt to meet the needs of visitors, but also retain certain elements. They say that culture should be protected from the harmful effects of tourism. They relate ecological sustainability to environmental carrying capacity (which embraces social and economic constraints on the environment). They suggest a quantitative approach to calculate the carrying capacity of the environment, but do not indicate the maximum limit of the carrying capacity, which serves as a threshold for

defining a sustainable environment. The work of Mowforth and Munt (2015) focuses on the broad general definition of the pillars of sustainable tourism and looks at the possibility of measuring them; it also appears to pave the way to assessing sustainable tourism in quantitative terms. However, such approach provides little guidance on how to explore the perceptions of sustainable tourism, which is the focus of this research.

Second, in the course of investigating the contribution of tourism to regional development, Huttasin defined sustainable tourism in relation to general regional development as follows:

The economic sustainability in relation to the benefits derived from tourism based on: the level of capital investment made in the tourism sector, the availability and attention for development of knowledge in the tourism sector, the availability of quality labor, and the contribution of tourism to the GDP. (Huttasin 2013)

This definition appears to be more specific in terms of the elements that constitute a sustainable economy. Huttasin defines the socio-cultural element of sustainable tourism as a combination of societal and cultural sustainability issues. Social sustainability is related to the benefit derived from tourism in the form of the educational opportunities provided by tourism entrepreneurs to their employees, as well as social security and safety. Cultural sustainability is the preservation and maintenance of culture and heritage and the use of this element for regional development.

The third element of sustainable tourism is ecological sustainability, which Huttasin expresses in terms of the capability of the ecological system to survive, adapt, and rebuild itself from disturbances such as pollution, natural disasters, and other impacts. She describes the specific indicators of a sustainable environment in terms of the action of tourism entrepreneurs to protect the quality of the air, water, and natural resources against pollution (including noise pollution) and to minimise energy consumption. Again, this definition seems more specific and relevant to the investigation and monitoring of the progress of sustainable tourism in terms of the general contribution of tourism to the goal of sustainable development, rather than to understanding stakeholders' perceptions. Also, some of the sustainability indicators, such as the contribution of tourism to GDP, are related to the general economic development of a region, which may not be directly linked to the sustainability of tourism.

In general, the above definitions seem specific and relevant to the investigation and monitoring of the progress of sustainable tourism in terms of the general contribution of tourism to the goal of sustainable development. However, some of the sustainability indicators, such as the

contribution of tourism to GDP, are generally related to the economic development of a region, which may not be directly linked to the sustainability of tourism.

The last definition is suggested by Durovic and Loverentjev (2014), who claim that general indicators of sustainable tourism may not be appropriate to monitor the development of specific types of tourism. These scholars have developed specific sustainability indicators for cultural tourism, namely, economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Economic sustainability is related to the possibility of meeting the economic needs of the local community at the destination with the economic possibilities provided by cultural tourism. They describe the indicators of economic sustainability in different ways, such as the economic benefits of cultural tourism for the community at the tourist destination, which depend on the volume of tourism, demand, length of stay and expenditure, and employment generated. Durovic and Loverentjev indicate that economic sustainability can be accomplished through high-quality cultural tourist products that have cultural parts (cultural routes, museums, galleries) and tourist parts (accommodation, transportation, entertainment), supported by institutional preconditions for developing cultural tourism at the destination (laws, regulations, public rates, and state subsidies) (Durovic and Loverentjev 2014).

Social sustainability is related to ensuring that the benefits for the community at the tourist destination and local culture are both tangible and intangible. Durovic and Loverentjev also mention the social sustainability of cultural tourism in terms of local public safety and security, which determines the level of tourist satisfaction with the safety of the destination. The conservation of cultural heritage refers to the safeguarding of the authentic cultural identity of the community at the destination as a contributor to the sustainable social dimension of cultural tourism.

Environmental sustainability is related to respecting the carrying capacity of the ecosystem by reducing all types of pollution. The environmental sustainability of cultural tourism can be ensured through activities like the protection of the natural ecosystem, effective energy use, the management of waste, the management of water, the treatment of wastewater, controlling atmospheric pollution, and the appropriate management of facilities and infrastructure (Durovic and Loverentjev 2014).

The definition by Durovic and Loverentjev is adopted for the current research, as opposed to the definition of Mowforth and Munt (2015), as it is more suitable for the quantitative measurement of the sustainability of tourism. Huttasin (2013) defines the elements of

sustainable tourism by linking its contribution to sustainable regional development, whereas Durovic and Loverentjev (2014) define the elements of sustainability by relating it to tourism. The following section looks at sustainable tourism in Ethiopia's Tourism Development Policy and Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, before operationalising the three dimensions of sustainability for use in this study.

2.3.2 Ethiopian policy framework

In order to discuss the dimensions of sustainable tourism in relation to Ethiopia, it is important to look at the Ethiopian policy framework. The main policy relating to tourism in Ethiopia is the Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy. The policy's vision is 'to see Ethiopia's tourism development led responsibly and sustainably and contributing its share to the development of the country by aligning itself with poverty elimination' (MoCT 2009). Hence, it appears that Ethiopia aspires to develop tourism in a sustainable way in order to meet the development needs of the country. In line with this, Ethiopia has identified a set of objectives that are related to: ensuring the competitiveness of its tourist destinations; the creation of employment opportunities; the wider distribution of income and the enhancement of decision-making opportunities for communities; solving tourism problems; and working towards extending the length of stay of tourists. Realising the positive image of the country through the development of tourism in a responsible and sustainable manner, without disrupting the culture and lifestyle of the people and the natural environment, is also among the objectives set out in the Tourism Development Policy (MoCT 2009).

The policy and strategies for tourism development in Ethiopia appear to support the attainment of the objectives contained in the Tourism Development Policy; they support the development of attractions, promotion of destinations, and changing of the image of the country. These are set in such a way that tourism development contributes to the general development needs of the country. However, in relation to the sustainable development of tourism, the policy does not clearly indicate the direction that needs to be taken to ensure the sustainability of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental elements of sustainable tourism through the minimisation of the negative cultural and environmental effects that tourism can have.

Recently, the need to develop tourism in a sustainable way has attracted the attention of the Government of Ethiopia. This was based on a suggestion made by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an association established by the United Nations to help the Horn of Africa respond to drought and desertification. IGAD observed the challenges of

tourism development in East Africa and urged member states to develop their own tourism master plans, as a guiding framework for the development of tourism. As a result, the Ethiopian government, namely, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in collaboration with IGAD and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), developed the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (2015–2025) (UNECA 2015). This document is based on Ethiopia's current Tourism Development Policy and is being used to guide the development of tourism. The Sustainable Tourism Master Plan has set sustainability as a guiding principle for the strategies and actions taken to ensure the development of tourism in Ethiopia. The dimensions of sustainability set out in the STMP are:

Economic Sustainability and Equity: *Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.*

Environmental Health: *Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.*

Respect for the Social-cultural Authenticity of Host Communities: *Conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. While an integral component of the sustainability criteria and guidelines, special emphasis will be placed upon this given Ethiopia's rich natural, cultural, and archaeological diversity and its strategic importance to the development of the national and regional tourism sector (UNECA 2015).*

The STMP states that these internationally recognised principles, set forth by the World Tourism Organization, will be applied consistently and rigorously in all actions and tasks associated with the implementation of the STMP of Ethiopia (UNECA 2015).

Unfortunately, the STMP directly adopts the international concept of sustainability without operationalising the definition to the context of Ethiopia. The document neither elaborates on the specific elements of sustainability or how to ensure the long-term viability of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental elements of tourism. For example, economic sustainability, which is one of the pillars of sustainability, has been defined in terms of stable employment, income-earning opportunities, and social services to host communities, as well as poverty alleviation. However, these variables, which are supposed to define economic sustainability,

are vague. For example, the STMP does not specify how to create stable employment and does not make clear the type of income-earning opportunities that would contribute to a sustainable economy.

In a similar manner, related to the conservation of the natural environment, the following sentence has been included in the STMP:

It should be appreciated that the success and sustainability of the tourism industry in the country will depend on the extent to which natural resources are sustainably exploited for tourism use. [...] Likewise, though it is currently not a major concern in the country, mass tourism could also have detrimental impacts on natural environments such as destruction of habitats and pollution. It is imperative that the relationship between tourism growth and development and the cultural and natural resources be well managed so as to maintain the symbiotic relationship and to leave it as intact as possible. (UNECA 2015)

When saying that ‘natural resources are sustainably exploited for tourism use’, the STMP does not specify what this means in practical terms – such as how such resources can be exploited sustainably. Moreover, while mass tourism has been recognised for its negative effects on the environment, in Ethiopia it is not yet considered a problem (UNECA 2015). In addition, the official documents do not provide a clear direction for investigating stakeholders’ perceptions of sustainable tourism.

In general, what can be observed from the Tourism Development Policy and STMP is that both focus on the development of tourism; changing the image of the country; developing, using, and maintaining destinations; employment creation; foreign exchange generation; and promoting destinations, which could feed into the development of the country. However, these documents do not indicate how tourism stakeholders should act to be responsible (how to not negatively affect the socio-cultural and environmental elements). Although the STMP has clearly made sustainability one of its guiding principles, the document has not indicated what sustainability means in Ethiopia and how to make tourism sustainable. For this, we need to refer to the literature.

2.3.3 The three dimensions of sustainable tourism

From the literature, we can derive three main dimensions (or elements) of sustainable tourism: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental. These dimensions are explained in detail here.

2.3.3.1 Economic sustainability

The economic dimension refers to all monetary earnings flowing from tourism. The literature suggests that multiple perspectives can be taken on the earnings from tourism. For a sustainable economic dimension, it is not enough to just look at an increase in visitors or revenue – the focus should be on viability. For example, Brohman (1996) argues that in the course of ensuring economic development based on tourism, the long-term effect needs to be considered. Moreover, growing competition and the effect of globalisation require a different way of planning for the sustainable development of tourism (Mowforth and Munt 2015). Based on these arguments, the economic sustainability of tourism is viewed as the viable long-term operation of tourism, from which the benefits serve the long-term needs of the majority, instead of the short-term goals of the few.

Economic sustainability is comprised of income generation and employment opportunities, as well as the attractiveness of the destination; the level of capital investment (for the acquisition of human and material resources) in the tourism sector in that destination, which links the sector to the local economy (Huttasin 2013); and the knowledge creation activities that enhance the quality of labour in the destination, which affects the length of stay and satisfaction of tourists (Mitchell and Coles 2009; Huttasin 2013). Some studies express the viability of economic benefits based on the quality of the tourism products and facilities offered, which together contribute to a sustainable economy (Fetene et al. 2012; Durovic and Loverentjev 2014; Wondowossen et al. 2014; Choi and Sirakaya 2005).

This thesis investigates the perceptions of stakeholders of the sustainability of the economy in terms of their attitude towards the specific elements of the economic dimension of tourism, such as employment activities, income generating activities, and foreign exchange earning opportunities, which are indicated in the STMP of Ethiopia (UNECA 2015) and in most of the academic literature (Choi and Turk 2011; Franzoni 2015; Tanguay et al. 2010; Wondowossen et al. 2014). The current research explores the economic sustainability of tourism in terms of the following:

- The perception of local residents at the destination of the employment and income-generating activities being created for local people
- The perception of all stakeholders (private, public, and community at the destination) about foreign exchange earning activities and the length of stay of tourists

- The perception of government officers (central and regional) related to the government's support and engagement in the enhancement of employment opportunities, income generating activities, and the generation of foreign exchange

2.3.3.2 Social-cultural sustainability

Socio-cultural sustainability is another element of sustainable tourism. The Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy and the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan align social sustainability with economic sustainability. These documents relate social sustainability to the benefits of tourism that enhance social services to the community at the destination and contribute to poverty alleviation (MoCT 2009; UNECA 2015). This approach may help to link the socio-economic effects of tourism to the social and economic development of a country, but it does not distinguish between economic sustainability and social sustainability.

In this thesis, as discussed above, the academic approach of Duovic and Loverentjev (2014) is used to explain sustainable tourism. This approach splits socio-cultural sustainability into two parts: social sustainability and cultural sustainability. The definition used by the STMP (UNECA 2015) describes social sustainability in terms of tourism's contribution to social welfare and poverty reduction. The literature elaborates on social sustainability in terms of the link between tourism and the community at the destination (Mitchell and Coles 2009), i.e., the level of participation of the community in tourism activities that benefit and enhance their livelihood (Mitchell and Coles 2009; Fetene et al. 2012; Huttasin 2013; Durovic and Loverentjev 2014); community-driven or community-based tourism development such as the reinvestment of funds in the community, implementation of a 'local first' policy, the promotion of local businesses, and local participation in tourism; and community participation in decision making, collaboration, information, and communication (Choi and Sirakaya 2005; Huttasin 2013).

The current research explores the social sustainability of tourism in terms of the following:

- The perception of the private and public sectors with regard to the contribution of tourism to societal development and poverty alleviation
- The perception of the private sector and the government with regard to the manner in which they engage with the community at the destination in the implementation of tourism activities

- The perception of the community at the destination with regard to the level and nature of their participation in tourism activities and the nature of the benefits they derive from such activities

Cultural sustainability is expressed in terms of respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of the community at the destination (UNECA 2015). The academic literature recognises the dynamism of culture, including the changes taking place related to lifestyle and continuous interactions with others (Mowforth and Munt 2015). Cultural sustainability is described in terms of the ability to retain or protect elements of the culture of a society, including the features that distinguish it from other societies (Mowforth and Munt 2015); the level of maintenance and conservation of its built and living heritage (Tanguay et al. 2010; Durovic and Loverentjev 2014); and the availability of education and training for the proper interpretation and presentation of information about a site or community (Borges, Carbone, Bushell, and Jaeger 2011; Choi and Sirakaya, 2005). The current research explores the perceptions of the private sector, government, and local communities located around the tourist attractions in relation to the conservation of cultural resources, as well as the way that they engage in tourism activities.

2.3.3.3 Environmental sustainability

Environment sustainability is another important component of tourism. The Ethiopian STMP defines a sustainable environment in terms of the optimal use of environmental resources that are key to the development of tourism and maintenance of the essential ecological processes that help to conserve the natural heritage and biodiversity (UNECA 2015). This is a broad definition of environmental sustainability. The literature describes environmental sustainability in terms of the protection of physical and manmade resources, ethics, policies, standards, and the minimisation of negative impacts (Choi and Sirakaya 2005); the level of investment made for the conservation and preservation of biodiversity (Huttasin 2013); the care and conservation of endangered species that attract tourists (Choi and Sirakaya 2005); the minimisation of pollution to air, water, and mineral resources, as well as noise and waste management (Tanguay et al. 2013; Durovic and Loverentjev 2014); and the education of the community at the destination and of visitors about the need to take care of and conserve the natural attractions (Tsefaye et al. 2015). The current study investigates how tourism stakeholders perceive the environmental sustainability of tourism, including:

- The perception of the private sector (hoteliers and tour operators) about the conservation of natural and manmade environmental attractions

- The perception of government officials at the central and regional levels about the conservation of natural attractions
- The perception (and engagement) of the community at the destination about the protection of environmental attractions

2.3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research operationalises the elements of sustainable tourism based on input from the literature and the Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy in order to understand the attitude of stakeholders (the government, private sector, and residents at attraction sites) regarding sustainable tourism and the goal of sustainability in tourism. It establishes that sustainable tourism requires the minimisation of the effect of tourism on the environmental and cultural resources used for tourism purposes. This is believed to be accomplished through the support provided by stakeholders for sustainable tourism development (Brown 2004; Choi and Sirakaya 2005). The economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism all require the commitment of different stakeholders who contribute to the sustainability of these elements. For example, private sector stakeholders (such as the accommodation providers, tour companies, travel agencies, and transportation providers) play a key role in the economic sustainability of tourism through the provision of employment opportunities, among other things. The cultural dimension involves local communities, as they are providers of the culture component of tourism, as well as other stakeholders, such as museums. The ecologic dimension requires the involvement of private investors who are engaged in lodge and resort services, the community that neighbours the tourist attraction, the government, and nature itself, which determines the future of animals and plants.

The SDGs, in particular SDG 17, clearly identify the partnership between policy makers, the private sector, and the community (civil society) as one of the main goals and as key to attaining the other SDGs (UNWTO and UNDP 2017). SDG 17 (partnerships for the SDGs) specifically states that tourism can strengthen public-private partnerships and engage all stakeholders to work together to achieve the SDGs (Mead 2018). Therefore, in expanding the view of sustainability beyond the traditional economic or ecological approach, there is a need to consider a greater and more complex range of stakeholders to enhance the sustainability of tourism (Franzoni 2015). How can these different stakeholders, who could have different interests and motivations, come together to work towards ensuring sustainable tourism? This issue has attracted the attention of scholars and remains relevant (Getz and Timur 2005; Waligo

et al. 2013; Bramwell et al. 2017). The current research aims to investigate the development of stakeholder collaboration and its influence on stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism (based on the three pillars of sustainability) and its implementation. The next section looks at the literature on stakeholder theory, stakeholder collaboration, and the role of stakeholders in the sustainable development of tourism.

2.4 Defining stakeholders and stakeholder collaboration

The previous section outlined the dimensions of sustainability and the major area of emphasis of the current study in analysing sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. Sustainable tourism is a multi-dimensional concept that requires the involvement of various interest groups who play a role in implementing sustainable tourism (Waligo et al. 2015). The attainment of sustainable tourism requires the recognition of tourism as a system of continuous interactions among stakeholders who balance the use and conservation of tourism resources (Jamal and Stronza 2009; Merinero-Rodríguez and Pulido-Fernández 2016). This section defines the terms stakeholders and stakeholder collaboration, in preparation for the sections that follow, which look at the social exchange theory as a theory for analysing stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism and the factors influencing stakeholder collaboration, before presenting a framework for the analysis of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and its impact on sustainable tourism.

2.4.1 Definition of stakeholders

Most definitions of the term 'stakeholder' consider a stakeholder to be an actor who can directly or indirectly affect and be affected by the actions of others (Freeman and Reed 1983, cited in Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, and Colle 2010). This definition of stakeholders is based on the argument that the traditional stakeholder management approach focuses on a dyadic relation between an organisation and its stakeholders (the shareholders and employees). The traditional approach of stakeholder management appears to have overlooked the influence of other internal and external stakeholders, beyond shareholders and employees; i.e., it fails to recognise an organisation as a system of interactions and interrelations among different parties (Freeman et al. 2010; Waligo et al. 2013).

Since its formulation, the definition by Freeman et al. (2010) has been widely applied in different studies, including tourism research (Aas et al. 2005; Byrd 2007; Canizares, Canalejo, and Tabales 2016; Getz and Timur 2004). In an earlier publication, Jamal and Getz (1995)

contextualised the actors involved in tourism and defined stakeholders as ‘actors with an interest in a common problem or issue and includ[ing] all individuals, groups, or organisations directly influenced by the actions of others’ (*ibid.*, p. 188). This definition seems to be directly related to Freeman’s definition of stakeholders and embraces a wide range of actors.

Similarly, Jamal and Stronza (2009) define stakeholders as those individuals, groups, or organisations that have a stake or interest in a common problem or issue and that are directly influenced by the actions others take to solve problems. This definition seems simplistic, as it only considers those stakeholders who can be influenced by the actions of others. However, both definitions refer to a stakeholder as anybody who has a stake or concern in a problem or an issue.

Most of the early tourism studies that investigated stakeholders’ issues were referring to organisational-level stakeholders (Merinero-Rodríguez and Pulido-Fernández 2016). However, recent studies on stakeholders in tourism suggest the need to consider the community at the destination as stakeholders, on the basis that the community also has a direct stake in tourism and tourism activities, especially in protected areas, such as parks and cultural attractions (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Jamal and Stronza 2009). In addition, others (Paloniemi and Tikka 2008) have suggest the consideration of actors that are not directly affiliated with tourism, including international development organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Moreover, nature (the natural environment) is also regarded as a stakeholder that can be affected by tourism and the actions of other stakeholders (Driscoll and Starik 2004; Jamal and Stronza 2009).

Based on the production and consumption of tourism products, recent developments in tourism also recognise tourists as stakeholders, on the basis that tourists also play a role as producers (co-creators) of tourism experiences (Richards 2012; Campos, Mendes, Valle, and Scott 2016). But in the case of developing countries such as Ethiopia, because of the relatively low level of tourism development, much of the international tourism appears to be controlled by chain hotels, tour operators, and event organisers. Hence, there is not as much room for co-creation as there might be in a more developed country. Co-creation with tourists is, therefore, an issue that should be considered once a tourist destination is well developed.

In general, it can be inferred from the above that the stakeholders in tourism are many. As such, they contribute to the complexity of the tourism system. In this study, the focus is on the stakeholders that directly influence, and could be directly influenced by, the development of

sustainable tourism. The approach of this research relies on the argument that sustainability, in the case of tourism, greatly relies on the level of support by the destination community, who exploit the environmental resources and benefit from tourism (Richards and Hall 2003; Paul 2014).

In relation to the definition of community, Jamal and Getz (1995) consider a community as those people living in the same locality at the tourist destination. However, there are different types of community members that assume different roles and hold different positions; this definition does not make such distinctions clear. Richards and Hall (2003) define destination communities as those communities different from the international community. Hence, the current study uses the community at the destination, the private sector (accommodation providers and tour operators), and the government (central and regional) as units of analysis to investigate the development of stakeholder collaboration and the perceptions of stakeholders about sustainable tourism. Figure 2.1 indicates how tourists reach a tourist destination, i.e., either through tour companies that provide tourists with package of products, including the visit to a destination, or just as free and independent travellers who visit destinations freely based on their schedule. As explained before, this study will focus on destination based stakeholders that are considered to play a direct role in tourism development and management. As such, stakeholders are viewed as those individuals, organisations (from both private and public sectors) or groups (destination communities residing around tourist attractions) that can affect or be affected by the development of tourism.

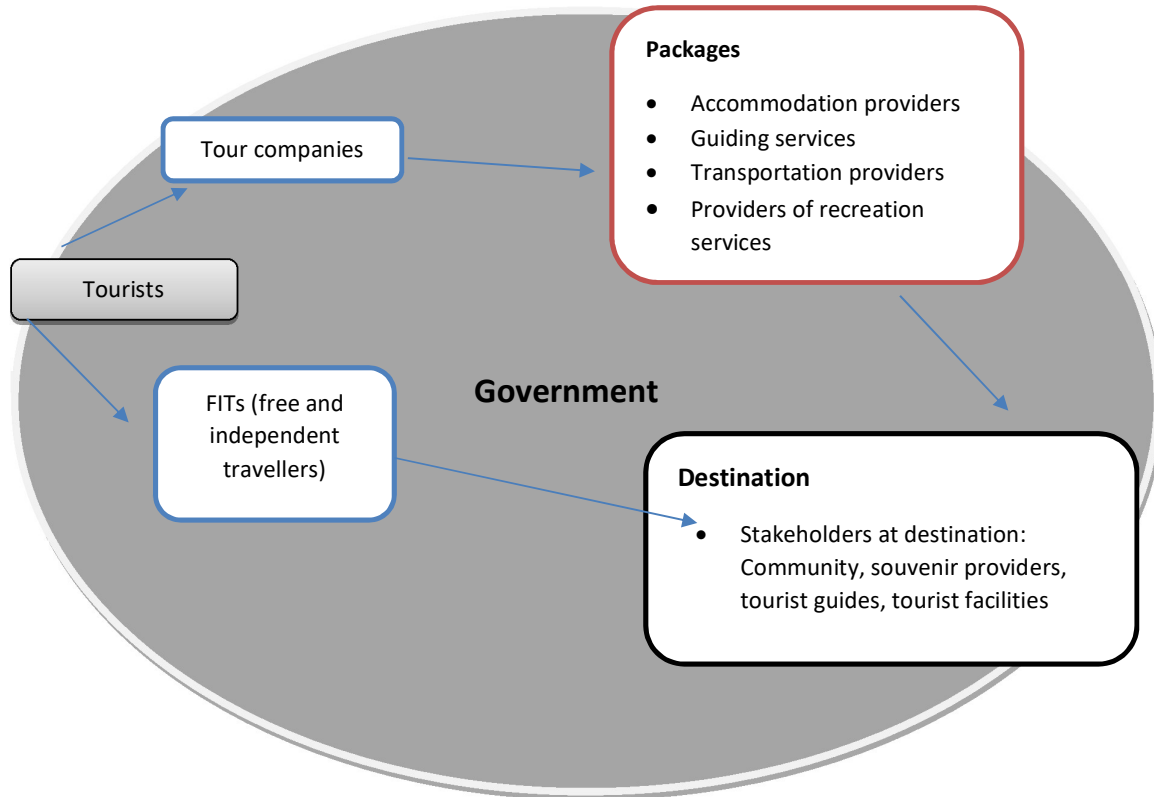


Figure 2.1. Tourism system – key destination stakeholders

In line with the aim of this research, namely, the investigation of the nature of stakeholder collaboration and the perception of stakeholders regarding sustainable tourism, this thesis focuses on the route by which tourists come to Ethiopia. On this route, the tour companies are the major actors between the tourists, tourist facilities, and the tourist destination. Upon their arrival, the tour company takes the tourists to a hotel and destination, depending on their arrangement. At the particular destination, the hotelier hosts the guests who come through the tour company. Finally, the community near the tourist destination to be visited (the local residents) are involved in tourism activities through the products and services they offer and play a part in determining the satisfaction level of the tourists. Moreover, the local residents at the destination community can positively or negatively influence the survival of the environment and cultural attractions.

Besides the service providers and community, the government plays a major role in sustainable tourism development by developing policies and monitoring their implementation. In general, the aforementioned group of stakeholders (the private sector, destination community, and government) are perceived to influence the nature of sustainable tourism at a destination. Therefore, this research explores the nature of the relationship among these stakeholders in order to understand the nature of their collaboration and their perceptions about sustainable tourism.

2.4.2 Definition of stakeholder collaboration

This section looks at collaboration, as opposed to cooperation and partnership, and defines what stakeholder collaboration means. Collaboration is a dynamic concept that supposes flexible interaction among actors, unlike the static concepts of ‘coordination’ or ‘cooperation’ (Kernel 2005). Collaboration allows stakeholders to flexibly contribute to new ideas and challenges in order to improve group decision-making processes. Collaboration is a form of group behaviour in which stakeholders act together to attain a common goal, unlike cooperation, where people act together on a short-term basis while working separately towards their own goals (Polenske 2004). Jamal and Getz (1995) add that cooperation involves working together towards a common end, but it does not necessarily require the conditions that collaboration requires.

In the academic literature, the terms collaboration and partnership are sometimes used interchangeably (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Jamal and Stronza 2009; Graci 2013), but they are also differentiated in terms of scope. According to Selin and Chevez (1995b), partnership is only one form of collaboration and refers to an agreement that takes place between small groups to reach a common agreement to deal with specific issues.

In relation to organisations, scholars (Hardy, Lawrence, and Grant 2005; Lawrence, Hardy, and Phillips 2002) define collaboration as an inter-organisational process that balances divergent stakeholder concerns and produces innovative and synergistic solutions to complex problems. Collaboration gives stakeholders an advantage that they cannot get by working alone and helps them to solve problems that cannot be solved by a single actor working alone (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Savage et al. 2010). In simple terms, collaboration is viewed as a joint activity among different actors within a network (Muijs, West, and Ainscow 2010). Collaboration is also viewed as a process of joint decision making in which the decision makers share power

and assume collective responsibility for their actions and the consequences of such actions (Selin and Chavez 1995b).

Early advocates of collaboration in tourism studies (Jamal and Getz 1995) define it as a process of joint decision making among autonomous, key stakeholders of an inter-organisational, community in a tourism domain to resolve the planning problems of the domain and to manage issues related to the planning and development of the domain. This definition includes the decision makers in the tourism domain and acknowledges their importance in decision making related to problem solving. Furthermore, collaboration is viewed as a process that leads to the sharing of resources and ideas and the implementation of ideas, as well as creative methods to deal with solutions to complex problems (Graci 2013). These definitions highlight the significance of collaboration among stakeholders in order to jointly deal with issues that are common concerns for stakeholders and that cannot be solved by a single actor. As seen earlier, sustainable tourism is a domain-level issue that cannot be dealt with by a single actor or stakeholder. Based on this, for the purpose of this thesis, collaboration is defined as a process by which the stakeholders in the tourism system jointly work towards ensuring sustainable tourism development.

In the planning and management of a tourism destination, collaboration is the means by which the fragmented elements of the tourism system are integrated and coordinated towards the development of tourism (Jamal and Getz 1995). It is often argued that in order to attain a common goal, collaboration requires stakeholders to leave their individual interests aside and work together harmoniously (Arenas 2010). However, some parties (e.g., Gray 1985) are against the notion that the parties must give up leverage or compromise their interests for the sake of reaching consensus. According to Gray (1985), collaboration does not mean compromise or giving up power, but rather sharing power, although this requires any existing power disparities to be rectified first (Kramer 1990). For instance, if the Ministry of Trade grants permission to an investor to operate a lodge in a given community, the business may not succeed without the willingness and cooperation of the community (i.e., the safety and security of the business depends on the willingness and support of the society in which the business is located) (Stone 2012). Therefore, there needs to be a consensus among government officials regulating tourism and the local community in order to create a conducive environment for investors, as well as visitors, without compromising the interests of any single actor.

Collaboration between stakeholders can take any form. For instance, the stakeholders could engage voluntarily, based on their own ideas and motivations. This is called ‘spontaneous’ or ‘voluntary participation’, where the community, for example, decides to take part in the development of tourism on its own initiative without being pressured by external bodies. There is ‘induced participation’, in which the stakeholders may suggest ideas or give input, while the final decision is ultimately made by tourism authorities. This kind of community participation is token, and decision-making power is largely vested in the hands of the authorities. Another type is ‘coercive participation’, which refers to the situation whereby tourism development is initiated with the apparent aim of meeting the needs of destination residents, while in reality external stakeholders, such as statutory authorities, tourists, or tour operators, are benefiting most from the arrangement (Saufi, O'Brien, and Wilkins 2014; Tosun 1999). In the case of voluntary community engagement, the stakeholders’ willingness to collaborate determines their engagement, while in the other forms of community engagement people are forced to collaborate regardless of their interests. The current study investigates and characterises the nature of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia.

The next section discusses the theories of collaboration in order to develop a conceptual framework for the analysis of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia.

2.5 Theories of collaboration

This section introduces social exchange theory and the theory of stakeholder collaboration, which are used in this thesis to analyse stakeholder relationships, before setting out the phases of the collaboration process.

2.5.1 Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory explains why actors collaborate (or why they do not collaborate) in terms of an exchange process. ‘Social exchange is a two-sided mutually contingent and mutually rewarding process involving transactions, or simply an exchange’ (Emerson 1976). It necessitates a two-sided reinforcing relationship, i.e., the mutual interdependence of parties in an exchange in which they reciprocate. As such, the decision of individuals to engage in an exchange relationship depends on their evaluation of the costs and benefits of the relationship. Based on this evaluation, individuals may decide to enter into a relationship in which their benefits can be maximised (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012). An individual’s perception of the

costs and benefits of the relationship could lead them to engage in a recurrent process of exchange (Nunkoo 2016).

In defining an 'exchange', scholars have highlighted the importance of reciprocity (Emerson 1976; Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005; Presenza and Cipollina 2009). Reciprocity can make actors mutually interdependent, in an exchange in which both benefit. However, the kind of reward to be reciprocated, be it in the form of tangible (material objects) or intangible resources, is the subject of debate. Emerson (1976) claims that the exchange process among a network of actors does not necessarily result in a flow of only material objects; rather, he argues that other non-material rewards could reinforce the exchange process. In addition to the object of exchange, social exchange theory has been challenged on different bases, such as its theoretical base and the conceptual definition of the constructs related to the exchange process.

For example, Emerson (1976, 336) argues that 'it [the social exchange theory] is not a theory; rather, it is a frame of reference within which many theories, some micro and some more macro, can speak to one another, whether in argument or in mutual support'. Emerson explains that social exchange theory is not an independent theory, but rather borrows different concepts from sociology, economics, and other disciplines, and does not have a strong enough theoretical basis to stand alone. This debate has been continued by other scholars (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005) in order to make the theory less ambiguous and more applicable.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) analysed social exchange theory based on a review of different organisational studies. They identified different areas of concern related to the conceptual ambiguity of social exchange theory, which includes lack of clarity of the rules and norms of exchange among the parties, the nature of the resources to be exchanged, and the relationships that emerge out of the exchange process. First, related to the rules of exchange, these scholars argue that reciprocity is the only principle that is considered in an exchange relationship, even though there are different rules that individuals set as decision rules. These rules include:

- **Altruism:** in which one offers something to the other without expecting reciprocity
- **Group gain:** which may not involve dyadic exchange on an individual basis, but instead the gains are accounted for by the group as a whole and individuals in a group must be flexible in order to contribute to the success of the group and share from the group gains

- **Competition:** the opposite of altruism, in which case one may decide to harm the other party for individual benefit, although such an act may backfire
- **Rationality:** where people decide on the means and end of their relationship based on some logic (reasoning)
- **Status consistency:** where a benefit is allocated to an individual based on the social status he/she holds

These rules guide individuals when entering into an exchange relationship, which does not necessarily involve negotiation or reciprocity (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005; Paraskevaïdis and Andriotis 2017). This points to the possibility of flexibly applying the exchange rules with or without involving reciprocity in the social exchange context. For example, the application of the social exchange theory in a marriage can be explained without involving the reciprocity rule: In Ethiopia the union between the two families of the couple does not rely on any rule of negotiation or reciprocity; instead the people can rationally choose and decide on the union or base it on the social status they hold. In a similar manner, in tourism activities, where international organisations support tourism development in a given country, reciprocity might not be involved – it could be based on altruism or the rationality of the donors.

Second, related to the resource of exchange, the economic value of the exchange is most commonly considered, although other socio-emotional values (such as love, status, information) and goods and services could serve as an element of the exchange (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005; Nakonezny and Denton 2008; Wang and Noe 2010). Studies have found no clear link between these exchange resources and the rules of exchange that guide the relationship. For example, the exchange between a married couple could result in no material exchange between the couple; rather the couple derive psychological benefits such as gratification and satisfaction (love) from their relationship (Nakonezny and Denton 2008). The relationship between tourism and tourists could involve the exchange of non-material goods, especially as tourism has intangible aspects such as experience. In a similar manner, the relationships between tourism stakeholders could be considered a reflection of the social status of the stakeholders or a form of voluntarism, which generates psychological satisfaction, for example, through the legitimisation or recognition given to a person for his/her participation in community-based tourism activities (Coulson, MacLaren, McKenzie, and O'Gorman 2014; Paraskevaïdis and Andriotis 2017).

It can be inferred from such an argument that the social exchange framework can provide a flexible interpretation of the exchange relationships, which could depend on any object of

exchange and the possibility of applying different rules. Such flexibility allows for the wide application of the social exchange relationship and the development of the subject of social exchange theory, but it could also lead to criticism.

Finally, the third point that Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) make is related to the controversy over the nature of the resulting social exchange relationships (outcomes). Blau (1964) argues that 'only social exchange tends to engender feelings of personal obligations, gratitude, and trust; purely economic exchange as such does not' (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005). However, the review by Cropanzano and Mitchell reveals the possibility that economic transactions could also lead to social exchange relationships over time.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) focus on the need to understand the difference between relationships as an interdependent exchange (transaction) and as an interpersonal attachment resulting from exchanges. They say that the notion of exchange as a series of interdependent transactions that result in a sort of interpersonal attachment is fundamental to social exchange theory. It is worth noting the point made by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), that parties can exchange anything in any form. They talk of two possible scenarios:

- A social transaction in a social relationship and an economic transaction in an economic relationship: In this case, there is a match between the form of the transaction and the resulting relationship. This implies that the deal between the parties is direct and predictable and the match expected. The match between the form of the transaction and the resulting relationship could be the result of a formal contractual agreement reached on the points.
- An economic transaction that results in a social relationship or a social transaction that results from an economic relationship: These two scenarios are dependent on the state of trust between the parties in the relationship and the nature of the interaction(s) between the parties (i.e., the perpetuation of interactions). We can infer from this second case that the relationship between the transactions and the resulting form of relationship depends on certain interpersonal factors between the two parties, which are not legally governed.

The above scenarios indicate the possibility of any kind of relationship from any kind of transaction and, as such, there would not be any clear expectation about the outcome of the relationship unless there was a legally-binding document guiding the relationship between the

parties. In general, the debates based on the nature of the transaction and the resulting relationship could provide a good lens through which to analyse the relationship between tourism stakeholders and the factors that influence their relationship.

A number of studies have elaborated on the applicability of social exchange theory to tourism studies (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, and Vogt 2005; Ap 1992; Byrd, Bosley, and Dronberger 2009; Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005; Nunkoo 2016; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012; Teye, Sirakaya, and Sönmez 2002). Recently, Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, Kock, and Ramayah (2015) used the revised assumptions of the framework of social exchange theory based on the work of Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) to investigate the perception of residents around a tourism destination with regard to tourism development. These scholars investigated the applicability of the six rules of exchange (altruism, competition, group gain, transaction, rationality, and status consistency) to explain the residents' perceptions of tourism development in the Lenggong Valley in Malaysia using a quantitative approach. They found that the exchange rules, which do not necessarily involve a transaction, explain the residents' perceptions of tourism's support for development. For example, they found that some rules of exchange, such as altruism and group gain, were relevant; i.e., residents with a high level of concern for environmental protection showed less concern about the positive impacts of tourism, because they favoured environmental protection, which benefited society (group gain) and sacrificed their own interest in economic gain for the interests of society (altruism). Nunkoo (2016) supports the premise that social exchange leads to a longer-lasting relationship than economic exchange. He focuses on the need to understand the elements of exchange that guide the relationship. Based on such premises, the current study tries to identify and elaborate on the factors that facilitate or hinder the collaboration between stakeholders.

2.5.2 From stakeholder theory to stakeholder collaboration

Stakeholder theory has evolved as a substitute for the theory of the firm, which focuses on the interaction of a firm with the market in order to determine market price (Savage et al. 2010). The theory of the firm mainly focuses on the interests of a firm; however, the introduction of stakeholder theory provides the chance to incorporate the interests of stakeholders that can affect or be affected by the organisation's decision (Savage et al. 2010). Stakeholder theory places an organisation at the centre of decision making. Until recently, the literature has referred to Freeman's definition of stakeholder theory (Freeman et al. 2010), which defines the relationship between stakeholders.

However, the approach of putting the organisation at the centre has faced many challenges on account of the fact that such an approach may make stakeholders less powerful and mere recipients of the decisions of organisations (Savage et al. 2010). Moreover, the growing interest of the public in resources and the environmental impact of businesses has challenged this traditional hierarchical approach in which organisations were a major decision maker. Such growing interest (and influence) of the public has called for a collaborative approach to management, in which the managers no longer play the role of controller or advisor, but instead need a new set of skills through which they can empower stakeholders and facilitate interaction (Selin and Chevez 1995b).

This kind of argument has brought about the theory of stakeholder collaboration, which responds to the need to move from an individualistic approach to a group approach to decision making. The theory of collaboration has evolved from the field of organisational behaviour, which was developed to guide organisations towards collaborating, instead of conflicting and competing, over limited resources (Gray 1985; Selin and Chevez 1995b).

The early advocates of collaboration in tourism planning and destination development (Jamal and Getz 1995) argued that ‘while inter-organizational collaboration is receiving widespread attention in several research disciplines, the potential application of this emerging body of knowledge for managing the complex and dynamic tourism domain has emerged recently’, pointing to the limited availability of literature on stakeholder collaboration in the field of tourism. More recent reviews on stakeholder relationships in tourism also show little progress, especially on stakeholder collaboration, which promotes tourism as a system made up of a range of stakeholders extending from organisations to (grassroots) communities (Merinero-Rodríguez and Pulido-Fernández 2016).

As seen in the previous section, the stakeholders of tourism are not limited to organisational stakeholders and can include the environment and future generations, who could determine the sustainable development of tourism (Byrd 2007). The multi-stakeholder nature of tourism requires an analysis that is based on the relationship among multiple actors, who work together to solve complex problems such as the effect of tourism on the environment or its contribution to poverty alleviation.

One of the theories that has been extended to explain collaborative relationships among stakeholders in the tourism system is Gray’s (1985) inter-organisational collaboration theory. This collaborative framework was originally developed by McCann (1983) for social problem

solving interventions. Later, Gray extended the framework to the analysis of organisational-level stakeholder collaboration. The importance of this theory for analysing the framework of collaboration has been widely acknowledged in tourism studies (Gray 1985; Jamal and Getz 1995; Selin and Chevez 1995a; De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Graci 2013). Gray's inter-organisational collaboration theory was based on the assumption that collaboration is the means through which different organisations come together to solve domain-level problems that cannot be solved by a single organisation alone (Gray 1985; Selin and Chevez 1995a). It is built on the following key principles:

- Stakeholders are interdependent
- Solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences
- Joint ownership of decisions is vital
- Stakeholders assume joint responsibility for the future direction of a domain
- The partnership remains dynamic and emergent (Jamal and Getz 1995; De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Graci 2013)

These principles advocate for the interdependence of stakeholders, who complement each other and constructively and jointly own decisions. With regard to the nature of the stakeholder relationship, the need for interaction evolves dynamically depending on the need for joint decision making or problem solving.

2.5.3 Stages of development of collaboration

Based on the above assumptions, Gray sets up a framework for collaboration that constitutes three phases: problem setting, direction setting, and structuring. Gray advocates for the autonomy of the decision makers (i.e., while stakeholders exercise joint decision making, they retain independent decision-making power within the scope of the shared rule) (Jamal and Getz 1995). The problem setting stage is mainly concerned with the identification of the 'problem domain', the issues that need collaboration, and the legitimate stakeholders that have the capacity to be involved in the collaboration. Here, the problem domain refers to the issue that is common to the stakeholders and that requires the involvement of the stakeholders to address it (Gray 1985). The success of the problem setting stage depends on the stakeholders' understanding of each other's legitimacy; the existence of a skilled, capable, and unbiased convener who can lead the group; a degree of shared power among the stakeholders; the stakeholders' positive belief in the outcomes of the collaboration, i.e., that it will contribute to solving their problems (this enhances the commitment of the stakeholders); and adequate

resources to convene and enable the collaboration process (Gray 1985; Jamal and Getz 1995; De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Jamal and Stronza 2009).

The completion of the problem setting stage leads to the second stage, the direction setting stage. At this stage, stakeholders deal with the problem in depth to form a common understanding. De Araujo and Bramwell (2002) articulate the values (such as policies, rules, and frameworks) that guide their activities in this stage: The stakeholders set a framework within which they can work together and evaluate each other's actions by setting rules that guide the stakeholders' working relationship.

The success of direction setting depends on the coincidence of the values that guide the stakeholders; i.e., the stakeholders must be able to develop a sense of common purpose and have values that guide them through the process. At this stage, sub-groups can be formed, which contributes to the success of problem solving at the domain level. Joint information searches can facilitate the process of problem solving. Exploring the opinion of the group (and sub-groups) and reaching an agreement is part of the process (Gray 1985; Wood and Gray 1991).

The completion of the second stage leads to the third stage, which is called structuring. During the third stage of the collaboration, relationships are institutionalised; i.e., a long-term structure for the interaction is established to support and sustain the problem solving activities of the stakeholders (Gray 1985; Kramer 1990). The success of the third stage depends on the stakeholders' understanding of the importance of ongoing interdependence among them or an external mandate by the government that requires formalisation of the collaboration, as well as a geographical location of the stakeholders that enables them to meet face-to-face (Gray 1985). The third stage of collaboration is considered optional and is undertaken depending on the nature and importance of the problem domain and the objective of collaboration (Jamal and Getz 1995). If the problem domain is important and the intended objective needs continuous collaboration, the collaboration tends to be institutionalised to facilitate the following up of implementation. In addition, the scope and scale of collaboration could also facilitate or hinder the institutionalisation of the shared goal (Jamal and Stronza 2009); i.e., the number of collaborative members and the required amount of collaboration determines if the stakeholder collaboration progresses or not. Figure 2.2 summarises the specific activities performed at each stage of the collaboration, as identified by Gray.

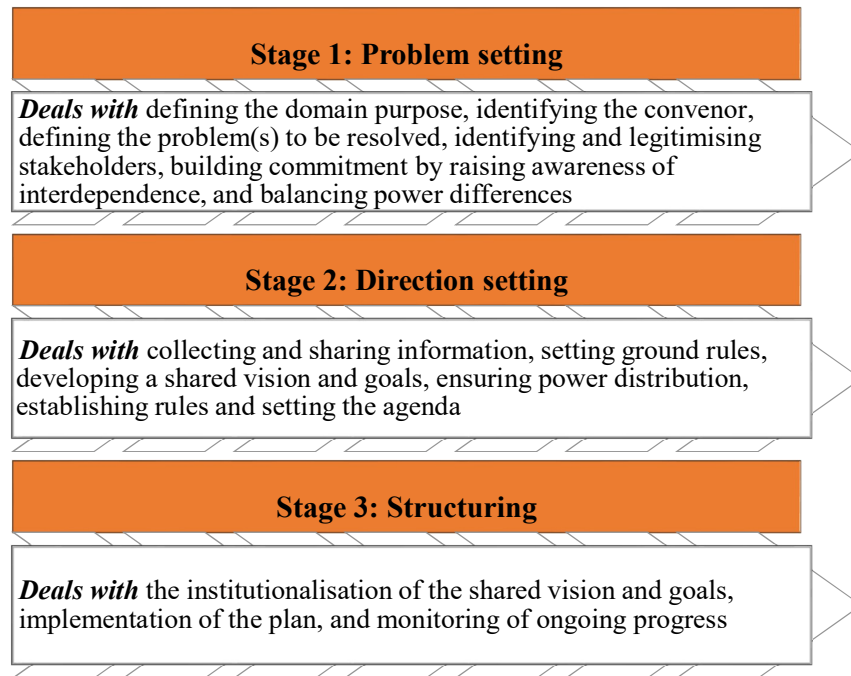


Figure 2.2. The process of collaboration

Source: Gray 1985, p. 918

The three stages of collaboration are interrelated, continuous, and open ended (McCann 1983; Gray 1985; Jamal and Getz 1995). The stages are interrelated, in the sense that the next stage should follow the preceding stage. For example, without identifying and involving the right mix of stakeholders (stage 1), it is futile to try to set a ‘shared rule’ that governs the whole range of stakeholders (stage 2). Collaboration must take place continuously, because in different societies there are always recurrent domain-level problems that need the collaborative efforts of stakeholders. The collaborative problem solving process needs to be open ended in order to entertain problems and allow the process to be adjusted to deal with the problems that might arise at different times (Selin and Chevez 1995b). The continuous evolution of collaboration makes it an emergent, adaptive process (Graci 2013).

This framework provides a good basis for understanding the nature of collaboration among different stakeholders at the organisational and community levels in tourism planning and development (Jamal and Getz 1995; Jamal and Stronza 2009). For example, Jamal and Getz (1995) demonstrate and propose the adoption of the collaborative framework of Gray (1985), on the basis that tourism is a public good and involves domain-level issues whose development requires the involvement and collaboration of various stakeholders. These scholars have adopted the three-stage process of collaboration of stakeholders and discuss the relevance of

collaboration for community-based tourism planning in light of the importance of collaboration for solving planning issues and the development of a destination through the coordination of various stakeholders.

At the same time, Selin and Chevez (1995b) adapt the model of collaboration for environmental management, on the basis that collaboration can help to solve environmental resource management problems at the domain level. These scholars support the claim of Gray that the process-oriented model of collaboration must be adaptable to the unique demands of the situation. They further extend and elaborate on the model of collaboration by identifying the antecedents and consequences of collaboration, which pass through problem identification, direction setting, and structuring stages.

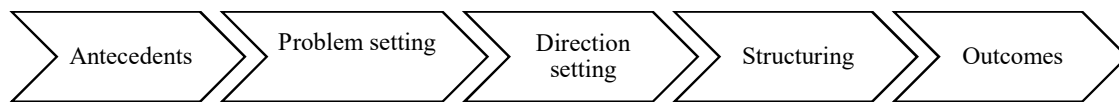


Figure 2.3. Modified framework of stakeholder collaboration

Source: Adapted from Graci 2013 and Selin and Chevez 1995b

According to Graci (2013) and Selin and Chevez (1995b), collaboration is an emergent process that is initiated based on antecedent factors, such as an already existing relationship, the existence of a strong leader who can determine a problem and initiate collaboration, a crisis that is commonly observed by different stakeholders, or the existence of a third party or broker who can initiate the collaboration. Based on this, the initiation of collaboration by stakeholders can lead to the problem setting, direction setting, and structuring stages. The overall process of stakeholder collaboration can lead to a certain outcome, which can be determined in terms of the impact of the action taken or benefit derived from the collaboration.

Selin and Chevez (1995b) developed a collaborative model for environmental resource management based on the case studies conducted on environmental resource management. In the same year, these scholars (Selin and Chavez 1995a) developed an evolutionary tourism partnership model. Later on, their work was applied to tourism studies, especially in the area of environmental conservation (Jamal and Getz 1995; De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Jamal and Stronza 2009; Graci 2013). De Araujo and Bramwell (2002) applied the framework of collaboration to investigate the nature of partnerships among regional tourism officers in Brazil. They found that the framework best explains collaboration at the regional level, but they suggest that the antecedents of collaboration, identified by Selin and Chevez (1995a) as

separate factors causing collaboration, do not have to be viewed as only the cause (antecedent), but are rather contextual factors that could influence the whole process of collaboration. They identified that factors such as incentives for working jointly, the leadership skills of the convenor, and the tourism resources of the destination area can alter (influence) the process and outcome of collaboration at any stage.

Overall, it can be said that these studies have indicated the applicability of the theory of collaboration on various scales of stakeholders and regions. However, these studies did not indicate the effect of collaboration, but merely described the process of collaboration. Such a gap in tourism studies conducted on stakeholder relationships has been confirmed by a recent review of studies on stakeholder relationships by Merinero-Rodríguez and Pulido-Fernández (2016). Most of the studies conducted on stakeholder collaboration focus on the nature and process of collaboration, with little attempt to link the effect of collaboration to the development of tourism.

The recent work of Graci (2013), however, should be considered for its contribution to linking partnerships with the sustainability of ecotourism. Graci (2013) examined the success of collaboration in the form of a multi-stakeholder partnership on the Gili Islands in Indonesia through the framework developed by Selin and Chevez (1995b). She found that despite the challenges the island faces, the continuous and successful collaboration of stakeholders has helped the island to overcome the challenges of development and allowed the residents to continue to enjoy the benefits of tourism. However, like the work of the above scholars, the work of Graci (2013) is a single case study and, therefore, does not provide an adequate basis for understanding the influence of stakeholder collaboration on sustainable tourism. Moreover, the focus of Graci (2013) is related to a single element of sustainable tourism – the environment – through the investigation of ecotourism.

This thesis builds on the work of Graci (2013) and Selin and Chavez (1995b) for the purpose of examining the nature of multi-stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia. This model could help us to examine the antecedents of collaboration in Ethiopia, the process of collaboration (problem setting, direction setting, and structuring), the implementation of collaboration, and the outcome of collaboration by linking it with sustainable tourism (based on the three elements: economic, environmental, and socio-cultural heritage). Such an approach of linking multi-stakeholder collaboration with the sustainability of tourism could contribute to discussions on stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism.

In general, although collaboration can positively contribute to the attainment of sustainable tourism, the process is influenced by different factors. The next section looks at the factors that have been indicated in the academic literature as influencers of the success of collaboration.

2.6 Factors influencing stakeholder collaboration

Stakeholder collaboration is a complex undertaking. Identifying the framework of collaboration alone is not sufficient to ensure successful collaboration. This requires an understanding of how to enhance the collaboration by identifying the factors that influence the success of the collaboration (Gray 1985; Selin and Chevez 1995a; Waligo et al. 2013; McComb et al. 2017). As seen in the previous section, collaboration theory provides a descriptive basis through which relationships can be investigated. But it does not explain the factors that could influence stakeholder collaboration and the effect that collaboration could have on certain outcomes.

Based on a theoretical review, Savage et al. (2010) classified the factors that contribute to the success of collaboration: (1) Factors related to the appreciative linkage (for example, the existence of shared goals and recognition of the importance of interdependence). These are factors that lead to the recognition by stakeholders of the importance of collaboration and the coincidence of their values. (2) Factors related to the structural features of collaboration. These are factors that determine the nature of the structure of collaboration, such as how tightly coupled and institutionalised the structure of collaboration is (for example, the degree of shared power among the stakeholders). (3) Factors that are related to processual issues such as the degree of trust among partners and the quality of leadership (Savage et al. 2010). In general, these factors are influencers of the relationship among the organisations involved in collaboration. Whether these factors also apply in the same way in the tourism system, which includes the community as a stakeholder, has not been well discussed in the academic literature. In the following section, the factors influencing stakeholder collaboration and the attainment of sustainable development of tourism are discussed.

2.6.1 Recognition of legitimacy and mutual interdependence

The role of stakeholders indicates their influential capacity, which determines if they are legitimate stakeholders (Jamal and Getz 1995; Sripun, Yongvanit, and Pratt 2017). Legitimacy determines who is entitled to influence the decision-making process (Lockwood 2010). Legitimate stakeholders are those who are believed to be appropriate and have the right to

participate in decision making related to tourism activities. Therefore, understanding and determining who the legitimate stakeholders are is a crucial step in identifying stakeholders (Franco and Estevão 2010; Jamal and Getz 1995; Lockwood, Davidson, Curtis, Stratford, and Griffith 2010). Identifying legitimate stakeholders and including all of them can, however, be difficult, as stakeholders often have different interests and motivations. At the same time, excluding stakeholders poses a difficulty, because those groups that are not considered may question the legitimacy of the process (Kramer 1990; Wood and Gray 1991).

In tourism planning, Jamal and Getz (1995) focus on the importance of considering and including legitimate stakeholders in the planning for tourism development. The failure to recognise and involve legitimate stakeholders at the initial phase could lead to implementation difficulties while executing the plan, for technical or political reasons. In relation to inter-organisational collaboration, Gray (1985) indicates the conditions for considering the legitimacy of a stakeholder. These include: the right of a stakeholder to participate and effect decisions and the capacity of the stakeholder to participate in the decision based on the resources and the skill (capacity) of the stakeholder.

In identifying legitimate stakeholders, Jamal and Stronza (2009) place importance on the knowledge of the stakeholder, which could give the stakeholder legitimacy. These scholars describe three types of knowledge that could be considered in ensuring the legitimacy of stakeholders, particularly referring to the tourism stakeholders in protected areas: scientific knowledge, indigenous (traditional) knowledge, and local knowledge. Scientific knowledge can provide legitimacy for elites with a scientific background such as the academic community, consultants, and advisors. Indigenous and local knowledge can provide legitimacy to local residents and the community living around protected areas (Jamal and Stronza 2009). The consideration of legitimacy, based on the knowledge of stakeholders, can provide a strong basis for stakeholder inclusion in the decision-making process, related to the development of tourism.

The level of awareness that stakeholders have of the need to support each other is one of the most important factors determining the nature of stakeholder collaboration. According to Gray (1985), stakeholder appreciation of the value of others determines their willingness to consider each other as important or legitimate partners. An empirical study conducted by Selin and Beason (1991) revealed that the lack of recognition of the importance of the activities of another organisation and its impact on their own activities has influenced the collaboration and

cooperation between natural resource management agencies and tourism advocacy organisations in the United States Forest Service, chambers of commerce, and tourism associations adjacent to the Arkansas National Forest. This implies that legitimacy alone is not sufficient, but that the stakeholders should also be able to understand how important they are to each other.

However, there is an argument that legitimate stakeholders may not be willing to collaborate if they do not feel that their influence can have an immediate effect (Mitchell, Agle, and Wood 1997). Sometimes legitimate stakeholders may not collaborate with others in order to retain their influential capacity (power) to control others. This is common in the centralised systems of developing countries, where the governors tend to retain decision-making power for themselves (Tosun 2000; De Araujo and Bramwell 2002). This indicates that in addition to recognition of legitimacy, stakeholders need to acknowledge the importance of their mutual interdependence and decide to work together.

2.6.2 Power

Power is among the factors that determine a stakeholders' importance, and it can also provide them with legitimacy. Nunkoo (2016) describes power as the capacity to attain an end. This capacity may emanate from their resources, position, or knowledge and skills. Such resources enable a person or group, such as a community, to influence their relationship with others or attain their own needs (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012; Nunkoo 2016).

Different stakeholders may hold different types of power. A review by Saito and Ruhanen (2017) of tourism organisations in Queensland, Australia identified the types of power that different stakeholders hold. At the organisational level, different stakeholders possess different types of power, which influences the nature of their collaborations in terms of the planning and implementation of tourism development. These types of power are: coercive power (mostly possessed and used by government policymaking bodies), legitimate power (held and used by private organisations and destination management organisations to prescribe what other stakeholders should do), induced power (possessed by resourceful organisations that are capable of providing financial support), and competent power (possessed by educational institutes and consultants who have the capacity to influence other stakeholders through the skill, knowledge, and expertise that they have). These types of power allow each of these stakeholders to exercise influence over other stakeholders in the process of collaboration.

Literature from a social exchange perspective views power differently from authoritative rule. According to this field, power is a means by which the actors involved in the social exchange process achieve mutual benefit (Ap 1992; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012). The social exchange relationship puts little emphasis on the role of coercive power, which is exercised by government officials or other bodies that control resources and decisions.

Power influences stakeholder collaboration in different ways: It determines the decision-making role of stakeholders, the creation of policy, and the allocation of resources (Bowen, Zubair, and Altinay 2016; Dredge 2006; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012). When the more powerful groups influence and dominate the less powerful ones in a collaboration, a power imbalance occurs. Such an imbalance can negatively influence the commitment of stakeholders to collaborate with each other to support the development of tourism. Moreover, the less powerful stakeholders are less likely to collaborate with stakeholders that are assumed to be more powerful, as indicated by the findings of Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012). For example, in a collaboration between destination residents and the government of Mauritius, the residents, who had a low self-image in terms of their power position, were reluctant to collaborate with the government, whom they considered more powerful (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012).

Power can also influence the perception that the different stakeholders have about each other's role and determine their willingness to collaborate. Nunkoo (2016) argues that the value attributed by parties to the power of a person determines the influential capacity of that person. In other cases, more powerful stakeholders have refused to collaborate with others in order to maintain their influential position (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002). Especially in developing countries, the centralised approach of leaders helps them to retain most of the power and make most of the decisions themselves and the followers became the recipients of the consequences of the leaders' decisions (Muangasame and Mckercher 2015). For instance, the research findings of Saufi et al. (2014), who investigated the power structures related to government departments in Lombok, Indonesia, indicated that the distribution of power was weighted towards the authorities and led to a disjointed regional tourism power structure and fragmented tourism planning, as well as the failure of tourism programme implementation and weak tourism regulation in the tourist destinations.

In the current research, the role of power is investigated, as well as how it influences stakeholder collaboration, the perception of stakeholders, and their support for the sustainable development of tourism in Ethiopia.

2.6.3 Trust

Trust is also an important factor in the success of collaboration. Most importantly, as Cook and Rice (2003) argue, an uncertain or non-negotiable type of relationship requires a strong basis of trust between stakeholders. Unlike the negotiated type of relationship, which is binding and enforceable, the non-negotiated relationship strongly depends on the existence of trust between the parties in an exchange (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005; Nunkoo 2016).

In a collaborative relationship, the role of trust can be viewed from the institutional level and the individual level. The research findings of Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012) support the importance of institutional trust, such as in the government, as a basic factor in determining the relationship between the community and the government in the tourism system. The government can exhibit its trustworthiness by showing a commitment towards meeting the needs and interests of the community. Nunkoo and Ramkissoon argue that:

Trust in government actors is dependent on the perceived benefits and costs of tourism. If residents derive benefits from tourism, they are likely to trust tourism institutions, and if they perceive tourism as resulting in costs, this causes distrust in government institutions. (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012)

Or, in other words, if residents are able to see the developments in their vicinity, then they will trust and show more solidarity with the government in supporting the development of tourism.

Understanding how trust is built and the factors contributing to trust building can help us understand how to build trust and its role in collaborative relationships. In relation to trust building, Graci (2013) argues that effective stakeholder management builds trust and gives stakeholders a sense of empowerment and ownership (i.e., trust can be acquired through the process of collaboration). A study conducted on collaboration between the regional governors of the agricultural sector and central government in Ethiopia revealed that the absence of trust between them led to weaker collaboration (Steiner and Hanks 2016). Another study investigating partnerships in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia revealed that trust is key to the success of partnerships, because most people prefer to work with those they trust (Drost, Van Wijk, and Mandefro 2012). However, the inability of people to meet and know each other can affect the level of trust they have in each other (Drost et al. 2012). It seems that the existence of trust leads to collaboration, while at the same time collaboration can also build trust among stakeholders.

In relation to the base of trust, some studies have found that the degree of trust among different individuals depends on their heterogeneity or homogeneity. A national survey in the United States revealed that people tend to trust those who have similar traits, such as education, income, race, and other personal characteristics (Alesina 2000). A study conducted in Ethiopia to investigate the social capital of farmers who dwell in the northern part of the country found that people assess one another's trustworthiness according to the social status that they hold (Kassahun 2015; Abbay 2016). People tend to trust those who have a high social status in economic terms, who are from a good area of residence, and who have the correct political affiliation. However, data from the World Value Survey⁴ reveals that the level of trust is significantly lower for those from the highest social class (Inglehart et al. 2014). A difference in trust might be observed depending on the extent to which the community members are close to each other or meet each other on a daily basis, as was the case in Cyclone Marcia in Queensland, where people were able to easily get in touch and collaborate on disaster management in tourism due to their previous relationships and continuous communication (Jiang and Ritchie 2017).

The World Value Survey revealed that people in Ethiopia do not easily trust each other at first instance. Generally, they have less trust for people outside their own community. In addition, most people trust those who are working in the private sector less than those working in the public sector. People from the highest income category do not believe that most people can be trusted (Inglehart et al. 2014). It can be inferred that the high-income category of people associate trustworthiness with income level. In some cases it could be difficult to form a partnership or collaboration between people with a high income and those with a low income, even in the same sector, such as the private sector. Given the general scenario of trust among people in Ethiopia, it is worth paying close attention to the nature of trust among tourism stakeholders.

The functioning of tourism requires a high level of trust among actors in the tourism system; however, there is a dearth of research on how trust functions in the tourism system in Ethiopia. A study conducted by Getachew (2015) on public and private partnerships in the tourism sector revealed that mistrust is a factor that influences partnerships between groups. However, this study does not explain the reasons for the mistrust or how mistrust affects relationships. A recent study conducted by Yetnayet and Getaneh (2018) found that mistrust is one of the factors

⁴ The World Value Survey analyses the changes in the values of people and the influence of such changes on their political and social life (see <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp>).

influencing the relationship between the private and public sectors in tourist destinations in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. In this region, private sector stakeholders, such as hotels and tour operators, have lost confidence in the government because of its lack of commitment to deliver, evidenced by its failure to fulfil its promises and play its part to encourage collaboration.

In the current research, the influence of trust on stakeholder collaboration and how it influences stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes towards the sustainable development of tourism is explored.

2.6.4 Leadership and governance

Understanding the governance and leadership approach can shed light on the power relationship between the government and other stakeholders, such as the private sector and the community at the tourism destination, in the analysis of stakeholder collaboration. In the process of collaboration, the role of leaders can be seen from different angles. Leadership is a function associated with inspiring and supervising people, sharing information, and facilitating the development of trust among members to help them create a common vision and accomplish the group goal (Haven-Tang and Jones 2012; McGehee, Knollenberg, and Komorowski 2015). In the tourism system, leaders play an important role in guiding collaborations or partnership initiatives to ensure the sustainability of tourism development. As Graci (2013) and Selin and Chevez (1995a) indicate, leadership can be an antecedent to collaboration, when the leader plays a proactive role to initiate collaboration. It can also be part of the process of collaboration, when leaders act as a catalyst in facilitating collaboration (Gray 1985; Savage et al. 2010; Waligo et al. 2013).

Leaders of collaborating stakeholders can facilitate and encourage team spirit among members (Miller and Miller 2012). They can ensure that individual needs are met and members work closely with each other. Especially proactive leaders, who are capable of creating common understanding among stakeholders, can encourage members and enhance collaboration among stakeholders, as in the case of the Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project in the United Kingdom (Waligo et al. 2013). Leadership in tourism also requires knowledge and skills related to tourism. In the case of the northwest region of Ethiopia, poor know-how and technical capacity among the leaders at the official level has been found to influence the nature of collaboration between the government and private sector (Yetnaynet and Getaneh 2018). Yetnaynet and Getaneh found that supervisors from the government office merely visit hoteliers situationally, but do not focus on strategic issues, which could enhance public-private sector collaboration

towards the development of tourism. Instead they focus on checking individual hotels for cleanliness and inspecting facilities. In this case, private stakeholders complained about the leaders' inability to properly report the concerns of the private sector to the top government offices.

All kinds of leaders may not provide adequate support for stakeholder collaboration. Autocratic leaders who hold centralised power and follow a top-down approach may not encourage stakeholder participation. For example, the top-down leadership approach followed in the Thrace region of Turkey is one of the inhibitors of the participation of stakeholders in decision making. Such a top-down approach favours the government, while discouraging stakeholder participation (Muangasame and Mckercher 2015).

The governance system is another factor that determines the success of inter-group collaboration among multi-stakeholders. Governance can be defined as a collective management style in which private and public institutions deal with their common issues. It includes formal institutions and the empowered regime (Vallejo and Hauselmann 2004). A supportive governance system can positively influence stakeholder collaboration and contribute to the sustainable development of tourism. Supportive governance can ensure the equitable distribution of power among different classes of society and enhance economic and social equity among the various stakeholders at different destinations, such as in metropolitan and peripheral areas (Britton 1982).

The governance system can be understood in terms of the government's political commitment to delegate power and encourage participation to enhance the collaboration of stakeholders. The government's unwillingness to share power has been observed by different scholars in Ethiopia (Kauffmann 2008; Tamir 2015; Yetnaynet and Getaneh 2018) and other developing countries (Caffyn and Jobbins 2003). The regional-level officers are the 'just' representatives of the central government, but they have no power to entertain the views of the private stakeholders or act on their concerns. Instead they merely present the central government's plan to the private sector and destination communities (residents).

Caffyn and Jobbins (2003), who conducted a comparative study on the costal management of tourism in Morocco and Tunisia, found that in both countries stakeholder consultation and the decentralisation of administrative and decision-making processes are challenged by centralised governance systems. Similar observations have been found by Tamir (2015) in Ethiopia, where the regional tourism governors are mere office bearers who are nominated to promote the

political goals of the government. The regional culture and tourism officers do not have a clear understanding of what they should do, and there is no framework that allows for stakeholder participation in decision making. This has negatively affected the collaboration between regional governors, destination communities, and related officers. A study conducted by Kauffmann (2008) in the Central Rift Valley of Ethiopia revealed that regional tourism officers assumed the position of tourism management without the capacity to influence, but did not allow other stakeholders, such as from the private sector and NGOs, to act. Such a centralised approach and the observed power distance have discouraged private investors from finding solutions to tourism development problems in the region.

Stakeholders' perceptions of the nature of governance can influence their commitment to work collaboratively with the government and other stakeholders in the tourism system. For example, in the past in Ethiopia, a bureaucratic form of governance was identified as discouraging access to government offices to obtain trade licences and comply with the legal requirements for tour operators and hoteliers (UNECA 2015). In a similar manner, in the Mediterranean region of Europe, the centralised governance system has negatively affected the community's perception of and level of involvement in tourism development (Caffyn and Jobbins 2003). Hence, the governance system can influence the perception of the destination community in such a way that the community views decisions made in a top-down way as illegitimate and not representing the interests and opinions of the community (as found in a case study carried out by McComb et al. 2017 in Northern Ireland).

The current study investigates the influence of the governance system on stakeholder collaboration and links stakeholders' perceptions and commitment to the sustainable development of tourism based on their influence on economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability. The next section presents a review of the empirical evidence related to the importance of collaboration for sustainable tourism in Ethiopia.

2.7 Sustainable tourism and stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia: Empirical evidence

As indicated in Chapter 1 (section 1.3.1), Ethiopia has ample tourist attractions that are capable of contributing to its economic development and the improvement of the livelihoods of people. However, the country is not benefiting to the fullest from these resources for a number of reasons, including poor image, lack of infrastructure and facilities, poor promotion of destinations, and lack of collaboration among stakeholders.

In order to overcome these limitations, the Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy emphasises that stakeholder collaboration is key (MoCT 2009). However, the extent to which stakeholder collaboration is being undertaken and how it is contributing to the sustainability of tourism needs closer attention. To guide this analysis of stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism, firstly, the empirical evidence from Ethiopia needs to be reviewed. The following sub-sections look at some empirical studies on stakeholder collaboration and the elements of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia.

2.7.1 Economic sustainability

This section looks at some empirical studies in order to understand how stakeholder collaboration has contributed to economic sustainability in Ethiopia. The economic sustainability of tourism entails the viable long-term operation of tourism and accrual of benefits from tourism to serve long-term needs (Brohman 1996). Specifically, economic sustainability has been described in terms of the economic performance of tourism related to its contribution to income generation and employment opportunity creation, destination competitiveness, and the livelihood of the community (Ajala 2008; Wondowossen et al. 2014). Destination promotion is a major factor in attracting tourists and ensuring a sustainable economy in a particular destination (Poshi 2017).

A study conducted by Ajala (2008) based on the tourist attraction potential of destinations in the Amhara region of Ethiopia found that tourism makes an enormous contribution to employment opportunities and income generation in the region by attracting both domestic and international visitors. This scholar adds that tourism is a year-round business for the region. He asserts that although there is enormous tourism potential, the region has not yet generated enough benefits, due to the limited availability of hotels.

Some studies have investigated economic sustainability, based on the competitiveness of the destination. For example, Wondowossen et al. (2014) investigated the competitiveness of Ethiopia in terms of the leakage and linkages related to employment and income generation opportunities. This study found that Ethiopia is becoming more competitive, although it is challenged by low quality infrastructure in terms of roads, hotels, and beds at remote destinations, lack of diversity of tourism products, and low investment in tourist facilities, which all contribute to the poor image of the destination. This study was based on a review of secondary documents, mainly official reports by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. As such,

it does not indicate the magnitude of the contribution of tourism to employment and income generation opportunities for different groups of society.

On the other hand, a survey based on a questionnaire and interviews found that tourism in Ethiopia is uncompetitive (Mitchell and Coles 2009), largely due to the poor quality of infrastructure and the absence of trained manpower in the sector. These scholars emphasise that the management and control of tourism services, such as hotels, is one of the factors contributing to the lack of competitiveness of tourism in Ethiopia. They suggest some strategies that could be used by managers to handle tourism services in order to maintain international standards. What can be understood from these results is that the private sector and the government have not invested in infrastructural facilities to enhance the competitiveness of tourism, which could contribute to the sustainable economic development of tourism.

Other studies have investigated the impact of tourism on the livelihood of people in the local community and on the natural environment. The investigation of the contribution of a community-based eco-tourism project at Nechisar National Park revealed the successful contribution of the project to employment and income generating activities, as well as to the generation of foreign exchange from the entrance fee, accommodation and transportation activities, visitor guide fees, and food and drinks (Fetene et al. 2012). This study indicates that such achievements have been made because of the availability of hotels and the tourism-related activities provided by the surrounding community (guiding, arranging boat transportation), although seasonality limits the continuity of tourism activities.

It can be observed that the availability of infrastructural facilities and investment by the private sector in infrastructural facilities play a major role in enhancing the employment and income earning opportunities of the community. However, in the case of the Awi zone in the Amhara region, community-based tourism is not contributing well to the livelihood of the community and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, because of the challenges it faces from society and the system of governance (Tamir 2015). This project was launched through the regional government office without creating awareness about the benefits of community-based tourism. Hence, the community's perception of the negative effects of tourism on culture and religion outweighed their perception of the positive economic benefits. The above case study shows that besides the infrastructural facilities at a tourist destination, the level of awareness and support of the community also determines the economic sustainability of tourism.

In the Central Rift Valley of Ethiopia, Kauffmann (2008) found that the centralised system of leadership and governance made the regional tourism officers and the destination community powerless and prevented them from participating in tourism development activities. This study found that failure to recognise the legitimacy of the local community as a stakeholder influenced the relationship between the residents at the destination and the private sector investors who operate the lodge and tourism services. The residents were displaced from their villages and their land given to private investors for a tourist lodge; however, the community does not directly benefit from the lodge or other tourism activities. As a result, the community sabotages the smooth running of the lodge and its services, by disappointing tourists (Kauffmann 2008). It can be inferred from such activities that the absence of a common understanding between the local residents and hoteliers influences the long-term development of tourism in the region, especially in relation to the satisfaction level and length of stay of tourists.

2.7.2 Socio-cultural sustainability

Culture is one of the elements determining the sustainability of tourism because it contributes to the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination; it is considered to be the heart of tourism, as it provides tourists with learning experiences (Robinson and Picard 2006). The contribution of culture to the sustainability of tourism depends on the extent to which the culture is preserved and passed on to the next generation. The level of concern of the stakeholders for heritage and cultural attractions can be observed through the perceptions of stakeholders and the physical status of the heritage sites in specific destinations (Dwyer and Kim 2003). Socio-cultural sustainability also contributes to the goal of sustainable tourism. Cultural and heritage attractions are among the most important products of tourism (Durovic and Lovrentjev 2014). As such, the sustainability of tourism depends upon the extent to which the stakeholders work together to ensure the survival and continuity of the society's cultural and heritage resources. It can be assumed that the conservation and reasonable use of socio-cultural resources can be achieved through the collaboration of stakeholders in relation to the areas of use and conservation. This sub-section looks at the empirical evidence on the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism, based on the limited studies available.

Some case studies (Tamir 2015; Woldu 2018) have found that the socio-cultural impact of stakeholder collaboration varies. The investigation by Tamir (2015) looks at the influence of stakeholders' relationships on socio-cultural aspects. It found that the lack of common interest

between the community and regional tourism officers, the negative perception of the community about the effect of tourism on cultural values, the community's lack of knowledge about tourism and community-based tourism, and the loose supervision of tourism activities by the concerned regional officers have affected the relationship between the community (residents) and the regional tourism officers, and ultimately affected the implementation of the community-based tourism project. It can be inferred from this that the centralised approach used to design the community-based tourism project has affected the destination residents' knowledge of the project and their commitment to collaborate with the regional officers in charge of managing the project. On the other hand, we can also see the positive impact of the refusal of the destination community to collaborate with the community-based tourism project, in that their refusal may help them to retain the cultural and religious value of the destination and prevent acculturation. The case study also found that if the community was valued as a legitimate stakeholder and involved in the planning for community-based tourism, they may have understood the positive impact of tourism and been willing to collaborate with the government on the implementation of community-based tourism.

The relationship among destination residents can also influence the sustainability of culture in the form of the lifestyle of the community. The study by Woldu (2018) in Lake Tana in Ethiopia explains the nature of the relationship among stakeholders (residents, church groups, and tourist guides) in the region and the influence of their relationship on the culture. The Lake Tana area is dominated by Ethiopian Orthodox Christians; as such, the tourism activities are also dominated by the Christian community. The clergy and local tourist guides explain Lake Tana to the tourists in terms of the religious history of the destination, but do not describe the culture of the non-Christian community. The lifestyle of non-Christians and their cuisine is dominated by that of Christians. As a result, the cultural foods prepared by the non-Christian tribes are demanded less by visitors (Woldu 2018).

It appears that the lack of clear understanding of the community about the importance of the non-Christian community for tourism activities is influencing the activities of these peoples. The dominance of one group over the other groups also implies that there is that a lack of intercultural tolerance and respect for each other's culture. Consequently, the relationship between the residents could limit the ability of minority groups to work and generate benefits from tourism and could even contribute to the disappearance of their culture and lifestyle in the future.

Socio-cultural sustainability could also be viewed according to the extent to which cultural values are conserved and preserved to meet the needs of the next generation. For instance, the conservation of knowledge assets depends on the extent to which information is preserved, interpreted, and passed on to visitors. If such knowledge is not conserved it can lead to the loss of the universal value of the heritage resources (Negussie 2010; Borges et al. 2011). For example, religious services, such as mass on Saturday and Sunday, and the celebration of the Epiphany, which used to take two to five hours, are now getting shorter. The Church appears to be focusing on the tourism potential of the ceremony, rather than its religious value for society. Such a conflict between cultural value and economic value could lead to the commoditisation of religious culture in the area (Negussie 2010).

A case study on heritage in the Tigray region found that the cultural value of tourism resources in the region is facing various challenges, such as dependence on hypothetical historic information, the misinterpretation of information about heritage, the limited capacity of heritage interpreters, lack of attention to community-based heritage interpretation, problems with stakeholder cooperation, lack of organised interpretation and presentation, and problems with the adequacy and quality of facilities, among other things (Asfaw and Gebreslassie 2016). These problems could lead to the distortion of the image of this cultural site and the transfer of inaccurate information to visitors and future generations. In the long run, these problems threaten the cultural value and heritage of the site as an authentic resource of knowledge, history, and culture (Negussie 2010).

2.7.3 Environmental sustainability

The conservation of environmental resources and attractions contributes to sustainable tourism. The environmental sustainability of tourism also depends on the nature of stakeholder collaboration and the commitment of stakeholders to support the goal of conservation. It has been argued that the collaboration of stakeholders in environmental management can create a sense of social responsibility and stewardship towards natural resources (Selin and Chevez 1995b). Especially the involvement of the private sector and destination communities in the planning and management of environmental resources can create a sense of responsibility and ownership on the part of these stakeholders. This section looks at some of the empirical evidence related to the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia.

The collaboration of stakeholders in developing a plan for conserving and using natural attractions and the implementation of this plan can influence environmental sustainability in a

positive or negative way. A study conducted by Zerga (2015) that investigated the causes of degradation of Awash National Park found that the competition between the government and the residents over land had an adverse effect on the park. The residents, who used to live on the land and graze their cattle in the vicinity, were displaced for a sugar factory. These residents now use the park to graze their cattle and prepare charcoal wood to generate income to survive (Zerga 2015). This causes problems for the park. The lack of involvement of the community in tourism planning, the lack of a common vision and consensus about the strategy for development, and the community's inability to see any benefit from the investment in the park has severely affected the sustainability of the park.

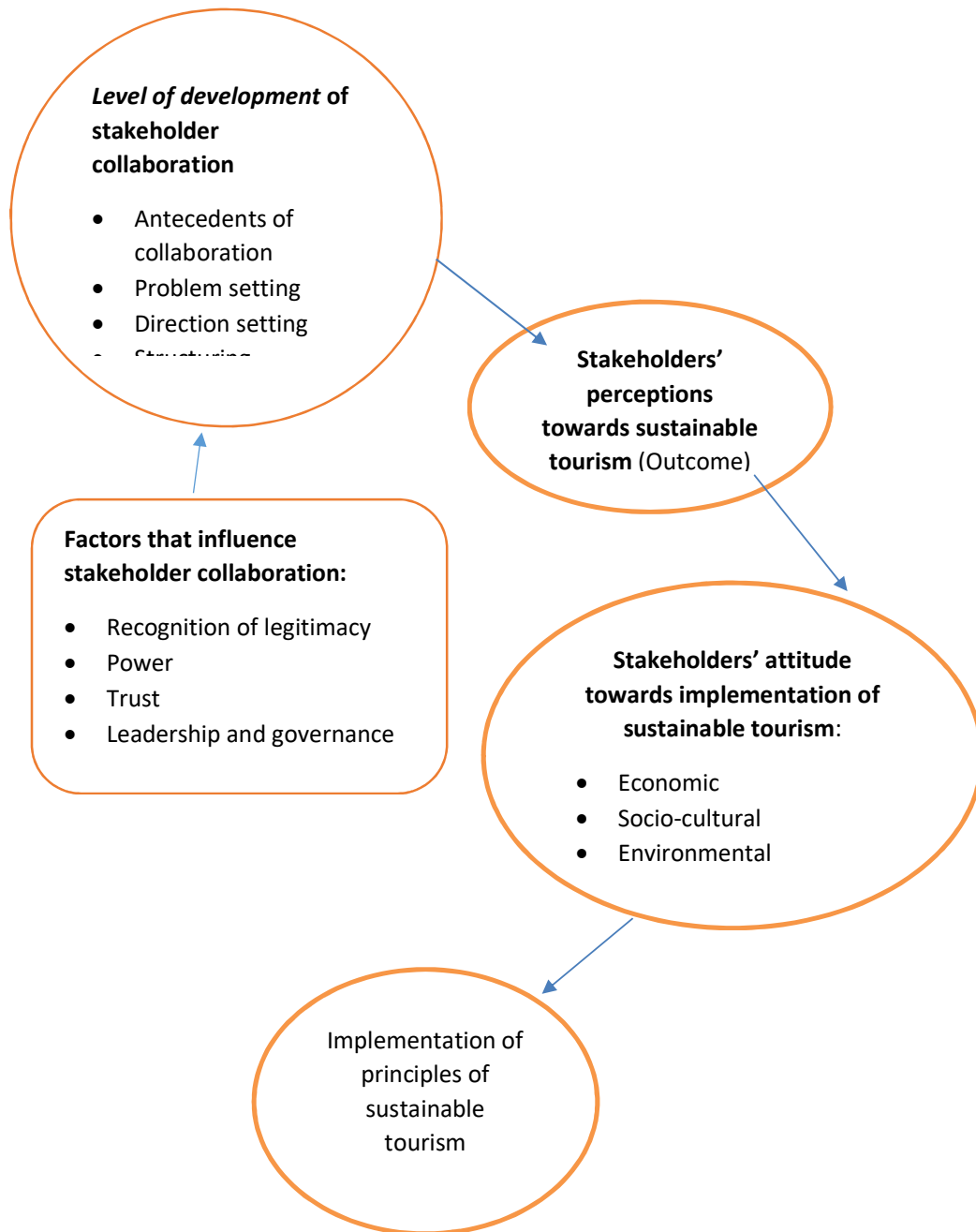
Similar studies have shown that most of the parks in Ethiopia face challenges related to overgrazing, illegal settlement, deforestation, pollution (of air or water), fire, and improper garbage accumulation (Menbere and Menbere 2017; Abebe and Bekele 2018). Scholars attribute this to the absence of strong stakeholder collaboration and the shortage of adequate skilled manpower, as well as poverty, lack of an alternative means of livelihood, and lack of awareness.

In general, it can be inferred that the actions of the community have implications for the survival of the wildlife in the park, and the cutting and burning of wood for the preparation of charcoal also directly contributes to air pollution. Studies have indicated that the lack of community engagement and loose nature of collaboration contribute to the degradation of the environmental attraction (Zerga 2015; Getahun and Yeshanew 2016). Most of the studies, however, have focused on the general challenges and opportunities of tourism development, without clearly indicating the reasons for the loose collaboration and lack of community engagement.

2.8 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is an anchor that indicates the relationships between the main constructs that are the subject of investigation (Baxter and Jack 2008). In the current research, stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism are the main constructs, which are linked to each other by the assumption that the level of development of stakeholder collaboration can influence the perception of stakeholders with regard to sustainable tourism. The relationship between these constructs is presented in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4. Conceptual framework: Relationship between stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism



As indicated in Figure 2.4, this thesis looks at the development of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia and stakeholder collaboration, based on a framework for collaboration, which is made up of the antecedents, problem setting, direction setting, structuring, and the outcome (which is considered to be the stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism). Within the postulate of the social exchange theory, this research investigates the factors that could influence the development of collaboration and explains how these factors influence the attitude of stakeholders about sustainable tourism, in terms of its economic, social-cultural, and environmental dimensions. Successful stakeholder collaboration has the potential to contribute to the implementation of the principles of sustainable tourism⁵, which can balance the economic concerns of stakeholders with the conservation of environmental and socio-cultural resources.

2.9 Research questions

The research questions are formulated according to the conceptual framework (Figure 2.4) and will be addressed and analysed in the empirical part of the study to attain the research aim, which is to explore the nature of stakeholder collaboration and its influence in relation to the elements of sustainable tourism in the context of Ethiopia. The main research question is as follows:

1. *Which factors facilitate the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia?*

In order to determine what factors facilitate collaboration, it is necessary to explore the development of collaboration among tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the following sub-questions are set:

- 1a *At what stage of development is tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and how did this collaboration evolve over time?*
- 1b *What are stakeholders' perceptions about such collaboration?*
- 1c *What factors have facilitated or hampered the development of this collaboration?*

⁵ 'Implementation' is included to indicate the scope of effect of the stakeholder collaboration, but is not part of the variables investigated in this study.

The analysis of stakeholder collaboration will be made through the framework of stakeholder collaboration, which passes through five stages: identification of antecedents, problem setting, direction setting, structuring, and outcome (Selin and Chevez 1995a; Graci 2013). Investigation of the stage of stakeholder collaboration helps us to understand the evolution of collaboration over time and stakeholders' perceptions about the collaboration. Such investigation will reveal the stage of development of stakeholder collaboration and the factors that facilitate the development of collaboration. The explanation of the influence of the factors that facilitate stakeholder collaboration will be made in line with the postulate of the social exchange theory. As such, a positive evaluation of the importance of collaboration can lead to the collaboration of stakeholders, while negative perceptions may reduce their interest in collaborating. Based on the argument of the social exchange theory, the current research tries to explore the factors that influence the stakeholders' evaluation of the benefit of collaborating, and it explains how these factors influence tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia. Therefore, the influence of the underlying factors that are indicated in the literature, such as power, trust, legitimacy, leadership, and governance, which affect a stakeholder's evaluation of the value of collaboration, will be explored in this study in order to answer the first research question.

An investigation of the development of collaboration among tourism stakeholders leads to the second question, which focuses on the relationship between stakeholder collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions about sustainable tourism, in relation to the level of development of collaboration. The second question is formulated as follows:

2. *How are stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism related to the level of development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia?*

This question was raised to investigate the influence of collaboration on stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. The assumption is that the level of stakeholder collaboration could influence the perception, i.e., level of understanding and manner of interpretation, of sustainable tourism and the attitude of stakeholders about specific elements of sustainable tourism (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions); i.e., better collaboration could result in a better perception of sustainable tourism, whereas a loose collaboration, or an unsuccessful collaboration, may result in a different perception of sustainable tourism among the stakeholders. The following specific questions are framed to answer the second research question:

- 2a *What are stakeholders' perceptions about sustainable tourism?*

- 2b *What are the stakeholders' attitudes about the elements of sustainable tourism?*
- 2c *How are these perceptions related to past or future collaboration?*

The above questions are used as a guide to analyse the relation between the development of stakeholder collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions about sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. The nature of the interrelationship between the main research questions is graphically indicated in brief in the following figure (Figure 2.5).

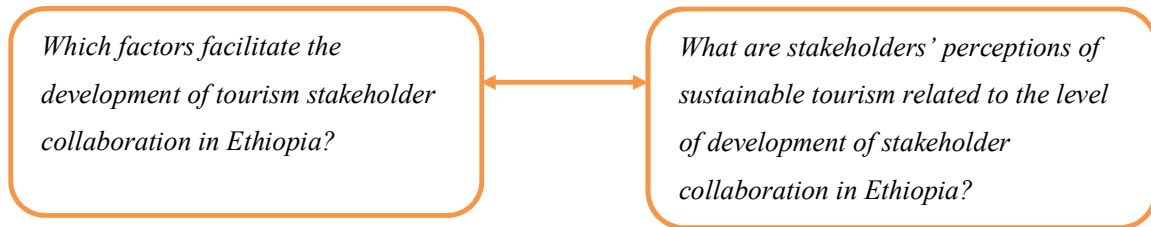


Figure 2.5. The interrelation between the main research questions guiding the study

The answer to these questions will give a picture of the nature of stakeholder collaboration and its influence on stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism, in Ethiopia.

To answer these questions, various research approaches were used. Chapter 3 presents the research design and methods used in this study.

Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter describes the research methods used to answer the research questions presented in Chapter 2. It discusses the research design (section 3.1) and describes the case studies considered (section 3.2). It then provides information about the research participants and the approach used for their selection (section 3.3), the methods of data collection (section 3.4), and, finally, the process of data analysis (section 3.5).

3.1 Research design

The research design is a blueprint depicting the major steps in the research process, including the methods of data collection and analysis, which connect the empirical data to the initial research questions and ultimately lead to a conclusion (Hartley 2004). In order to explain the major steps and methods employed in this research, the next section presents an overview of the research questions and aims of this study.

3.1.1 Aim and research questions in brief

This research aims to explore and discuss the development of stakeholder collaboration and its influence on stakeholders' perceptions about sustainability and sustainable tourism. The attainment of this objective is guided by two main research questions. The first question looks at *the factors that facilitate the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia*. Investigation of this question will be carried out based on the theory of collaboration, which has been framed as having five stages: antecedents, problem setting, direction setting, structuring, and outcome (see Figure 2.3). The answer to this question will help to determine the stage at which the stakeholder collaboration is and *the evolution of this collaboration over time, as well as the stakeholders' perceptions about such collaboration*. This will help to create an understanding of the applicability of the framework of collaboration to the multiple case study context.

The second research question explores *stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism related to the level of development of collaboration in Ethiopia*. Analysis of this question will help us to understand stakeholders' perceptions about sustainable tourism, and how these perceptions relate to past or future collaboration. This question explores the perceptions of stakeholders of sustainable tourism in general and in terms of the specific dimensions of sustainable tourism: the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions. The answers to this question will

help us to understand the perceptions of government officials (policy makers), the private sector (accommodation providers and tour companies), and destination residents related to sustainable tourism. The stakeholder groups included in the public sector, private sector, and destination residents are based on tourism in the four case study sites (see section 3.3). The consideration of these different destinations is expected to provide us with an understanding of whether stakeholders' perceptions are influenced by the sector to which they belong (public, private, community) and the geographic location in which the stakeholders are located.

3.1.2 Methodological approach

In order to answer the above questions, qualitative research methods were employed. A qualitative research method provides an interactive process that helps us to understand the meanings that people attach to a particular phenomenon (actions, decisions, beliefs, values, etc.) within their social world (Snape and Spencer 2003). In this research, a qualitative approach was chosen in order to personally interact with individuals and groups of tourism stakeholders in order to explore and understand how they collaborate, the factors that influence their collaboration, how these factors influence the nature of collaboration, and how the stakeholders perceive sustainable tourism. This qualitative approach helps to produce knowledge about the development of stakeholder collaboration and its relationship with the perception of sustainable tourism in the context of this study (Ethiopia). Moreover, the interactive process of qualitative research helps to flexibly generate detailed data (responses) from the respondents and discover novel or culturally-situated knowledge from the information that people provide (Bryman 1984; Phillimore and Goodson 2004; Tracy 2010; Petty, Thomson and Stew 2012).

Qualitative research employs different forms of design, including ethnography, document analysis, grounded theory, and case study, which are chosen depending on the aim of the research or the intention of the researcher (Starks and Brown Trinidad 2007). In the current research, in line with the aim of exploring and explaining the nature of stakeholder collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism, a case study approach was adopted (Rowley 2002; Baxter and Jack 2008).

A case study is defined as 'an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a large class of similar units' (Gerring 2004). The case study method is one of the most frequently used in tourism research, because the context of each tourism destination is unique, and the case study approach allows the extraction of knowledge specific to the context (Xiao

and Smith 2006). In the current study, the case study approach was chosen as it provides an in-depth study of a particular research problem in the context of the different case study areas. In addition, in the study of sustainable tourism it is important to focus on concrete situations in which the different dimensions or elements of sustainability can be examined. A case study approach also provides clues for similar destinations on how to improve collaboration and on stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism.

With regard to the definition of cases and the units of analysis, Gerring (2004) argues that the definition of cases depends on the intention of the researcher. The intention of this research is to develop an overall understanding of the development of collaboration among tourism stakeholders in different sectors and different geographic areas and elaborate on their perceptions of sustainable tourism. Hence, in the current research, case study sites are defined as particular locations that are geographically bounded, and the units of analysis are those individuals and groups who are tourism stakeholders at each destination.

A multiple case study approach has been adopted in this research. Although expensive and time consuming, the multiple case study approach is believed to produce robust results (Noor 2008). It helps to overcome the problem of putting all the empirical eggs in one basket, as in the case of a single case study (Baxter and Jack 2008). In the current study, instead of focusing on the response of a particular group of stakeholders in a given destination – or of a particular group of stakeholders – the views of different groups of stakeholders (public, private, and destination residents) in the case study areas are incorporated. Such an approach is assumed to yield a good understanding of the stage of development of collaboration between tourism stakeholders at different levels and their perceptions of sustainable tourism. Moreover, the investigation of sustainable tourism in a holistic manner (incorporating the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions) necessitates the selection of cases that have economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects. It is expected that this will provide a sound view of stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism, in general, and in relation to the specific elements of sustainable tourism in the case study destinations, in particular.

The current research considers four geographic locations in Ethiopia as case studies: Addis Ababa, Gondar, Bishoftu, and Awash National Park, which together constitute a multiple case study. The perception of stakeholders related to the three elements of sustainable tourism will be explained based on the response of the stakeholders at the four destinations. It is believed that such an approach will provide a concrete view of the nature of stakeholders' perceptions

of sustainable tourism. Moreover, the consideration of stakeholders in different locations will help to understand how the factors affecting collaboration (such as power) apply in different areas and among different groups of stakeholders.

Each of the case study areas are located in different regions and have primarily different kinds of tourism resources: socio-cultural (Gondar), ecological (Awash National Park), economic (Addis Ababa), and a combination of all three elements (Bishoftu). They were selected for their differences and similarities across the sites, in crucial dimensions that might influence stakeholder collaboration, which will help us to investigate the influence of collaboration on the different dimensions of sustainability. Table 3.1 summarises the case studies, the nature of the destination, and the types of stakeholders selected in each destination. Section 3.2 provides more on the nature of the case study areas and the rationale for choosing them.

Table 3.1. Characteristics of case study sites: Nature of resources, location, dimensions of sustainable tourism studied, and stakeholders

Characteristics	Case study sites			
	Addis Ababa	Awash National Park	Gondar	Bishoftu
Primary nature of destination resources	Economic	Ecological	Socio-cultural	Economic, ecological and socio-cultural
Location of destination	Capital city	Regional	Regional	Regional
Dimension of sustainable tourism considered	Economic, socio-cultural, and environmental	Economic, socio-cultural, and environmental	Economic, socio-cultural, and environmental	Economic, socio-cultural, and environmental
Tourism stakeholders who participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public (MoCT, ETO) Private (accommodation providers, tour companies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public (regional tourism officer) Local residents Park management group (scouts, tourist guides, environmentalists, community representative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public (regional tourism officer) Local residents Tour guides Accommodation providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public (regional tourism officer) Accommodation providers

3.2 Case study sites

Four case studies areas were selected for this study in order to facilitate a robust analysis of the stage of development of stakeholder collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. This section discusses each of these case studies.

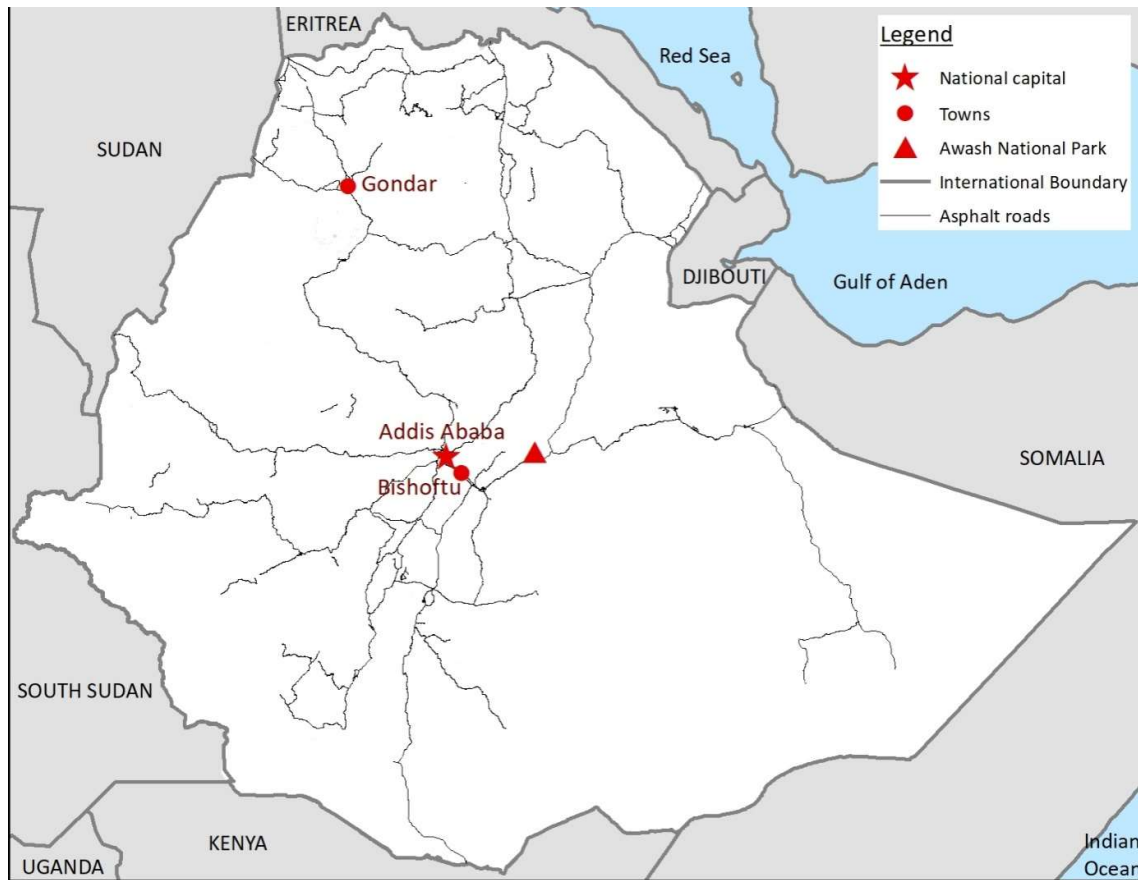


Figure 3.1. Map of the four case study areas selected for this research

Source: Map designed by Desalegn Gurmesssa

3.2.1 Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa is the capital of Ethiopia, the fourth largest city in Africa and the diplomatic capital of Africa. It is also one of the most important tourist destinations in Ethiopia (Robinson and Jonker 2016). As a capital city, Addis Ababa is a hub for various types of travellers and hosts different international organisations, such as the African Union and UNECA. It has around 112 diplomatic embassies of different countries and is the location for various federal-level ministerial offices including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as well as the Ethiopian Tourism Organization.

Addis Ababa has many tourist attractions such as museums, old Ethiopian Orthodox churches (such as St George's Cathedral and Entoto Maryam Church), the souvenir shops in Shiro Meda, and the National Museum, which is home to the 3.2 million-year-old skeleton of 'Lucy', believed to be the oldest human skeleton discovered (Ethiopian Tourism Organization n.d.).

Furthermore, Addis Ababa hosts many conferences and international meetings, such as the International Conference on Financing for Development held in July 2015. It is also a centre for business activities and investments, including in the hotel business. There are 31 branded hotels such as Starwood, Rezidor, Marriott, and Louvre, with a total of 3,130 rooms (JLL 2016)⁶.

Besides the main hotels, most leading travel agencies and tour operators are also found in Addis Ababa. Bole International Airport, the biggest hub for air travel, is located there. All international travellers who travel to Ethiopia for conferences, meetings, visits with family and relatives, or leisure have to pass through Addis Ababa. Leisure tourists who intend to visit historic places have to deal with tour operators based in Addis Ababa. The overall setup of the city and the extensive economic activities performed there make it the centre of the country's economy (World Bank Group and MoCT 2012; JLL 2016). The strategic location of Addis Ababa and the economic activities conducted in the city attract people from the countryside; consequently, the total population of Addis Ababa is currently estimated to be close to 4 million (World Population Review 2017).

Given the abovementioned features, this research included Addis Ababa in the case studies in order to investigate the extent to which tourism stakeholders from the private sector (hoteliers, national tour operators) and public sector (MoCT, ETO) collaborate with each other, and with other stakeholders in regional tourist destinations, to promote sustainable tourism. Clearly Addis Ababa is the centre of the Ethiopian economy and, therefore, attracts attention from the private sector and the government. It is the hub of Ethiopian tourism through which tourists to other destinations flow, and these flows are controlled by stakeholders in Addis Ababa. However, the sustainable development of tourism requires the balancing of economic interests and the conservation of socio-culture and environmental resources. Therefore, the current study looks at the extent to which these stakeholders work together on a collaborative basis and how they perceive sustainable tourism.

3.2.2 Awash National Park

The second case study is Awash National Park, which is located 225 kilometres east of Addis Ababa. It is among the acclaimed national parks in the Great Rift Valley region of Ethiopia (Getahun and Yeshanew 2016). Covering 827 square kilometres, the park is the most important

⁶ JLL is a brand name and a registered trademark of Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated, which specialises in real estate and investment management.

conservation area in the Ethiopian lowlands. It hosts over 460 species of birds, among which six are endemic. Other wildlife, such as leopards, cheetahs, lions, and endangered species of antelopes, are also found in this park (Ethiovisit n.d.).

Considering the eco-tourism potential of Awash National Park and its relative proximity to Addis Ababa, the park is not performing well. In the year 2011, the park was visited by around 4,000 people, generating nearly 60,000 Ethiopian birr (around EUR 2,143) in gate revenue (Alemayehu 2011). In the year 2013/2014, the national park was visited by 11,843 tourists, and the income generated was 1.2 million Ethiopian birr (EUR 34,285) (Tezera 2015). This more recent study shows an increase in the number of visitors. However, a number of other studies reveal that the park is facing serious challenges from natural and manmade risks, such as deforestation and illegal settlement (Zerga 2015; Getahun and Yeshanew 2016; Biru, Tessema, and Urge 2017). The park's potential as an eco-tourism attraction and its locational advantage, as well as the current status of the park, make it an interesting case study.

In order to investigate the tourism activities at Awash National Park and the perceptions of stakeholders about the sustainability of the park, the researcher investigated the nature of collaboration between the community at the destination (the residents around the park), the regional tourism and cultural officer (who is in charge of the planning and management of regional tourism activities), and the park management staff (who are located in the park). This analysis helps us to understand the nature of the collaboration among these stakeholders and their relationship with the central government and tour companies, as well as to identify the factors influencing their collaboration and their perceptions of tourism in the park. The analysis from this case study will provide a basis for the comparison of results from other case studies, which have different tourist attractions and activities.

3.2.3 Gondar

Gondar is a tourist destination in the Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia. Located 725 kilometres north of Addis Ababa, Gondar was the capital of the Ethiopian Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries. During this period, Gondar was ruled by Emperor Fasilides and his successors. Each of the emperors built imperial palaces, which today are collectively called Fasil Ghebbi. In addition to Fasil Ghebbi, there are various other historic places in the region, such as the Debre Berhan Selassie (monastery and church), Bath of Fasilides, Qusquam (monastery and church), Thermal Area, Sosinios (also known as Maryam Ghemb), Gorgora (monastery and church), and Palace of Guzara. Forty-four Ethiopian Orthodox churches,

cultural dances, handicrafts, and national celebrations, such as the Epiphany, are among Gondar's tourist resources. Some of these tourist resources are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites (UNESCO n.d.).

To facilitate tourist services and take advantage of the tourism opportunities in the region, there are some hotels in Gondar that claim to be up to international tourist standards. In addition, there are community members who are organised in the form of associations, including a tour guides' association, a transport providers association, a handicraft producers association, and an association of handicraft shops, which are engaged in offering cultural products to visitors. Based on the rich cultural and historic resources of Gondar, as well as the observable level of facilities, one would expect good opportunities to be generated for the society and the country as a whole. Besides the availability of facilities and cultural resources, the efforts made by tourism stakeholders to collaboratively conserve and maintain the socio-cultural resources in the area and care for the natural environment determines the sustainability of tourism in the region.

This research aims to explore and explain how the tourism stakeholders in the region – the private sector (hoteliers, tour guides), destination residents (community), and public sector (regional cultural and tourism officers) – collaborate and how they perceive sustainable tourism. The stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism will be examined in terms of the elements of sustainable tourism (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental), in order to compare the perception of these respondents with that of respondents in other destinations in an effort to reach a robust conclusion about Ethiopian tourism stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism.

3.2.4 Bishoftu

Bishoftu, formerly known as Debre Zeyit (meaning the Mount of Olives), is a city near Addis Ababa in Oromia Regional State. It is located 47 kilometres southeast of Addis Ababa and 52 kilometres northwest of Adama, halfway along the main highway connecting Ethiopia's biggest cities. The name Bishoftu was derived from the Oromiffa language and means 'the land of excess water bodies'. This name derives from the state's many crater lakes such as Bishoftu, Hora Arsadi, Cheleleka, Kuriftu, Kilole, Green Lake, and Babugaya. Six of the fifteen crater lakes in the country that serve as tourist attractions are found in Bishoftu (Everything Ethiopian n.d.). Bishoftu also has abundant bird life and a beautiful landscape.

There are many interesting resorts and hotels available in Bishoftu, such as Kuriftu Resort and Spa, Lisak Resort, and Adulala, which makes Bishoftu a preferred destination among both leisure and business travellers. In particular, the main city of the state is becoming a prominent centre for meetings, incentives, conferences, and events (MICE) tourism and is an ideal destination for special events like weddings. It also attracts investment and is becoming home to different kinds of training centres (Bishoftu Cultural and Tourism Office n.d).

In addition, Bishoftu serves as a religious and cultural centre for the Oromo nation. The Oromo people are followers of the Wakefeta religion and conduct their yearly thanksgiving prayer (known as *Irreecha*) at Hora Arsadi, one of Bishoftu's many lakes. This ceremony is often held at the end of September, usually a week after *Meskel* (the finding of the true cross). Millions of Wakefeta Oromos attend the ceremony every year, along with numerous local and international tourists (UNECA 2015). This makes Bishoftu one of the emerging tourist cities in Ethiopia.

The proximity of Bishoftu to Addis Ababa makes it a comfortable place for a day trip or a weekend getaway. The region's advantages have attracted attention from investors in the lodge and resort business. The large number of hotels and resorts surrounding the lakes in Bishoftu show the level of attention that private investors are paying to Bishoftu as a tourist destination. Of course, investment opportunities for private investors depend on the willingness and legal support of the government, but maintaining the attractiveness of the destination for tourists and economic actors requires stakeholder collaboration. With this in mind, the researcher chose Bishoftu as the fourth case study destination. This case study will allow us to compare stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in Bishoftu with those of stakeholders in the other case study sites (Addis Ababa, Awash National Park, and Gondar), in order to understand the overall perception of tourism stakeholders of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia.

3.3 Selection of research participants

The three major groups of stakeholders considered for this research were the private sector, the public sector, and the local community at or around the tourist destination. As discussed in Chapter 2, unlike tourists (i.e., the mobile stakeholders), the stakeholders considered in this research are those stakeholders at the tourist destination and those that directly affect the development of sustainable tourism (Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2008; Hanafiah, Jamaluddin, and Zulkifly 2013). In order to select the individual research participants for this study, a purposive sampling technique was used (Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam 2003). Purposive sampling

helps select individuals that are a rich source of data and capable of providing information relevant to the topic of discussion (Palinkas et al. 2015). Therefore, in this research hotel managers, staff of tour companies, tour guides, and some government officers were purposively selected in order to obtain rich input into the nature of stakeholder collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism.

In each case study area, key stakeholders were contacted, who then referred other participants using the snowball sampling technique (Kothari 2004). The snowball technique is a way of finding respondents who are otherwise hard to find (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981; Foley and Timonen 2015; Timur and Getz 2009). This research argues that in cases where tourism and the knowledge of tourism is less developed, the snowball technique can provide access to more knowledgeable respondents who can provide the kind of information that is relevant to the research. For the current research it would have been difficult to find willing respondents if snowball sampling was not used. Meeting private sector stakeholders and government officials was particularly challenging. For example, political appointees of the government and government officials would not have been comfortable participating and providing information if they were not contacted by referral. The saturation principle was followed when deciding on the number of respondent. Recruitment of more respondents was stopped when the responses from respondents were found to be similar to each other and the same responses were reappearing.

Similarly, people in the private sector were also found to be unwilling to provide interviews, as they suspected that someone might be spying on them on behalf of the government to assess their performance, which could be used for taxation purposes. This practice is real and has been reported in previous research (e.g., Gobena and Van Dijke 2017). It was also challenging meeting with hoteliers; there are different categories of hotels that target all kinds of guests, as well as tourist standard hotels, which target mostly tourists. In such circumstances it would have been difficult to identify relevant respondents and recruit them for interviews without referrals.

The combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling used in this research offered the chance to meet important respondents with relevant input for the current research. The composition and number of participants involved in the research can be found in Table 3.2. The methods of data collection, individual interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) are discussed in section 3.5.

Table 3.2. Composition and number of respondents contacted for research from 2015 to 2017

	Individual interviews								Focus group discussions	
Case study site	Private sector			Public sector				Total number of individual interviews	Destination community	Total
	Hotels	Tour operators	Local guides	Head office	ETO	Regional offices	Park management group			
Addis Ababa	5	5	2	2	2			16		16
Gondar	5		5					10	8	18
Awash		1				1	5	7	9	16
Bishoftu	5					1		6		6
Total	15	6	7	2	2	2	5	39	17	56

As indicated in Table 3.2, different groups of stakeholders (public, private, and community) from the four case study areas participated in this research. From the private sector, people from hotels and other forms of accommodation, tour operators, and local tour guides participated. From the public sector, government officials ranging from the woreda level (the lowest administrative level in the governance structure of Ethiopia) through to the ministry office, as well as individuals from park management groups, took part. The third group was the destination community, which refers to the people living in the neighbourhood of the park (at Awash National Park) and the World Heritage Site (at Gondar). These groups were contacted through a data collection assistant who has knowledge of the culture and people of these areas.

Due to the qualitative nature of this research, there was no predefined number of participants; the recruitment of respondents was stopped when the responses reached saturation point (Mason 2010; Fusch and Ness 2015). At the saturation point, the responses of the interviewees became more or less similar, and there was limited possibility of enriching the existing data by conducting more interviews.

As can be seen in Table 3.2, at Awash National Park hotels and private tourist guides were not involved in the study. Unlike the other destinations included in this research, very few private sector entities have invested around the park; as such, it was difficult to involve the private sector in this research. Two lodges were observed to be operating during the data collection, but, as the owners and managers of these lodges live in Addis Ababa, it was not easy to meet them for an interview. Meanwhile, at Gondar, the tour operators and regional officers did not participate in the research. At Gondar, local guides are more visible than tour operators. The regional cultural and tourism office also did not participate in the research, as it was not easy to secure the cooperation of the regional officer during the data collection period. This sort of unwillingness on the part of the regional officer is among the challenges listed by some other scholars who have conducted research in these areas (Gobena and Van Dijke 2017; Gudeta 2018).

As for the focus group discussants, the composition of dwellers in Bishoftu and Addis Ababa are of a comparable nature in that they are involved in different economic activities, not just tourism. During the fieldwork at Bishoftu, the researcher tried to meet people in the community to conduct the FGDs. However, it was not easy to find local residents around Bishoftu's lakes, which are crowded with hotels and tourism activities. Instead, the researcher contacted accommodation providers from the private sector and the government officer in charge of

planning cultural and tourism activities in the city for individual interviews. In total, 56 individuals participated in this research (in both interviews and FGDs). The method of data collection is provided in section 3.4, followed by the data analysis topics in section 3.5.

3.4 Data collection

The method of data collection was selected based on the type of data to be generated, the nature of the research questions, and the nature of the respondents (Darlington and Scott 2003; Petty et al. 2012). In the current research, primary data was considered helpful in understanding the perception of the respondents regarding the nature and stage of collaboration among them and their perception of sustainable tourism. The research questions that were employed for this study mainly focused on exploring and explaining the major themes of this research: the stage and nature of collaboration, the factors that influence the nature of collaboration, and the stakeholders' perceptions of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental elements of sustainable tourism. There were slight differences between the questions prepared for the different groups of stakeholders, which were contextualised for the particular groups of respondents based on the sector to which they belong (i.e., the private sector, public sector, or community). The most important factor affecting the choice of method was the composition and nature of the respondents who participated in this research, namely, the individuals working in the public or private sectors and the residents living at the tourist attraction sites. A combination of methods – face-to-face interviews, FGDs, and field notes – was employed. A description of the methods used for data collection is presented in the following sub-sections.

3.4.1 Semi-structured face-to-face interviews

Interviews are data collection techniques that help to extract the opinions and attitudes of people in a flexible manner (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick 2008). Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the respondents from the public and private sectors in all four case study areas during the period 2015-2017. This approach provided flexibility for the researcher and the respondents in the process of data collection (Kothari 2004). The research benefited from the flexibility of the interview process, as it provoked more 'how, why, and what' questions related to the perception of the respondents about different issues, such as the importance of collaboration, the selection of legitimate stakeholders, and the determination of common goals.

It would not have been possible to collect data from the officers and business persons without the flexibility offered by a face-to-face interview, as they generally do not feel free to express their opinion in public. The interviews facilitated data collection from people holding official government positions at the head and regional levels, who were not necessarily willing to share their views with the public. Similarly, the individual interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to meet business managers in the accommodation and tour operator sub-sectors (tour guides and tour operators), as well as park management groups at Awash National Park, at times and places convenient for them.

Moreover, the flexibility of the interviews provided an opportunity to elicit some retrospective and anticipatory elements that could not be obtained through other data collection techniques (Darlington and Scott 2003). For example, the perception and attitude of people about the extent to which they trust each other and their descriptions of the influence of power in the process of collaboration were obtained from the reflections that respondents provided, based on their own experiences in the process.

3.4.1.1 Interview protocol

The interviews were guided by pre-prepared interview questions (see Annex 1), which were pre-tested and adjusted accordingly. Before conducting the interviews, the interview questions were translated from English to Amharic, the local language in Ethiopia, to ensure that the interviews and discussions were understandable for the respondents. The translated questions were checked by colleagues at the Tourism Management Department of Addis Ababa University in order to ensure the validity of the translation.

Before conducting the actual interviews, the researcher introduced herself to the respondents. After becoming familiar with the respondents, the researcher introduced the aim of the data collection and assured the research participants of the confidentiality of their responses. Once the consent of the respondents was obtained, the researcher turned the voice recorder on and proceeded with the interview following the interview guide. Sometimes the respondents raised general issues that were not related to the topic of interview; in such situations the interviewer re-directed the discussion.

All interviewees were allowed the freedom to choose their own interview time and place. Accordingly, all the interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for the respondents (sometimes during office hours or after office hours in cafeterias). The overall process of the interviews is presented in the following section.

3.4.1.2 Interview process

The first interview was conducted with a senior part-time hotel manager and full-time university lecturer. This respondent helped to test the clarity of the questions, after which some questions were modified to suit specific participant groups, i.e., tour companies, hoteliers, government officers, and destination communities. Questions were also customised to fit the context of each destination.

In Addis Ababa the government-run Ethiopian Tourism Organization and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism were contacted for interviews. Tour operators, hotel managers, and the head of the Addis Ababa Tour Operators Association (AATOA) were interviewed. The individual face-to-face interviews were personally arranged by the researcher through telephone calls. In Gondar, Bishoftu, and Awash National Park, the interviews were assisted by fieldwork assistants who live in these areas. The assistants were identified through people who knew them. The assistants who helped in Awash National Park and Bishoftu were graduates of Addis Ababa University and, therefore, familiar with research methodology. The assistant at Gondar was contacted through a friend who teaches at Gondar University and is a graduate of Gondar University. In general, because of the distance between the three locations and from the area of residence of the researcher, data collection activities were pre-arranged with the data collection assistants over the telephone.

Individual interviews were mostly conducted at the convenience of the respondents in terms of time and place. However, some challenges were faced in relation to conducting the interviews. One of the challenges was related to the willingness of the respondents to be interviewed; some people, especially the tour operators in Addis Ababa, asked to see and read the questions beforehand. However, none of those who received the interview questions beforehand answered telephone calls to make an appointment for an actual interview. Accordingly, later requests for the questionnaire were refused. This was an effective strategy to ensure that the researcher was able to meet the respondents and conduct the interview all in one appointment.

Some other respondents were reluctant to be interviewed when they heard the objectives of the research and that their responses were going to be used for a PhD thesis. Some explanations given included:

I have another appointment with customers.

Your questions need quite some time; let me arrange and call you some other time.

Oh, if it is for a PhD, let me have some time to get prepared and you may call me some other time.

After receiving these reactions, the researcher started having friendly and simple discussions with the respondents, without mentioning that the research was part of a PhD thesis.

In order to develop trust, the development of rapport is one of the most important strategies for social science researchers to enable them to easily approach respondents (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, and Liamputtong 2007). As suggested by these scholars, the researcher also tried to establish a friendly relationship with hotel managers, tour operators, and tour guides before commencing the face-to face interviews. These informal interactions smoothed the relationship with the interviewees and made some of the respondents forget that they were being interviewed and their voices recorded.

The other challenge was related to the use of a voice recorder. Particularly those who were affiliated to the government were not happy to have their voice recorded, especially when they learnt that their responses were going to be published. They specifically checked whether the voice recorder was turned off before expressing their opinion. In order to record the respondents' voices, the researcher guaranteed the confidentiality of their responses. Field notes were also taken, so as not to miss the responses of these people.

With the respondents who were not happy to be recorded, the same question was asked after turning the voice recorder off. The respondents' answers often differed on and off the record. For example, one official from Awash National Park was asked about the status of the park and how his office works with the surrounding community. His response when being voice recorded was that the park is in good shape, very green, populated with much wildlife, and capable of attracting large numbers of tourists. However, this did not fit with the actual status of the park as known by the researcher from observations and other respondents. Once the voice recorder was turned off, the respondent said:

Now that you are not recording my voice, let's be honest. The park is highly endangered, and this community is not benefiting in any way, although it is a guardian of the park... Personally, I feel sorry about the attention that is given to this park and the lifestyle of this community...

The off-record response was recorded as an anonymous note and used for analysis purposes, based on the consent of the respondent.

Sometimes the sequence of the questions in the questionnaire was not followed, because the interviews were structured as an informal conversation. At times the interviewees answered several questions together with another question that was not raised or designed to be discussed later. Sometimes the respondents added more points beyond the questions to further elaborate on their responses. The responses of the local guides who had university degrees were of this nature. In order to keep track of the questions, the interviewer tried to take the interviewees back to the focus of the questions. More details on how the problems that arose in the interviews were handled are given in section 3.6 on the limitations of the study.

The interviews were conducted in two phases. The first phase took place between June and September 2015 and was conducted with respondents at Addis Ababa, Awash National Park, and Gondar. Government officers at the central and regional levels, the accommodation providers, tour operators, and tour guides, as well as park management groups at Awash National Park, participated in this round. Initial data analysis was conducted on these responses, but some issues arose, such as the influence of the geographic location on stakeholder collaboration, which needed further elaboration. Moreover, the perception of respondents about the environmental elements of sustainability in relation to the influence of tourism activities was not sufficiently understood in the Awash National Park case study site, where the private sector respondents did not participate, or in the Addis Ababa and Gondar case studies, which both appeared to have more of an economic and socio-cultural character.

Based on these results, a second round of data collection was conducted in July and August 2017. The same questions were used for data collection at Bishoftu (the fourth case study). The questions raised in the other regions were used to interview the culture and tourism planning officer in Bishoftu. Similarly, the questions that were prepared for the initial round of interviews with the private sector (the hoteliers) were used to collect data from the hotel and lodge operators in Bishoftu.

In general, the individual interviews held with private sector operators and public sector officers were helpful in understanding the nature of collaboration between the private sector entities located in different geographical areas and the relationship between the private sector and the government at the central and regional levels. However, the individual interviews with representatives from the private and public sectors were not sufficient to understand the complex nature of stakeholder relationships and the overall perception of sustainable tourism

in the case study sites, without the involvement of the destination communities. This gave rise to the need for an additional data collection method, FGDs.

3.4.2 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussion is a data collection method that involves talking to many people at the same time and allowing them the freedom to discuss their issues of interest (Wong 2008). Unlike the individual interview method, in which the respondents individually give their own perspective, FGDs provide researchers with the chance to pool different people, especially the community at the destination, to discuss issues. FGDs encourage interaction among participants, who share and discuss their experiences. Of the stakeholders considered in this research, the destination community was involved through FGDs in the year 2015.

Generally, 4 to 10 people are involved in an FGD and they share their thoughts on issues of interest in less than two hours (Stewart and Shamdasani 2014). It has been pointed out by scholars (Morgan and Spanish 1984) that an FGD can be influenced by the subjectivity of the investigator or moderator, by whom respondents can be manipulated to act in accordance with the interests of the investigator. However, unless the facilitator guides the discussion, the discussants may dominate each other; i.e., some people may keep silent while others speak during the discussion (Darlington and Scott 2003). This problem was faced in the current research at Awash National Park, where the male participants tended to dominate the female participants in the FGD. In order to balance the voice of the participants, it was important to initiate and give opportunities for those discussants who were inactive in the discussion.

3.4.2.1 FGD protocol

At both focus group discussion sites, the researcher played an active role in introducing the aim of the FGD and encouraging the members to introduce themselves and develop the self-confidence to freely express their ideas in front of the other participants. The full consent of the discussants was also obtained. Fortunately, all of the discussants were willing to participate and interested in the topic. Afterwards, the guiding rules for the discussion were set as follows:

- One person speaks at a time and discussants must wait until the speaker finishes expressing his/her idea before having a turn at speaking.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- It is not necessary to agree with the idea of another discussant.
- Whenever the questions or issues are not clear, discussants are allowed to ask questions.

- The discussants are allowed to use the language that suits them (Afan Oromo or Amharic at Awash National Park).

The next section sets out the process for the FGDs at the selected tourist destinations.

3.4.2.2 FGD process

In tourism research, FGDs are an important tool for ensuring the involvement of large numbers of research participants, in general (Boateng 2012), and the destination community, in particular, as they give a large number of people the chance to be involved in the discussion face-to-face (Simmons 1994; Cole 2006). In the current research, FGDs were arranged based on the consent of the interested people. As such, it can be assumed that they were freely expressing their ideas. Participants sometimes refuted each other's ideas and sometimes supported them.

Two FGDs were held: one with the destination residents at Gondar and one with those at Awash National Park. The FGDs involved eight and nine participants and were conducted at Gondar and Awash National Park, respectively. FGDs were deemed relevant at these destinations, because these destinations are characterised by cultural and environmental attractions, which are surrounded by local residents who are also originally from these areas. These residents' lives are tied to the tourist attractions; hence, FGDs offered the community the chance to discuss their understanding of, and commitment to, sustainable tourism, as well as their experiences working with the other stakeholders. Each discussion at both destinations lasted less than two hours. Based on the research questions, basic issues related to the importance of collaboration, the issue of legitimacy of stakeholders, and other related issues were discussed in the FGDs in relation to the nature of their collaboration with other tourism stakeholders. The community's perception of sustainable tourism was also discussed in terms of the elements of sustainability. This discussion with the community enabled the researcher to analyse the responses in the individual interviews held with the private sector and government officers, especially in relation to the nature of the relationship between the community and the government, as well as the relationship between the tour operators and community in Awash National Park and the tour guides and community at Gondar.

At both sites, Gondar and Awash National Park, the establishment of rapport through self-introduction and explanation of the purpose of the study was the first step. The discussants were then assured of the confidentiality of their responses in order to encourage them to freely express their views. After securing the respondents' agreement, the discussion commenced.

Based on the full consent of the discussants, a voice recorder and cell phone were placed on the round table where the discussants sat for the FGD in order to capture the responses of the whole group.

In both cases, the FGDs were composed of different groups of people. In Gondar, diverse groups of people engaged in different sectors, but working and living around Fasil Ghebbi, took part in the FGD. The discussants included representatives of the church (a priest), weavers association, transportation providers association, tannery association, souvenir designers association, handicraft sellers association, and tour guide association (in total eight individuals). What was interesting about this heterogeneous group was that each discussant was engaged in different activities, although all are engaged in offering tourism products and dwell around Fasil Ghebbi. The combination of these respondents was helpful in understanding the views of the different groups in the area on the nature of collaboration with different tourism stakeholders, such as the regional government office and the tour operators in Addis Ababa, as well as their perception of sustainable tourism. For example, the nature of community involvement in decision making on tourism development, as well as giving feedback and requesting clarification from the central government in relation to benefit sharing, was voiced by the discussants.

The second FGD was held at Awash National Park. Nine participants were involved in this discussion, consisting of residents living around the park. The discussion with these people was facilitated by a graduate of Addis Ababa University who was born in this community and worked in the lodges in the park. The facilitator introduced the researcher to the community and explained the purpose of collecting the data, which was an important step in convincing people to collaborate in the research. The facilitator explained that the local people were used to receiving some money for their cooperation. Based on his suggestion, the participants in the FGD were paid a small amount of money (equivalent to around EUR 2 each) for their participation.

The FGDs were also not free from challenges. Some people tended to dominate the discussion; for example, at Awash National Park, two people were repeatedly raising their hands to give comments. In order to avoid the dominance of these people, the research encouraged other participants by calling their names and requesting their opinion on the issues being discussed. This proved to be a good strategy to encourage participation, especially by the women, who were quietly listening instead of commenting.

3.4.3 Field notes

As well as the individual interviews and the FGDs, the researcher took field notes during the data collection. Every day, a note was made in relation to what was observed during the data collection at the specific case study site.

3.5 Data analysis

Aside from the field notes, the analysis of qualitative research starts with the transcription of the data (Braun and Clarke 2006; Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas 2013). The analysis was based on the six stages of thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis was chosen because of its flexibility. Moreover, thematic analysis considers not only the content of the data, but also its context (Alhojailan 2012; Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, and Redwood 2013; Vaismoradi et al. 2013).

As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), first, as a way of becoming familiar with the data, the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim in Amharic and translated into English. The content and structure of the discussion, as well as the tone of the respondents, were captured from the audio recordings and the field notes taken before and after the interviews and FGDs. The field notes were used to supplement the recorded interviews and FGDs, because they captured the reactions and physical setup of the interviews and FGDs, which is believed to help explain the demeanour of the respondents. In general, the familiarisation stage (the first stage) is a very important stage, which is often considered analogous to laying the foundations of a structure, as it determines the quality of the final structure.

Following the transcription and translation of verbatim transcripts of the data from Amharic to English the initial coding was generated (stage 2). The codes were based on a combination of themes that are ‘data-driven’ (inductive) and ‘theory-driven’ (deductive) (Vaismoradi et al. 2013). Coding started with repeated reading of the text data.

In order to manage the data and make it amenable to further analysis, initially individual items were manually coded by highlighting selected responses with different colours. For example, the responses obtained from tour operators were categorised using a green colour. Responses obtained from hoteliers, tour guides, and others were also highlighted with different colours in order to be able to identify the specific text segments that were relevant. While coding the data, Creswell and Miller (2000) suggest the involvement of individuals external to the research in

order to improve the credibility of the coding process. Hence, some experienced colleagues and research supervisors participated in coding the data, and their coding was compared to the responses already coded by the researcher. Involving individuals external to the research is believed to ensure inter-rated reliability and, hence, improve the reliability of the coding process (Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle 2001; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers 2002).

The third stage is searching for a theme among the codes. This phase involves sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant codes. The researcher organised the codes in the data matrices to manage the bulk of the data and to facilitate a focused analysis by forming themes (Ritchie, Spencer, and O'Connor, 2003). A data matrix is a two-dimensional tabular representation of data in rows and columns that is used to compare data collected from more than one unit and make it amenable to further analysis. In this research, the coded data were placed in rows and columns in such a way that the original interview questions formed a thematic framework (Ritchie et al. 2003), around which the responses of the interviewees were organised. The rows represented the themes that were developed based on the interview topics; the columns represented the codes corresponding to the themes obtained from the responses of the research participants.

For example, some of the rows represented the themes corresponding to the stages of collaboration (for instance, the first row could represent the theme 'legitimate partner'; the second row could represent the theme 'power'). The first column contains the code that corresponds to the theme in a particular row obtained from the first respondent. The second column represents the codes that correspond to the theme in a particular row based on the response of the second respondent.

After finishing the coding of responses, the data were further synthesised to form a thematic framework (Ritchie et al. 2003). Responses relating to the same issue were categorised under one main overarching theme. For example, responses related to awareness of the importance of collaboration were categorised together (snapshots of the data matrices and a sample code can be found in annexes 3 and 4).

Two data matrices were developed in order to summarise the different responses obtained from the different groups of respondents in the case study sites. The first data matrix was developed for the private sector group (such as the hotel managers, tour operators, and tour guides) located in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and Bishoftu. A separate data matrix was developed for the individual

interviews conducted at Awash National Park, because the respondents differed from those other groups. The individual respondents at Awash National Park were the park management groups engaged in the conservation of the park. They are non-business oriented and live and work in the park. Unlike the responses of the hotel managers and tour operators, who were responding on the basis of their relationships with partners from the point of view of doing business, the response of those in the park management group was related to the performance of the park and their relationship with the central government, regional park management offices, and surrounding community.

The fourth stage repeated the third stage and involved re-reading the data and checking the codes to see if they were consistent. Through this process, new codes were obtained. Codes relating to the themes of 'trust' and 'professionalism', as factors influencing collaboration, were identified during this stage.

This stage was followed by the fifth stage: naming and defining the themes. In this case, the data matrix was reviewed and the themes noted in order to define the themes (except for the themes that were developed based on the codes generated from the data [inductively], most themes are related to the variables indicated in the theoretical framework). This stage led to the final stage (sixth stage): producing the report. In preparing the report, the texts with most expressive quotes were selected and included as necessary. The storylines relating to the research questions were produced at this stage. Chapters 4 and 5 present the empirical results obtained from the data. The findings were analysed and interpreted in light of the conceptual framework.

Chapter 4. Multi-stakeholder Collaboration and its Determinants in Ethiopia

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings of this study on the first research question:

- 1. Which factors facilitate the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia?*

To answer this question, it looks at the stage of development and evolution of stakeholder collaboration in the study sites (sub-question 1a; section 4.2) and the perception of the stakeholders of such collaboration (sub-question 1b; section 4.3). The chapter then looks at the factors that have facilitated or hampered the development of stakeholder collaboration (sub-question 1c; section 4.4) in the study sites.

In order to answer this question, individual interviews and FGDs were conducted with tourism stakeholders from the public sector (the central government in charge of tourism management and development and the regional tourism offices), private sector (tour companies and accommodation providers), and destination community in the four case study sites. The data collected from the individual interviews and FGDs was analysed according to the theoretical framework laid out in Chapter 2 (see Figure 2.4), which expresses the collaboration of stakeholders in terms of five stages (see Figure 2.3): antecedents (or conditions for collaboration) (section 4.2.1), problem setting (section 4.2.2), direction setting (section 4.2.3), structuring (section 4.2.4), and outcome (Chapter 5). The findings on the impact of the collaboration on the stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism (which answers the second research question) are presented separately in Chapter 5.

4.2 The stage of development of stakeholder collaboration

This section presents the findings from the data obtained from the research participants based on the framework of collaboration, which describes the antecedents of collaboration, problem setting, direction setting, and structuring (see Figure 2.3 and section 2.5). In order to investigate the extent of collaboration among tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia, the public sector, private sector, and destination community in Addis Ababa, Gondar, Awash National Park, and Bishoftu were assessed using data obtained through face-to-face interviews with individuals in the public sector and private sector, as well as from FGDs with destination communities. This section presents the participants' views in terms of the stages of development of collaboration. The antecedents of collaboration are presented first, followed by the other main stages in the

collaboration process. The final stage, outcome, is dealt with in Chapter 5. Throughout presenting the findings, especially while presenting the direct quotes from the informants, the informants were given ID codes that consisted of acronyms representing the initials of the case study site (e.g., Addis Ababa – AA, Gondar – G, Awash National Park – ANP, Bishoftu – B) and the initials of sector to which the respondent belongs (e.g., hotel manager – H, tour operator – T, tour guide – G, government – Gv). The codes for the informants are provided in the Annex 5.

4.2.1 Antecedents of collaboration

The current research attempted to identify the antecedents of collaboration from the responses of the participants. Based on the interviews with government officials, it was identified that the aim of the public sector, i.e., the government bodies, is to make tourism among the top five economic engines for the country's development, through employment creation and poverty reduction. From the perspective of the government, the main issue appears to be poverty reduction, which needs an urgent solution. Hence, the poverty reduction agenda could be considered an antecedent for collaboration. In order to understand whether the poverty reduction aim is also voiced by the private sector at the selected case study destinations, further investigations were made.

The private sector stakeholders in the case study sites (e.g., accommodation providers and tour companies) have established professional associations, such as a hotel owners association and tour company association. However, these associations do not appear to be actively mobilising their members. Moreover, the aim of these associations is to connect their members with the government, based on the individual needs of the association members.

One of the respondents from the private sector made the following comment in relation to these associations:

Association membership facilitates our interaction with the government in getting permission, such as importation of duty-free equipment... (Interviewee AA H3, 2015)

Hence, the aim of poverty reduction does not seem to be shared by the government and the private sector stakeholders.

The government also considers associations as an instrument through which to meet the private sector, based on need. A government official who works as a director for stakeholder relationships made the following point:

We work with them [the private sector] through their association since it is difficult to meet them individually. But sometimes we call the hotels for a meeting whenever there are some events such as international conferences and others. They also request from us whatever they need. In addition, the regional offices contact the hotels in the region, and we work with them through our regional officers. (Interviewee AA Gv1, 2015)

As this response reveals, the government is working with the private sector. It arranges for the stakeholders to meet, but it does not appear to create other conditions for collaboration, such as raising a common urgent issue to be dealt with.

Although strong antecedents of collaboration among the stakeholders (strong leadership or a common issue needing urgent attention) were not observed, further investigations were made about the consecutive stages of collaboration to identify the nature of the relationships among stakeholders and to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of collaboration among the public sector, private sector, and local community in the selected case study destinations. The following section presents the results of the interviews with stakeholders in relation to the next stage of collaboration, problem setting.

4.2.2 Problem setting

This stage of collaboration mainly depends on the extent to which the stakeholders are capable of identifying a common domain purpose and legitimate stakeholders with whom to work (see Figure 4.1).

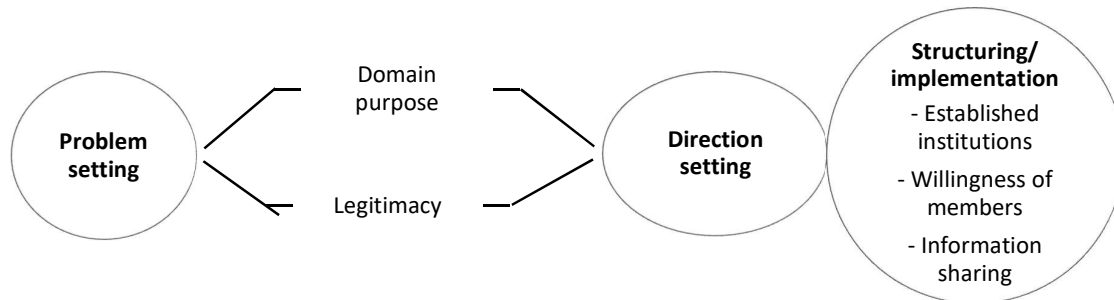


Figure 4.1. Problem setting, direction setting, and structuring

4.2.2.1 Domain-level purpose

Identification of the domain-level purpose or issue is one of the most important factors in this stage of collaboration among stakeholders. Interviews and discussions were held with the

stakeholders in the case study sites in order to understand the existence of a domain-level purpose common to all stakeholders, in general, and their respective associations, in particular.

The service providers (hotels and tour companies) were asked whether they have common goals that they are working towards together with their partners. Most of the hoteliers and tour operators replied that they do not have common goals, but that they have similar interests related to sales and profit maximisation. Most of the hotel managers shared the view of the following respondent, who has worked in the hotel management sector for more than 20 years:

We don't have a common goal that brings us together on a periodic basis, but we all have similar interests. As we are doing business, we all want to maximise our sales... That is what I feel. (Interviewee AA H5, 2015)

Similarly, the tour operators also promote their own profit-related purpose. However, the tour operators and hoteliers do not appear to share a common purpose. One of the respondents interviewed representing the tour operators' association reflected the same view as the previously quoted hotel manager:

I am telling you from my experience of more than 20 years... we don't have such a culture [of setting common goals], and we don't know each other at all. We all do whatever we are assigned to do. By chance, I personally know some travel agents and we discuss some issues informally. Apart from this, we have never held a formal discussion to set and achieve common goals... whether on how to promote tourism or how to benefit the society, etc. (Interviewee AA H4, 2015)

As per the interviewees' responses, there is neither an inter-association nor an intra-association goal that is meant to be commonly achieved by the members of the hotel owners association or the tour operators association.

Moreover, due to the differences in the aims of the members, the previous Addis Ababa-based tour operators association was split into two groups: One group promotes pure business goals, and another group is more focused on professionalism in tourism (i.e., the professional qualifications of tourism operators). The group that prioritises business goals is the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association (ETOA); the second group is the Addis Ababa Tour Operators Association (AATOA). Therefore, there are two different associations of tour operators in Addis Ababa with two different aims. This can be inferred from the criteria that the associations have set for joining. For example, to join the ETOA each operator has to own at least three minivans; however, the AATOA requires that the members have a professional qualification

and possess at least one car. The AATOA focuses on recruiting skilled members who graduated in tourism or who have taken a course related to tourism. As long as individuals (the tour operators) can meet the requirements of the government, they can obtain a licence from the Ministry of Trade and Industry without having any background or qualification in tourism.

The individual tour operators also claim that they intend to attract a large number of international tourists, but they have little intention of collaborating with their fellow tour operators to achieve this. This can be inferred from the comment made by one of the interviewees, an owner of a tour company:

Well, in the tourism sector there are so many secrets that you shouldn't share with anybody. Since the services offered are almost similar, we try to differentiate ourselves in terms of the type of service, price, and some other strategies. So in the context of Ethiopia, you don't have to share such secrets except with your staff here. We don't even share all these secrets with all our staff, for they could leak the information.

(Interviewee AA T4, 2015)

From this and other responses, intra-group competition and distrust can be observed among the members, instead of the setting of common goals. The tour operators compete for guests rather than working together to attract more tourists. In the context of this research, it appears that rather than supporting each other and benefiting from each other's activities, the hoteliers and tour operators, which are mainly located in Addis Ababa, focus on their own interests.

Similarly, the lodges and resorts located in Bishoftu revealed that they compete with each other for business; however, they support each other whenever they have excess bookings and sometimes borrow materials from each other. One of the interviewees at Bishoftu made the following point:

We are just working independently... working to attract tourists as much as we can. What else can we do together? Only we share the guests with other hotels when we get excess bookings. (Interviewee B H1, 2017)

In general, the stakeholders do not consider the need to work together at the domain level, but instead focus on maximising their own individual interests (profit). The lack of common goals between the hoteliers and tour operators may follow from their inability to recognise each other as legitimate tourism stakeholders, as presented in the next sub-section.

4.2.2.2 Recognition of legitimacy

The three groups of stakeholders (private sector, public sector, and destination community) were asked about the extent to which they consider each other as legitimate and important stakeholders. The following section presents the views of each group of research participants on this point.

Private sector

The private sector service providers who participated in this research were: the hoteliers, tour operators, and tour guides. For the local guides located in Gondar, the tour operators and hoteliers are their most important partners. The guides access the tourists in groups through the tour operators and as backpackers who travel independently. The tour operators based in Addis Ababa are considered the most influential partners by the local guides working in Gondar. The tour operators based in Addis Ababa arrange the tour packages and send the tourists to the destinations. The tourists then arrive in the hotels and are transferred to the local guides, who take them to different tourist sites, as can be understood from the following quote:

...we work with the national tour operators. The national tour operators send the guests either with the local guide or with their driver; we directly interact and work with them. The second one is the local travel agents. The third one is the case of private tourists who come by themselves, without any travel agent and tour operator. These tourists directly come here and rent the hotels; in this case the hotels call us to take these visitors. So we work with the national tour guides, travel agents, and hotels.
(Interviewee G G2, 2015)

However, the tour operators do not consider the local guides as legitimate stakeholders or their primary important partner. For the tour operators based in Addis Ababa, the hotels, particularly those located in Addis Ababa, are the most important partners, because they provide the tour operators with accommodation services for their guests. These hoteliers can negatively influence the operation of the tour companies if they decide to change their arrangements or cancel the bookings of the tour operators. One of the tour operators in Addis Ababa reflected on the influence of the hoteliers as follows:

Sometimes we sell packages and reserve hotels, but the hotels may not fulfil their promises. Especially during the high season, booking hotels is so problematic. You have already sold the package to the guests, then you fail to get accommodation... Oh, you can't imagine the mess. (Interviewee AA T4, 2015)

Tour operators are, therefore, highly dependent on their relationship with hoteliers, but in some cases they cannot rely on them to provide the services contracted. This sometimes forces the tour operators to make changes to their packages, often using lower quality hotels and negatively affecting customer satisfaction. This implies that hoteliers are the most important partners for the tour operators, especially in Addis Ababa.

In contrast, the hotels in Addis Ababa focus more on event organisers, such as the African Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNECA, and other NGOs that organise major conferences and events, which attract large numbers of conference and business travellers. Sometimes the hoteliers receive online bookings directly from the guests. So they do not see the tour companies as adding much value to their business.

There is not much use in relying on the tour operators, as our relationship is situation-based. For us, our main purpose is sales maximisation, doing business, and we can sell our services even directly to the customers. ...We get online requests all the time...
(Interviewee AA H5, 2015)

In a similar manner, the lodges and resorts in Bishoftu do not recognise tour companies as having a high level of legitimacy. They claim that they are working by themselves to get domestic tourists, walk-in guests, and international visitors, who can book accommodation through the Internet. A hotel manager in Bishoftu explained:

We usually get a larger number of local visitors over the weekends who spend a day or the weekend. We are located at a strategic place, close to Addis Ababa. The expressway is very comfortable for the visitors to easily drive to Bishoftu, and as such tour operators do not have any contribution in our case. (Interviewee B H3, 2017)

For the bigger hotels, the capacity to accommodate different kinds of visitors, be they leisure tourists, conference tourists, or other kinds of tourists, makes them powerful and independent, while it makes the tour operators less powerful.

On the other hand, for the hotels in Gondar, the tour operators and tour guides are the most influential partners. This is because these hotels are located in the countryside and rarely have international conferences or business travellers. Their main customers are the leisure travellers that come through the tour companies and sometimes through direct online bookings. As the respondents indicated, the hoteliers in Gondar get 80–90% of their customers through the tour operators in Addis Ababa.

Mainly... we work with the tour operators. Around 80% of the tourists come to our hotel through the tour operators. The remaining 20% of our rooms are occupied by individual travellers who come on their own and some domestic guests. So mainly we work with the tour operators; in addition, we also work with the local guides to get the tourists who come without scheduling their visit. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

It can be inferred from the above response that the majority of tourists being served in Gondar come through tour operators. Like the tour guides, the hoteliers also consider tour operators to be the most important stakeholders. In this regard, the tour operators have a large amount of bargaining power with the hoteliers in Gondar, as these tour operators can choose between different hotels. To mitigate this power imbalance, the hotels in Gondar said that they use different mechanisms, such as offering tour operators special discounts, free rooms and services, and other associated benefits, as a means of building their relationship with the tour operators and tour guides in Addis Ababa:

We are very flexible; if they [the tour operators] book a room and cancel it, we cannot penalise them by charging them even half of the price. You know why? ... If we do so, they [the tour operators] will never come back again to our hotel. This is impossible in the case of the hotels found in Addis Ababa; no hotel would cancel the reservation for free since they [the hoteliers] could lose other market opportunities. But in our case, we don't have a market at all unless we create a smooth relationship with the tour operators. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

It can be understood from the above interview that the tour operators in Addis Ababa dominate the decisions of the hotel managers in Gondar. The fact that the hoteliers in Gondar rely on international tourists who come to Ethiopia through arrangements with the Addis Ababa-based tour operators has created a power imbalance between the tour operators and hoteliers in Gondar. Since the hoteliers in Gondar are far from the centre (Addis Ababa), they are unable to directly attract lots of international tourists. While most of the hoteliers interviewed in Gondar target international tourists, these tourists are actually directed to the hotels in Gondar through the tour operators based in Addis Ababa.

The ability of tour operators to switch their business between hotels and destinations is another factor influencing the bargaining power of hoteliers in Gondar. However, the hoteliers with a higher level of education and skills, such as those in Addis Ababa, were better able to negotiate a good deal with the tour operators. Meanwhile, the medium-sized or small hotels and those found in distant areas had less power to negotiate with the large tour operators in Addis Ababa.

Destination community

In order to investigate the extent to which the local community is considered a legitimate stakeholder at the case study sites, interviews were held with the private sector stakeholders (such as the hoteliers in Gondar, Bishoftu, and Addis Ababa and the tour operators). Discussions were held with the community in order to understand the extent to which they feel that they are recognised as a legitimate stakeholder. This section presents the findings related to the recognition of the legitimacy of the destination community.

The majority of the business people (tour operators and the hoteliers) who participated in this study admitted that they do not consider the local community at the attraction sites as an important partner. However, they recognise, in principle, that they should consider the destination community as a legitimate stakeholder, although they do not work with them in practice. For instance, from the tour operator groups, most tour operators that were interviewed share the view of the following tour operator:

Honestly speaking, there is nothing meaningful that we did for and with the community, which of course I believe needs attention. (Interviewee AA T1, 2015)

The hoteliers in Addis Ababa mostly express their relations with the community in terms of the contribution they make to the community in the form of corporate social responsibility, which does not make the community a legitimate stakeholder in their eyes:

...we promise different things for the community when we engage in the business; one of the promises is to discharge the social responsibility. So, supporting the society is part of our social responsibility that we discharge... we buy books, clothes, and other things for the needy people. (Interviewee AA H3, 2015)

Unlike most hoteliers in Gondar and Addis Ababa, which focus on attracting international (Western) tourists, most of the lodges and resorts at Bishoftu see the surrounding community as instrumental in the success of their business and recognise them as legitimate stakeholders. Most of the hoteliers from Bishoftu who participated in this research shared the view of the following respondent:

Our major partners are the surrounding communities. Almost 99% of the employees working in this resort are recruited from the surrounding community. Some are directly recruited, and the others are indirectly benefiting... We also acquire the raw materials

for the kitchen and the furniture for the rooms from this community. (Interviewee B H2, 2017)

The lodges in Bishoftu target domestic tourists and ‘walk-in’ guests (i.e., people who come to the hotel without a prior booking), more than international guests who could come through the tour operators. The hoteliers based in Bishoftu have enough market access, as they are close to Addis Ababa. They mostly serve domestic tourists and conference tourists; they host meetings and organise different catering services, which makes them less dependent on international tourists and tour companies. As such, the lodge and resorts in Bishoftu prefer to work closely with the community in order to build a smooth relationship, as the community provides the hoteliers with different raw materials and inputs. It seems that the target market they serve, as well as the nature of the services that the hotels provide (i.e., Western-oriented services versus more traditional services) determines the extent to which they consider the destination community as a legitimate stakeholder. One hotel owner/manager in Gondar who operates a lodge made the following comment about working with the destination community:

We are working very closely with the farmers and the surrounding community. I always take the tourists to the place of the farmers and show them the life of the farmers, how they produce something like honey, and other lifestyles. You know that tourism is not only visiting the castle all the time. A person may have come to Ethiopia some 20 years ago and saw this castle; if he comes again, is he going to visit this castle again? That is very boring. Especially for the current generation, it would be a very boring kind of trip. So we are arranging a number of events through which they get experiences from what they see or hear. For example, I have arranged for hiking; the ‘ferenji’ [foreigners] like hiking, horse riding, and so on. What they experience will create more long-lasting memories and fun than the heritage and historic-related products, so we need to be creative, rather than becoming history tellers. Everybody knows coffee, but the tradition of making coffee is different everywhere. It would be very enjoyable if we could show tourists how Ethiopians make coffee, which would be very interesting for the ferenjīs. Such experiences will attract tourists more and more, and they could extend the period of their stay in this city, which could have great economic consequences. So what I mean is that tourism is about creativity and sharing experiences; it is not only history telling. Take horse riding; it gives enormous satisfaction to the tourists – they wait for the day very eagerly. In this way the owner of the horse will also benefit, you know... Most importantly, we teach our people the importance and value of a horse; we show them the special care the horses need and how the owners could benefit from their horses. (Interviewee G H4, 2015)

As can be observed from this response, the type of service that the hoteliers or the lodges engage in, as well as the level of creativity and experiences shared with visitors, determines the importance of the community as a legitimate stakeholder.

Compared to the hoteliers in Addis Ababa and most of the hoteliers in Gondar, who apparently focus on Western-style services, the lodges and resorts in Bishoftu appear to value the local community as an important partner that can influence the success of their activities. This could be related to the nature of the products the lodges offer, which makes them more dependent on the local community.

On the other hand, like the hotels in Addis Ababa and most of the hoteliers in Gondar, the tour operators conceded that they are not collaborating with the destination community, even though they rely on the attractions in the local area. Rhetorically, the tour operators believe in the importance of collaboration with destination communities, but, practically, they do not work with the community as a legitimate and important stakeholder.

Public sector

Discussions were also held with the private sector and the local community in order to understand the issue of legitimacy. As reflected by the interview respondents, the government provides trade licences, star ratings, and quality assurance for the tour companies and hotels. For some tour operators and hoteliers, the office of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism facilitates attendance at international expos and exhibitions. Ethiopian Airlines, which is regulated by the government, gives discounts and chartered flights to those tour operators who bring large numbers of visitors.

The accommodation providers, especially those in Addis Ababa, also work with the government on the safety and security of guests at conferences, workshops, and other meetings held in the city. The hoteliers, security guards, and others discuss how to efficiently host the guests whenever there are events in Addis Ababa.

At the regional level, support from the regional office of culture and tourism for tour guides and accommodation providers is rare. The hoteliers in Gondar even accuse the government officials of not cooperating with them in developing tourism:

The government does not help us in making this city a conference city. Everything goes to the emerging cities like Bahirdar, Hawassa, and others. Our region [the Amhara

regional office] does not do anything, and they are even among the ones who defame Gondar as an expensive city. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

The tour guides working at Fasil Ghebbi in Gondar have the same impression as the hoteliers:

Except for controlling our activities through setting regulations, the regional government is not actively facilitating [anything] for us. There is a set of criteria that is put as a requirement to work as a guide... To work as a local guide, one has to register at the local guides' association in the Amhara region in the city administration of Gondar. The members of this association work on a strict rotation system following the queue. (Interviewee G G3, 2015)

The reflections of these respondents show that the government is influencing stakeholders' operations by controlling their activities, instead of considering and involving them as legitimate stakeholders.

Based on the interviews and FGDs with stakeholders, the next section presents the extent to which the stakeholders work together to set a common direction.

4.2.3 Setting a common direction

The research participants were asked about the direction stakeholders follow in the course of collaboration and the extent to which they have set guidelines for their collaboration. As can be seen from the previous section, private sector entities such as hoteliers and tour operators do not see their mutual interdependence the same way. As such, there is no clear direction that guides their relationship. On the other hand, the Ethiopian Tourism Organization states the direction of the government as follows:

We need to attract huge numbers of tourists; we need to derive economic gain from them. The direction of the government is also to make tourism one of the five economic engines of the country. So our aim is to overcome the problems faced so far and maximise the economic benefit of tourism. The government is also designing plans and strategies around the economic benefits by developing and transforming the sector, involving the stakeholders and making them beneficiaries, so that the cumulative effect will contribute to our economy. (Interviewee AA Gv3, 2015)

The Ethiopian Tourism Organization seems to provide direction for all stakeholders in relation to how they should engage and work together towards the development of tourism. One of the determinants of the success of direction setting is the extent to which power and information is

shared with other stakeholders (Gray 1985). In order to understand whether or not information is shared by the government with the tourism stakeholders, the following question was asked:

Q: Do you think that all of your partners clearly know the goal of the government office?

Yes or no.

The representative from the Ethiopian Tourism Organization answered as follows:

We are at the initial stage. We set every plan and goal, but it is very difficult to say that all stakeholders have reached the level of full understanding. The nearby stakeholders [referring to hotels and tour operators located in Addis Ababa] know our goals to some extent, but the more distant ones such as in the destination communities do not know them fully. So we have a plan to create awareness and brief them on our goals so that all stakeholders can collaborate with us and benefit from the process as well.

(Interviewee AA Gv3, 2015)

One can infer from the above response that the full range of tourism stakeholders have not been involved in setting the direction. Moreover, the interviewee stated that his office is intending to call on stakeholders for implementation of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization's plan, although it did not involve the stakeholders at the initial stage of designing the objectives. In particular, the local communities living around the attraction sites seem to be seen by the Ethiopian Tourism Organization as distant stakeholders.

Power sharing, which could be undertaken in the form of delegation, and involvement of the participants in planning or decision making are factors that facilitate direction setting. The central government has delegated the conservation of resources and heritage to the regional governments and destination communities. However, the lack of actual participation by the communities in goal setting is one of the issues that emerged from the discussions with research participants:

They invite us to the planning and performance reporting events, and we do participate. In fact, the regional tourism office gets the directives from the federal government and invites us. We comment on the plan and give them sort of comments... They seem to incorporate our ideas... but they come with the already finished deal. They set their own plans and allocate the budget for all activities, so our comments are not that valuable to them... (Interviewee G G4, 2015)

The above interviewee revealed that the government officers invite the participation of the community at the meetings physically; however, they do not incorporate the opinion of the stakeholders in setting a direction. It can be observed that the participants do not follow a common direction with the government, which is consistent with the fact that their ideas are not incorporated in the planning stage.

In relation to the distance between the private sector and the public sector in terms of their goals, the stakeholders from the private sector have not reflected much on the direction they commonly follow.

In order to get a clear picture of the nature of collaboration among the tourism stakeholders, further discussion was held with the research participants. The next section looks at the data and analysis of the participants' responses in relation to the structuring stage of stakeholder collaboration.

4.2.4 Structuring/implementation

In order to understand the structuring stage (whether or not there is any formal institutional arrangement), the research participants were asked about the existence of a clear reporting structure and a formal institution that assumes ongoing responsibility for the issues that concern the stakeholders. It was found that there is a paper-based institution, but it is not actively available to engage the stakeholders. The stakeholders were also not well informed about the existence and importance of institutions, and, as a result, the members of the private associations were reluctant to assume responsibility. Even though there are initiatives by the government to form institutions that could serve to develop tourism in Ethiopia (for example, the Ethiopian Tourism Organization), information asymmetry appears to exist between the private and public sectors relating to the institutionalisation of collaboration. The following paragraphs present the findings on this stage.

4.2.4.1 Active and physically accessible institutions

From the perspective of private sector actors, owing to the absence of common goals and a close working relationship among the stakeholders, it appears that there is no clear structure for collaboration between private sector actors. One can infer from the comment of the following respondent the extent to which the hoteliers have institutionalised their working relationship:

I heard that there is an association even when I was doing my master's thesis, believe it or not [...] I couldn't even find their office. One guy led me to a building located somewhere, I went there, then the people working in that building directed me to another building, telling me that the association had left the office in that building six months ago. Again in the second building I couldn't find the office. I talked to a lady at the front desk. She gave me the chairman's phone number, but I couldn't physically get him. I think no one is interested and willing to take full commitment in this regard. Everybody runs here and there for their personal benefit. (Interviewee AA H2, 2015)

The above quote is from a manager of a branded international hotel chain in Addis Ababa, who has served for over 20 years in the sector. He was not aware of the existence of the hotel associations until he did his thesis for his master's degree recently. However, the hotel association has no physical office and does not actively and formally engage with its members. This also implies that there is no formal information sharing among stakeholders in the sector.

The issues that the above respondent mentioned were also encountered during the data collection. Theoretically, a hotel association exists, but there is no office that can be physically accessed. The same is true in the case of the tour operators; there are associations, but no physical office. As a result, the interviews with the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association and the Addis Ababa Tour Operators Association were arranged by phone and the interviews conducted in a cafeteria.

4.2.4.2 Willingness of the members

In the case of associations in the private sector (i.e., hotel and tour operator associations), their establishment is mandated by the government in order to smooth the link between individual private sector entities and the public sector. The lack of active and physical offices of associations could be attributed to the fact their establishment was not initiated with the apparent interests of the private sector at heart. As the interest of the private sector was not involved in the initial phase of establishing the association, the members show little commitment to strengthening their relationships in the form of an association. One of the hotel managers in Gondar made the following comment in relation to the status of the hotel association in Gondar:

In the first place, I don't think we have made a full commitment and are engaged to the extent that we are supposed to be. For one thing, hotels need daily follow-up of the routine things that can't be accomplished in our absence... So whenever we are called

for a meeting, we do not give due attention to that meeting and participate in it. In addition, as long as we are doing business and trying to maximise our individual benefit, it is not common to work harmoniously in this country, particularly in the city of Gondar. The government should give due attention to this association and follow up on its activities; this could help us to become active. You know, no hotel manager would like to become chairperson of this association, because it needs too much time there in the office, but none of us are willing to spend all that time since we are busy. It would be a good idea if the government assigns an officer who could actively lead this association very keenly. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

At the initial stage of forming an association, creating domain-level awareness about the importance of collaboration can help to trigger the commitment of the members. However, from the response of the above respondent, it appears that the hoteliers in the case study sites have not fully understood the importance of collaboration and do not want to take responsibility and the initiative to work with other stakeholders. As a result, most of the hoteliers focus on the short-term and day-to-day goals of the hotel, seeing the association as the responsibility of the government. The view of the above respondent was shared by most of the participants in this research.

4.2.4.3 Information sharing

The government has made efforts to institutionalise the relationships between stakeholders to engage them in the promotion and development of tourism. Among such initiatives are the establishment of tourism offices like the Ethiopian Tourism Organization and the Tourism Transformation Council to promote tourism. In the past, sport, tourism, and culture were administered by the same government department. Since 2005, however, culture and tourism have been separated at the federal level. The Ethiopian Tourism Organization, whose main aim is to promote and develop tourism, was established under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. However, as the interview with an official working at this office indicated, not all stakeholders are familiar with the existence of this office. Although the phone numbers of the affiliates of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization (such as the hotel owners' association chairman) were recorded in the organisation's phone directory, most of the contact addresses were incorrect or not current.

In addition, the private sector stakeholders who participated in this research did not share any knowledge related to the existence and functioning of these offices. This could indicate a top-

down approach to the initiation and establishment of these offices, in which the private stakeholders have not participated. It seems that the full range of stakeholders are not working with this government office and the government seems to be making decisions independently of the private sector and other important stakeholders at the grass-roots level. The members of the destination community located at Gondar (the local guides) and those at Awash National Park hardly reflected on the existence of collaboration and its importance.

4.2.5 Conclusion

From the cases studies it appears that the tour operators in Addis Ababa rely heavily on the hoteliers in the destinations to provide their services. However, the hoteliers do not consider the tour operators as their most important partners, on the basis that the hotels can get direct bookings from their customers (tourists) and other guests. Among the hoteliers and the tour operators there seems to be a weak collaboration. As can be observed from responses of the research participants, the individual hoteliers and the individual tour operators do not reflect much on the importance of their fellow hoteliers and tour operators.

At Bishoftu, the hoteliers reported relying on the surrounding community's cooperation for the smooth functioning of their businesses. Unlike the hoteliers in Addis Ababa, the hoteliers in Bishoftu mention the importance of collaborating with other hoteliers. The stakeholders in Gondar (hoteliers, local tourist guides and the community residing around the tourist attractions) mostly relate the success of their operation to the nature of their collaboration with the tour operators in Addis Ababa. However, the tour operators in Addis Ababa do not reciprocate; they do not recognise the importance of the hoteliers and tourist guides based in Gondar. The tourist guides on the other hand appreciate the importance of collaboration with the hoteliers in Gondar.

The regional government official in Awash National Park claims that it is working with the surrounding residents in protecting the park. The community on the other hand reports that there is a big working gap between them and the government officials.

In general, this section of the thesis presented the findings of the study in relation to the stage of development of collaboration between tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia. The next section looks at the stakeholders' perceptions about such collaboration.

4.3 Stakeholders' perceptions of collaboration

In principle, most of the stakeholders interviewed seem to recognise the importance of collaboration. Most of them acknowledge that collaboration could bring them new and innovative ideas. However, they were not necessarily willing to work with all other stakeholders:

4.3.1 Important, but not necessary

Some of the respondents, such as the local community and the tourist guides, perceived collaboration as an important concept that could benefit them, but felt it was not necessary to collaborate in a formal manner. The following quote, which was taken from the FGD with the local community in Gondar, was agreed upon by the discussants:

Working in an association gives the chance to come up with different innovative ideas; likewise, there are a few who want to step on others' shoulders in the name of association membership. Though we are not interested to continue with this kind of people, we are forced to continue once we become a member. (Focus group discussant G1, 2015)

As the above respondent stated, in reality, most of the stakeholders, especially the tour guides, are not happy to work together, especially within the context of a formal relationship, such as an association:

As per my evaluation, there is no benefit that could be derived from being registered as member of that association [the tour operators' association]... I don't like their procedure... So I am just working independently without being affiliated with the tour operators' association. (Interviewee AA T4, 2015)

The above interviewee is a tour operator in Addis Ababa; while he appreciates the importance of collaboration in the name of an association, he believes that it is not necessary to be a member of an association.

4.3.2 A way of getting support

The hoteliers and tour companies that participated in this study consider membership in an association as a way to reach the government and get the support they need, e.g., trade licences and the duty-free importation of vehicles and other capital goods. The hoteliers and tour operators benefit from association membership in this regard, and membership is voluntary.

The purpose is just that they facilitate our interaction with the government. Rather than acting individually to process any issue, it is better to act in group. However, except for getting permission for duty free commodities for the hotels, we have not seen any benefit from [being a member of] this association. (Interviewee AA H5, 2015)

4.3.3 A means of control by the government

Associations are viewed by hotels and tour guides outside Addis Ababa and by the communities at the destinations as a way for the government to control the activities of stakeholders, as the following interviewee indicated:

As we have been telling you, the motive of the government in initiating the formation of an association is simply to devise a mechanism to control us [the association members]. Otherwise, they [the regional officers] do not understand it [tourism] and no one is thinking about the future of tourism or its income and sustainability. (Focus group discussant G1, 2015)

According to the discussants in this FGD in Gondar, associations such as the travel and tour operators associations, the tour guides associations, and others (souvenir producers, handicraft sellers, and other small enterprises) are composed predominantly of members who are politically affiliated with the government and established by the government to control the activities of the association members who do not support the ruling party's political ideology. Most of the individuals who participated in the FGD at Gondar were registered members of their respective associations, because it is a government requirement for doing business in Ethiopia; it is not a strategy that the individuals would have decided upon by themselves.

I prefer to work independently rather than in this association. But it is not possible to work on an individual basis. The government requires registration to make the control process very simple for itself. [Laughter] ...It makes things very simple for the government. It is indirectly manipulating us; otherwise, it is of no benefit to us. But if you try it [tour operation] individually, the process will become very complex. You need to have at least two cars, an office, value added tax (VAT) registration... all these things are discouraging, and when you think of working as an individual travel agency, the burden will be more. Otherwise, it would have been good to work independently. (Focus group discussant G2, 2015)

It appears from the interviews and FGDs that an individual's decision to join an association is based on the expectation that they will receive benefits from the association for their individual business, instead of group gain. In addition, the individuals operating as a tour guides,

transportation providers, or souvenir producers do not join the associations of their free will. They are indirectly forced to join by the costly requirements of registration, which they cannot afford as individuals.

The local community at Gondar saw the formation of an association mostly as a government tool, because it simplifies administrative processes for the government. Associations allow the government to process bulk requests, rather than individual cases, leaving the association to administer its own members.

The interviews revealed that rather than a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, there is a spirit of competition among the association members. A guide working at the Gondar site commented on the nature of collaboration among the member guides as follows:

You know, in Ethiopia, an association or whatever you say is not functional. Consider the football and athletics team as a simple example... We Ethiopians are amazing people. When it comes to defending against an external enemy, we become so friendly and love each other; we seem cooperative, but in practice we are not. (Interviewee G G2, 2015)

To explain the functioning of the association, the above respondent used Ethiopian athletics as a metaphor. Apparently, the athletes are working together on a collaborative basis, but in practice their sense of competition and individualism dominates. According to this respondent, similarly, tourism stakeholders give low value to each other and their respective contributions. It follows that it is unlikely to secure the collaboration of stakeholders in the tourism sector, which often involves the collaboration of stakeholders in fragmented sectors. Every individual tourism stakeholder in Ethiopia considers themselves as capable of doing things on their own and, as such, focuses on maximising their own short-term benefit, rather than considering the strategic relevance of working together for the future. This implies that the perception of the importance of collaboration is one of the factors influencing the development of collaboration among stakeholders. Various factors have emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions as influencing the perceptions of stakeholders about collaboration, and potentially influencing future collaborations as well; these are presented in the next section.

4.4 Influencers of the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia

4.4.1 Awareness

The level of awareness of individual stakeholders about the importance of collaboration was one of the prominent issues emerging from the stakeholder interviews. In addition to the respondents' low level of awareness about collaboration, their knowledge of the nature of tourism also appears to be relatively undeveloped. There seems to be little understanding of the nature of tourism among tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia. An interviewee who had spent more than 10 years in the hotel sector commented as follows:

Tourism has been misunderstood by the stakeholders. Even those people actively working in tourism in different sectors do not know that tourism is team work; they lack the knowledge that tourism is about image creation and experience sharing. The tourism community has not deeply understood the nature of tourism. Had there been a better understanding of tourism, the hoteliers could have arranged well-furnished and attractive accommodation, the destinations also could have been operated with skilled labour, and the government as well as the entire society would recognise that the failure of a single person or institution could lead to a big loss. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

This respondent observed fragmented relationships among the stakeholders that have provided tourism services throughout his long career in the sector.

Moreover, the seasonal nature of tourism itself seems to be undermining and influencing the interest of stakeholders in collaborating, as income from tourism fluctuates. However, according to the responses obtained from the interviews with tour guides, the guidelines set for the local guides at Gondar do not seem to consider this reality; the guidelines include a succession plan stipulating that every guide must leave the tour guides' association after having accumulated 50,000 Ethiopian birr (EUR 2,000) over 5 years of service. Apparently, the government considers jobs in the tourism sector as a stepping stone to other businesses. However, the guides' earnings are often inadequate in the low season and they have to fall back on the earnings saved during the high season. This process makes the accumulation of the required amount of money difficult. The restrictions set by the government relating to membership of the association and the manner of leaving the association are worrisome for

guides, as they may not be able to save the amount of money required by the government. However, the government officials do not seem to understand the seasonal nature of tourism, perhaps because they are not practically involved in tourism activities. This misunderstanding about the nature of tourism hampers the level of understanding between the tour guides and the government.

In addition, the hoteliers and the tour operators view tourism merely as a business in which they can make money. One of the tour agents made the following comment with regard to his experience in the sector:

In my 17 years in this sector I have come to observe lots of issues. If you consider hoteliers, in the beginning there were few hotels, but there was high demand. But these days the hotel owners came in bulk to the market, and now there is excess supply. But in all these processes the most acute problem is the attitude of the owners towards offering professional services. The tour operators also enter into the business because the business does not require much investment. After making some money they divert to other investments... You know, tourism has become a sector which any layman can join or leave... (Interviewee AA T3, 2015)

It can be understood from this respondent that there is little understanding and awareness about tourism on the part of tourism operators. It appears that individuals enter into the business of tourism for the sake of fulfilling their individual financial needs, instead of promoting the development of tourism as a public good in a collaborative way. The limited understanding about the nature of tourism and stakeholders' profit-making orientation is one of the factors that has influenced the nature of collaboration between tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia.

Level of awareness is also related to the professional qualifications of the stakeholder. The next section will focus on the impact of professionalism on the development of collaboration.

4.4.2 Professionalism

At the time of data collection for this dissertation, the office of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ethiopia was led by non-tourism professionals. Before the assignment of the current minister (at the time of data collection), who is in fact a linguist, the ministerial office was led by an engineer.

In addition, most respondents (from officials to the small business owners in the destination communities) are not tourism or hospitality-related professionals. Some of the officials interviewed are historians, linguists, or chemists, or have a qualification in public administration. Most of the interviewees from the hotel sector and tour operators had not completed a university education, nor did they have any tourism-related training. These non-professional backgrounds heavily influence the technical and conceptual skills of the actors and their level of understanding of the management of tourism. For example, one of the regional tourism planning officers interviewed for this research was a chemistry graduate who used to teach high school. He was assigned to his current position only six months before he was interviewed and did not seem knowledgeable about tourism. Similarly, the officer in the other region was a person who used to teach at a university and did not have any experience related to tourism or tourism management.

The observed knowledge and skills gap seems to have created enormous conflicts of interest among the different stakeholder groups, especially the private sector and the local community at tourist destinations. The case of the tour operators based in Addis Ababa and tour guides in Gondar can be considered as an example:

Nobody values professionalism in tourism; people simply think that tourism is a sector in which you can easily make money and grow very fast, even if you do not have any knowledge about tourism... The tour companies in Addis Ababa send the guests to this site [compound of the Castle of Gondar] along with their guides... These guides may be able to speak English or other foreign languages, but they usually have little knowledge about tourism or the culture and history of this place. (Interviewee G G3, 2015)

The limited knowledge about the importance of professionalism in the tourism sector seems to be creating misunderstanding among the stakeholders. The above interviewee added the following point:

Although you acquire some experience and develop an interest in the field, no one considers the guide service as a normal field of work. Rather, they consider this place [compound of the Castle of Gondar] as a place where jobless people spend their time when they don't have any other option. (Interviewee G G3, 2015)

It seems that the value placed on the professionalism of actors in the tourism sector is very low, compared to that placed on the benefits that tour operators expect to generate. It appears that the tour operators who are more business oriented and interested in generating revenue are

influencing the nature of collaboration between them and the tour guides at the grass-roots level.

Related to the lack of professionalism of stakeholders, there was also an observable lack of professional ethics, which is influencing the working relationship among the stakeholders. According to most hotel operators, the turnover of human resources in the tourism industry, especially in the hotel sector, is one of the manifestations of this lack of professional ethics. One of the interviewees made the following comment in relation to the ethics of employees in the hotel:

The waiters leave one hotel and join another hotel. There is high turnover in the hospitality sector, because there is high demand for manpower, but the people working in the sector are not professionals and do not have professional ethics. That is why they easily switch from one organisation to another, from this business to another business.

(Interviewee B H1, 2017)

Employee turnover is expressed by the above respondent as an indicator of a lack of professional ethics. Among the hotel managers and tour operators involved in this research, only 4 people had spent between 10 and 20 years in the same position. Most hotel managers, who are generally considered senior and knowledgeable, have worked 1 to 3 years in their current post.

The low level of professional ethics of people working in the sector is also related to another important aspect of stakeholder relationships: trust. The next section presents the findings on trust in relation to professionalism and the nature of collaboration among tourism stakeholders.

4.4.3 Trust

Lack of professionalism was identified as one of the factors negatively influencing the level of trust among the stakeholders interviewed. This can be observed from the stakeholders' reflections. For instance, one of the respondents from the tour operators group made the following comment:

Most tour operators are simply merchants who just joined the sector because they have money; they don't know the profession and the ethics of the profession, so they don't respect and trust the professionals. They don't encourage them; they rather hire their relatives so that they can control the business. (Interviewee AA T2, 2015)

A respondent from the hotel sector also made the following comment in relation to the nature of the trust and collaboration between the employees and the hotel owners:

The owners do not trust their employees, let alone trust and work with external stakeholders at the country level. How do you expect them to collaborate at the country level showing a concern for tourism? They are not professionals, nor do they have knowledge about operations in hospitality, so they think they will lose control of their resources if they collaborate with other stakeholders. (Interviewee B H1, 2017)

As can be seen from the interviews with participants from the private sector, the problem of trust between stakeholders is associated with the lack of knowledge and professionalism of the people engaged in the hospitality sector. Not only the knowledge gap, but also the desire to control tourism resources appears to be one of the reasons for the mistrust between owners and their employees.

The observable level of mistrust between the destination community and public sector officials is another problem hindering the success of collaboration between them. For example, the local community and tourism employees at Awash National Park do not rely much on members of the park management group, as they consider them to be political appointees who are not really committed to the conservation of the park. The focus group discussants made the following point in relation to the community's trust in government officials:

They usually gather us for discussion, but our ideas are lost along the way before reaching the concerned body. There was even a meeting last week, but still no change; rather, the situation gets worse. We tell them the problems, but they give us no solution. (Focus group discussant ANP2, 2015)

The above discussant described the reason for mistrust in government officers (especially the regional government officers) as the lack of communication of their ideas and needs to the federal level government. Adding to this, the following discussant explained that he was willing to participate in this study for the sake of cooperating with the researcher:

We are tired of talking, for nothing. We are only talking with you as you told us that you are a student and ... you are also our 'daughter' [indicating the speaker feels close to the interviewer]. Otherwise, there is no need for discussion; it is a dead issue. (Focus group discussant ANP7, 2015)

The above focus group discussant is a villager who lives near Awash National Park, and his trust in individuals was not dependent on prior knowledge of the researcher, unlike the finding

of the World Value Survey (Inglehart et al. 2014), which revealed that most people in Ethiopia do not trust those whom they meet for the first time. However, from the FGD it is clear that the community mistrusts the government officials, who fail to properly connect with the community and apply a top-down approach to tourism planning and management. This has led the community to give up on collaborating with the government.

4.4.4 Power imbalance

During the initial phase of stakeholder collaboration, identification of powerful stakeholders is a requirement, and, in the later stages, distribution of power among the stakeholders is believed to make the process of stakeholder interaction more effective (Gray 1985). Based on the results of the interviews and FGDs, it can be seen that much of the power is vested in the hands of the government and individuals are the mere recipients and executors of government decisions. In relation to the involvement of the private sector, one of the hotel managers in Bishoftu made the following statement:

... as you know, different policies and directives are set by the government, and we have the responsibility to execute the government directives. (Interviewee B H3, 2017)

In most cases, private sector actors appear to be mere recipients of the decisions passed by the government, which has a strong power position. The private sector can only acquire the power to influence or be considered legitimate when its members are organised in the form of an association. Currently, the establishment of an association and membership in that association are requirements mandated by the government. In addition, in order to operate in the hospitality sector, association members are required to process their requests through their association in order to get support.

I believe that rather than acting independently, you will become powerful when you are working with the association... The government gives priority and attention to the associations, rather than individuals, so it is good to be part of the association, rather than working independently. You have a voice when you work through the association. (Focus group discussant G2, 2015)

The chairman of the tour operators association who participated in this research also indicated the position of the association in terms of its decision-making role, as follows:

I have not seen many of our contributions in the plan. We are just participating for the sake of involvement in the process, but in reality, I don't see our position. They [the

government] are not used to it [sharing the decision making]; even this kind of working system has started only recently. They are not considering us to a reasonable extent. They are at the beginning stage; stakeholder involvement is symbolic for the moment, and we do not get much attention at this moment. (Interviewee AA H4, 2015)

Similarly, people in the destination community expressed their level of influence in terms of their participation in decision making; they seem to provide some input into decisions, although they do not see their input in the final outputs. One of the respondents voiced his opinion with strong emotion, as follows:

We discuss the conservation of the park and our relationship with the park with the government officials. We talk about our concern for the life of this park and how we should engage in its conservation and share the benefits. They [the government officials] usually take note of this, but there is no response. It has happened several times, but with no response at all. (Focus group discussant ANP7, 2015)

The community members' perception of being powerless greatly influences their willingness to collaborate with the government (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012). It appears that the exclusion of the community makes them lose interest in working with the government. It can be inferred from the quote of the discussant that the community is engaged in 'induced participation' (Mensah and Ernest 2013; Saufi et al. 2014; Tosun 1999), where they are working with the government in only a token way, without any power. It also appears that there is an imperfect flow of information; the respondents revealed that the regional governors produce a report that indicates that the office is closely working with the community and the region is performing well, and everything is in place, which is not entirely accurate.

4.4.5 Supervision (leadership and governance)

Supervision was observed in terms of the leadership and governance of tourism in the case study sites. Lack of leadership and governance of tourism has been reported in the literature as negatively influencing the working relationship between the public and the private sectors in Gondar and Bahirdar (Yetnayet and Getaneh 2018). Similarly, on a large scale (including more case study areas), the current research has identified supervision as a factor negatively affecting the relationship among the stakeholders. The research participants in different regions made different comments about the influence of the leadership and governance of tourism on their commitment to work together on a collaborative basis. Most of the respondents from the private sector and the local community said that there is loose and partial supervision of the activities

of the tourism stakeholders, in which the leaders and governors supervise and monitor the activities of some stakeholders, but not others. For example, in relation to the supervision of tour operators' activities, one of the respondents expressed his concern as follows:

Once the tour operators get their trade licence, there is no supervision of their way of operation. Some tour operators use the cars that they imported for tour service for non-tourism activities. Some tour companies rent the cars to other people or organisations. This is so discouraging for the other tour operators and the association members that are only relying on tourism-related activities. (Interviewee AA H4, 2015)

The people who rent their cars for non-tourism activities are acting in an unethical (possibly illegal) way, and their actions negatively influence the commitment of other tour operators, who follow the rules of the association and regulations of the government, to collaboration.

At Gondar and Awash National Park, similar situations were observed during the field work. The community living near Awash National Park describes the situation as a 'lack of attention for the park'. An environmental expert who works in Awash National Park commented on the nature of the supervision of the park as follows:

... [Why] should they [the woreda-level⁷ governors] visit the park only every 9 to 10 months? Why do they not visit us at intervals of 3 to 4 months? Why don't they cross check the report and the physical status of the park...? You see, this is creating space for the park management groups to fabricate unrealistic reports. If you consider the number of oryx found in the park and the number of oryx reported to the woreda, it is quite surprisingly different. (Interviewee ANP 4, 2015)

The woreda level officials rely on the park managers' reports. There is no physical supervision at the site. This weak supervision has allowed the park managers to manipulate reports. The park management may produce unrealistic reports for a number of reasons, including the fact that they are political appointees of the government who only see the value of information in terms of its political impact (Tamir 2015), or it may stem from the lack of knowledge of the park management group. This situation of mistrust between the experts working in the park and the government officials affects the commitment of experts working in the park to collaborate with the woreda-level government officials. A similar result was obtained in a study conducted by Kauffmann (2008) in the Central Rift Valley region of Ethiopia.

⁷A woreda is an administrative level in Ethiopia equivalent to a district.

The problem of supervision was also raised by the focus group discussants in Gondar. The community representatives, as well as the guides, stridently complained about the tourist police, whom they call 'hasslers'. The loose supervision of the actions of the tourist police influences the working relationship among the hoteliers, guides, and souvenir shop owners, as reflected by the respondents:

The city administration established the tourist police to protect the safety and security of the tourists. However, these tourist police have turned to earning money from tourists, acting as tour guides. Based on the actions of these people, the tour companies as well as the hoteliers consider all the guides as thieves. Based on this stereotyping, the souvenir sellers also don't allow the legal guides to enter their shops. (Focus group discussant G3, 2015)

The above extract implies that there is loose follow-up of the activities of the tourist police by the regional tourism administrators. In addition, the legal tour guides and souvenir shops in the same city and working around the Castle of Gondar do not trust each other or collaborate with each other.

Another interviewee commented as follows in relation to the working relationship between the community and the regional officers:

You know, in the case of our country, they [the authorities] start finding a solution after the problem has already matured... so very rarely do they collect feedback from us [the hoteliers], and that is in fact when they discover a problem and reach a certain level of frustration. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

We can understand from the above quotes that the centralised system of governance, coupled with the apparently ad hoc leadership style, is influencing the commitment of stakeholders to work together in their respective associations and with the government officers.

4.4.6 Geographic location

The geographic location of the respondents was also a factor in collaboration. Of the private sector actors, the stakeholders based in Gondar are relatively far from the capital city; as a result, they depend more on the tour operators based in Addis Ababa to send them tourists. However, the hotels in Bishoftu are located less than 60 kilometres from Addis Ababa and, therefore, are able to attract tourists directly:

We don't depend on anyone. This resort is self-sufficient, and apart from the tourists, our maximum sales point depends on events and meetings. In terms of attracting these events, we also have our own department that is exclusively devoted to searching for events; the department uses different mechanisms to bring meetings and events here.
(Interviewee B H2, 2017)

The hoteliers based in Addis Ababa and the surrounding regions, such as Bishoftu, can get enough domestic and international travellers because of their locational advantage, whereas regional cities and destinations depend on international travellers coming through tour operators.

The tour operators based in Addis Ababa organise tour packages and arrange the travel routes in favour of specific hotels or cities outside of Addis Ababa. This finding echoes the work of Britton (1982) on tourism underdevelopment in peripheral regions. International tourism, in particular, tends to be dominated by companies from the core developed economies. In turn, the capital cities of developing countries play a key role as a gateway for foreign tourists. We can relate the argument of Britton to the results of this study, as the location of hotels and tour operators gives companies in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu an advantage over stakeholders located in the countryside.

The stakeholders in peripheral locations do not have enough access to the market; as a result, they need to be connected with tourism stakeholders in more central locations. However, those stakeholders that have a locational advantage tend to care less about collaboration with stakeholders in peripheral locations. One can infer from the above analysis that the geographic location of the stakeholders is one of the factors contributing to the power imbalance between the stakeholders. The actors that are located in a geographically better position influence the activities of those stakeholders found in a less privileged locations in terms of market access.

The factors affecting collaboration between stakeholders are summarised in Table 4.1. The table illustrates the vertical relationships between the public sector, private sector, and local community, and the horizontal relationships between stakeholders in the private sectors. The vertical relationships refer to the relationships among the stakeholders at different levels (i.e., government, private and destination community), whereas the horizontal relationships are the inter-stakeholder and intra-stakeholders relationships, mostly among private sector stakeholders.

Table 4.1. Summary of factors influencing development of collaboration

Factors influencing vertical relations	Factors influencing horizontal relationships
Public sector (government officials), private sector (hoteliers, tour operators, park managers), destination community	Private sector (hoteliers, tour operators, tourist guides)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust• Power imbalance• Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness• Geographic location• Professionalism• Trust

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the research on the influence of collaboration on stakeholders' perceptions of, and commitment to, sustainable tourism (the outcome of collaboration).

Chapter 5. Stakeholder Collaboration and Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism

5.1 Introduction

Stakeholder collaboration is a process of joint decision making among legitimate stakeholders, and it is argued that successful collaboration among stakeholders can contribute to the sustainability of tourism (Canavan 2016). In Ethiopia, as indicated in the previous chapter, collaboration among tourism stakeholders can be described as an informal relationship. Although the stakeholders rhetorically acknowledge the importance of collaboration, their collaborative activities are undeveloped. This can be attributed to different factors, including lack of awareness of the importance of collaboration, power imbalances among stakeholders, lack of trust, lack of professionalism, ad hoc leadership and inadequate governance of tourism, and the geographic location of stakeholders, to mention a few.

The theory of collaboration states that collaboration is the means by which stakeholders promote shared understanding about an issue (Jamal and Getz 1995; Graci 2013; Gray 1985). However, this research has revealed that there is poor collaboration among tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia, which has observably contributed to a difference in the perception and focus of stakeholders related to sustainable tourism. This chapter presents the empirical findings about the relationship between collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. It aims to address the second research question of this thesis:

2. *How are stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism related to the level of development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia?*

In order to understand the influence of stakeholder collaboration, the researcher investigated stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in the four case study sites (sub-question 2a; section 5.2). This investigation is believed to provide an understanding of the extent to which collaboration has helped the stakeholders to work closely together and share views about sustainable tourism. In relation to this, the attitude of stakeholders towards the three elements of sustainable tourism is explored (sub-question 2b; section 5.3), namely: the economic element (section 5.3.1), socio-cultural element (section 5.3.2), and environmental element (section 5.3.3). In section 5.4 the relation between the stakeholders' perception of sustainable tourism and the level of collaboration (sub-question 2c) is presented. This is believed to link the development of stakeholder collaboration with the perception of sustainable tourism.

5.2 Perceptions of sustainable tourism

In this research, the participants were asked to reflect on their understanding of the concept of sustainable tourism. During the interview and discussion sessions it was difficult to directly relate collaboration to the perception of sustainable tourism. Most respondents focused on collaboration, the challenges with collaboration and the challenges of tourism development in general, mostly related to infrastructure problems. In order to understand the tourism stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism, at times leading questions were raised. Finally, discussions were held with the respondents and the results are indicated in the following sections.

5.2.1 Local tour guides

The local tour guides located at Gondar were asked about their perception of sustainable tourism. Most of the tour guides interviewed related sustainable tourism to the conservation of nature and culture, but they also emphasised the involvement of, and benefit to, society (as in community-based tourism). For instance, one of the local tour guides offered his view of sustainable tourism as follows:

I understand it in terms of its benefit for the local community. I don't see sustainability in Gondar, but I could use other places to make it clear for you. Around Lalibela and Debarke there are different projects that engage the community directly. For example, there is a project named JAICA, which hires the local people in cooking for the 'ferenji' [foreigners]. You see other people engaging in tourism-related activities and benefiting from them. They also conserve natural resources by planting and taking care of plants every year. In the tourist destinations found in the northern part like Axum, the communities are benefiting and also contributing a lot, conserving resources, creating awareness, and benefiting the people. In this process, they are also preparing the ways in which the next generations will proceed with tourism. (Interviewee G G2, 2015)

Like the above tour guide, most of the local tour guides described the sustainability of tourism in terms of the benefits that the community derives from tourism and the efforts the community makes to conserve the tourist attractions.

5.2.2 Hoteliers

Similar discussions were held with hoteliers in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and Bishoftu in order to understand their perception of sustainable tourism. Most of the hoteliers associated sustainable

tourism with the continuous flow of tourists and benefit. Their views varied according to the location (tourist destination). One of the accommodation providers in Bishoftu gave his view of sustainable tourism as follows:

My understanding about sustainable tourism is just using the available tourist attractions and attracting more tourists to get the related benefit. (Interviewee B H3, 2017)

An Addis Ababa-based hotel manager described sustainable tourism as follows:

Sustainable tourism is a tourism activity that is continuous, a continuous cycle of visits that provides benefits for stakeholders (businesses, the public sector, and the local community) and helps the locals to develop their cultural heritage, which in turn supports the tourism activity. (Interviewee AA H2, 2015)

The hoteliers in Bishoftu and Addis Ababa mainly related sustainable tourism to the benefit obtained from tourism based on the continuous flow of tourists. On the other hand, hoteliers in Gondar related sustainable tourism to the benefit earned from tourism by engaging in conservation and the protection of culture and history. One of the respondents based in Gondar who has served as a hotel manager for more than 10 years described sustainable tourism as follows:

Sustainable tourism means ensuring the continuity of good things and transferring them to the next generation...then sustaining tourism results in preserving the culture and history [...] and transferring it to the next generation. This is the reality about sustainable tourism, but what we are observing on the ground is another [thing]. We can't ensure the sustainability of tourism while not tending to the problems surrounding these historic places; it is very hard to predict how it could go in the future if it continues in its current state. History can be inherited by the next generation through preservation and proper documentation of history and culture by the current generation. We are in a civilised world, so it is easy to document in electronic format and promote the tourism resources of the country. Some countries are good at promoting the little resources they have and earning a good income from that, while other countries like ours have ample resources, but are unable to promote and maximise the benefit from these resources. So sustainability will be ensured through the preservation of resources, proper documentation, and promotion of the destination. In this way, it will pass to the next generation. The current generation will also be proud of being Ethiopian and be able to proudly define its identity. (Interviewee G H4)

The above respondent reflected on sustainable tourism as it related to the conservation of cultural heritage and the benefits acquired from such resources.

Hence, it seems that the perception of sustainable tourism by stakeholders depends on the location in which the stakeholders are found. For example, the hoteliers in Addis Ababa relate sustainable tourism to the continual flow of tourists, while the hoteliers in Gondar relate it to maintenance of the culture.

5.2.3 Tour operators

Discussions were also held with the tour operators in order to understand their perception of sustainable tourism. In addition to economic concerns, the tour operators relate sustainable tourism to environmental and socio-cultural conservation more than hoteliers do.

In the context of Ethiopia, nowadays, they [the government] are focusing on the establishment of the ecology [referring to a community-based ecotourism project]. The extent to which they could involve the surrounding community may vary. They may say that they are involving the community; that is a good start. I had a chance to attend an exhibition on the ecologies surrounding Addis Ababa; they are in good condition. In the beginning, GTZ [German Agency for Technical Cooperation] organised an ecology project with the aim of involving the community; I think it is doing fine. Bale National Park is also aiming at protecting the wildlife by creating awareness and involving the community. (Interviewee AA T4, 2015)

Some of the tour operators, like the above respondent, relate sustainable tourism to community-based tourism that involves the community in all aspects (the conservation of resources and benefiting from such activities). Others focus on the cultural aspects of tourism in defining sustainable tourism:

We do have heritage, destinations, and cultural events. If we consider the particular case of the Moursi society, to sustain tourism in that particular area, we need to keep them underdeveloped. We shouldn't introduce medical facilities, schools, toilets, clean water, and technology to make them pristine and modern... as tourists are attracted to the [original] manner of living of this society. They live nude, fetch water from long distance rivers, etc., these are the adventures that the tourists want to see. If these people continue living this way, their culture will be sustained. Sustainability is about keeping the destination for the next generation as it is. (Interviewee AA T5, 2015)

Hence, tour operators seem to have different perceptions about sustainable tourism; some associate it with environmental conservation, while some others relate it to sustaining the culture.

5.2.4 Park management team

Individual interviews were held with the park management team at Awash National Park. These team members are dedicated to the management and conservation of the park. As such they are concerned with the conservation of the park and the benefit to the surrounding community. The park management team's perception of sustainable tourism relates to the conservation of the park:

Sustainability means the balance of the management of the park and its wildlife with the benefits the community gets from the park. (Interviewee ANP 4 Gv4, 2015)

Unlike the respondents located in other areas, the perception of these respondents of sustainable tourism is related to maintaining the wellbeing of the park. The members of the park management team seem to also relate the other elements of sustainability (economic and cultural) to the wellbeing of the park, as shown in the following comment:

The fate of the community's culture as well as economic gain rests on the ecosystem, so we give priority to the park management, which is a major issue in its current status. Economic gain or whatever you say is not an issue of concern for us. (Interviewee ANP Gv5, 2015)

The fact that these groups are independent and dedicated to the management of the park might have contributed to their concern for the environment above the cultural and economic elements of sustainability.

5.2.5 Public sector (government)

In order to arrive at a better understanding of tourism stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism, government officials were also interviewed. One government official (at the central level), reflected as follows:

The sustainability orientation of Ethiopia is currently associated with the so-called 'arengwadelimat' [green development – related to the conservation of parks], but the priority is economic development, through increasing the tourist flows... Ecotourism is a Western concept that we do not practise in great detail. In our country, the focus is

on tourism development; i.e., it is about attracting the tourists by preparing services for them and generating income. (Interviewee AA Gv1, 2015)

As can be observed from the comment by this government official, sustainable tourism is associated by the government with green tourism (environmental conservation), although this is considered by the respondent to be a Western concept that is not actually practised in Ethiopia. The government of Ethiopia might have adopted the universal principle of sustainability for political reasons, but the official reflects that this principle does not fit the country's situation. It has been indicated in the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan that Ethiopia has adopted the definition of sustainable tourism set by the World Tourism Organization (UNECA, 2015). However, the officials in charge of developing the tourism policy and following up on the progress of policy implementation do not seem to have internalised this concept.

5.2.6 Summary

Table 5.1 summarises the views of the different stakeholders based on their sector and geographic location.

Table 5.1. Summary of respondents' reflections on sustainable tourism

Respondent	Geographic location	Perception of what sustainable tourism means
PRIVATE SECTOR		
Local tour guides	Gondar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging the community in tourism-related activities to benefit from them - Conserving natural resources by planting and taking care of plants - Working on people, creating awareness, and producing professionals and a skilled workforce
Hoteliers	Bishoftu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using the available tourist attractions, attracting more tourists, and getting benefits
	Addis Ababa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generating continuous benefits for stakeholders - A continuous flow of tourists to the country - Supporting the locals in developing their cultural heritage
Tour operators	Gondar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The continuity of good things and transferring them to the next generation - Attending to the problems surrounding historic tourist places
	Addis Ababa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating in the community services - Protecting the wildlife - Maintaining the lifestyle of the people in the place visited as it is (keeping them underdeveloped)
PUBLIC SECTOR		
Government	Addis Ababa-(central level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Arengwadelimat' (meaning green revolution, related to conservation of parks), but the priority has been maximising economic benefit and increasing tourist flows
	Awash National Park, Bishoftu (regional level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuity of resources and responsible use of resources so that the next generation will also benefit from them
Park management group	Awash National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance between conserving the park and its wildlife and deriving economic benefits for the community by involving the community in conservation

As can be observed from Table 5.1, different stakeholders located in different tourism destinations have different perceptions of sustainable tourism. This research also investigates the influence of collaboration on stakeholders' attitudes about the specific elements of sustainable tourism. The next section presents the findings on the attitude of stakeholders towards the three elements of sustainable tourism: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental.

5.3 Attitude towards the three elements of sustainable tourism

During the interviews, it was difficult to talk to the respondents about their attitude towards the elements of sustainable tourism (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental), due to their

different understandings of the concept (as mentioned in section 5.2). In order to study the stakeholders' perceptions of the elements of sustainable tourism, the respondents were given a brief explanation about what sustainable tourism means. Using this approach, it was possible to extract some views related to the attitude of the stakeholders to the elements of sustainable tourism. The following sub-sections present the findings of the stakeholders related to each of the elements of sustainable tourism.

5.3.1 Economic sustainability

The perception of stakeholders about the economic element of sustainable tourism was obtained through individual interviews and FGDs with the research participants. Aspects such as employment opportunities, destination promotion, and length of stay were discussed. The following paragraphs present the stakeholders' perceptions about these aspects of economic sustainability.

5.3.1.1 Employment creation

This study found that the service providers, such as hoteliers and tour operators, who participated in this research perceived the employment opportunities provided to their employees as contributing to sustainable tourism. However, it appears that the key positions at the international hotels in Addis Ababa are mostly filled by expatriate staff, while the lower-level positions such as housekeeping, security, and kitchen jobs are held by local staff. One hotel manager said that the general manager of one of the star hotels in Addis Ababa is paid a monthly salary of USD 7,000 (189,500 Ethiopian birr), with which, according to him, he could hire 60 local Ethiopian staff.

The hotel owners and managers were asked about the economic implications of hiring expatriate staff. One of the marketing managers in a hotel in Addis Ababa commented as follows:

You know, the logic is as long as the expatriate staff members are able to meet the purpose of this hotel, it means nothing. If you think of hiring a French chef from Addis Ababa, you could find someone who has worked with the French chef, but you can't get that exact French flavour. Some guests even come to get the real French flavour, so you cover your cost through this process. (Interviewee AA H3, 2015)

It can be understood from this quote that hoteliers are primarily focusing on meeting the needs of international tourists, rather than providing employment opportunities for locals or generating foreign exchange. It appears that in terms of the professionalism of the employees, the owners place more trust in foreign staff than domestic staff. It can also be observed from the above quote that the target customers that hotels serve determine their employment policy, regardless of the economic contribution and sustainability of such benefits for local people. With regard to the employment policy of hotels, the government and private sector do not appear to work together; most hotel managers also revealed that hotels' employment policies are often not in harmony with Ethiopian labour laws, which permits the employment of foreign staff in high positions, but obliges their replacement with local staff over a period of time (WAAS 2012).

The law is not very strictly applied; no expats have been made to leave their position. If they have to be replaced, they will be replaced by other foreign staff that can fit the position based on their experience. (Interviewee AA H5, 2015)

One can understand from the experience of the above respondent that there is loose supervision of the hoteliers' activities in terms of the nature of the employment opportunities they provide. And there is little effort made to transfer knowledge from foreign to local staff through training and experience sharing.

The attitude of hoteliers at the lodges in Bishoftu is quite different from that of hoteliers in the two cities (Addis Ababa and Gondar), in that they give much more priority to employing members of the local community:

This sector is labour intensive, so we use different kinds of employees; at the lower level 100% are from the surrounding community, at the middle level around 99%, and at the top position we can say 80% of the management team are from this community. In the future we are planning to fully run this resort using employees recruited from this community, for a number of reasons. On the one hand, we can safely do our business; on the other hand, there would be lower employee turnover, as the employees do not have to move from this place to another place to see their family; and, thirdly, as the employees would become stable, they can generate good ideas and work from the bottom of their heart. So far, if you see the employment mix in this resort, you can say 99% are from this community. (Interviewee B H2, 2017)

It can be inferred from the above response that the resort works closely with the surrounding community and seems to involve the community more than hotels that target international tourists.

5.3.1.2 Destination promotion

Poor destination promotion has been found to contribute to the poor economic sustainability of tourism in Ethiopia. As we have seen in the previous section, hotels targeting international tourists and business travellers mostly rely on expatriate employees in order to provide a standard level of service; despite this, the hotels are still not attracting as many international tourists as they would like.

There are very few tourists. If you consider the occupancy rate, most of the time it is 40–60%, sometimes in the big hotels up to 70%. We receive less than one million tourists in a year. In other tourist destinations, a given city could even get 10 to 20 million tourists. But for us, given all this heritage, and these attractions, we receive less than one million at a country level. We have not worked on tourism; it has not been promoted. There might be a latent demand; we cannot say there is no or less demand, but we did not do our assignment of promoting the country. Even in some other countries where there are very few attraction sites, the tourists spend more nights. But in our country the promotion work is lagging, which means serious work needs to be done in a collaborative manner. A given hotel or tour operator cannot work alone to promote the country on CNN or BBC or whatever, but if they work together, they can create a good image. (Interviewee AA H1, 2015)

The above respondent believes that the hotels in Ethiopia are under occupied because of poor destination promotion.

In addition to poor promotion, the number of nights spent by the tourists is indicated by the hoteliers as another problem. The following section presents the research participants' attitude about the tourists' length of stay in the different destinations.

5.3.1.3 Tourists' length of stay

The research participants pointed to the length of stay of tourists as one of the indicators of economic sustainability. The longer a tourist spends in a given destination, the more money they will spend in that destination. The poor linkage between destinations and tourism stakeholders (mostly the tour operators who apparently regulate the route of tourists) is contributing to the short stay of tourists at historic destinations such as Gondar.

In the case of historic sites like Axum, Gondar, and Lake Tana, the chance of getting a sustainable flow of guests is reducing. If you also consider this city, currently the length of stay of tourists is only 6 hours. The tourists usually come from Bahirdar at 9:00 am, then finish the whole visit at 3:00 pm and travel to Debark. This city is not benefiting from tourism. (Interviewee G G2, 2015)

As the above respondent states, the short length of stay is related to the conflict of interest between the tour operators and tour guides. The tour guides claim that the tour operators are designing short travel routes in order to save money on hotel accommodation and related expenses.

The local guides are well aware of the amount that the tour operators charge the tourists for accommodation, transportation, and guiding services, and the amount they actually pay. For example, the guide fee that most tour operators charge the tourists is USD 80, but what they actually pay the guides is USD 20. The conflict of interest and lack of collaboration between these parties is related to a lack of professional ethics and supervision by the concerned tourism body. As a result, the tour operators exploit the weak market position of the guides. Consequently, the guides develop a careless attitude towards their job and unethical behaviour: the guides usually take the tourists to only the three main sites (the Castle of Gondar, Church of Debre Birhan Selassie, and Mewagna Genda – the swimming pool of the emperor), although there are other interesting places. Some guides revealed that they spend long hours in one place to consume the entire hours devoted to other places. In this process, the tourists may not see all of the three places desired, as they have to leave the place within the specified time.

Leisure travellers also spend only a few nights in Addis Ababa, according to the hoteliers. On average, the guests spend two nights in Addis Ababa, one night on their arrival and the other on their departure. Conference tourists who come to Addis Ababa can only visit a few places, such as the museum, and take part in only a few activities, such as the cultural coffee ceremony immediately after their meeting. Due to this lack of coordination among the conference organisers, souvenir shops, cultural event organisers, and tour operators do not benefit from conference tourists.

In contrast, the lodges and resorts based in Bishoftu, which mainly target domestic tourists (visitors, meetings, conferences, and other social events such as weddings) did not complain about the length of stay of tourists.

On average, three to seven days is common. Some guests stay for a year, some others for a month, but these ones are in fact exceptional, so you cannot take them into account when talking about the rest of the tourists. If you compare the trend of their stay, in the past the tourists used to spend a night or so. But now, the minimum is two days; so this implies the promising nature of the tourist flows and their length of stay at Bishoftu, I think. (Interviewee B H2, 2017)

The next section presents the findings on the stakeholders' view of the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism.

5.3.2 Socio-cultural sustainability

The attitude of the research participants in Addis Ababa, Bishoftu, Gondar, and Awash National Park in relation to the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism is discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.3.2.1 Promotion of cultural resources

Most of the hoteliers, particularly those in Gondar and Addis Ababa, do not consider the promotion and preservation of socio-cultural resources to be their responsibility. Specifically, the hoteliers in Addis Ababa are least concerned about the promotion of socio-cultural resources, as they can easily get visitors anyway:

Our services are city-centred; we provide the accommodation, the refreshment services, and others – that is it. So I cannot say we are doing this and that with regard to cultural promotion. We sometimes offer a coffee ceremony, the cultural one; we offer cultural gifts... Honestly speaking, we don't do that with an intention of promoting culture. I just mentioned these ones to you for your information; rather, cultural promotion is a big issue that we have not considered. (Interviewee AA H2, 2015)

It seems from the above respondent that the hotels do not feel responsible for cultural promotion as a tourism activity. Most of the hoteliers contacted through this research focus mainly on Western-type services tailored towards international business travellers and conference tourists. Moreover, they seem to pay more attention to the products that produce more income. The view of the following respondent clearly illustrates this:

Our main business, by the way, is more one of room renting. We get 80% of our income from room rent; food is supplementary. No one comes for our food; they all come to us for the room. If the guests are not comfortable with the room, regardless of the quality

of the food, they could easily shift to other hotels. Apart from this, we follow a B&B [bed and breakfast] approach, so if the bed and the room are comfortable for them, they could consider the taste of the breakfast too. Most importantly, the business travellers don't come here to taste the cultural food of Ethiopia. If they want to see the cultural food or the culture as a whole, mostly they commit to an extra night and look for special places that offer cultural stuff. As long as there is another opportunity to taste the culture somewhere else, our contribution on working on the culture does not add that much value for them. (Interviewee AA H3, 2015)

The literature says that, 'If a culture is to prove sustainable in the face of tourism, then traditional and ethnic foods must be preserved along with other art forms' (Reynolds 1993). However, as can be observed from the above respondent's response, most of the hoteliers focus on Westernised services, which they perceive to satisfy the travellers more than local products. As such, they are less committed to the promotion of cultural offerings. This perception of the hoteliers can be attributed to the fact that the hoteliers do not see cultural offerings as part of sustainable tourism (which could be attributed to their lack of knowledge and understanding of sustainable tourism). Instead, they care more about meeting customer demands from which they can easily make money.

On the other hand, most of the hoteliers in Gondar said that cultural promotion is among their aims. One of the hotel managers interviewed in Gondar expressed his view as follows:

We take a firm stand on making our approach cultural. The table, the chairs, the paintings, the rooms, the beds, and others are all made of cultural products; we are working very seriously on cultural promotion. Believe it or not, our hotel is becoming the second attraction site for the tourists. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

Other respondents have shared their perceptions about socio-cultural sustainability in terms of promoting and offering cultural products, as presented below.

5.3.2.2 Offering cultural products

Some of the hoteliers in Bishoftu and Gondar consider that offering cultural products and values, alongside other services, is one means of contributing to the continuity (sustainability) of culture and also promoting their own business:

What we believe is that the culture and heritage that you and I have ignored cannot be remembered by others. We shouldn't expect others to talk or know or promote our culture; we are responsible for that. We consider our culture as our asset/money; we

can sell and make money from it. If you ask me if this approach is feasible, I can say yes, it is feasible... We consider the preservation and promotion of our culture as our obligation. When you consider the issue of criteria, there are criteria that you need to meet to operate in this sector. Basically, when it comes to cultural promotion it is our firm stand that we need to penetrate the market through culture, serve the visitors in a cultural way. As I already told you, the tourists do not travel all this way for the room service; we know they have better facilities and comforts in their country. So what we have to focus on is just providing them with a unique experience. Most of the countries have benefited from tourism and developed economically because they have seriously worked on their culture and sold it very well. We have abundant culture: so we should conserve, develop, and sell [it]. (Interviewee B H3, 2017)

The other hoteliers, especially those in Gondar, also believe that offering cultural products such as food and drinks can contribute to the sustainability of culture. But, apparently, they are not focusing on cultural offerings. They mention that the design of the tour package and the route of travel decided by the tour operators greatly affect the hoteliers' commitment and the guides' motivation, as already indicated in the previous sub-sections. One of the hotel managers at Gondar revealed the influence of tour operators in linking hoteliers with guests:

Believe it or not, the guests may come here, although where they eat and drink is already booked for them; they may come to us perhaps to use our room. The tour operators are the key players in booking everything and selling in this country. I can say more than 75% of everything is decided by them. Except for the walk-in guests, we don't prepare meals for the other tourists who come through the tour companies unless we are ordered to do so. So our main income is from sale of rooms in that regard. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

As can be observed from the remarks of this hotelier, the nature of the relationship between the hoteliers and tour operators can influence the attitude of the hoteliers in a positive or negative way in relation to promoting culture.

In a similar manner, the tour operators' actions affect the attitudes and commitment of the local guides. Most of the tour guides interviewed at Gondar were born in that area, some of them had lived there for more than 10 years, and all of them had spent more than 5 years in the guiding business. Although these guides could contribute to the sustainability of culture through the translation of the culture and heritage in an appropriate way, their commitment is dependent on the fee they are paid by the tour operators for the services they provide. Most of the tour guides interviewed share the view of the following respondent:

[T]here are many places to be visited in Gondar, such as Guskwam, Felasha, Mewagna Genda [the swimming pool of the emperor], Selassie, and others. But we only take the tourists to three places... We don't want to work; we are not ready to work. Rather, we look for a shortcut to get the money, rather than working for the money...In most cases the fee is fixed; we are paid 400 birr per round, whether we have one visitor or four visitors – it is all the same for us. So why should I waste my energy? That is how I think... (Interviewee G G2, 2015)

The above response shows that the guides' commitment and inclination is highly tied to the pay they receive from the tour operator. As a result, the tour guides in Gondar are not playing their part as guides. Even though there are more interesting historic places in the city, the fact that the guides mainly show only the same three places affects the attraction potential of the destination.

In general, when considering the commitment of the hoteliers towards ensuring the sustainability of culture, lodges located at the cultural destinations (Gondar and Bishoftu) contribute to the presentation and conservation of culture more than the hoteliers located in Addis Ababa, who claim to be offering city-centred services. Besides being located at the cultural destination, the commitment of lodges in Gondar to promoting the culture might be related to their limited market access, unlike the hotels in Addis Ababa.

5.3.2.3 Maintaining culture

Discussions were held with community residents at selected destinations (Awash National Park and Gondar) in order to understand their attitude to maintaining culture as an aspect of sustainable tourism. Awareness of cultural sustainability issues was less observable in the park management groups and community living near Awash National Park than in the local community in Gondar.

It appears that the community around Fasil Ghebbi in Gondar clearly knows about culture and the issues related to cultural sustainability. However, the community's commitment to the conservation of culture is associated with maintaining culture that serves as a tourist attraction and the benefits they receive from tourism. The community feels that, as the neighbours of an historic attraction, they deserve a clean environment, community schools and hospitals, and other services, which they believe should be supported by the tourism income their region generates. However, the absence of benefit sharing has led some people to develop a hostile attitude towards tourism. Most of the tour operators who participated in the study reported that

members of the local community snatch tourists' cameras and handbags, steal from them, and engage in other unfriendly practices.

In addition, the tour operators and tour guides have an observable influence on the community's commitment to ensuring the cultural sustainability of tourism in Gondar. The people residing around Fasil Ghebbi are economically dependent on tourism and engaged in transportation services, souvenir shops, weaving, and cultural shows. However, the FGD conducted with these groups revealed that they are not practically committed to cultural preservation; instead, they seem to be competing for business, as they are not receiving any incentives or encouragement from the government and other service providers, such as tour companies and accommodation providers, that would help them work towards maintaining their culture. One of the focus group discussants made the following comment, which other discussants applauded:

Believe it or not, the 'ferenji' [foreigner] would like a product that is made in front of them. They want to see the real experience and enjoy the product. But no one is arranging for this type of show; we don't have a strong link with the ferenji. If the guides could bring the guests to our shops, we could give them a commission, and in that way we can mutually benefit... The culture and tourism office is not intervening in controlling the unnecessary actions of the guides... Still our shop is placed in front of the Fasil Ghebbi, but how could the tourists come to us unless somebody just brings them to us? (Focus group discussant G4, 2015)

As can be observed from the above response, cultural sustainability is related to the gain that the community receives from sale of cultural products and experiences to the tourist. However, the local community in Gondar is not in a power position to meet the tourists, nor are they supported by the government to display their cultural products. Like the hoteliers, the destination community is also influenced by the tour guides and tour operators.

People residing near the Castle of Gondar claim to be the source of 'authentic' culture and cultural products, but it is difficult for them to sell their products or display their cultural events to tourists. The tour companies rarely arrange for the tourists to see what the local people do, how the surrounding community lives, and so on. As the respondents revealed, in most cases the tourists who are guided by the tour companies spend a short amount of time at the tourist sites in Gondar, because the tour operators want to transfer the tourists to nearby cities where they can find cheaper accommodation services and save money on food and other services.

In addition, the so-called tourist police, whom the community calls ‘hasslers’, are blocking links between the tourists and the community. The tourist police are generally youngsters who completed high school, but failed to enter university. They have been organised into associations and assigned to safeguard the security of the tourists, but without any payment. These tourist police become hasslers and even engage in snatching cameras and handbags from tourists, or in buying souvenirs at low prices and selling them to the tourists at much higher prices. Such acts by the tourist police have created an understanding gap between the tour companies in Addis Ababa and the small business holders near the park. According to the shop owners, the guides who come from Addis Ababa with the visitors directly head to the tourist bus without meeting anyone.

The discussants revealed that the government is not helping the community to combat the illegal actions of the tourist police. The transportation providers also complain about the work of illegal transport providers and the informal working system between the tour operators and the illegal transportation providers:

The tour companies in Addis Ababa cause a serious problem for us. We are here providing well-organised transportation services; however, the tour companies may give the job to someone who they informally approach or who offers them a cheap price. In this regard we submitted our complaint to the government offices in order to avoid these illegal people. After nagging the office several times, rules have been designed by the government to punish the illegal transportation providers. But the implementation is delayed. (Focus group discussant G1, 2015)

5.3.3 Environmental sustainability

In the current research, as already indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the research participants hardly mentioned environmental issues when talking about sustainable tourism. This sub-section discusses the environmental sustainability issues described by the research participants.

5.3.3.1 Environmental cleanliness

Interviews were held with the stakeholders in order to understand their attitude towards and commitment to ensuring a sustainable environment. Most of the respondents, especially those from the private sector, consider environmental conservation to be the responsibility of the

government. But in relation to the functioning of hotels and the overall effect of tourism on the environment in terms of cleanliness, a few hoteliers expressed the following view:

With regard to the environmental aspect, especially related to cleanliness, I cannot comment anything on the distant destinations and cities in the countryside. But if we consider it from Addis Ababa's perspective, tourism makes a positive contribution to the city. (Interviewee AA H3, 2015)

The positive contribution of tourism to environmental cleanliness is related to the fact that Addis Ababa is the capital of Ethiopia and the headquarters of the African Union and many international organisations, which makes it a centre for meetings and conferences. The hoteliers in the capital city seem to relate environmental issues to the cleanliness of the environment.

However, in Gondar and Awash National Park it appears that there is less understanding about the need for cleanliness. It was observed during the fieldwork in Gondar, for example, that there are many beggars around the Castle of Gondar, as well as people urinating around the Castle of Fasilides, which spoils the environment for tourists. Such issues have attracted little attention from regional governors and the surrounding community, as the community discussants reported. This implies a low level of awareness about the environmental sustainability of tourism.

In Bishoftu, the lodges and resorts are built around the Babougaya River. At the moment the lodge owners control the waste materials, both the liquids and solids, by accumulating them in dumpsters. However, none of the lodges have thought of the long-term effect of disposing of this waste. The liquid waste, such as laundry soap and toilet waste, etc., leak underground and join the Lakes of Bishoftu. In the long run, such leakage could contribute to the disappearance of the river, as well as the aquatic life found in the river. This is also true for the wildlife at Awash National Park; if the animals drink the polluted water, they could die and disappear over time.

Neither the businesses owners nor the government has considered the effect of the leakage of liquid waste on the river and the animals. The official interviewed at Bishoftu gave his opinion on the health of the river as follows:

In relation to the effect of the hoteliers on the river, we have not done anything thus far. We are planning to consult the researchers and see the effect, and afterwards we could devise some remedies... Honestly speaking, we are just busy working to make Bishoftu a tourist city. (Interviewee BGy, 2017)

Economic priorities have apparently dominated environmental conservation for stakeholders at all levels.

5.3.3.2 Conservation of natural attractions

The research participants were also asked about their commitment and contribution to the conservation of the natural environment. The views of the respondents are presented here.

A government official revealed that the central government is contributing little to the conservation of natural attractions, taking the case of Simien National Park in Ethiopia as an example:

Simien National Park has been registered as a World Heritage Site, but now it is highly endangered and at a critical stage, to the extent that it could be cancelled from the world heritage list. Then a movement was started to save this park, with the support of the donors. The status of the national parks in fact indicates the extent of attention the government gives to their conservation; this is something that is very visible, and so the government also admits this fact. ...In addition to the environmental degradation, the community living around the park don't have an interest in its conservation; rather, they start invading the park with their cattle to make use of what's left over.
(Interviewee AA Gv1, 2015)

One can observe from the above comment that the government is not committed to the conservation of natural attractions (parks). The scant commitment of the government to the conservation of parks also contributes to the attitude of the surrounding community, who become less concerned about the conservation of the park.

As part of the research, site observation was done at Awash National Park. The park has a desert landscape with few trees and wild animals, which can be viewed only from a distance. During the field visit it was rare to see wildlife in the park. Some camels, oryx, and bird species were seen from a distance. The park does not have any compound that protects the wildlife. It is an open area and the road leading from Addis Ababa to Djibouti crosses this park. The park management employees who live inside the park said that the wild animals run away when cars cross the park, and some of them are knocked down by the cars. As a result, the number of wild animals is decreasing and the attractiveness of the park is also being affected. One of the members of the park management team shared his experience as follows:

Most of the time the visitors are disappointed upon their arrival. 'Did we come here to see the cattle? Where is the wildlife? Is the park all about these things?', are among

the most common comments made by the tourists. Sometimes it may take the visitors three to five days to get the kind of wildlife they wish to see; sometimes they may not succeed at all, and this is so disappointing for the tourists... (Interviewee ANP Gv5, 2015)

The above interviewee indicates the challenge for Awash National Park: tourists are attracted by the unique wildlife found in the parks; however, when they do not see what they expect, they are disappointed and may not re-visit or recommend the park.

Tourism development is highly dependent on the development of infrastructure and facilities, but in the case of Ethiopia, particularly Awash National Park, it appears that this has received more attention than the conservation of the park. The FGD with the community at Awash National Park revealed that the community is well aware of the need to conserve the park. However, they said that their motivation to do so is affected by the fact that they are not benefiting from the income from the park in any way:

We don't have special interest in it as a neighbour of this park ...The government has never built a school in the name of this park or designed a project, or there is nothing that we could mention that we have benefited from the park; no health centre, school, or water or some other asset has been offered to us from the income from this park. But we are benefiting from it, although we forcefully invade the park to feed our cattle. We have requested [a share] and commented about this [lack of benefit] at several meetings in relation to the park, but we have never got a response in any form. (Focus group discussant ANP5, 2015)

As can be observed from the responses of the research participants, the destination community's interest in the conservation of the park is also tied to the benefit they expect to receive. The fact that they are not benefiting from the park irritates them and makes them act against the interests of conservation. However, the interview held with the federal tourism office reveals that 85% of the income from the park goes back to the region.

We involve the community in the benefits obtained from the tourist resources. Only 15% of the revenue collected from entrance fee is used by the federal government... 85% of the income is spent back in the region... that is how we encourage the community in the conservation of tourist resources. (Interviewee AA Gv2, 2015)

At the regional level, the whole population, including those who do not contribute to park conservation, also share in this income. The interviews and FGDs indicated that the community living around the park cut the trees from the park for charcoal wood and sell it to the people

living in the town to generate income, as they said they do not directly obtain the benefits that the central government referred to.

Another indicator of the environmental sustainability of tourism is noise pollution (Huttasin 2013; Tanguay et al. 2010). The FGD with the community group at Gondar and a review on the travel website TripAdvisor.com (Pharmgal 2015) reveal that noise pollution is one of the factors influencing sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. The next section presents the respondents' views related to this issue.

5.3.3.3 Noise pollution

Among the research participants, the residents in Gondar are more concerned about noise pollution than the other stakeholders. Near the fence of the Castle of Gondar there is a big stadium where concerts, religious services, contests, and exhibitions are held. These programmes are announced using loudspeakers. One of the community representatives in Gondar said that the loudspeaker system is so powerful that it could actually damage the buildings:

You know, the municipality never takes action when the bazaars and conferences are conducted by loudspeaker. All in all, what I would suggest is that tourism should be led by the people who have an attachment to the heritage, not the politicians who are working for their own benefit. (Focus group discussion G1, 2015)

There are about 44 Ethiopian Orthodox churches surrounding the Castle of Gondar; all of them use loudspeakers for their spiritual services. The loudspeakers reach the whole city, and this religious chanting takes place nearly every day. These practices disturb the tourists visiting the sites and may also damage the buildings over time. The following comment by a tourist was obtained from Trip Advisor:

The very early morning religious chanting on Sundays added to the ambience of being in a different country (although not my religion, I can't complain as I was a visitor).
(Pharmgal 2015)

The frequency of religious chanting could discourage the tourists from spending more nights in Gondar, as the churches celebrate saints' days almost every day. While the surrounding community and visitors are concerned about the environmental impact of the noise, the public and private sector actors did not mention it as an issue of concern. Moreover, discouraging such services to control the noise pollution could negatively influence cultural sustainability.

5.3.4 Summary

Table 5.2 provides a summary of the responses of the stakeholders from the three sectors (private sector, public sector, and destination community) in relation to their understanding of the three elements of sustainable tourism.

Table 5.2. Summary of responses related to the stakeholders' understanding of the specific elements of sustainable tourism

Element	Stakeholder category		
	Public sector	Private sector	Destination community
Economic	- Contribution to development	- Employment creation - Destination promotion - Tourists' length of stay	
Environmental	- Conservation and use of natural attractions/ resources	- Environmental cleanness	- Noise pollution
Socio-cultural		- Promotion of cultural resources - Offering cultural products	- Keeping authentic cultural attractions and the benefit gained from cultural attractions

As can be seen from Table 5.2, the stakeholders from the public and private sector appear to be more interested in the economic element of sustainable tourism and less concerned about the other elements. In most cases, these groups did not consider the conservation of cultural resources as their responsibility. The environmental element of sustainable tourism also appears to be understood differently by the different stakeholders.

5.4. Perception of sustainable tourism and stakeholder collaboration

As indicated in the introduction of section 5.2, it was not easy to directly link the perception of sustainable tourism to stakeholder collaboration. However, the reflection made by some respondents to a certain extent reveals how stakeholder collaboration has influenced the perception of sustainable tourism. For example: a hotel manager located in Gondar made the following comment:

There are no stages for discussing about tourism, tourists, its [tourism] benefits, or its development... still awareness creation is a big problem that has been undermined as

per my understanding. At different public gatherings and churches they [officials, religious leaders respectively] just preach politics, instead of educating the society about tourism, which could serve as an economic backbone of this historic city. The people in church even don't know about tourism and don't care about tourists. They urinate there in the church compound; they can't listen to you when you advise them. Had they known about tourism and the issue that the income generated through tourism also goes to them they could have kept their environment clean. There should have been a public toilet at least in historic churches that are serving as tourist attraction, the people there should have been educated about tourism, they [those people serving churches] themselves would be beneficiaries from the souvenirs if they could be able to design that and display it to the tourists, you can't blame these people, they don't know it at all. (Interviewee G H3, 2015)

As can be inferred from the reflection of the above respondent, the absence of common stage for discussing tourism issues, as well as the community's unwillingness to collaborate, is influencing people's understanding about tourism and its sustainability.

In a similar manner, the private sector actors, mostly the hoteliers in better geographic locations, feel that they are self-sufficient and independent, as a result of which their perception of sustainable tourism is observably partial. One can infer from the reflections of the following hotelier located in Bishoftu the future of collaboration:

.... you know we are advantaged over the other hoteliers located in distance areas, we do not depend on tour operators or others to secure the market. We receive online bookings from different guests, so we are almost independent of anyone. ... In terms of the supply of raw materials also we are in a better position, we just use our own farm from which we get the vegetables, and we have our own diary production.... (Interviewee B H5, 2017)

The attitude of stakeholders like the above respondent is apparently one of the factors influencing stakeholder collaboration and the future of collaboration, as well as the overall perception of sustainable tourism, i.e., the above respondent believes that since the supply chain of his company is fully coordinated, he does not need to interaction with other stakeholders. Moreover, as the focus of his company is doing business, he is

not concerned about culture and the environmental protection⁸ issues. The same respondent, when asked about sustainable tourism replied that:

.... What can I say? Sustainable tourism is a difficult concept to explain, but I think it is something which belongs to the government's responsibility. We are a business organisation, so mainly our focus is on customer satisfaction and improving our revenue... (Interviewee B H5, 2017)

As can be observed from the above responses, the inability and unwillingness of stakeholders to collaborate with other stakeholders is influencing their understanding and perception of sustainable tourism.

One of the regional government officials shared his opinion on how the sustainable tourism issue is being dealt with:

....so far our focus was to make this city a tourist city. Tourist standard hotels are being constructed ... we did not work on sustainable tourism. Very recently a researcher has come to present the effect of the hotels on the lakes, since then we are just thinking about it. We will call the investors and discuss about it... that is our plan, otherwise I cannot say this and that about sustainable tourism... (Interviewee B Gv, 2017)

It can be observed from the above reflection that there was a weak collaboration between the government office in the region and the private sectors. Apparently the official has understood the need for collaboration to deal with sustainable tourism.

In general, this section presented the stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism. The next chapter presents a discussion of the main findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

⁸ This hotel is one of the hotels found surrounding the lakes of Bishoftu, who are contributing to the pollution of the river and the marine lives found in the river.

Chapter 6. Discussion of Main Findings

6.1 Introduction

Tourism is often regarded as an engine of the economy in both developing and developed countries. In many countries, including Ethiopia, it is among the most important contributors to income and employment opportunities, as well as GDP (Richards and Hall 2003). However, as the current research has shown in the case of Ethiopia, there are a number of factors negatively influencing the potential of tourism to develop in a sustainable manner. One of the biggest barriers to the sustainability of tourism is lack of stakeholder collaboration. Many previous studies have indicated that a lack of stakeholder collaboration is one of the many challenges hampering the development of tourism (Getahun and Yeshanew 2016; Kauffmann 2008; Tamir 2015). However, relatively little research has been conducted to assess exactly how stakeholder collaboration influences sustainable tourism development. With the intention of filling this research gap, the current study has analysed the factors that influence the development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and the influence of stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in relation to the level of development of stakeholder collaboration.

This chapter provides a discussion of the main research findings and links them to the existing literature and theory on stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism.

The discussion is organised around the two main research questions for this study:

1. *Which factors facilitate the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia?* (section 6.2)
2. *How are stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism related to the level of development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia?* (section 6.3)

6.2 Understanding stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism in Ethiopia

This section discusses the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and the factors that have facilitated or hampered it. It attempts to answer the first research question:

1. *Which factors facilitate the development of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia?*

6.2.1 The evolution of collaboration

This section answers the following sub-research question:

1a At what stage of development is tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and how did this collaboration evolve over time?

Unlike previous studies conducted in Ethiopia, which have merely indicated that there is a weak relationship among stakeholders in the Ethiopian tourism sector (Tamir 2015; Mohammed 2016; Woldu 2018), this dissertation explores and explains the factors that have contributed to this poor relationship. This research investigates the relationship between tourism stakeholders, including from the public sector, private sector, and destination community, based on the conceptual framework for collaboration set out in Chapter 2 (section 2.8).

The stage of tourism stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia was analysed within the framework of stakeholder collaboration, which begins with exploring the antecedents of collaboration. This is followed by the problem setting stage, which includes identifying a capable convener who can lead the process of collaboration and identifying legitimate stakeholders, as well as building the commitment of stakeholders through awareness creation (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Graci 2013; Selin and Chavez 1995a; Wood and Gray 1991). Successful passage through the problem setting stage leads to the direction setting stage (Graci 2013). This stage involves agreeing on a shared vision, setting a common direction (goal), and establishing rules that guide the stakeholders. The direction setting stage then leads to the structuring stage, during which the relationship between the stakeholders is institutionalised in order to establish a long-lasting relationship to help the stakeholders to work together on a long-term basis in an ongoing collaboration.

Based on the empirical data obtained from this research, in strict accordance with the framework for stakeholder collaboration applied in this study, it is difficult to clearly understand what stage of collaboration best fits the context studied. On paper, Ethiopia appears to be in the third stage of collaboration (structuring), where the collaboration among stakeholders becomes formal and institutional. This stage is evidenced by the establishment of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization and Tourism Transformation Council at the government level, as well as different private sector associations and community-level organisations, which provide an institutional framework for collaboration among stakeholders. However, in reality, collaboration among stakeholders in Ethiopia is at a much earlier stage. The results show that

the research participants (from the private and public sectors and the destination communities) do not share the same issues or a common goal that they could work towards in a formal manner. It is also difficult to identify collaboration as moving from one stage to another in a sequential order in accordance with the framework for stakeholder collaboration. In other words, in the Ethiopian context, the model failed to follow the sequential stages of stakeholder collaboration, unlike in other countries (Selin and Chavez 1995b; De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Graci 2013).

Hence, the empirical evidence from the current research contradicts the stakeholder collaboration process from problem setting to direction setting and the institutionalisation of collaboration (structuring). This could be due to a number of reasons, which are discussed in the following paragraphs, based on the discussions with the research participants in relation to the stages of development of collaboration.

As an antecedent of collaboration, scholars (Graci 2013; Selin and Chavez 1995a) have indicated that collaboration can be initiated by a strong and enthusiastic leader who can act as a catalyst for partnership development. Unfortunately, such a leader who is keen to bring the public and private sectors together to work towards a common goal does not seem to exist in the case study sites. This could be due to the individualistic orientation of the private sector or the absence of a strong leader from the government to facilitate a well-coordinated relationship. It could also be due to a lack of belief by private sector stakeholders that collaboration will produce a result. Related to the development needs of the country, respondents from the public sector mentioned poverty and unemployment as among the major problems for which tourism could provide a solution. However, neither the private sector actors nor the community have shown concern for these problems as common problems towards which they should work.

Although no common issue was determined in the preliminary stage of collaboration, the respondents were asked further about the manner of collaboration, based on the pre-defined interview guides. Based on the framework for collaboration (Selin and Chavez 1995a; Graci 2013), the next stage of collaboration is problem setting. The success of the problem setting stage depends on the extent to which the stakeholders acknowledge each other as important partners. It can be understood from the results that although collaboration among stakeholders requires the mutual recognition of each other's legitimacy, the service providers who belong to the private sector (i.e., tour operators, tour guides, and hoteliers) in the case study sites do not view each other as being equally important. In the private sector, the hoteliers and tour

operators located in the capital city wield more influence (power) than those located in the periphery. These groups value the other stakeholders based only on the volume of business they provide, their market orientation (i.e., domestic versus international tourists), the availability of alternative partners, and their capacity to access markets based on technological infrastructure (e.g., receiving online booking service). For example, the legitimacy of tour operators as partners of the hoteliers in Addis Ababa is related to the volume of business that the tour operators can generate.

Besides the private sector stakeholders, various tourism studies indicate that for tourism to develop sustainably the host community needs to be considered as an influential stakeholder (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Byrd 2007). However, this study found that most of the private sector stakeholders, such as hoteliers, express their relationship with the local community in terms of the way in which they reach the 'poor people', i.e., their corporate social responsibility activities. They reported supporting the needy by offering food, clothing, and books for children. Corporate social responsibility focuses on the profitability of the company, while also discharging its social responsibility (Henderson 2007). So while this may indicate some recognition of the needs of the local community, it does not frame them as a legitimate stakeholder in the tourism sector or as a partner for hotels. Such a relationship does not contribute to collaboration between hoteliers and the destination community.

For culturally oriented tourism that attracts leisure travellers, the local people are one of the most powerful partners affecting the experience of tourists (Cole 2006). However, the hoteliers near Fasil Ghebbi, for example, did not mention the community as an important stakeholder. Destination communities possess local knowledge (Jamal and Stronza 2009) and, hence, can support the activities of tour operators through knowledge transfer activities. However, the tour operators who participated in this study appear to directly relate the contribution of the local community to their business activities and otherwise ignore them (Kauffmann 2008), as the local community does not directly contribute to the volume of their business. The ignorance of the community is also a problem, which is similar to the findings of Saufi et al. (2014) in a study on Lombok, Indonesia, where the community at the attraction was disregarded and marginalised by tourism agencies and other private sector providers, on the basis that the people in the community were illiterate and too inexperienced to work with.

Studies (Provan and Kenis 2008; Erkus-Ozturk and Eraydin 2010) revealed that the form of network governance greatly affects the success of the network. The result of this study also

reveals that, as a tourism stakeholder, the government in Ethiopia is influencing stakeholders' operations by controlling their activities. This seems to be contrary to the supposed role of the government in tourism as a facilitator and enabler of collaboration by tourism stakeholders (Vernon, Essex, Pinder, and Curry 2005). The hoteliers, professional associations, tour companies, and regional government offices may request the federal government to arrange a stakeholder meeting; otherwise, it is not common for government officers to have discussions with other stakeholders or facilitate supportive activities such as training. This result confirms the findings of Yetnayet and Getaneh (2018). Overall, it can be observed from the results that the nature of the relationship between the government and the service providers is situational, because it depends on the existence of a specific event, such as an international meeting or conference, to trigger a perceived need for collaboration.

The degree of shared power is another factor that contributes to successful passage through the problem setting stage. It has been determined from the empirical evidence generated by the case studies that, due to their locational advantage, the tour operators in Addis Ababa are more powerful than the stakeholders in regional cities such as Gondar. A study conducted by Buhalis (2000) in the United Kingdom attributed the power and dominance of the tour operators around the Mediterranean Sea to the incompetence of the hotel managers. The more experienced and educated tour operators were more empowered to influence the accommodation providers. In a similar manner, the investigation by Bastakis et al. (2014) on the relationship between the tour operators and the hoteliers in other European cities revealed that the size (financial capacity) of the tour operators empowered them and provided them better bargaining power than medium and small-sized hotels. In the case of Ethiopia, the geographic location of the hoteliers in Gondar influences their potential to attract enough visitors by themselves, making them dependent on tour operators, unlike the hoteliers in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu. Exposure and locational advantage were found to give the tour operators in these centres the power to influence other stakeholders, such as the tour guides and hoteliers in Gondar, which are far away from the capital.

It is clear that no individual organisation can be successful unless it cooperates with other organisations. This does not mean that one should sacrifice their own interests or power for others, as the relationship between the tour operators in Addis Ababa and the hotels in Gondar indicates. Based on the more powerful position of tour operators who supply them with guests, the hoteliers in Gondar are willing to assume the cost of last-minute cancellations rather than risk losing business from the tour companies in the future. Such a working style is not in line

with the principle of collaboration, in which the stakeholders are assumed to share the costs and benefits of collaboration in a proportional way (Savage et al. 2010).

In general, it can be understood from the above analysis and discussion that most of the tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia prefer to work with partners with whom they can maximise their individual interests and do not consider the importance of working with each other to further the interests of all stakeholders. Based on the framework for collaboration (Gray 1985; Selin and Chavez 1995a), problem setting leads to the next stage of collaboration, the determination of common goals and directions at the domain level (direction setting). However, due to the observable lack of domain-level goals and the inability of stakeholders to recognise each other's legitimacy, it was difficult to investigate the next part of the collaboration process. Despite this, the stakeholders were asked about direction setting in the interviews and FGDs.

Setting or identifying a common direction entails defining a framework of rules and guidelines for the stakeholders to follow in the course of dealing with the domain-level issues identified during the problem setting stage and sharing information. This study found that the government sets the direction in a top-down way, without considering much feedback or input from the private sector stakeholders and destination community. Such a top-down approach goes against the principle of community collaboration advocated by many scholars (Jamal and Stronza 2009; Shani and Pizam 2012).

Incorporation of the destination community's opinion and the sharing of information would arguably empower them (Cole 2006) to cooperate with the government and other service providers for the benefit of all stakeholders. However, as indicated by the government officials, the government follows a top-down approach in deciding on goals and directions. Such a process of goal setting is not in line with the theory of collaboration; McCann (1983) suggests that although complete consensus is not necessary, the goals must accommodate the input of diverse stakeholders and ensure their operationalisation through programmes, policies, and actions.

While the direction setting stage is generally regarded as the stage that gives birth to the relationship among stakeholders, as they devise rules and frameworks within which to work, the lack of recognition of each other's capacity as powerful and legitimate stakeholders has led to the absence of common goals among the hoteliers, tour operators, government, and local communities in Ethiopia.

Past the direction setting stage, the institutionalisation and formalisation of relationships among stakeholders depends on the extent to which the members believe that it is important to establish a formal organisation for collaboration (Gray, 1985; Wood and Gray 1991). This study identified that there are formal institutions and offices such as the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association, the hotel associations, and the Ethiopian Tourism Organization, which have been established to represent the stakeholders and facilitate the development of tourism. Such organisations appear to parallel the structuring stage of collaboration. However, the formation of these offices is driven by the government and membership often mandatory (e.g., as a requirement for obtaining a licence), and not because the stakeholders believe in the importance of collaboration.

In general, based on the framework of collaboration set out in Chapter 2, it appears that collaboration in Ethiopia is not very advanced. Although there appears to be an institution with a structure that could monitor the ongoing collaboration between the stakeholders within and between the different associations (Ethiopian Tourism Organization), the interviews reveal that the relationship between stakeholders is not very strong and has not advanced to a formal level. In practice, formal collaboration between tourism stakeholders has failed to advance in Ethiopia, mainly because the process of collaboration, such as the formation of the associations, was not initiated by the stakeholders, but by the government in a top-down way. Moreover, from the interviews it became clear that there are no clear and common goals at the domain level and a lack of guidance on the potential forms and benefits of collaboration, resulting in a lack of collaborative relationships among the stakeholders interviewed. The dedicated ministry and establishment of government offices and associations could imply the importance given by the government to the need for formal collaboration in the tourism sector. However, the failure to create awareness about the importance of such collaboration, the inability to properly incorporate all of the legitimate stakeholders at the initial stage of forming these associations, and the inability to define domain-level issues that need collaboration have influenced the proper functioning of these associations. This finding supports the argument of Gray (1985) that the inability to properly progress through each stage in the process of collaboration (e.g., problem setting, including identification of domain-level issues and the involvement of legitimate stakeholders) influences the success of consecutive stages (e.g., direction setting, structuring, and outcome).

6.2.2 Stakeholders' perceptions of collaboration

This section answers the following sub-research question:

1b What are stakeholders' perceptions about such collaboration?

From the interviews and FGDs, it seems that the private tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia (hoteliers, tour operators, and tour guides) are not free to decide whether or not to become a member of an association, but rather are forced to become a member in order to access government offices and obtain necessary permits etc. Joint ownership of decisions is also not evident; instead, decisions appear to be owned by the government and implemented using a top-down approach. As a result, the tourism stakeholders do not have a collective sense of responsibility for the development of tourism, instead showing more concern for their own individual interests, which is against the theory of collaboration (Gray 1985; Graci 2013).

Related to this, the stakeholders hold different perceptions about collaboration. As observed from the discussions with the research participants, some stakeholders view collaboration as an important channel through which to share resources and support each other, while some uninterested stakeholders consider it a tool for the government to control their activities. The perception of collaboration in Ethiopia appears to be different from in the West, where collaborators share the benefits and the costs (Savage et al. 2010; Waligo et al. 2013). This difference in perception may be due to the lack of understanding about collaboration and its importance at the domain level.

In conclusion, besides the top-down initiation of collaboration by the government, there are other factors that influence the decision of individual stakeholders to work together. These factors have all contributed to a weak relationship between stakeholders. This finding marks the importance of investigating the factors that have contributed to the weak collaboration among stakeholders in Ethiopia, in order to improve relationships among the stakeholders and further the development of tourism in Ethiopia. The next section presents and explains the factors that have been identified as influencers of the development of stakeholder collaboration.

6.2.3 Factors influencing stakeholder collaboration

This section answers the following sub-research question:

1c What factors have facilitated or hampered the development of this collaboration?

Despite the fact that the process of collaboration was not followed, this research attempted to identify the factors facilitating or hindering the development of collaboration among the stakeholders in the study sites. The research also sought to explain how these factors contributed to the weak collaboration, based on the assumptions of the social exchange theory.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) state that a relationship can be described in terms of a social exchange in which people tend to work with each other on the basis of the existence of trust between them. The resulting relationship may become a social relationship or an economic relationship. An economic exchange may also bring people together and, over time, such an economic exchange could continue in the form of an economic relationship or may turn into a social relationship.

In the current research, the social exchange and relationship between the stakeholders is difficult to explain in line with this description. In most of the case study sites, the interest of the stakeholders is geared towards meeting their own needs. There does not appear to be a long-term and established relationship that can be explained as an economic or social relationship. The relationship between the hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu with the tour operators shares some characteristics of an economic exchange or relationship. The relationship between the hoteliers found in Gondar and the tour operators can be understood as a social relationship initiated by the hoteliers in Gondar to bring about an economic relationship.

Overall, the relationships between the tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia are weak due to certain factors, including lack of trust and power imbalances, which were also identified by Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012). In addition to these factors, this research has identified professionalism as a factor in collaboration. It has been argued that professionalism is key to enhancing collaboration among different stakeholders (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, and Allen 2001). When actors are professional, they have the expertise they need to influence their partners (Hasenfeld 1987), as in the case of the tour operators that are influencing hoteliers in the Mediterranean (Buhalis 2000). However, this research found that tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia lack professionalism, which leads to a lack of trust, as a result of which the non-professional stakeholders ignore the few professional tourism stakeholders.

On the part of the private sector actors, there is an observable lack of professionalism and professional ethics, which is influencing the development of collaboration among the stakeholders. Most stakeholders gauge the importance of collaboration according to their individual benefit. The precedence of individual interests over concern for group gain has led

to competition instead of collaboration (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005) and is affecting respect for professionalism in the tourism sector. For instance, the owners of tour companies do not consider the value and importance of professional guides. As such, they do not collaborate to plan itineraries or share the benefits (revenue) from tourism activities with the tour guides. Related to the influence of professionalism on stakeholder collaboration, it can be argued that stakeholders' ignorance and negative perceptions of each other's lack of professionalism has negatively impacted on the development of collaboration between them.

Gray (1985) suggests that the presence of a capable convener is one of the factors in successful collaboration. However, unfortunately, there is a clear lack of professional leaders at official levels in the tourism sector in Ethiopia. At the time of data collection for this dissertation, the office of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ethiopia was led by non-tourism professionals. Before the assignment of the current minister (at the time of data collection), who is in fact a linguist, the ministerial office was led by an engineer. Despite a lower number of graduates in tourism studies compared to those in other sciences such as engineering, accounting, and finance, there are some tourism management graduates who have bachelor and master degrees. However, at ministerial and lower governmental positions in the governmental hierarchy, the government nominates people with close political affiliation with the government, even if they lack expertise in tourism. Apparently, the government does so to maintain its power position. However, the mismatch between the profession and the position of leaders has contributed to the poor understanding about the nature of tourism and the importance of collaboration between tourism stakeholders.

Besides the development of collaboration, professionalism creates confidence and trust among the collaborating parties. The current study found that lack of trust among tourism stakeholders is related to the lack of professionalism of the owners and their employees. Most of the employees of tourism operators are not tourism professionals, so tourism operators do not trust their employees and do not want to delegate management of their business to them. At the same time, the owners and managers do not want to enhance the professional skills of their employees for fear that their employees will leave the company for better opportunities. This is in line with the findings of Huttasin in the case of Thailand (Huttasin 2013), who found no trust or support by employers for the professional development of their employees.

Trust also creates confidence (in the other stakeholders' skills, ability, and professionalism, and their own capacity), which makes the parties more willing to support and cooperate with

each other (Reina, Reina, and Rushton 2007). From the FGDs, it is clear that the community mistrusts the government officials, who fail to properly connect with the community and, instead, apply a top-down approach to tourism planning and management. This has led the community to give up on collaborating with the government. This result is in line with the findings of Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012), in that the mistrust that the community has in the government officers influences their decision to collaborate with them. This study also found that trust between private sector stakeholders is dependent on the economic status of the stakeholders. This result is similar to the results of the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al. 2014), in which the people (stakeholders) in the high-income category were found to have less trust for those in the low-income category (lower-level employees). An example of this is the inability of tour operators to trust the tour guides in the case study sites. Some studies argue that trust can be developed through continuous interactions and dialogue between actors (Drost et al. 2012; Graci 2013). However, most hotel managers and tour operators are not able to develop trust in their employees. Accordingly, there is little chance to develop trust through collaboration. Prior knowledge of each other could influence the degree of trust and the ongoing relationship, as in the case of trusting a relative or family member.

In general, the current study supports the idea that trust is a preliminary requirement for successful collaboration between stakeholders (Savage et al. 2010; Young-Ybarra and Wiersema 1999). The interviews found that collaborations (associations) in the Ethiopian tourism sector are not initiated in the interest of stakeholders who trust each other, but rather created at the behest of the authorities. However, it is difficult for the government to impose collaboration in a top-down fashion, because basic trust is lacking.

Besides lack of professionalism and trust, the observable power imbalance between the government officials, private sector actors, and destination communities is another factor that has contributed to the weak collaboration in the tourism sector in Ethiopia. This is a common phenomenon in many developing countries, according to Tosun: 'Centralization of public administration of tourism restricts the influence of community-level groups on the planning process, and implementing plans, as it increases the vertical distance between planners and the broad mass of the population' (Tosun 2000, p. 618). The issue of community exclusion, as described in the FGDs, is similar to other countries, both developed (Canavan 2017) and developing (Aas et al. 2005; Tosun and Timothy 2003). The tourism officers do not consider the destination community to have any valuable tourism-related knowledge (because many are illiterate) and exclude them from planning; however, failing to consider the ideas of others

results in the underutilisation of good ideas that could be provided by enthusiastic stakeholders (Canavan 2017).

Cook and Rice (2003) argue that uneven power distribution among actors reduces their commitment. The results from this study show that the private sector and the destination community are mere recipients of information, their involvement is largely token, and their input does not appear to be officially considered. Furthermore, the government and the private sector appear to place little value on working with the destination community and intentionally ignore them. Intentional ignorance can be understood as a means of exerting or retaining power by the key players in the tourism industry (i.e., the regional government officers in this case). The evidence that certain stakeholders, such as the local community at the tourist destinations and the hoteliers in Gondar, are ignored indicates that they have little power to influence the actions of other stakeholders, such as the tour operators. Hence, it appears that a power imbalance exists in the Ethiopia tourism section, which has led to the stakeholders who hold the power (such as the government) deliberately ignoring other stakeholders (like the destination community), unless they see an economic benefit to be gained from collaboration. This, in turn, negatively affects the commitment level of the individuals being ignored to multi-stakeholder collaboration. Such interaction discourages community participation and reduces the willingness of stakeholders to collaborate on related issues. This finding is in line with the findings of Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012) in Mauritius and of Saufi et al. (2014) in Lombok, Indonesia, who found that when stakeholders perceive that they are disempowered or ignored, it reduces their commitment to collaborate with the government.

In addition to ignoring the other stakeholders (in terms of not considering their ideas or input), the unbalanced support of the government for stakeholders at different levels also contributes to the power imbalance among stakeholders. To obtain support from the government, association membership is mandatory for guides and small business owners, such as the souvenir producers and sellers in Gondar, while it is not as important and compulsory for the hoteliers and the tour operators in Addis Ababa. As one moves down to the regions, it appears from the interviews and FGDs that there is less support for the community in general, but, conversely, more control is exerted over them. This could be related to the low level of economic contribution that these small business holders make to the government's aim of development.

In general, it can be seen from the interviews and the FGDs that tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia have long experienced power imbalances and a lack of professionalism, trust, and supervision, which have affected the nature of the relationship among the stakeholders. The lack of professionalism (and professional ethics), as well as the power imbalance, mistrust, and lack of awareness among tourism stakeholders have influenced the overall development of collaboration in the tourism sector in Ethiopia. Previous studies that have elaborated on the influence of power have focused on legitimate official power (Ap 1992; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012). In addition to the influence of official legitimate power (a centralised approach to the governance of tourism), the current research identified the role of expertise (or professionalism), which influences not only the working relationship between the stakeholders, but also the level of trust that individuals have in each other. Professionalism was also observed as one of the factors creating trust in other stakeholders. Stakeholders' negative perception of the professional capacity of government officials has negatively influenced the local community's motivation to work with government officials.

Finally, it appears that among the rules guiding relationships that were identified by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), reciprocity and competition seem to better explain the perception of the tourism stakeholders who participated in this study of the importance of collaboration. The individual stakeholders decide to collaborate based on the expected benefits of collaboration, sometimes at the expense of the interests of the other stakeholder. If the collaboration is not perceived to have enough benefits, they ignore the collaboration.

The next section discusses stakeholders' perceptions about sustainable tourism and links them to the current development of collaboration in Ethiopia.

6.3 Stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism and the current level of development of collaboration in Ethiopia

This section discusses the findings in relation to how the different stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism affect the stage of development of collaboration between them. First, discussions related to the overall perception of sustainable tourism are presented, followed by a discussion of the relationship between stakeholder collaboration and the perception of sustainable tourism. It attempts to answer the second research question:

- 2. How are stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism related to the level of development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia?*

6.3.1 Stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism

This section answers the following sub-research (2a, and 2b which are interrelated) questions:

2a What are stakeholders' perceptions about sustainable tourism?

2b What are the stakeholders' attitudes about the elements of sustainable tourism?

Sustainable tourism draws on the definition of sustainable development, which was initially set by experts from developed countries, with a major concern for environmental protection (Liu 2003; Seghezze 2009; see also Chapter 2). Since the inception of the concept of sustainable development, environmental protection and development have been priority agendas, until the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals added the eradication of poverty and other development-related problems (UN n.d.). The SDGs, in particular, advocate for the consideration of sustainability goals as interdependent goals; in other words, the successful achievement of one goal requires consideration of the other goals.

However, based on the findings of this research, environmental protection does not appear to have attracted the attention of private sector and public sector actors in the tourism sector in Ethiopia, even though the definition of sustainability adopted in the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan considers environmental protection as a guiding principle for the sustainable development of tourism in Ethiopia. Apparently, private sector actors as well as the public sector actors appreciate the relevance of environmental conservation and cultural protection, but do not feel obliged to engage in ensuring the environmental and socio-cultural sustainability of tourism. In Ethiopia, there is a clear discrepancy between the principles of sustainability adopted in the tourism policy and master plan and those applied in practice.

This research has discovered that one size does not fit all in relation to the definition of sustainable tourism and identification of its elements. Although sustainable tourism is generally understood as the viability of its elements (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental) for the benefit of current and future generations, in Ethiopia most of the tourism stakeholders associate the sustainability of tourism only with the continuity of tourism and the benefits obtained from tourism activities. Some stakeholders relate the sustainability of tourism to the continuous existence of the tourism resources in their area (such as cultural resources or natural attractions) through their conservation. For example, stakeholders who are located at a destination that is identified by its cultural assets define sustainable tourism in terms of the protection of these cultural assets and the continuation of the benefits obtained from them. In a similar manner, stakeholders that are located near natural tourist attractions, such as parks,

focus on the conservation of the park and the benefit to be derived from the park. This finding is in line with two of Seghezze's five 'Ps' (2009): the 'person' (i.e., sustainability is viewed differently by different people) and 'place' (i.e., the perception of the concept of sustainability varies based on place).

Moreover, defining sustainable tourism in terms of maintaining the life style and culture of the community disregards the dynamism of the culture (Mowforth and Munt 2015). Mowforth and Munt (2015) point out that the culture of a society is subject to change; therefore, the concerned stakeholders should understand that and devise a mechanism by which they can develop, adapt, or maintain elements of the culture.

Comparing the perceptions of sustainable tourism across the various respondent groups in the private sector, it appears that tour guides and tour operators have a better understanding (related to the definition of UNWTO) of sustainable tourism than hoteliers (UNEP and UNWTO 2005). The tour guides and the tour operators relate the sustainability of tourism to its cultural and environmental aspects. Such a difference could be associated with the nature of the service they provide (their mobility), which involves taking tourists to different sites that have environmental and cultural value. The mobile nature of tour guides and tour operators exposes them to various places and allows them to interact with international tourists, some of whom have an understanding of sustainable tourism. This gives the tour operators and tour guides an awareness of sustainability, lending support to the idea that sustainable tourism is a Western concept (Lu and Nepal 2009), as tour operators and tour guides learn what sustainable tourism means from their (Western) clients. This finding further supports the idea that some stakeholders are more important than others in enhancing the sustainable development of tourism in a form that takes the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions into account.

On the other hand, the hoteliers see the employment opportunities created by tourism as their economic contribution to the community. However, the employment that they provide is mostly in the form of lower-level positions, such as housekeeping and security, which provides a low level of income for the community in terms of their economic share. Most of the hoteliers that hire expatriate staff revealed that there is a scarcity of qualified manpower on the local labour market. However, the employment of expatriates could have intrinsic value for hoteliers; Fortanier and Wijk (2010) argue that foreign staff members promote the destination in their home country, countering the image of developing countries as associated with civil war,

hunger, and epidemics. International hotels, as well as international staff, are more likely to convince international tourists to visit a destination than local staff. This is particularly helpful for countries like Ethiopia, which are known for hunger and prolonged civil unrest. Besides the promotional value that foreign staff can provide, they can also contribute to the competitiveness of the destination by providing standardised services (Mitchell and Coles 2009).

At the same time, the practice of employing expatriates on a continuous basis does not contribute to the development of the knowledge and skills of locals, which would contribute to the competitiveness of local staff (Mitchell and Coles 2009) and the retention of the foreign currency in which the foreign staff are paid. It appears that hoteliers that are mainly focused on Westernised types of services do not have a deep understanding of economic sustainability, or are unconcerned about benefiting others. It can be observed that private sector actors have little concern for the creation of a sustainable economy in terms of the employment opportunities they create at the domain level, from which other stakeholders can obtain a fair share in terms of the benefits and costs of tourism-related activities.

However, the lodges in Bishoftu mainly focus on domestic tourists. Moreover, they are located in the neighbourhood of a local community, without which the lodges cannot operate smoothly. It appears that there is a good link between these lodges and the local community in Bishoftu. In particular, the recruitment of staff from the local community contributes to poverty reduction in the area. As respondents have indicated, the employment of one person also benefits their family; the employees feed their families and support their children with the salary they receive from the lodge or resort.

It appears that the hotels that focus on international visitors and business travellers lack trust in the professionalism of local staff and lack interest in training and hiring them. As a consequence, they create few employment opportunities for local staff in higher position. In contrast, the lodges that focus on domestic services and offer creative products display a more favourable attitude towards hiring local staff from the destination community, and they appear to create better employment opportunities for local staff at all levels than the hotels that hire international staff. It appears that the lodges are closer to local communities and contribute more to the general poverty reduction goal of the country than hotels that cater to international tourists and business travellers.

The findings of the current study further reveal that the tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia relate the lack of sustainable economic development of tourism to poor destination promotion. Such

comments by the respondents are in line with the reports of the World Economic Forum; relative to the other African countries, Ethiopia does not attract many visitors, and the country is not branded in a way that appeals to visitors (World Economic Forum 2015). The 1984 famine and drought still dominate the external image of Ethiopia (Walle 2010) and, as a result, people mostly associate Ethiopia with famine and political instability (Girma 2016). Some respondents indicated that, until recently, tourists have had a negative image of Ethiopia, and they even bring water from their own country worrying that they may not find pure drinking water in Ethiopia. In addition to Ethiopia's history of famine, the current state of unrest in the country since 2016 is another challenge to the development of international tourism. Meanwhile, neither the private sector nor the public sector is showing much concern about how to maximise the local tourism market. The respondents believe that such problems, which are related to poor destination promotion, could be rectified through the collaborative work of stakeholders, although none of them are ready to assume the responsibility to initiate collaboration.

In a nutshell, it can be understood from the findings of this study that, in relation to the sustainability of tourism, people confuse money and value: they are keen to earn money, but they do not understand how the value on which money is based is created. In most cases, economic value tends to be derived at the expense of socio-cultural and environmental resources. This can also be understood from the stakeholders' conceptual understanding and practice of the principles of sustainable tourism. Tourism is mostly understood as an option for economic development; as such, stakeholders primarily consider how to benefit from tourism. The government requires the expansion of investment in hotels and accommodation services to attract foreign exchange earnings. It also forces the formation of associations and the establishment of micro and small enterprises to support the general development goals of the country (i.e., employment creation and poverty alleviation). The potential of tourism to meet the development needs of the country seems to have been overemphasised, instead of developing tourism itself (through the conservation of cultural and environmental resources).

6.3.2 Perceptions of sustainable tourism and the level of stakeholder collaboration

This section answers the following sub-research question:

2b How are these perceptions related to past or future collaboration?

Collaboration among tourism stakeholders cannot guarantee the attainment of sustainable tourism development, unless the actors share a common understanding of the concept of

sustainability itself (Conaghan, Hanrahan, and McLoughlin 2015; Sharma and Kearins 2011). Understanding sustainable tourism presents challenges because sustainability is a vague concept that is too flexible and dynamic to be concretely defined (Johnston 2014). In order to overcome the inherent difficulties in understanding the concept, there needs to be a mechanism to create a common understanding about sustainable tourism that different stakeholders could work towards in a particular situation. Scholars (Cardenas, Byrd, and Duffy 2015) suggest that stakeholders need to engage in informed participation, while supporting the sustainable development of tourism. The findings of the current study show that the stakeholders do not appear to have been engaging in informed participation relating to the development of sustainable tourism. This can be observed from the stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism.

Basically, it can be understood from the findings of this research that the collaboration among tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia is weak. This lack of collaboration affects sustainability in different ways. First, there is no shared understanding of the concept of sustainability, because there is no sharing of information among the stakeholders; i.e., the inability of stakeholders to collaborate and share a common view has contributed to a difference in their perceptions of sustainable tourism. What the tourism stakeholders perceive as sustainable tourism differs from each other, from the theory of sustainable tourism as expounded in the academic literature, and from its translation into official policy. The results of this study reveal that tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia are not fully aware (informed) of the principles of sustainable tourism in a way that they can implement them in practice. This can be observed from the difference between the official document produced by the government on the development of tourism in Ethiopia (the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan) and what the stakeholders actually perceive and practise as sustainable tourism.

Second, the aspects of sustainability recognised by stakeholders are generally limited by their individual interests, which in the case of the tourism industry are often economic. This problem is compounded by the limited understanding by the stakeholders of the holistic nature of sustainable tourism. The stakeholders tend to overemphasise the economic element, rather than the socio-cultural and environmental elements, of sustainable tourism. The socio-cultural resources used for tourism depend to a large extent on the local community. Unfortunately, the people in the local community do not seem to have pride in their traditions and culture and are not presenting their resources to tourists in order to keep their culture alive. Like the private and public sectors, the local community is caught up in an economic discourse, rather than one

that considers the culture or society, or even the environment, with which they have strong socio-cultural links. For example, local guides are generally considered as ambassadors of their culture in their destination (Salazar 2012); the way they behave, their knowledge of the culture and norms of the destination, and their communication skills all affect tourists' experiences. However, as can be observed from the results of this research, the guides' perceptions of sustainable tourism and their commitment towards ensuring the sustainable development of tourism is tied to the benefit they receive from tourism and their relationship with the tour operators.

Furthermore, tourist guides are believed to play a 'guide-plus' role that transcends basic guiding: They participate in history telling, experience creation, and social mediation between the tourists and the destination community (Hansen and Mossberg 2017; Bryon 2012). However, the current study reveals that tour operators are the key players influencing the commitment of other stakeholders, including the tourist guides, hoteliers, and grassroots community. This finding supports the argument of Sigala (2008) and Bricker and Black (2016), who claim that tour operators directly affect the tourists and facilities in each destination, as well as the volume of tourism, irrespective of their geographic location or product focus.

In addition, the economic focus of the local guides distorts the cultural and historic elements of the destination, as they associate the guiding service purely with the economic gain they receive from it. The actions of the local guides can negatively influence the sustainability of the destination and the level of experience and knowledge transfer, as in the case of Lalibela (Ethiopia), where the conflict between religious values and economic interests influences the knowledge transfer and historic value of the destination (Negussie 2010).

Poor collaboration between the stakeholders can also be observed from the conflict of interest between the tour guides and tour operators related to benefit sharing, which in turn affects the sustainability of benefits to the destination, particularly in terms of the fairness of benefit sharing among the stakeholders (UNECA 2015). The benefits of tourism accrue to a small group of stakeholders in a few key sites only. In such circumstances, the inability to share the benefits from the tourism activities results in weak collaboration and leads the stakeholders to engage in unethical practices; for example, most of the tour operators who participated in this study blame the tour guides at the destinations for the bad experiences of tourists. This finding is similar to the findings of Kauffman (2008), who observed the community's lack of collaboration with the private sector and the regional governors because of the lack of benefits

from tourism activities in their region (Central Rift Valley in Ethiopia), where the community threw stones at tourist vehicles and blocked the roads.

The current study found that the poor collaboration between stakeholders has also resulted in misconceptions about the responsibility for sustainable tourism. For example, unlike the lodges, which consider the preservation of culture among their main activities, most hoteliers that claim to offer ‘city-centred services’ do not perceive culture to be one of the elements of sustainable tourism. This result supports the findings of Timur and Getz (2009), in which the stakeholders based in urban areas focused on providing city-based experiences and the economic impact of tourism, disregarding the cultural aspects of tourism. Such ignorance of the components of tourism might be due to a lack of knowledge or understanding of the nature of tourism, or the prioritisation of one’s own business and profits over the domain-level issues (such as sustainable tourism).

In addition to the private sector stakeholders, the community at the destination is considered to comprise stakeholders who are influential in determining the sustainability of tourism at the destination. As such, collaboration between the destination community and the other stakeholders could yield a common understanding about sustainable tourism. However, it can be inferred from this research that the tour operators who design tourism packages have a more influential role than the destination community, which enables them to stimulate sustainability in their own interest. As discussed earlier in this chapter (section 6.2.3), the lack of professionalism among tour operators in Ethiopia is a major obstacle to collaboration and negatively influences stakeholders’ perceptions about sustainable tourism. Tour operators’ lack of professional ethics is negatively impacting on the commitment of other stakeholders, such as the hoteliers and tour guides, to collaboration. The economic focus and the individualistic orientation of private sector actors seems to be negatively influencing the sustainability of culture and violating the principle of ‘respect for societal culture’ in the process of developing sustainable tourism (UNECA 2015).

It appears that the government is also more interested in the economic gains from tourism than the conservation of cultural resources. In cases where the community is highly dependent on tourism activities for economic survival, it can be difficult for the government to fully leave the responsibility for cultural promotion and conservation to the community. Moreover, given the observable mistrust of the community in the regional level governors and the gap in the working relation between them, the central government might need to closely follow up on

whether the regional governors are working properly with destination communities and discharging their responsibility to facilitate and supervise the activities of tourism stakeholders. Unlike in other countries where the level of awareness of sustainable tourism is better and most scholars suggest that the government should act as a facilitator (Vernon, Essex, Pinder, and Curry 2005), Ethiopia apparently needs the engagement of the government both as a controller and a facilitator.

As reported in the previous chapter (Chapter 5), at the beginning of the interviews and FGDs, most stakeholders were not relating sustainable tourism with the environment, but later, when the meaning of sustainable tourism was explained, some of them related environmental sustainability to environmental cleanness. However, most stakeholders are not practically involved in the protection of the environment, which they consider the responsibility of the government. This result is contrary to the findings of Imran, Alam, and Beaumont (2014), who found that knowledge about environmental conservation determines environment-related awareness and support for environmental conservation. The findings of this study indicate that environment awareness may not necessarily lead to support for environment conservation. The current study found that the stakeholders relate environmental protection to the benefits they can obtain from supporting environmental protection. For example, the local people living around Awash National Park cut down the trees in the park for charcoal, which they sell to the people living in the town to generate income. This action of the people living around the park supports the findings of Imran et al. (2014) that people usually associate environmental protection with the incentive they receive from such activities. In the case of Awash National Park, people are aware of the need for environment protection, but their perceived inability to share in the benefits from the park impacts on their motivation to conserve the park.

In general, collaboration depends on a shared understanding of the issues and the degree to which stakeholders share the costs and benefits. Based on the findings of the current research, it appears that the lack of collaboration and the fact that stakeholders do not share a common goal related to the sustainable development of tourism has created a difference in view; i.e., the top-level stakeholders and the grass-roots stakeholders do not share a common view of sustainable tourism. Each stakeholder group thinks about sustainable tourism from their own perspective. The government sees tourism as a means of economic development and poverty alleviation, and the private sector and destination community are interested in the economic benefits of tourism. They do not follow the same path and do not support each other in achieving these goals. It appears that there is more competition between the stakeholders than

collaboration. This difference in the perception of sustainable tourism could affect future collaboration among the stakeholders. When the stakeholders are not headed in a similar direction, it can be difficult for them to establish joint responsibility at the domain level.

In light of the theory of stakeholder collaboration (Graci 2013; Gray 1985; Selin and Chevez 1995a), factors such as lack of recognition of each other's legitimacy and importance, the absence of a common domain level purpose, and lack of recognition of the importance of collaboration imply that the 'problem setting stage' of collaboration is weak, creating asymmetry among the stakeholders in terms of their perceptions of sustainable tourism. The difference in perceptions about sustainable tourism and its specific elements could negatively influence future collaborations among tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia.

The next chapter (Chapter 7) summarises the main findings of the research, before setting out the theoretical and practical implications of the findings and making suggestions for further research.

Chapter 7. Main Findings and their Implications

The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the literature on stakeholder collaboration and perceptions of sustainable tourism by exploring and explaining the stage of development of collaboration among tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia and the factors that hamper or facilitate this (research question 1), as well as stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism and how these relate to the level of development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia (research question 2). To answer these questions (and the sub-questions; see Chapter 1), Chapter 2 provided a conceptual framework, which guides the research. Following this framework, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in four case study sites, as indicated in Chapter 3. The findings of this qualitative research were presented in Chapter 4 (research question 1) and Chapter 5 (research question 2) and discussed in Chapter 6.

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings of the study and the implications of these findings, before making suggestions for further research.

7.1 Main findings and the revised conceptual model

Based on the investigations made, it was found that although stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia has advanced to the level of institutionalising relationships (structuring), in practice it is still at the initial stage of collaboration (problem setting). Different factors have been identified as negatively influencing stakeholders' perceptions about the importance of collaboration and the evolution of collaboration over time, including: lack of awareness of the importance of collaboration, lack of professionalism and trust, power imbalances, lack of adequate supervision (leadership and governance), and geographic location. The study also found that the poor collaboration between the stakeholders is contributing to differences in their perceptions of sustainable tourism, which, in turn, is impacting negatively on collaboration.

The following Figure (7.1) presents a revised conceptual model that was developed based on the findings of this study. This is followed by five propositions drawn from the findings that summarise the basic relationships between the variables indicated in the revised conceptual model.

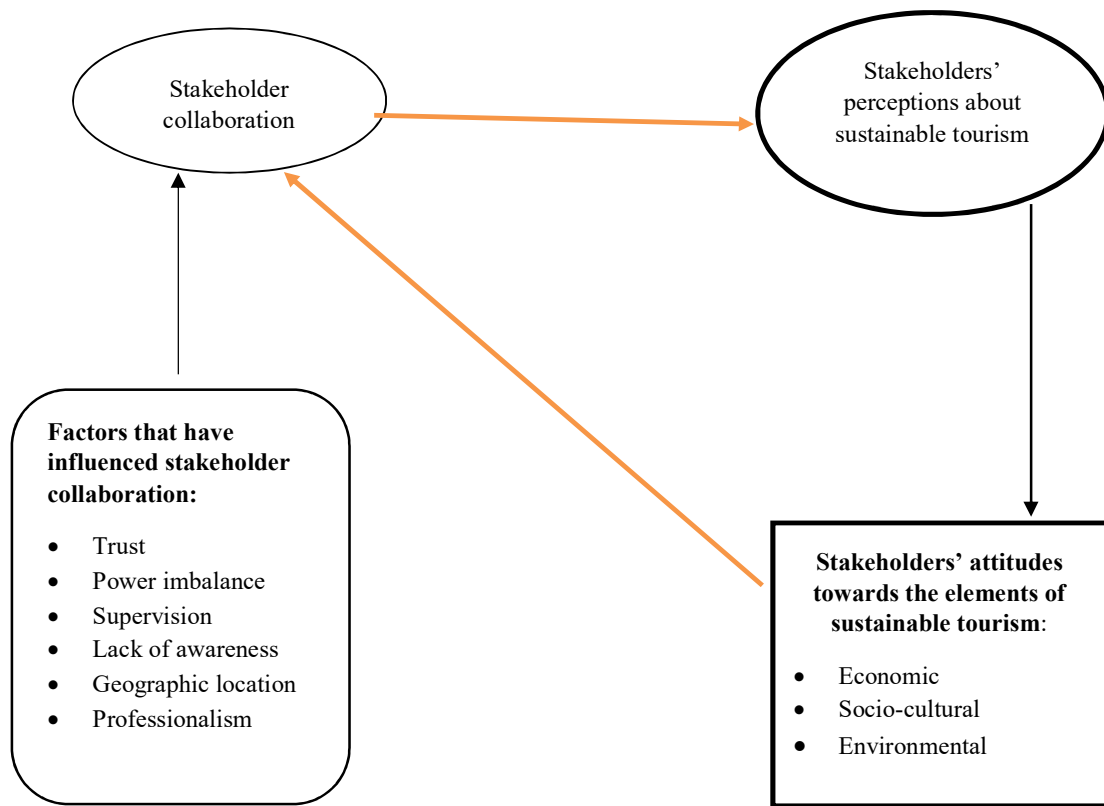


Figure 7.1. Revised conceptual model of the relationship between stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism in Ethiopia

The above figure is based on the finding that stakeholder collaboration in the tourism sector in Ethiopia is poorly developed, although it seems to have reached the stage of institutionalisation, which the stakeholders are not fully aware of and not convinced about (Chapter 4). This has contributed to the inability of stakeholders to share a common understanding about sustainable tourism, as presented in Chapter 5. The stakeholders' lack of a common understanding about sustainable tourism could in turn contribute to the poor collaboration of stakeholders, as they may not share a common domain-level issue. The next section sets out implications of this study for academics and policy makers.

7.2 Implications

The multi-stakeholder and multiple case study approach employed in this research is believed to have a number of implications for academics (in terms of knowledge) and also practically for tourism policy makers (in terms of devising a robust policy framework to guide the

development of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia). This section sets out the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

7.2.1 Theoretical implications

This thesis has shown that collaboration among stakeholders is an indispensable part of sustainable tourism development, and that such collaboration requires recognising a wide range of stakeholders as legitimate actors in the tourism system, as well as addressing issues of power imbalance among these stakeholders. With regard to the issue of stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism, this study contributes to theory in a number of ways.

7.2.1.1 Theory of collaboration

Most of the previous studies on sustainable tourism focused on listing and defining the elements (indicators) of sustainable tourism (Choi and Turk 2011; Durovic and Loverentjev 2014; Tanguay, Rajaonson, and Therrien 2013). Other research focused on defining and measuring sustainable tourism (Choi and Sirakaya 2005; Mowforth and Munt 2015). The studies conducted on Ethiopia focused on identifying the overall challenges facing tourism development in Ethiopia and its prospects (Gedecho 2015; Kauffmann 2008; Tamir 2015), but they did not look at the influence of stakeholder collaboration or the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the sustainability of tourism. In order to fill this gap, the current research has investigated stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism in light of the development of collaboration between them.

This study built on previous work conducted on stakeholder collaboration in different contexts. First, it used the framework of collaboration in order to investigate the stage of collaboration (Graci 2013; Selin and Chavez 1995a; Wood and Gray 1991). However, it was found to be difficult to explain the stage of collaboration among stakeholders in Ethiopia using this framework, as the application of the framework to a large group of stakeholders does not clearly indicate the stage of collaboration among them. Especially in the context of developing countries, where the theory and practice of collaboration is less understood by stakeholders, it is difficult to determine the stage of collaboration. This implies that the process of collaboration depends on the specific context and stage of development of a country.

The inability to strictly meet the conditions in each stage of collaboration is another factor affecting the applicability of this framework to the Ethiopian context. For example, if collaboration is not initiated willingly by the individuals or their affiliated organisations, it is

unlikely that they will be able to find a common goal or advance common interests (Gray 1985; Selin and Beason 1991). In Ethiopia, regardless of the stakeholders' level of interest and involvement, there are associations and government offices established in connection with tourism that are initiated by the government. The establishment of such organisations corresponds to the third stage of Gray's framework (structuring). However, without passing through the first (problem identification) and the second (direction setting) stages of collaboration, embarking on the third stage – i.e., establishing an association with partners who do not identify each other as legitimate stakeholders and do not share a common vision or goal – affects the development of the collaboration.

Second, unlike previous studies, which have considered single types of tourism stakeholders (Jamal and Getz 1995; Mensah and Ernest 2013; Simmons 1994), the current study considered different groups of stakeholders, reflecting the complexity of the tourism system as well as the different tourism contexts in Ethiopia. Tourism stakeholders were selected from the private sector, public sector, and destination communities to participate in this research. Through the emphasis on the voice of various stakeholders, this study has been able to elaborate on the development of stakeholder collaboration in Ethiopia and identify the factors that influence the effectiveness of collaboration. Among these are the following.

First, in relation to the multiplicity of stakeholders, there is a power imbalance based on the immediate influence of a stakeholder on the activities of others; i.e., those stakeholders that have an immediate influence have more power than the others. Second, geographic location also contributes to the power of stakeholders, in that those stakeholders who are situated in a geographic location that exposes them to better access to tourists are more powerful and influential than others.

Third, in relation to the elements of exchange (the social exchange), past researchers (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2012; Saito and Ruhanen 2017) have heavily emphasised power and its influence in determining the effectiveness of a relationship. However, the current research has tried to further explore how such a power imbalance could be created by considering the vertical relationship between the government, the private sector, and the destination community and the horizontal relationship between private sector associations. The specific explanation of the influence of different factors can be considered a unique contribution of this research. For example, this study has identified that individuals in a power position intentionally ignore others (especially those who they feel do not provide them with immediate benefit) and strive

to maintain their power position. This role of intentionally ignoring people in the course of maintaining the power position is one of the unique findings of this study.

Fourth, the application of social exchange theory in this research to explain the factors affecting the effectiveness of collaboration, in terms of an individual stakeholder's evaluation of the benefits of collaboration, contributes to this theory. Hence, this research has extended the applicability of social exchange theory in tourism studies, as well as identifying more factors, beyond behaviour-related factors such as trust, that determine the relationship between stakeholders. One of the factors determining the effectiveness of collaboration that was identified in this study is the professionalism of tourism stakeholders. In developed and middle-income countries, lack of professionalism may not be a burning issue and, therefore, is not indicated in the literature in terms of its influence on stakeholder collaboration. However, this research has identified that lack of professionalism and related professional ethics is one of the factors influencing the level of trust that individuals have in each other and their interest in collaboratively working together.

Finally, previous studies on the process of collaboration (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Gray 1985; Wood and Gray 1991) have placed primary importance on the existence of domain-level issues and the importance of these issues. However, this study identified more factors that have an influence on collaboration, regardless of the existence of domain-level issues, such as the recognition of each other's legitimacy, the existence of power imbalances and mistrust, and the lack of professionalism and professional ethics. The explanation of the influence of these factors on the success of collaboration among tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia could be considered a unique contribution of this research to our understanding of the factors that influence collaboration.

7.2.1.2 Theory of sustainable tourism

Unlike previous studies, which have mostly focused on specific aspects of tourism and the economic benefits of tourism (Ajala 2008; Fortanier and Wijk 2010; Gannon 1994; Negussie and Wondimu 2012; O'Sullivan and Jackson 2002; Tamir 2015; Wondowossen, Nakagoshi, Yukio, Jongman, and Dawit 2014; Zegeye 2016), this research considers the different elements of sustainable tourism. The holistic approach followed by this thesis to cover the different elements of sustainability sheds light on the focus of stakeholders and the nature of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia. Specifically, this research has made a number of contributions to the theory of sustainable tourism.

First, the principle of sustainable development of tourism advocates for maintaining a balance between the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental elements of tourism in order to meet the needs of current and future generations. However, sustainability is perceived by most stakeholders involved in this research in terms of the continuity of the economic benefits of tourism. The literature (Borowy 2013; Meadows, Meadows, and Randers 2005) reveals that developed countries have passed beyond economic concerns to contemplate how to conserve culture and the environment in order for tourism to be sustainable. This suggests that sustainability is a context-specific concept that relates to the needs and stage of development of a particular destination.

Second, even the economic-related activities of tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia do not appear sustainable. Each individual stakeholder appears to be striving to get his or her fair share of benefits in economic terms, which are generally short term-oriented. This economic focus of the stakeholders also negatively influences the socio-cultural and environmental elements of sustainable tourism. Instead of conserving socio-cultural and environmental resources, which could contribute to the benefits of tourism in the future, each individual tries to make use of cultural products and environmental resources as a means of livelihood. It follows that more concern given to one element of sustainable tourism (economic element) negatively affects the other elements of sustainable tourism (socio-cultural and environmental elements).

Third, most of the people who took part in this study consider environmental conservation to be mainly the responsibility of the government (also see Inglehart et al. 2014). However, the negligence or lack of awareness of the government about environmental conservation is influencing the environmental concern shown by private sector actors and destination communities. Perhaps if the government took the initiative and played its part in environmental conservation, the other stakeholders would follow. In a developing country where environmental awareness is lacking, the sustainability of the environment is dependent on the actions of the government, rather than the local community (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Jamal and Stronza 2009).

Fourth, as has been observed in this study, by ensuring the sustainability of tourism through environmental conservation, preservation of culture, and contribution to income and employment opportunities, domestic businesses such as lodges contribute more to sustainable tourism than hotels and tour operators, who are more economically focused.

Finally, linking sustainable tourism to stakeholder collaboration can be considered an important contribution of this study. This study found that weak collaboration between stakeholders results in different perceptions of sustainable tourism and prevents the stakeholders from forming a common understanding of sustainable tourism. This research empirically elaborated on how this difference in perception ultimately influences the implementation of sustainable tourism and the sustainable development of tourism, from which the present and future generations can benefit.

7.2.1.3 Methodological contribution

Unlike most tourism studies, which take a single case study approach, this study used multiple case studies in different geographical areas in Ethiopia. In tourism research, there is a scarcity of multiple case studies (Bramwell, Higham, Lane, and Miller 2017; Ruhanen, Weiler, Moyle, and McLennan 2015), as the multiple case study approach is complex in terms of collecting and processing data. In addition, the study was conducted in a society with low level of awareness about research and a low willingness to give information. The fact that the study was conducted by a researcher who is embedded in the culture of Ethiopia helped overcome these difficulties.

Moreover, the current research shows how the methods – individual face-to-face interviews and FGDs – complement each other. The combination of individual interviews with private sector actors and government officials and FGDs with members of the destination communities allowed the triangulation of results from these groups. For example, the comparison of the results of individual interviews with government officials and the FGDs with the destination community revealed the nature of community involvement in tourism planning. The results show the relevance of individual face-to-face interviews for exploring sensitive government information and the relevance of FGDs with members of the community, who were able to support each other by reflecting each other's opinions. This combination of methods revealed the perspective of both the government and the community.

The multiple case studies conducted at different geographic locations also allowed the researcher to better understand the perception of these stakeholders about sustainable tourism by involving the most important stakeholders at a particular destination. The study clearly illustrates the relevance of the multiple case study approach in conducting a comprehensive study of this type.

Besides its academic contribution, this study is also provides input for policy makers into the tourism policy of Ethiopia and similar developing economies, as discussed in the following sub-section.

7.2.2 Practical implications

The result of the current research has a number of practical implications for policy makers seeking to make use of tourism for development purposes. First, tourism is seen as one of the potential drivers of growth and transformation in developing countries. However, there are limited studies that have analysed sustainable tourism in light of the role of stakeholders in Africa, in general, and Ethiopia, more specifically (Rogerson 2007). Many scholars (Kidane and Berhe 2017; Negussie and Wondimu 2012; Tamir 2015; Wondowossen et al. 2014) and development agencies, such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), have called for increased collaboration among stakeholders in tourism development. However, hardly any of these researchers have indicated exactly how increased collaboration can enhance the sustainable development of tourism. Moreover, there is no appropriate framework or structure in place and no clear policy that involves the private sector and the destination communities (Woldu 2018). Hence, there is no clear direction for stakeholder collaboration; it is not enough to merely mention the importance of partnership or collaboration without clearly indicating the potential areas in which the stakeholders should collaborate, along with the potential benefits they could derive from collaboration.

Second, it has been observed that the sustainability principle that Ethiopian tourism adopts is the principle set by UNWTO (UNECA 2015). However, it is clear from this study that the stakeholders' actual perceptions of sustainable tourism differ from the official definition. Therefore, in order to make the implementation of sustainable tourism a reality, the government might need to consider the view of the people on the ground and set actionable guiding principles, instead of copying and imposing principles that have been set in another cultural context. In other words, the sustainable tourism policy might need to be developed using a mixed bottom-up and top-down approach, which could help policy makers and implementers share their experiences and ideas at the domain level.

In addition, the multiple case study approach has shown that the perception of tourism stakeholders varies according to the destination where the stakeholder is located. This difference in the perception of sustainability based on geographic location needs to be taken into account when planning for sustainable tourism. Perhaps, instead of directly importing the

concepts of sustainable tourism set by outsiders as ‘universal principles’, policy makers need to define the concept in a manner that fits the country context (Mohammed 2016).

Third, power imbalance has been identified as one of the most important factors influencing the development of collaboration among tourism stakeholders in the case study sites. In order to mitigate the influence of this power imbalance, scholars (Eagles et al. 2013; Richards and Hall 2003; Vernon, Essex, Pinder, and Curry, 2005) have recommended a bottom-up approach to governance. To a certain extent, the government should change its role from being a controller of collaboration to a facilitator and provider of collaboration (Eagles et al. 2013; Vernon et al. 2005) in order to encourage the freewill and commitment of individuals and groups by empowering them. However, in developing countries such as Ethiopia where there is a low level of understanding about the importance of collaboration and the need for the sustainable development of tourism, completely changing the governance system to a bottom-up approach might be difficult. Without close follow-up and proper supervision of their activities, most people seek to promote their own interests at the expense of others, as seen in the self-centred behaviour of tour operators and other stakeholders in the case study sites. In order to bring about a collaborative system in which stakeholders deal with domain-level issues and reach a common vision and goal, the government needs to exercise some level of control and supervision when necessary. As claimed by Provan and Kenis (2008), individual participation in the collaborative process depends on the benefit the individuals get from the collaboration, while the form of governance can determine the success of networks at a group level. In order to effectively manage collaborations (through trust and consensus building) an independent body facilitating and following up on the process of collaboration and the development of tourism might be needed in Ethiopia, especially considering its context as a developing country (Lin and Simmons 2017).

Fourth, it has been found that level of awareness of the need for collaboration between tourism stakeholders is one of the main factors influencing collaboration. To address this, the government (especially the Minister of Culture and Tourism) and other concerned bodies need to arrange intensive awareness creation programmes, including by initiating research projects, conferences, and workshops that bring tourism stakeholders together. In addition, the government should give equal emphasis to tourism and hospitality education, as it does to agricultural and technology disciplines, in order to enhance the development of tourism in a professional way. In the short term, the government office in charge of the development of tourism should also work collaboratively with universities and technical colleges that offer

tourism and hospitality education in order to enhance professionalism and nurture the professional ethics of graduates who work in the tourism sector.

Fifth, lack of trust is another factor that was observed to hinder collaboration. If the professionalism of the actors in the tourism sector was enhanced, it would build trust among the owners of tour companies and their employees, as well as hotel owners and managers and their partners. In order to enhance professional development, the government should include the qualification of employees among the criteria used to renew trade licences for hotels and tour operators, as the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance (HERQA) does for universities in Ethiopia.

Finally, mistrust in the government structure by the destination community and the private sector is another factor that affects collaboration between the public sector and other tourism stakeholders. The government could mitigate this by practically involving tourism stakeholders in decisions and giving them timely and realistic feedback on their performance. Moreover, the government could increase its trustworthiness by incorporating the voice of representatives of the private sector and the destination community in policies and strategies, instead of presenting finalised ideas to the stakeholders.

7.3 Limitations of the study

This research is subject to limitations in terms of the collecting and processing of data, as well as the unwillingness of some important stakeholders to participate, which may have limited the conclusions drawn from the research. The process of data collection, especially in relation to translating the interviews from Amharic into English, was mainly handled by the researcher. As such, the interpretation of responses is dependent on the level of understanding of the researcher. To mitigate this problem, the researcher involved people from the local university (Addis Ababa University), who speak both Amharic and English, in checking the translations.

Beyond the national language (Amharic), lack of knowledge of the language of people in non-Amharic speaking regions, such as Awash National Park, could have posed a challenge to the process of conducting the FGDs. But the ability of the researcher to speak the languages of these groups made it possible to gain the participation of the community in the FGD.

In addition to the language issues, the unwillingness of tour operators in Addis Ababa to participate could have limited their involvement in this research. However, the researcher was

able to convince and include a reasonable number of tour operators by offering them support letters from Tilburg University and Addis Ababa University, where the researcher works.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

The aim of this research was to investigate the factors that influence stakeholder collaboration in light of the stage of development of collaboration among the tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia and to analyse the influence of collaboration on sustainable tourism. The study found that collaboration among tourism stakeholders is in its infancy in Ethiopia and can be described as a loose relationship resulting from a top-down approach. Furthermore, stakeholders do not share a common perception of sustainable tourism and, as such, focus more on their own personal interests instead of a domain-level agenda. Similarly, in terms of the elements of sustainability, the emphasis of stakeholders leans towards the economic dimension rather than the socio-cultural or environmental dimensions of tourism. In order to improve the collaboration among the stakeholders and enhance the development of sustainable tourism, it would be useful for future research to focus on the following areas.

First, future research could make a valuable contribution by elaborating more on the importance of collaboration and the causes of poor collaboration among stakeholders. For example, a focus on specific issues such as whether professionalism and trust build collaboration, or vice versa, and the basis of legitimacy, would be useful.

Second, the result of the current research implies that if there were better collaboration between the tourism stakeholders (private sector, public sector, and destination community), there could be a better and shared understanding about sustainable tourism, which could be implemented by the stakeholders as a domain-level issue. In a similar way, the inability to share a common view about sustainable tourism could hamper the collaboration between stakeholders, as they may not have a common goal that could bring them together. Further research could contribute to the literature on stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism based on these proposed relations, especially focusing on relationship between the stage of development of collaboration and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable development.

Third, this research and many previous studies conducted in Ethiopia are based on northern and southern tourist destinations that have been popular to date. Future studies could consider the less popular destinations in the east and west of the country (such as Jimma and Harar Jugol in the east), which have not yet attracted attention from researchers and policy makers. Such

an investigation would enrich the discussions on stakeholders and sustainable tourism in Ethiopia.

Finally, as this study is conducted in the context of a developing country, where there is limited research available on stakeholder collaboration and sustainable tourism, future studies could build on the current research by using a multiple case study approach in other developing countries in order to arrive at a robust conclusion about the factors influencing stakeholder collaboration in developing countries.

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Annex 1. Interview Questions

Informed consent

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- II. Title of research:** Multi-stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism development: An investigation of stakeholder collaboration and perception of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia
- III. Purpose of the data collection and objective of the research:** The main objective of the research is to investigate the factors that influence the development of collaboration by exploring the process and stage of development of collaboration among the public sector, private sector, and destination community, and its implications for stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism (economic, ecological, and socio-cultural sustainability) in Ethiopia. As part of this endeavour, this interview is collecting data for the PhD study being conducted by the above candidate.
- IV. Extent of anonymity and confidentiality:** No personally identifiable information will be collected from you and all the information you provide will be combined with other respondents' data and analysed and reported in aggregate. Responses will be kept confidential at all times and only the members of the research team will have access to the data.
- V. Subject's permission:** By taking part in this interview, you agree that you have read this consent form and give your voluntary consent to participate. Should you have any questions about this research or its conduct, research subjects' rights, or who to contact in the event of a research-related inquiry, please use the abovementioned address.

Interview questions

A. Questions for destination community (destination managers of the sites and some community representatives governing the touristic resources)

I. General process of collaboration

1. What sector do you represent in the tourism industry?
2. What is your perception about collaboration? (How do you understand it?)
3. With whom do you collaborate (why do you choose them), and what issues do you address mostly? (Why?)
4. Who is the most important partner for you? (In what ways do they support you, and how do you support them, and why?)
5. How do you collaborate? On what issues? When? Why?
6. Do you have a common goal that you promote with your partners? (What is that common goal?)
7. Do you have any set of guiding principles, rules, norms, or memorandum of understanding which guides your interactions with your partners? (Why/why not?)
8. Who makes the most decisions among the partners? Why?
9. How do you communicate with your partners? (Formality, frequency, channel?)
10. How do you describe the role of the public sector (the government)? In what ways do they provide you with support?
11. How do you rate the importance of collaboration from the point of view of your organisation?
12. Are there any reporting or supporting structures in your network? (How do they work?)
13. Overall, what is the most critical problem that you have been facing while working with your partners?

II. Collaboration and sustainable tourism – Indicators of the manner of involvement of the private sector in sustainable tourism

14. Do you think the way you are working together with your partners is affecting the sustainability of tourism? (If so, how?)
15. What is sustainable tourism for you?
16. How do you explain the importance of collaboration for sustainable tourism? Who do you think is the most responsible for sustaining development of tourism? (Why?)

17. What is your role? How are you contributing to the sustainability of tourism? In what way(s)?
18. What makes you support the sustainability goal? (Government regulation? Your mission? Business ethics? Or you have accepted it as your responsibility?) (This question is asked to understand whether business organisations are contributing to the goal of sustainable tourism or simply using it as a motto.)
19. Who are the owners of tourism businesses in your region? (How do they come to your region if there are owners coming from other countries or regions?)
20. In what ways does the community benefit from tourism related income?
21. Have you ever been involved in making economic decisions related to income gained by this region? Why/why not?
22. What do you suggest should be done to sustain the economic benefits of tourism in your region? (Why?)
23. How are you involved in environmental conservation?
24. What environmental changes have you observed as a result of tourism? (How do you evaluate this impact on the overall sustainability of tourism?)
25. Who do you think should take the responsibility for such changes? (Why? What about you?)
26. What do you do to promote the region's culture assets? What do you think is your contribution? In what ways?
27. What kind of cultural changes have you observed in your region because of tourism? Who do you think should take the responsibility for such changes? (Why?)
28. What kind of non-financial support have you received, and do you expect, from your partners? In what ways?
29. Overall, what is your main concern related to the sustainability of tourism? (Why?)
30. How do you evaluate your overall involvement in supporting tourism?
31. Have you ever been invited by the top officials or other partners to participate in making major tourism-related decisions? (If so, in what form?)
32. Is there anybody who controls your activities related to tourism? How do they control you, and why?
33. In promoting the development of tourism, what major challenges have you faced?

B. Questions for private sector (hoteliers, accommodation providers, tour operators, travel agents)

I. General process of collaboration

1. What sector do you represent in the tourism industry?
2. Do you belong to any membership association in tourism? (Why/ why not?)
3. What is your perception about collaboration? (How do you understand it?)
4. With whom do you collaborate? (Why do you choose them?) What issues do you address mostly? (Why?)
5. Who is the most important partner for you? (In what ways do they support you? How do you support them? And why?)
6. How do you collaborate? On what issues? (When? Why?)
7. Do you have a common goal that you promote with your partners? (What is that common goal?)
8. Do you have any set of guiding principles, rules, norms, or memorandum of understanding that guides your interactions with your partners? (Why/why not?)
9. Who makes the most decisions among the partners? (Why?)
10. How do you communicate with your partners? (Formality, frequency, channel?)
11. How do you describe the role of the public sector (the government)? In what ways do they provide you with support?
12. How do you rate the importance of collaboration from the point of view of your organisation?
13. Are there any reporting or supporting structures in your network? (How do they work?)
14. Overall, what is the most critical problem that you have been facing while working with your partners?

II. Collaboration and sustainable tourism – Indicators of the manner of involvement of the private sector in sustainable tourism

15. Do you think the way you are working together with your partners is affecting the sustainability of tourism? (If so, how?)
16. What is sustainable tourism for you?
17. How do you explain the importance of collaboration for sustainable tourism? Who do you think is the most responsible for the sustainable development of tourism? (Why?)
18. What is your role? How are you contributing to the sustainability of tourism? In what way(s)?

19. What makes you support the sustainability goal? (Government regulation? Your mission? Business ethics? Or you have accepted it as your responsibility?) (This question is asked to understand whether business organisations are contributing to the sustainability goal or simply using it as a motto.)
20. In what ways do your employees benefit from the tourism related income you gain?
21. On average, how many days do tourists stay in your hotel? (Why/why don't they stay?)
How about their willingness to spend money for the service? (Why/why are they not willing?)
22. Where and how do you buy your furniture and kitchen utensils? (Why?)
23. How are you involved in environmental conservation?
24. What kind of bathrooms and toilets do you use? Do you use towels or soft paper after a meal?
25. How do you minimise energy consumption?
26. What waste disposal mechanisms do you use?
27. Do you think your business would be troubled if you didn't use such energy consumption mechanisms? (Why?)
28. What do you do to promote culture to the tourists? What do you think is your contribution? In what ways?
29. Have you ever been involved in charities and social affairs related to tourism?
30. Overall, what is your main concern related to the sustainability of tourism? (Why?)
31. Is there anybody who controls your activities related to tourism? How do they control you, and why?
32. In promoting the development of tourism, what major challenges have you faced?

C. Questions for public sector organizations (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopian Tourism Organization, the regional governors)

I. General process of collaboration

1. What sector do you represent in the tourism industry?
2. What is your perception about collaboration? (How do you understand it?)
3. With whom do you collaborate? (Why do you choose them?) What issues do you address mostly? (Why?)
4. Who is the most important partner for you? (In what ways do they support you? What do you to support them? And why?)

5. How often do you involve your partners in making major decisions? (Why/why not?)
6. How do you collaborate? On what issues? When? Why?
7. Do you have a common goal that you promote with your partners? (What is that common goal?)
8. Do you have any set of guiding principles, rules, norms, or memorandum of understanding which guides your interactions with your partners? (Why/why not?)
9. Who makes the most decisions among the partners? Why?
10. How do you communicate with your partners?
11. How do you describe the role of the private sector and the destination community? In what ways do they provide you with support?
12. How do you rate the importance of collaboration from the point of view of your organisation?
13. Are there any reporting or supporting structures in your network? (How do they work?)
14. Overall, what is the most critical problem that you have been facing while working with your partners?

II. Collaboration and sustainable tourism – Indicators of the manner of involvement of the private sector in sustainable tourism

15. Do you think the way you are working together with your partners is affecting the sustainability of tourism? (If so, how?)
16. What is sustainable tourism for you?
17. How do you explain the importance of collaboration for sustainable tourism? Who do you think is the most responsible for sustaining development of tourism? (Why?)
18. What is the role of your office? How are you contributing to the sustainability of tourism? In what ways?
19. Do you have a sustainability policy? (If yes, since when? What is the main emphasis of this policy?) If no, why?
20. In what ways do your partners benefit from tourism related income?
21. In what ways is your office planning to sustain the economic benefits of tourism?
22. How are you involved in environmental conservation?
23. What do you do to promote the country's culture to the outsiders? What do you think is your contribution? In what ways?
24. How do you involve your partners in sustaining the country's culture? (What mechanisms do you use?)

25. How do you control/ follow up on your partner's performance?
26. Overall, what is your main concern related to the sustainability of tourism? What do you think are critical issues related to the sustainability of tourism? (Why/why not?)
27. In promoting the development of tourism, what major challenges have you faced?

Annex 2. Focus Group Discussion Questions

Informed consent

I. Investigator (researcher) profile:

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II. Title of research: Multi-stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism development: An investigation of stakeholder collaboration and perception of sustainable tourism in Ethiopia

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IV. Extent of anonymity and confidentiality: No personally identifiable information will be collected from you and all the information you provide will be combined with other respondents' data and analysed and reported in aggregate. Responses will be kept confidential at all times and only the members of the research team will have access to the data.

V. Subject's permission: By taking part in this discussion, you agree that you have heard the reading of this consent form and give your voluntary consent to participate. Should you have any questions about this research or its conduct, research subjects' rights, or who to contact in the event of a research-related inquiry, please use the abovementioned address.

Discussion questions

1. How do you describe your role and contribution in conserving and protecting the tourism (environmental and cultural) resources?
2. In the course of conserving these tourism resources with whom do you work?
3. How do you work together with the government and the private sector?
4. How do you describe sustainable tourism (economic, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions)?
5. How does the nature of collaboration influence sustainable tourism?
6. Overall, what are the problems you have faced while working with different stakeholders?

Annex 3. Data Matrixes

Interview Questions											
Response of Local guides											
Response of Hotels											
Interview Questions	LG 1 Kibede	LG 2 Sisay	LG 3 Belay	LG 4 Girum	LG 5 Chairman****	G -Quara Hotel	G -Goha Hotel	A Hilton Hotel	A Golden tulip		
1. Association membership	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
2. Importance of registering	i. One of the req	i. impossible	* Personal	* It is very	* Association is pow	* it could give us	* the association coul	* Just not to miss opp	* doesn't have much substance		
	ii. you will be	ii. You will serve the guests following the queue						* get better attention	* to facilitate interaction with the g		
	iii. government gives priority and attention for the associations than individuals										
Importance of Collaboration								* It is important, but	* Collaboration is priceless but then		
3. Cost and Benefit of registering/understand	i. it discourages	i. Benefit?	* It is of no	* It empowers us, because the go	* the associati	* the association is ve	* I don't think it is important for the business for the time				
	ii. we have not tri	had it been	* We have r	* reduced the level of competition with the tour guides who used to send their own guides.							
		* I prefer to work by	* The market	* the market is now not a free market: we are restricted by the government regulation governing this association though we are considered as							
			* we developed a sense of dependence on the queuing system. Though some of us have good experience and good academic record, we couldn't push on, we a								
		* You know in Ethio	* As a result the members developed a sense of dependence on the queue and carelessness for their career								
			* We couldn't work in freedom because of the queuing system: the benefit of this association is less than its cost, for us the experienced and po								
			* strictly forbidden to work as an independent guide.								
3.1. Reason for weakness of the association						* member's com	* members themselves	* I think no one is int			
						* Government's	* Lack of support from the government's side.				
4. Legitimate stakeholders	with hotels, tour	Tour opera	* operators	* mainly the tour operators and travel agents				* with hotels, tour op	* tour operators, event organizers some		
								* event organizers, MoFA, and others.			
i. the most important partner	The tour opera	The tour operators				* the tour oper	* Tour operators	* We like to work with the tour operators to maximize our r			
Issue of interaction								* with the hoteliers issues of market and raw material and			

Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View													
E57													
1	A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
2													
3													
4			ANP Ecologist	ANP Community Expert									
5	1 Stakeholders		*Community, Government offices	*Awash Fentale Wereda (Government), Community									
6	1.1. Important stakeholder		*Community										
7													
8	2 nature of collaboration		*we work with the surrounding community, enforce them if need be.										
9	2.1. over what issues do you discuss		*Conflict over the grazing land for being evacuated from their land for investment reasons.										
10													
11	2.2. Importance of collaboration for		* Collaboration is priceless : practically no park would survive without the engagement and support of a community.										
12													
13	2.3. Challenges of collaboration		* lack of other means of income										
14			* awareness about the benefit of tourism										
15			* lack support from the government: ... I cannot fully put the blame on the community, where could they go, where could they find the grass? Their cattle are their life, no were to graze										
16			* Emotional attachment with the camel: they rather argue that "I can't change a single camel in to 1000 cars. it could happen over my dead body unless I want to see my son dead f										
17													
18	3 Relationship with Government office		* with the lodge we have court case: he has constructed his lodge at a wrong place intentionally, so he diverted the park's income to his lodge.										
19			* The guys are not born to this family, so they don't have sense of belongingness for the surrounding except promoting their personal interest										
20			* he should have hired from these problem causing community in order to convince them										
21			* the owners are the former workers in this park: these guys were paving a way for their personal prosperity at the expense of the country's asset										
22			* the wild animals (Lion and tiger) are escaping from these places around the lodges.										
23													
24													
25			* The government did not take any measure about the lodges, though we were frequently reporting to them.										
26			* They settled the case through the local elders.										
27													
28	4 How has the community benefited?		* the scouts are hired from these community, they are born to this community, they should have benefited more, but they did not benefit.										
29			* the office is lead by the political appointees who don't have know how about tourism: We try to comment on it as a professional park can't be independent of the community, but the										
30													
31	* Nature of conflict explained		* no it is not, it the Wereda administration and management of the park with whom we are supposed to partner, we also engage the community on a very rare case, even forcefully. Bu										
32													
33	5 *common goal		* not sure, in practice nothing, they do things for fear of the authority only when there is meeting or when asked to submit their plan.										
34													

Annex 4. Sample of Coded Themes for the Factors Influencing Collaboration

Professionalism

- Guides may be able to speak English or other foreign languages, but they usually have little knowledge about tourism or the culture and history.
- No one considers the guide service as a normal field of work.
- People working in the sector are not professionals and do not have professional ethics. That is why they easily switch from one organisation to another.
- Most people consider this place as a place where the jobless people gather.
- Tourism is not just a charity through which you can provide employment to non-professional guides.

Power

- The government gives priority and attention to associations, rather than individuals/businesses.
- We do not get much attention at this moment....no response at all.
- It is impossible to work as an individual tour guide; collaboration is imposed.
- Collaboration is not a matter of choice.
- This association is called 'private', however, it is not purely private because we don't have power in setting prices.

Trust

- They [tour operators and hotels] hire their relatives so that they can control the business.
- The owners do not trust their employees and often interfere in the management activities.
- Our ideas are lost somewhere in between; we do not trust these officials [government].

Annex 5. List of Participants

No.	ID	Study site	Sector	Educational background
1.	AA H1	Addis Ababa	Private	PhD in marketing
2.	AA H2	Addis Ababa	Private	BA (first degree) in language
3.	AA H3	Addis Ababa	Private	Human resource management
4.	AA H4	Addis Ababa	Private	Attending college through distance education programme
5.	AA H5	Addis Ababa	Private	Masters in marketing
6.	AA Gv1	Addis Ababa	Public/government	BA in Amharic (first degree)
7.	AA Gv2	Addis Ababa	Public/government	Agriculture extension, BA in economics
8.	AA Gv3	Addis Ababa	Public/government	BA in public administration
9.	AA Gv4	Addis Ababa	Public/government	BA in economics
10.	AA T1	Addis Ababa	Private	Certificate/diploma
11.	AA T2	Addis Ababa	Private	Certified in hotel and tourism management
12.	AA T3	Addis Ababa	Private	BA in accounting
13.	AA T4	Addis Ababa	Private	Certified in hotel and tourism management
14.	AA T5	Addis Ababa	Private	BA in history
15.	AA G1	Addis Ababa	Private	Certified in hotel and tourism management
16.	AA G2	Addis Ababa	Private	BA in English language
17.	B H1	Bishoftu	Private	BA in human resource management
18.	B H2	Bishoftu	Private	Master's in business management
19.	B H3	Bishoftu	Private	Attending college through distance education programme in human resource management
20.	B H4	Bishoftu	Private	BA in accounting
21.	B H5	Bishoftu	Private	Attending college through distance education programme
22.	B Gv	Bishoftu	Public/government	BA in history
23.	G H1	Gondar	Private	BA in management
24.	G H2	Gondar	Private	Attending college through distance programme
25.	G H3	Gondar	Private	Diploma in accounting and finance
26.	G H4	Gondar	Private	Attending college through distance education programme

27.	G H5	Gondar	Private	Attending college through distance education programme
28.	G G1	Gondar	Private	BA in marketing and tourism management
29.	G G2	Gondar	Private	Attending college through distance education programme
30.	G G3	Gondar	Private	BA in hotel and tourism management
31.	G G4	Gondar	Private	Attending college through distance education programme
32.	G G5	Gondar	Private	BA in tourism management
33.	ANP 1	Awash National Park	Public/government	Diploma
34.	ANP 2	Awash National Park	Public/government	Diploma in agriculture
35.	ANP 3	Awash National Park	Public/government	Attending college through distance education programme
36.	ANP 4	Awash National Park	Public/government	High school graduate, attending college through distance education programme
37.	ANP 5	Awash National Park	Public/government	BA in environmental resource management
38.	ANP Gv6	Awash National Park	Public/government	BA in chemistry
39.	ANP T	Awash National Park	Private	BA in public administration
1.	Focus group discussant G1	Gondar	Local/destination community	High school graduate
2.	Focus group discussant G2	Gondar	Local/destination community	High school graduate
3.	Focus group discussant G3	Gondar	Local/destination community	High school graduate
4.	Focus group discussant G4	Gondar	Local/destination community	Primary education
5.	Focus group discussant G5	Gondar	Local/destination community	High school graduate
6.	Focus group discussant G6	Gondar	Local/destination community	High school graduate
7.	Focus group discussant G7	Gondar	Local/destination community	High school graduate
8.	Focus group discussant G8	Gondar	Local/destination community	High school graduate
9.	Focus group discussant ANP1	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	Elementary
10.	Focus group discussant ANP2	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	School not attended
11.	Focus group discussant ANP3	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	School not attended

12.	Focus group discussant ANP4	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	School not attended
13.	Focus group discussant ANP5	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	Elementary
14.	Focus group discussant ANP6	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	Elementary
15.	Focus group discussant ANP7	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	School not attended
16.	Focus group discussant ANP8	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	School not attended
17.	Focus group discussant ANP9	Awash National Park	Local/destination community	School not attended