The relationship between research and design.

Research has been an essential tool along the process. Since the beginning, literature research was done to obtain an initial grasp and to have a better overview about the topics tourism and sustainable development, in general, and in the location of Trujillo, in particular.

After the problem statement was formulated, the research and sub-research questions were shaped in order to have a set of guides that could help to start with the research. Even though the research questions were formulated at first, they were re-shaped as many times as needed, when the research was being broad or vague.

The moment and tools to find answers to these questions corresponded to the different stages of the thesis project. For instance, research on concepts and theories was done through literature research, which helped to build the theoretical framework, that would have later turned into the basis for conducting analysis and design. Spending the necessary amount of time to build up the theoretical framework was a key issue, since this was going to be the basis for the rest of the project.

The analysis part was done following the scheme built on the theoretical chapter, which served as guide to suggest main issues to be researched and do not loose the focus of it. This chapter intertwined research, analysis and design, and not necessarily in that order. To start the analysis of the site it was needed research on the issues at stake, and while doing the analysis, some ideas for possible solutions to the founded problems started to emerge. The Analysis chapter, has also been a reason to look at the research questions again and re-shape them.

For the design part, research regarding how to encounter certain issues was also needed. For instance, it was necessary to look at tools for controlling urban growth, and the requirements needed for their implementation, that have already been done in other contexts.

As described, the development of this project has been a cyclical process, where, although following a straight line from the initial Problem Understanding phase, until the Design phase, the content of the different chapters has been re-framed in order to follow a coherent discourse and do not loose the focus, having basis on what was proposed for the Theoretical Framework. A helpful tool was to do trial presentations, not only to look at the way the story telling was being done, so for presentation purposes, but for design ones, in that it helped to evaluate if what was being carried on was going on the way towards the expected final product.

The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/ case study chosen by the student within this framework.

The Graduation Lab of which this project belongs to is Complex Cities. Some of the topics that this graduation lab tackles are spatial planning and strategy making, and how do they contribute to the diminishing of poverty, environmental threats and weak governance in developing regions around the world. In that sense, the chosen case (Moche, Trujillo) meets the characteristics above described, in that poverty conditions are related to the lack of economic and physical development of the urban areas, on the one side, and that weak governance is one of the main reasons for this lack of development, on the other side.
It is also the case that Moche possesses environmental attractions, which are at risk of being devastated by urban sprawl if this is not well managed. For that, design plays an important role in showing possible ways to mitigate those effects, and the planning system is as important as the design, in that it can show how a design project could help to tie the social and economic components needed for sustainable development as well.

In this perspective, the case of Moche brings together the conditions to explore the possibilities of spatial planning and strategy making based on the existing local potentialities. The proposal goes more into showing that things can be achieved with the current assets, and that is more about fostering different relations and creating networks, rather than introducing dramatic changes in the whole governance system. In order words, that through small, but strategic, interventions, changes can be brought.

The relationship between the project and the wider social context.

This thesis project emerges in the middle of two trends happening right now in the Peruvian context: tourism growth and urban growth. The first one due to the big amount of tourist attractions spread all over the country, and a strong campaign boosted by the government, specifically the Ministry of Tourism and Foreign Trade; and the second one due to the increase of population aiming to live in cities, in search for a better future, what causes internal migration, and results in fast processes of urban sprawl, that surpasses government efforts.

These two trends are a reality not only in the city of the project, Trujillo, but in the whole country. Trujillo, at 2017, is the third most populous province in the country, and the second most populous metropolitan area, with 949 498 inhabitants, after Lima, the capital city that holds 9 752 000 inhabitants (INEI, 2009). Following Trujillo, there are other cities like Arequipa and Cusco that hold similar conditions, with these two tendencies going up. And although there is a big distance in numbers, the patterns under which these cities have been developed so far are very similar, and differ very much from being sustainable.

The governance system in Peruvian cities follow a very top-down approach, and there is no much of collaborative planning involved. Actually, most of the plans that are make consider social involvement just as a matter of following the laws. This, often results in presentation or, eventually, consultation meetings at a very last stage of the elaboration of the plan. Within this scheme, it is very few what the society can contribute to the plan making, and their degree of involvement is even less, sometimes barely knowing that a plan has been approved.

The implications of such a planning approach are big, and are mainly noticed when it comes to implementing projects that were not defined together with the local population, but just showed to them, instead. This approach has been used for a long time, causing delays on projects implementation, disagreement between society and local governments, and the consequent loose of political trust of civil society.

A few changes have tried to be inserted, but governments resist to give society the opportunity to be in charge of their development. Local empowerment is often seen as a threat, rather than as a way for locals to contribute to their own development.

Governments need to give space to different governance approaches, that utilizes local knowledge and assets, which maximize the usage of resources and increase the benefits for local communities. In other words, a sustainable approach of efficiency of social and environmental resource expenses and maximization of social, environmental and economic outcomes.

That is why looking for possibilities of how the tourist assets of Trujillo could contribute to improve urban conditions, and therefore, sustainable development, is relevant in the Peruvian context. It is aim of this project to not only show the possibilities for Trujillo, through the case of Moche district, to reach that goal, but also to serve as example for other cities that are currently going under similar processes.

In that sense, this thesis project is a stimulus to think on economic sectors that depend on the spatial development of a territory, and that can be the way to achieve local development while improving living conditions for local inhabitants.