



Environmental governance for sustainable tourism development: Collaborative networks and organisation building in the Antalya tourism region

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 16 May 2008

Accepted 5 January 2009

Keywords:

Governance

Collaborative networks

New organisations

Environmental protection

Sustainability

Tourism

ABSTRACT

For more than two decades the attainment of sustainable environmental quality and the protection of environmental assets have been at the forefront of central policy issues in global tourism development. Recently, it has been argued that collaborative and associative forms of governance among tourism companies and other related agents are growing in importance in the drive for sustainable and environmentally sensitive tourism. Despite the increasing number of debates on the role of networking on tourism they are not well supported by empirical studies, and still far from explain how such networks can contribute to the sustainable development of territories. This paper aims to contribute to previous literature by analysing together governance networks and literature on sustainable development, and by providing empirical findings that highlight the importance of governance networks in sustainable tourism development, the importance of different scales of collaborative governance networks and the role of organisation building for environmentally sustainable tourism development in Antalya. The paper offers analytical findings on the networks of environmental governance among different types of tourism organisations based on a company-level survey, which reveals an increase in local collaboration and self-help networking based on local concerns and endogenous dynamics among the different actors in tourism. Unfortunately, the findings show that environmental motivations fall far behind economic considerations in networking practices.

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1. Introduction

Only by improving competitiveness can development be sustained in the volatile economic conditions imposed by globalisation, necessitating both economic efficiency and high environmental quality among the different actors involved in tourism activities. As tourism companies become a part of the global economy, local collaborative actions that generate externalities for the companies increase in importance (Hassan, 2000). Among these collaborative actions, it is the ones focused on environmental quality and protection that are crucial for the development of environmentally sustainable tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 1999; Clarke & Roome, 1995; Dewhurst & Thomas, 2003; Halme, 2001; Hassan, 2000; Ostrom, 1990; WCED, 1987) since not all environmental problems can be solved through government

regulation alone, and require the active involvement of a wide range of organisations from the public, private and non-profit sectors (Huybers & Bennett, 2002; Tang & Tang, 2006).

It has been shown that some collaborative actions (Dedeurwaerdere, 2004; Ostrom, 1990) have become the basis of governance networks, and can be defined as an indispensable aid to decision-making and strategy-defining when adapting to global changes (Tang & Tang, 2006). This has led to the emergence of new organisations, and the importance of collective networking and organisation building among these organisations has been validated in previous literature on sustainable tourism (Dedeurwaerdere, 2004; Kickert et al., 1997; Schout & Jordan, 2003).

Networking among those involved in the development of tourism can bring certain benefits to all: Firstly, networks help to decrease transaction costs and allow an exploitation of the economies of scale and scope in various activities (Tremblay, 2000), since they spread the risk and enable access to complementary resources (Kumar & Van Dissel, 1996). Secondly, networking can potentially facilitate the avoidance of costs arising from the resolution of conflicts among stakeholders in the long term (Healey,

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1997), as the sharing of ideas among the participants of a network results in a richer understanding and learning of issues, and leads to more innovative activities (Camagni, 1991; Roberts & Bradley, 1991; Roome, 2001; Tödling & Kaufmann, 1999). Learning-based networks are important for increasing the capabilities of companies through rules that guide the behaviour of interacting entities (Kogut, 2000). Thirdly, as emphasised by Lane (1994), collaborative networks improve the coordination of policies and related actions, and promote consideration of the economic, environmental and social impacts of tourism in development strategies. Finally, networking allows a large number of small actors with limited resources to take part in the decision-making process, which is particularly important for those that cannot pursue sustainable development independently.

Despite the increasing number of debates on the role of networking on tourism they are not well supported by empirical studies, and still far from explain how such networks can contribute to the sustainable development of territories. To this end, this paper aims to contribute to existing literature by analysing together governance networks and literature on sustainable development, and by providing empirical findings on the contribution of the different networks to environmental protection and sustainable development. In order to achieve this aim, firstly, the paper introduces discussions on the importance of networks and the relative significance of environmental issues in these networks. Secondly, the paper examines the characteristics of these networks, whether they are government-oriented or developed for self-help, and discusses the importance of local and global networks in building environmentally sustainable tourism. In this context, an important point raised within this paper is the significance of different motivations in the building of governance networks. Thirdly, the paper attempts to examine the organisational basis of tourism activities and the role of different types of organisations in developing environmental governance networks.

The paper is set out as follows. Following the introduction, the second section of the paper discusses the increasing importance of networks and the affects of different types of networks on environmentally sustainable tourism development. The third section introduces the case study, while the fourth explains the methodology used in the survey and in the collection of data. The fifth section presents the findings on the environmental networks of collaboration between tourism organisations; and the paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the study on the development of sustainable tourism based on the different scales of network creation and the organisation-building process.

2. Governance networks for environmentally sustained tourism development

Although early debates in tourism literature were sensitive to environmental issues and the limitations of natural resources, the 1990s saw the emergence of studies that placed emphasis on the increasing role of partnerships and networks of collaboration as key factors in the resolving of environmental problems (Roberts & Simpson, 1999; Selin, 1993). The increasing importance of tourism partnerships has prompted several descriptive case studies (Jamal & Getz, 1995) and conceptual models (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Selin, 1993; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Selin & Myers, 1998), assessing new organisational forms and identifying key factors in successfully initiating and sustaining environmentally sustainable tourism development.

Networks for environmental governance can be established with a diverse range of motivations in mind. These can include

dealing with problems of crisis (Gray, 1989; Selin & Chavez, 1995), initiating environmental planning projects based on consensus-generating processes (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Jamal & Getz, 1995), protecting and improving natural assets (Hassan, 2000), and developing proactive actions through new projects (Ostrom, 1990). Reed (1999) emphasised that collaboration in networks is necessary since, as also claimed by Devereaux Jennings and Zandbergen (1995), individual stakeholders contribute less to environmental sustainability than networks of agents.

A review of previous literature indicates the existence of two main types of governance networks focused on environmentally sustainable development: policy and planning networks and self-regulating (self-governing) action networks (Fig. 1).

Policy and planning networks are formed out of a need for cooperation and collaboration in tourism planning (Hall, 1994; Roberts & Simpson, 1999). According to some authors (Bramwell & Lane, 1999; Hall, 1999; Timothy, 1999), cooperation and collaboration are major issues in the tourism planning arena, and are linked to the idea of sustainable tourism development. For this reason, national tourism administrations are looking for new ways to facilitate collaboration among the related ministries and to work in partnership with a wide range of actors, including non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and professional and voluntary/community groups to implement strategic tourism initiatives (Göymen, 2000). Power relations, however, are still important in policy and planning networks, and while it is the public institutions that usually define the priorities and practices, an increasing number of participants can be found taking part in the policy and planning processes. These networks play important roles in enhancing community participation and organisational integration (Caffyn & Jobbins, 2003; Tosun, 2000), and regulate environmental practices in order to enhance a region's standard of sustainability in the global arena.

Policy networks may take different forms, and can be vertical or horizontal in structure. Vertical relations are mainly observed between different levels of government departments at local, regional and national levels; while horizontal networks are formed between agencies organised at the same level (Hall, 1999). It is, however, vertical relations that are the most common form, and are generally regulated by public institutions, especially ministries with environmental protection responsibilities (Selin & Chavez, 1995).

Besides the partnerships between local and national agents, there is an increasing tendency to develop cross-border partnerships to define joint policies and planning practices (Fadeeva, 2004; Loughlin, 2000), since it is claimed that local networks formed between different stakeholders are not adequate and that there is need to combine them with global networks to ensure competitiveness in the global arena (Amin, 2000; Eraydın, 2005; Koschatzky & Bross, 2001; Lyons, 2000; Porter, 2000; Yeung, 2002). It is hypothesised in development literature that not only local, but also global networks can make an important contribution to the competitiveness of a place.

According to Hall (2003), and Holtz and Edwards (2003), ecotourism policies are complicated as multiple levels of public governance, from global to local, need to be covered. Although the scope of environmental governance is confined to an imagined global level (Ford, 2003; Paterson, Humphreys, & Pettiford, 2003), multilevel approaches to governance covering the local level must be taken into consideration; but while examples of environmental governance can be found among global associations and public institutions, it is still the local joint activities that lead in importance.

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