COMMUNITY TO WHAT? SOME ASPECTS ON COMMITMENT AND CO-OPERATION IN AN ISSUE-BASED NETWORK – CASE NORTH KARELIA TOURISM NETWORK

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ABSTRACT
The starting point of our research is the question why have so many regional tourism plans and strategies been forgotten on the shelves of authorities. One of the reasons is supposed to be the actors' low commitment to the network strategies. The approach is based on the assumption that co-operation in tourism industry is inevitably needed. The regional tourism industry is seen as a network of issue-based nets. Based on the literature review and a case study a tentative model of factors affecting company’s commitment to the network is suggested. In conclusion is suggested that in tourism industry the issue-based nets are the most appropriate research units when investigating company’s commitment to a network. In a network context the target of commitment seems to be the idea of co-operation in order to achieve some goals, not the individual relationships with other partners. So the "issue" is more important than the members of the net.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Components of the tourism services offered by destinations are mainly produced by small businesses, which often do not have enough resources for product development and promotion. This leads to an interest in horizontal and vertical co-operation. (Middleton 1989) Co-operation in tourism industry may include co-operative marketing initiatives, intergovernmental coalitions, public-private partnerships and inter- and intrasector planning that includes a multitude of actors with different aims and means. Co-operation ranges from brief interactions around a common problem to those where many organisations are represented in an ongoing venture. Partnerships may be highly structured by legally binding agreements or may be unstructured verbal agreements. (Selin - Chavez 1995)

Tourists' destinations range from purpose-built resorts to capital cities and entire countries (Laws 1995). The concepts "regional tourism" and "destination" often encompass regional and community levels of analysis. (Heath - Wall 1992) For a researcher's, developer's or planner's purpose a tourism region can simply be seen as a contiguous area that has been explicitly delineated as having relevance for some aspect of tourism planning, development or analysis. (Gunn 1993, Smith 1995)

In Finnish tourism industry the administrative regions are often seen as units for tourism development and planning. In most regional destinations in Finland (like Lapland, Savo, Saimaa lakeland and North Karelia) the municipalities or regional federations have developed together with the private businesses local or regional development programs or tourism strategies in order to strengthen the growth of the industry. But in many cases these plans and strategy papers have finally been forgotten on the
shelf and are covered by dust. The question is why have so many development plans been shelved?

1.2 Purpose of the paper

In order to find some answers for that question we started to investigate the regional tourism strategy in North Karelia Finland. Tourism businesses in a certain region, a regional tourism network, are composed of private and public actors, which form numerous issue-based nets (Brito 1997), which can be described as groups of independently owned and managed firms and representatives of other interests that agree to cooperate in order to achieve some common goals. Those actors’ individual success is tied to the success of the overall network. Actors should engage in co-operative behaviours and co-ordinated activities (Brito 1997).

Issue-based nets may constitute a form of formal or informal organisation "mainly based on co-operative relationships amongst actors who aim to cooperate with a collectively recognised issue by influencing the structure and evolution of systems to which they belong through an increased control over activities, resources and/or other actors" (Brito 1997). In a regional tourism networks e.g. numerous export-groups, product-development groups or other development projects are examples of these issue-based nets. The regional tourism network could also be seen as a net of issue-based nets, an issue-based network.

Our approach is based on the assumption that in tourism industry co-operation between private companies as well as with public actors is necessary and inevitable (see e.g. Boedlender et al. 1991, Laws 1995, Middleton 1989, Pearce 1992). The success of co-operation seems to have much to do with the question of actors’ commitment to the the co-operative arrangement. In a number of studies concerning co-operation in Finnish industry (see. e.g. Murto-Koivisto - Vesalainen 1995, Jonnininen 1995, Komppula 1996, Komppula et. al 1997) actor’s low commitment to the co-
operation was seen as a barrier to collaboration in interpartner arrangements. Despite its’ significance this important element of co-operation has been almost ignored in the research of multipartner co-operation (Nummela 1996).

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the commitment to a network and a network strategy in the context of regional tourism network. We focus on company’s behaviour and exclude the public sector actors as well as local residence. We try to find some answers to following questions:

- what are the factors that affect company’s commitment to a network
  to what a company commits in a network.

We first make a short literature review on the concept of commitment and then introduce our case North Karelia tourism network as well as the development of North Karelia tourism strategy. Based on this information we present a tentative model on factors affecting company’s commitment to a network. The second research question is discussed based on the results of a survey and supplementary interviews concerning tourism companies’ commitment to the goals and development projects of the regional tourism strategy in North Karelia.

2. COMMITMENT TO A NETWORK - LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research on commitment is mainly based on social exchange literature, either in distribution channels or more generally between buyer and seller focusing mainly on a dyad where both individual and organisational commitment have been the central topics (Morgan Hunt 1994). In marketing literature previous studies concerning commitment have mainly focused on partner’s commitment to a relationship in vertical
In this research company’s commitment to the network is defined as the company’s willingness and ability to accept the goals of the network and to make efforts (Anderson - Weitz 1992, Dwyer et al 1987, Nummela 1996) in order to participate in implementing the goals with a long term orientation (Ganesan 1994, Moorman et al. 1992, Shamdasani - Seth 1995).

Several researchers have stated that the development of commitment is a gradual process (e.g. Anderson - Weitz 1992, Sharma 1993, Wilson - Mummaleni 1986) and that during the development of the relationship the commitment tends to strengthen (Dwyer et al. 1987, Hyvönén 1992, Young - Denize 1995). We see the company’s commitment to a network as a process that ties the company to the network and relationships within it. The maintaining factor in this relationship is co-operation, and commitment is a series of ongoing small decisions sometimes manifested by investments (Andersson et. al 1997).

We agree with Anderson et al. (1997) and suggest that the first step in committing oneself to a network is the perception of the need for co-operation. The causes that motivate organisations to establish interorganisational relationships may be necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability and legitimacy. (Oliver 1990)

well as expectations of future outcomes of the co-operation (Komppula 1996) may affect actor’s desire to invest resources in the co-operation.

In the literature the traditional classification divides commitment into attitudinal and behavioural commitment (e.g. Denize Young 1996, Cullen - Johnson 1995, Halinen 1994, Hyvönen 1992, Komppula 1996). Attitudinal focus is characterised by factors relating to the belief in the organisation’s goals and values, willingness to extend effort for the organisation and the desire to remain in the organisation. (Williams - Hazer 1986) In the network context the focus is in network’s goals and values.

Behavioural commitment is realised in the concrete behaviour through which the partners become committed. Behavioural commitment can be measured with concrete actions as well as material an non-material investments.

If the company sees the co-operative arrangement attractive the degree of investments in the co-operation may be determined by the decision-maker’s satisfaction with previous outcomes of the relationship (Nummela 1996) or other relationships of same kind (Komppula 1996). The investments are also related to the company’s ability to invest resources in the co-operation. But an investment is not in itself a commitment (Andersson et al. 1997), it is an indicator of commitment. The size of the company and the relative position in the market where the network operates as well as the position of life cycle of the company determine the company’s ability to invest in the co-operation (Komppula 1996). The outcomes of the relationships are evaluated in comparison to the expected and achieved rewards as well as the costs incurred (Nummela 1996).

Gundlach et al (1995) suggest the temporal dimension as the third component of commitment referring to the long term orientation of the commitment. Continuity decisions are closely related to the overall level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the co-operation. Satisfaction is a result of the evaluation of the expected and experienced outcomes of the co-
operation. (Shamdasani - Sheth 1995) In general, development of commitment is largely a function of the perceived benefits (satisfaction and economic performance) of the relationship. (Cullen - Johnson 1995, Möller - Wilson 1995, Wilson - Mummaleni 1986) Satisfaction leads to further investments, strengthens the trust to the network and means continuing co-operation. Dissatisfaction may lead to mistrust and desire to leave the network.

Attitudinal and behavioural commitment are strongly interrelated. The more co-operatively the partners behave the more positive their attitudes towards co-operation tend to be (Nummela 1996). The first two phases of the network commitment process (i.e. the need for co-operation and desire to invest) represent the attitudinal character of commitment. In the early phases of the co-operation commitment is mostly attitudinal but behavioural commitment develops over time (Nummela 1996).

The commitment to a network develops through a co-operative process. As we stated earlier, we argue that the role of trust is important in the process. Moorman et. al (1993) define trust as a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence. Considerable researchers view trust as a belief, confidence or expectation about an exchange partner's trustworthiness that results from the partner's expertise, reliability or intentionality. Collaborative history between the actors (Andersson et. al 1997) as well as competence (Shamdasani - Seth 1995) and expertise (Moorman et al 1993) are suggested as an important foundation of trust.

According to our earlier results the relation of trust and commitment is somewhat different in dyadic and network relationships (Komppula 1996). One may cooperate with a partner for years in a network although he does not fully trust the other. Both partners may also be committed to a dyadic relationship because e.g. there may be no other alternatives. The effect of mistrust may be reduced by decreasing future transaction costs or by contractual schemes e.g. by prepayments or other sanctions. It may be
discussed if a "force" has anything to do with commitment which seems to be considered as a positive concept. On the other hand even written contracts will not necessarily protect companies from opportunistic behaviour, such as withholding or distorting information (Hunt-Morgan 1994).

Thus, we agree with Mayer et. al (1995) as well as Young and Wilkinson (1989) who argue that trust is not a necessary condition for cooperative actions to occur. The argument behind this statement is that co-operation will not necessarily put a party at risk whereas trust implies a willingness to take risks. But the perceived outcome of the co-operative actions will determine whether the relationship continues to be based on trust or if the trust is turned into mistrust which may lead to a relationship influenced by power, relative dependence and conflict (Andersson et. al 1997).

Nevertheless trust is a necessary condition for longitudinal network commitment which only makes sense if the future of the actor's relationship with other party or the network is of importance. Commitment also has a more distinct priority dimension: in a lot of situations it is not enough to know that the other party is trustworthy but also that the other will actively support the partner, to reciprocate. The commitment is a result of actions and counteractions between the parties involved. (Håkansson-Snehota 1995)

We also agree with several authors and suggest that the lack of commitment is one of the most significant reasons for dissatisfaction in interpartner co-operation (Jonninen 1995, Komppula 1996, Murto-Koivisto-Vesalainen 1995, Shamdasani-Seth 1995 etc.) especially in multipartner collaborations. In successful network co-operation both trust and commitment are the key elements.
3. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOURISM NETWORK AND THE TOURISM STRATEGY IN NORTH KARELIA

3.1 North Karelia Tourism Network

North Karelia is a region in the east of Finland which circumscribes nine rural districts and five towns. These together constitute the administrative region, the North Karelian Federation, which bears the responsibility for regional development and also serves as one channel of EU finance to companies and other actors in the region. For tourism marketing purposes the region is divided into four sub-regions, which have their own characteristic profiles, specialities and co-operative arrangements. There are also several local and community tourism organisations in the region. The North Karelian Federation owns 90 percent of the regional tourism marketing enterprise, North Karelia Tourism Marketing Ltd. The function of the firm is to join forces with local enterprises and municipal tourist boards to market the area as a tourist destination.

The private tourism industry is composed of about 260 companies (e.g. 50 hotels, 12 camping sites, 18 small holiday centres, around 150 farm tourism companies) More than the half of the companies operate only part-time in the tourism business. About two thirds of the companies are small family enterprises which employ only family members. The estimated total direct tourism turnover in the regions is about 400 million FIM (about 2200 FIM per inhabitant) and the impact on employment is about 500 full time and 500 part-time man-years (Pohjois-Karjalan liitto 1996). About 90 % of the total annual demand (measured in number of accommodation nights approx. 400.000) is domestic and the most important traveller group is the domestic holiday traveller who come by their own car (Pohjois-Karjalan liitto 1996). The major attractions in the region are based on nature activities.
3.2 North Karelia Tourism Strategy

The development of a collaborative tourism strategy in a region can be seen as a process (Gray 1985). In the first stage (antecedents to co-operation) the need for collaborative actions is recognised by various actors. (Jamal - Getz 1995) Ever since the beginning of the 1990s tourism as an occupation in North Karelia had been in some sort of a state of crisis. The main tourist attractions in the area had been experiencing financial difficulties due to the bad timing of major investments. In the mid 1990s there was a drop in the number of visitors to the area while in other regions for nature tourism there was an opposite development. Local tourism authorities were simultaneously experiencing great difficulties, notably with co-operation with local tourism occupations, which manifested itself in changes of leadership, press articles and problems with local joint marketing projects.

In the problem-setting stage problem resolution requires collective actions which require recognition of interdependence. Consensus on legitimate stakeholders is reached when stakeholders begin to mutually acknowledge the issue which brings them together. Common problem definition, perception of benefits and salience to stakeholders in the network are important. (Palmer - Bejou 1995, Selin - Chavez 1995) The North Karelia Federation convened in December 1994 a seminar on the development of tourism for entrepreneurs and interest groups close to tourism: a joint decision was taken to create a regional tourism strategy. (Komppula 1998)

In the direction-setting phase actors begin to identify and appreciate a sense of common purpose. Goals are established, ground rules set and subgroups are organised. (Selin - Chavez 1995) Invitations to the strategy workshops began in autumn and intended for the preparation of a strategy in co-operation. The goal of the strategy work was to define the competitive position and the strategic development areas of North Karelia tourism, and then to set up a development programme with common goals
for the period 1996-2000. Two regional workshops were held, one before the local workshops and one after them. (Komppula 1997)

The North Karelia Tourism strategy was finally adopted by the North Karelian Federation in spring 1996. In the course of the autumn the regional tourism marketing company duly prepared projects according to the strategy and requested offers for their implementation from several consultancy firms. As there was for some reason no monitoring group named, the preparation of the projects remained in the hands of only a few people.

As the networks implement their strategy based on common goals, the processes which lead to determine the goals of the network may broaden the understanding of commitment to a network. Based on 17 interviews in the spring 1997 concerning the strategy process itself we concluded that mistrust in early stage of the process lowered the desire to invest time and money in the regional tourism network co-operation: in problem setting and direction setting stages all the legitimate actors were not invited to the process and the strong role of the consultant was not perceived to promise satisfactory results for small entrepreneurs in the strategy process. (Komppula 1998)

Another critical phase seemed to be the structuring of the co-operation in the regional tourism network. The values of the actors should be shared and financial and organisational forms of co-operation should be discussed openly. In the North Karelia case the variety of actors, differences in organisational size and actors' values created a problematic situation. It was also difficult to agree the financial responsibilities. Many entrepreneurs were already either left out or withdrew from co-operation in the very early stages of the strategy process. (Komppula et al. 1997) We concluded that one important perspective in researching the concept of commitment in the network context may be the positions and roles the networking actors take in a network.
But the most important problem seemed to be the entrepreneurs’ mistrust against the strategy itself due to poor information flow and slow execution of the accepted plan. During the beginning of the implementation stage it became evident that a strategy that had seemed very well thought of during consultant presentations, but had actually, through manipulative practices that backfired in mistrust, been watered down to partial plans for products and customers. (Komppula et al. 1997)

FIGURE 1: Factors Affecting Company’s Commitment to a Network

The regional tourism strategy was meant to serve as a framework, where smaller nets form a large regional tourism network which pursues the regional overall goals. The companies and other actors shape and apply the goals as guidelines for their own strategic planning and goal setting. But the key question was if the companies will commit themselves to the network and the network strategy.
In conclusion on the literature review and the interviews on the strategy process we summarise the factors affecting the company's commitment to a network in figure 1.

4. COMMITMENT TO WHAT - RESULTS OF A SURVEY AND AN INTERVIEW

4.1 Research method
After investigating the strategy process we conducted a survey among the tourism network in North Karelia. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the companies' willingness to make efforts to participate in implementing the goals and objectives of the tourism strategy in company's own operations, willingness to commit to the goals of the regional tourism strategy.

A questionnaire was sent to 269 companies. The procentige of the returned questionnaires was 34, which can be considered good in Finnish circumstances, where most of the companies are very small family businesses, which tend to be passive in participating surveys (Jonninen 1995). The data correlates highly the tourism industry in North Karelia in terms of company size, situation in the region, the number of employees as well as other factors. In addition we made five interviews among different kinds of companies in order to get some in-depth information about the company's willingness to commit to the network.

4.2 Commitment to the goals of the network strategy
Commitment to the regional tourism network strategy was sought by implementing a bottom-up method in developing the strategy. Participation to the workshops and the process of setting the goals was thought to strengthen the commitment to the strategy. Commitment to the goals of the

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1 Results of the survey are reported in a publication by Komppula 1997
strategy would mean that the companies would develop their own strategies following the network goals, which was supposed to lead to the strong commitment to the implementation of the network strategy.

Less than 25% of the companies of the region were represented in the workshops although there were more than one hundred people involved in the strategy process. Those who were present probably represent more than the half of the touristic turnover in the region. Representatives of local tourist organisations and municipalities were active in the workshops. Many small companies did not have the possibility to participate due to lack of time. Some companies felt that they are so small that their opinions would not have any importance in the workshops. Some entrepreneurs had negative attitudes towards co-operation in general or towards the consultancy company responsible for the management of the strategy process.

The ten goals of the network strategy were listed in the survey and the respondents were asked, to what extend the companies are ready to invest in their own operations in order to implement the goals of the strategy. In case of three goals more than the half of the respondents were ready to make moderate investments in order to develop their own operations. In case of five goals more than the half of the companies had no intentions to any investments. Two of the goals shared the opinions in three given categories: willingness to high, moderate or no investments.
According to the results of the survey the participation in the workshops had affected to the willingness to invest in implementing the goals of the network strategy but the opposite way as expected: in case of all goals the companies which did not participate the workshops were more willing to accept the goals of the strategy as the guidelines of their own development processes. The atmosphere in the workshops was a factor which affected negatively to the commitment to the process itself: some of the respondents participated only in the first workshops and found it useless to continue.

The goals of the strategy were found good, but most of the companies saw them as too general. The goals of the North Karelia did not differ from other regions in Finland, except Karelianism as an attraction. Most of the larger companies also found some of the goals no more relevant because they already had reached e.g. the quality and responsible tourism goals in their own operations.

4.3 Commitment to the implementation of the network strategy by participating the projects
The North Karelian Tourism Development Project began in the beginning of 1997. Nine small companies and two nets of companies joined the project. The total number of participating companies was 32. There were also two other projects which were unofficially implementing the goals of the strategy, so the total number of companies participating the development projects was about 50. In all these projects addressed to the companies training was the main element.

The representatives of small and large companies alike would have expected prompt action from the tourism strategy in order to improve sales and marketing. Several of the most significant tourism businesses in the area were unable to accept the development project and convened to discuss their own development needs. As a result of these meetings the
large companies practically formed a co-operation network of their own through which they set about planning their own joint marketing and development projects for which they sought their own financing. The large companies did accept the goals of the strategy but not the ways of implementation.

In the spring 1997 representatives of two major companies of the region were elected on the board of the North Karelia Tourism Marketing Ltd, which brought the network of the large companies to control the implementation of the strategy. The marketing and sales orientation got more focus and co-operation between major attractions strengthened. The role of the local municipal tourism marketing organisations strengthened in marketing planning. The network of large companies together with the local and regional marketing organisations was clearly and consciously implementing the strategy. But how did the small companies in rural areas feel about the network strategy?

4.4 Is there any regional tourism network?
The results of the first interviews convinced us that the key concept of the success of a regional tourism network is company’s commitment to the network. In the tentative model we summarised the factors affecting company’s commitment to a network. But the results of the first interviews and the survey showed that especially the small companies did not perceive the regional network strategy as their own strategy. The question emerged, if there is any regional tourism network in North Karelia in the sense as it was presented in the beginning of this paper: a network of issue-based nets, an issue-based network with an own strategy.

The strategy process itself and the survey showed that the tourism companies in North Karelia have a "collective recognised issue", the need of co-operative regional marketing and sales in order to increase the number of tourists coming to North Karelia. The companies were also
satisfied with the goals of the strategy in general though they argued them to be too abstract and broad.

The small entrepreneurs we interviewed did not see themselves as direct members of a regional tourism network but they merely felt themselves members of some local nets composed of tourism businesses in a town or village producing total tourist products in their local environments. All the entrepreneurs had strong dyadic relationships with some other entrepreneurs. The interviews supported strongly our tentative model of commitment as a result of a co-operative process especially in an dyadic relationship. One respondent described the difference between co-operation and commitment as follows:

"One may cooperate with somebody but commitment is like a marriage. If you commit yourself to a business partner you must be as sure about the partner as if you would marry him/her." meaning that a strong longitudinal relationship requires trust, long experience and investments from both sides.

Commitments to multipartner co-operations were mostly occurred in different kinds of projects: interfirm marketing projects, development projects, training projects. These projects could be called as issue-based nets, because these are formed in order to solve co-operatively a certain problem. When the project is over there often remain some tight dyadic or triadic links between the participants, which then may form new nets and networks of relationships based on these dyads or triads.

The tourism entrepreneurs are continuously offered opportunities to join co-operative projects. The criteria used in evaluating the benefits of the project or co-operation was very similar to all entrepreneurs interviewed, independently the size, age, market position or other characteristics of the company. The most important criteria is the expected outcome of the co-operation which must be clearly significant in the beginning of the co-operative arrangement. The opportunity to participate the process where the
goals of the project are set is also important. The other important factor is
the trustworthiness and professionality of the person and/or the
organisation which "sells" the idea of the co-operative arrangement. The
person who is co-ordinating the co-operation must convince the
entrepreneurs that the project will give some benefits for the participants. It
is question of information and alternatives available.

The difference between "being in" and "committing to" a co-operative
arrangement became very clear in the interviews. In most of the cases the
entrepreneurs were ready to "join" the co-operative project even though
they were not convinced about the future outcomes especially if the
financial or other investments in the beginning were not considerable. But
if the first co-operative activities would not satisfy the company it would
quietly withdraw from the active implementation of the co-operative
project remaining as an passive noncommitted participant.

This supports our earlier argument that certain amount of attitudinal
commitment to the idea of co-operation in general is needed that there may
be behavioural commitment. Some actors may in the beginning of a co-
operational process only invest some money but not e.g. time in joint
efforts because they do not want to risk being left out of a possibly
successful network. If the network co-operation promises profitable
outcomes the attitudinal commitment develops and creates more
behavioural commitment in forms of material and non-material
investments. Through the benefits the temporal component - longitudinal
commitment to the network realises.

Especially in a regional scale it was very difficult for a small
entrepreneur to identify itself as a part of a network, if he/she did not
personally know the other members of the network, if the time-scale of the
commitment was not known in advance or if the goals and objectives of the
network were not clear and concrete. Most important was that the outcome
of the co-operation could be seen in advance, the benefits of the commitments were significant.

5. DISCUSSION

The starting point of our research was the question why have so many regional tourism plans and strategies been forgotten on the shelves of authorities. The approach was based on the assumption that because regions are tourist destinations with certain images and the total tourist products are composed of components produced by various actors, cooperation in tourism industry is inevitably needed. It was also suggested that the regions can be seen as issue-based networks where the collectively be the nets and members of nets recognised issue is the need for cooperation in order to increase the tourist turnover in the region. The regional tourism development plans were seen as plans and strategies of the regional tourism networks. The hypothetized reason for the unsuccessful implementation of these network strategies was the actors’ low commitment to the strategies.

Based on the literature review and our case study we suggested that the company’s commitment to the network and the network strategy is a gradual process affected by company’s internal and external factors as well as the behaviour of the company itself and other actors in the process. After identifying the factors affecting company’s commitment to the network we wished to learn to what a company in a network actually commits itself.

In conclusion we suggest that in tourism industry an issue-based net is most appropriate research unit when investigating company’s commitment to a network. A regional tourism network as defined in this case is far too wide a concept to identify for especially small companies. The companies seem to commit themselves to either dyadic or triadic business relationships or on multipartner level to projects with a given goal and clear
objectives. In a network context the target of commitment seems to be the idea of co-operation in order to achieve some goals, not the individual relationships with other partners. So the "issue" is more important than the members of the net.

The second conclusion is that in tourism industry there seems to be a need for commitment to an overall network, too, and that an overall network strategy is also needed. The network of issue-based nets, regional tourism network, can also be identified and most of the tourism companies accept the idea of being a component of a regional tourist product. But an individual company's commitment to the regional tourism network is identified only by such companies which play an active role in some individual issue-based net. If we see a regional tourism network as a network of issue-based nets we can agree with Brito (1997) who suggests that a small subset of interested actors are leading the collective action process and the bulk membership may be made up of a mass of passive actors not directly committed to the provision of the collective benefit though supporting it. A broad commitment to a regional tourism network and the implementation of the network strategy can be achieved only if the key actors in the issue-based nets of the industry commit themselves to the network strategy. We suggest that instead of integrating the goals and strategies of individual companies in order to develop the strategies of regional tourism networks the focus should be in the activities and strategies of issue-based nets.

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